

"Homer with the broad suspense
Of thundrous brow, and lips intense
Of garrulous god-innocence."

Has any modern singer discovered a higher poetical faculty, a more profoundly creative mind, or a bolder sweep of imagination than he who sang "the wondrous tale of Troy divine"? Doubtless our Wordsworths and Tennysons put much more knowledge into their verses; but where is the modern poem that has such a play of divine light over it as the *Iliad*, and where the poet who has the fire and self-forgetting fervour of him who thirty centuries ago sang of "the vengeful wrath of Peleus' son." Need we name Aeschylus, throned in gloomy grandeur,—Euripides,—Pindar, with his lyric fire, or the sweet-voiced Roman Virgil? Looking at their productions, can we say that there has been any increase in the mass, or improvement in the quality of the individual poetic mind? Nearly all the great problems of mental and moral science, about which the Reids, Hamiltons, Mills, Whateleys and Mansells are now wrangling, are discussed in the pages of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, with a breadth and depth which prove that in mental calibre the ancient thinkers were by no means our inferiors. In political science, we can boast of little advance. The proper functions and sphere of government are not now more accurately defined than of old. The grand, fundamental principles of government, that are applicable to all times, are to be found accurately laid down in the pages of Aristotle, Polybius and Cicero; and to these as the fountain-head, the statesman and political philosopher must turn still, for truths and maxims of guidance. Here are urged out, in exhaustive method, the comparative merits of monarchies and republics, of oligarchies and democracies, about which we are debating to-day. Nay, you find worked out here, a method of voting by classes which solved the problem over which British statesmen are now puzzling, and which, while avoiding the invidious and irritating exclusion of any from the franchise, secured the educated, intelligent and wealthy from being overpowered by the masses of an uneducated democracy. It is true that our modern men of science are far more advanced in a knowledge of the laws of nature than the ancient, whose acquaintance with the external universe was very meagre and often erroneous; but in *faculty* they do not, as a class, surpass the Euclids, Archimedeses and Aristotles of ancient days. In a more enlarged acquaintance with the facts and laws of nature, but not in faculty or mental power, can it be truly affirmed that we are ahead of those who have preceded us. And if we ask whether mankind are more virtuous than of yore, remembering that virtue lies in love to the laws and fatherland—in readiness to subordinate selfish interests to public exigencies, we may safely leave it to the conscience to say whether our age is more virtuous than the early ages of Greece and Rome, when the basis for the security of the commonwealth was felt to be moral considerations, not, as now, commerce and finance. Can it be truly affirmed that the boundless thirst for wealth, which is the ruling spirit of our age, and the great spring of enterprise, has