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PERICLES AND CLEON.

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THE contrast and comparison of Pericles and Cleon gives a strange yet faithful picture of Athenian inconsistency. "In the character of the Athenian populace we see vanity and self-conceit side by side with noble-minded liberality and absence of jealousy against foreigners; cringing submission to demagogues joined with a power of appreciating statesmanlike wisdom; firm attachment to liberty and cruel tyranny towards their subject states; utter disregard for the principles of justice if they interfered with selfish aggrandisement, and yet a patriotic anxiety for the honor of their native country." It is perhaps one of the most striking proofs in history of this same fickleness of disposition that the same people who had been wisely guided and controlled for over forty years by one, who, in his perfect harmony and completeness of nature, is the type of the ideal spirit, not of his own age only, but of antiquity, were ready to be swayed by one who may be regarded as the representative of the worst faults of the Athenian democracy such as it came from the hands of Pericles.

Yet, perhaps it is unfortunate in the interests of history that the biographies of Pericles, both as recorded by contemporary authors and by his admirers of the present day, though many and complete have been the accounts we have of Cleon's personality exist only in the writings of Thucydides and a partisan play, "The Knights" of Aristophanes, both of whom were violently prejudiced against Cleon—the former personally and the latter politically. Thus, while of Pericles we have the over-indulgent biography of Plutarch and the impartial account of Thucydides, it is more than probable that Cleon has had less than justice done to him in such portraits of him as have come down to us.

Both the statesmen wielded their influence over the destinies of Athens in the period which is generally termed "The Golden Age of Athens." But it was Pericles' privilege to guide Athens at the zenith of her greatness, while Cleon, who is the most distinguished representative of the new type of statesmen which the advanced democracy had produced and educated, comes into public notice when the brightness of that greatness is overcast, and when the turning point in the brilliant career of Athenian supremacy had been reached. The Persian war had created two leading cities where previously there had been only one. Over against the great Dorian city of the Peloponnesus stood the Ionian city of Central Hellas. The trained courage of the Spartan hoplite was matched by the skill of the Athenian sailor. And of these two rival powers the famous Delian Confederacy had already made one the greatest maritime power of any single state in Greece, while it had caused the other to rapidly decline in prestige. It was reserved for Pericles to insist that the Athenian Empire had taken the place of the Delian Leagues, and however his policy in this respect may be censured, it is a recognized fact that the change was inevitable. He it was who held undisputed mastery over Athens at the happiest and greatest period of her history, who gave his name to one of the greatest ages of the world. It has been justly said that "other ages have had their bright particular stars; but the age of Pericles is the Milky Way of Great Men." It is, indeed, true that splendid as the fortune of Athens was in every respect at this time, it was in nothing more remarkable than in the number of great men whom she had at her disposal. Yet though Athens' greatest statesman is the most interesting figure of the brilliant circle of poets, philosophers, sculptors and historians which was the distinct feature of the period, the age of Sophocles and Euripides, Ictinus and Phidias was not *made* by Pericles. As Bury says: "He was not a stateman of originative genius. He originated little; he elaborated the ideas of others. He brought to perfection the sovereignty of the people which had been fully established in principle long ago; he raised to its height the empire which had been already founded. It was his privilege to guide the policy of his country at a time when she had poets and artists who stand alone and eminent, not only in her own annals and those of Greece, but in the history of mankind."

Yet, though he may not have been creative, it was owing to the wise guiding power of this grand leader that Athens was made the wonder of the world. He owed the unparalleled ascendancy which he wielded so long over the fickle people, and in which we find one of the best proofs of his genius, entirely to his personal character. His personality was one of imposing grandeur. Connected both with the old princely Sicyon and with the great but unfortunate house of the Alcmaeonidae, having received the best education which the age could supply, he had all the advantages—wealth, high birth, powerful friends—which at the outset of his political life, though doubtless auxiliary, nevertheless ex-