

for himself a power which continued unbroken for several years. He called himself, meanwhile, an aristocrat or Conservative, and also a Democrat, because he drew supporters from both parties. For his own purposes he advocated peace, which had always been a cardinal, though somewhat accidental, feature in the policy of Athenian Conservatives; but the significance and secret of his power has nothing to do with political principles, aristocratic or democratic, but lies in the absence of all principle, other than hand to mouth enjoyment.

Plato, it is true, calls this a democratic principle, because it is the principle of ordinary unregenerate human nature; of the man in the street; but Plato would not have denied that this principle has been religiously followed by a good many aristocracies as well, and by men belonging, not to the streets, but to kings' houses.

Eubulus, in short, ruled by tact and by corruption; an Athenian Harley. His spirit was as unlike that of Nicias, the Conservative of the preceding century, as it was unlike the spirit of Pericles, or Cleon, or Theramenes.

There remains but one other distinct type, before the history of free Athens closed;—the type presented by Phocion. If Pericles may be called the optimist or idealist of reform, and Theramenes the idealist of scientific moderation, then may Phocion be described as the pessimist and idealist of reaction. To his pessimism and his reaction from democracy there seem to have been no limits. He seems not merely to have despaired of saving the freedom of the State from the Macedonian king, but to have judged it not worth saving. He had been brought up in the philosophic circle of Plato and his successors; he belonged by birth to the upper classes, who sent their sons to study under the well-meaning aristocratic dreamer, Isocrates, and it is probable that from both these distinct yet so far concurring schools of thought he had become infected with that dislike of democracy and that reaction towards autocracy and monarchy which marks all the literary men of this period, which is at its maximum in Theopompus (who discerned the rise of monarchy and the nation and the disappearance of democracy and the city state) and in Xenophon (who writes the first of Greek historical romances in honour of the paternal despotism of Cyrus, the Philosopher, on the throne "the Patriot King") but which also appears in the pictures of the benevolent despot—the good tyrant—of Plato and Isocrates, and which coloured even the speculations of a writer as cautious as Aristotle and of a poet as democratic in his sympathies as Euripides.

One imagines, then, that Phocion—so like Carlyle in his kindly cynicism and his contempt for popular opinions—was like Carlyle also in his leaning to autocracy and his scorn for democratic government. As one reads Phocion's life, one is reminded of that most characteristic and most delightful anecdote of Carlyle, how he said to the young soldier, since famous, that he hoped to see the day when he, a second Cromwell, should turn those babblers yonder, meaning the august parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, out into the streets, and lock the doors of Westminster behind him. Phocion, like Carlyle, deified silence, and longed to see the Athenian Parliament house or talking-shop emptied, barred, and dedicated to the reign of his favourite goddess.

It must have been from some such leaning to kingship in the abstract, as much as from utter despair of resisting the King of Macedon with such a swaying reed as the later Athenian democracy, that Phocion, himself a good soldier and successful general, set himself steadily against Demosthenes (and the patriotic anti-Macedonian crusade which Demosthenes preached) and from the first counselled submission to the inevitable king.

In the case of other advocates of peace, like Eubulus and Æschines, sinister motives are assumed by Demosthenes to be at the root of their advocacy; in the case of Phocion, no one, not even Demosthenes, attributes sinister motives. The members of both parties were at one in his case and agreed to honour and respect him with an unanimity with which hardly an Athenian statesman before had been honoured or respected by the people. The general confidence reposed in Nicias is perhaps the nearest parallel, since the confidence reposed in Phocion rested mainly on the same grounds of his personal honesty and good intentions. But Nicias showed no such administrative capacity as Phocion, and his personal loyalty and unselfishness were tarnished by backslidings, which were never chargeable to Phocion.

Grote quotes the confidence which the honesty of these two aristocrats inspired in democratic Athens as proof of the fairness and good sense of the democracy. The argument carries weight, but it is obviously two edged. These two men whom the people trusted so well, whose judgment carried so much weight with them, did not reciprocate the people's trust. Phocion, in particular, distrusted their judgment entirely; he answered their cheers only with laconic sarcasm and characteristic cynicism. "What are they cheering for," he asked, "have I said anything particularly foolish?"

The personal character of Phocion, then, emerged from the tragic history of the time unspotted, according to the testimony of friends alike and of opponents. Demosthenes himself, the first author not only of the day, but almost of all days, recognized that when his eloquent outbursts provoked an answer from Phocion—Phocion, whose only eloquence was the eloquence of a character higher than his own, motives more wholly unselfish, and a record more impressive in its transparent simplicity—Demosthenes recognized that the eloquence of speech was at a discount, the eloquence of a life in the ascendant. "Here comes," he used to say, "the sledge-hammer of my periods."

But in respect to the politics of Phocion—apart from his personal character—there has been much more controversy. It is easy to say that the events justified Phocion's forecasts, that the defeat at Chæroneia, which overthrew Athenian freedom, was the condemnation of Demosthenes, and the justification of Phocion's policy; it is easy, too, to add that it was better for the world that Macedon should conquer Athens, and so have leisure to conquer Asia and to Hellenize, i.e., to civilize, Asia Minor and the empires of the East and Egypt; whence the influence of Greece became strong enough and would widen enough to dominate and civilize their Roman conquerors a century and a half later, and so to civilize in some measure ourselves to-day. But, on the other hand, it is by no means clear that Demosthenes' cause was hopeless, though it happened to fail. It looks as if this Athenian Gambetta, this never-despairing, never-tiring, eloquent tribune of the people, came as near to defeating Philip when he won his pitched battle at Thebes—a battle not by swords, but eloquence, and won, not by those largest battalions, which Providence is said to favour, but by the best cause, the cause of freedom—freedom for which, and for which alone, he actually persuaded the Thebans to sacrifice ancient enmities and prehistoric jealousies, and to risk imminent destruction by an alliance with Athens; it looks as if Demosthenes on that day came as near defeating Philip, as the French Demosthenes, Gambetta, came near to defeating the unconquerable Germans, on the day when his agent, General Faidherbe (most tragically unfortunate of men), both won and lost again, not knowing that he had won, the battle of St. Quentin. And even if it was not so, even if Macedon was bound to win, does that justify Phocion's policy? On the contrary, though the world gained by Philip's victory, Athens gained nothing, but lost almost everything. If Phocion thought that the monarchical rule of Macedon was going to be a blessing to Athens, he was demonstrably wrong. And besides all this, after all is said, man being what he is, a creature born to action, what other thing than what Demosthenes did, could an ordinary, healthy-minded, energetic Athenian do, when he saw approaching the extinction of his empire and his liberty? Even though all the political doctors gathered about the bedside of the expiring State, to diagnose her condition, reported to him that the disease had run too far, that she had but one chance in ten of surviving, what could such a man do in such an hour, but answer, like the grim American President on his dying bed, "Well, then, I will try the one chance," and so battle manfully for life on the strength of it?

This was what Demosthenes did, and the Athenian people, who loved and respected Phocion for his personal rectitude, loved also and respected Demosthenes, even after his defeat, for his political rectitude, and thanked him publicly, "because he had not despaired of the Republic." If the philosophy, then, of Plato unnerved Phocion's mind and palsied his hand and turned him to a stony despair, it is only one more illustration out of many that in politics, as in morals, divine philosophy may overshoot the mark and be procuress to the Lords of Hell. Nevertheless, because moral and political insight and moral and political excellence