

THE
 H-I S T O R Y
 OF
 G R E E C E.

CHAPTER XIII.

Affairs of GREECE from the Thirty-Years Truce to that commonly called the PELOPONNESIAN WAR; with a summary View of the History of MACEDONIA from the earliest Accounts.

SECTION I.

Administration of Pericles : Science, Arts, and fine Taste at Athens. Change in the Condition of Women in Greece : Aspasia. Popular Licentiousness at Athens. The Athenian Empire asserted and extended. Project for Union of Greece.

A THENS now rested six years, uningaged in any hostilities; a longer interval of perfect peace than she had before known in above forty years, elapsed since she rose from her ashes after the Persian invasion. It is a wonderful and singular phenomenon in the history of mankind, too little accounted for by anything recorded by antient, or imagined by modern writers, that, during this period of turbulence, in a commonwealth whose whole population in free subjects amounted

VOL. II.

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scarcely

scarcely to thirty thousand families, art, science, fine taste, and politeness, should have risen to that perfection which has made Athens the mistress of the world, through all succeeding ages. Some sciences indeed have been carried higher in modern times, and art has put forth new branches, of which some have given new helps to science: but Athens, in that age, reached a perfection of taste that no country hath since surpassed; but on the contrary all have looked up to, as a polar star, by which, after sinking in the deepest barbarism, taste has been guided in its restoration to splendor, and the observation of which will probably ever be the surest preservative against its future corruption and decay.

Much of these circumstances of glory to Athens, and of improvement, since so extensively spread over the world, was owing to Pericles. Peisistratus had nourished the infancy of Attic genius; Pericles brought it to maturity. In the age of Peisistratus books were scarcely known, science was vague, and art still rude. But during the turbulent period which intervened, things had been so wonderfully prepared, that, in the age of Pericles, science and every polite art waited, as it were, only his magic touch to exhibit them to the world in meridian splendor. The philosopher Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ, whose force of understanding and extent of science acquired him the appellation of the Intellect, had been the tutor of the youth of Pericles, and remained the friend of his riper years. Among those with whom Pericles chiefly conversed was also the Athenian Pheidias, in whom, with a capacity for every science, was united the sublimest genius for the fine arts, which he professed; and Damon, who, professing only music, was esteemed the ablest speculative politician that the world had yet produced. Nor must the celebrated Aspasia be omitted in the enumeration of those to whom Pericles was indebted for the cultivation of his mind; since we have it on the authority of Plato, that Socrates himself acknowledged to have profited from the instruction of that extraordinary woman.

It will not be the place here to enlarge upon the manners any more than upon the arts and knowledge, of the age of Pericles; yet it may be requisite to advert to one point, in which a great change had taken place

Plat.
 Alcib. 1.
 p. 118. t. 2.
 Plat. vit.
 Peric.

Plat. Menex.

SECT. I. CONDITION OF WOMEN.

3

place since the age which Homer has described. The political circumstances of Greece, and especially of Athens, had contributed much to exclude women of rank from general society. The turbulence to which every commonwealth was continually liable, from the contentions of faction, made it often unsafe, or at least unpleasant for them to go abroad. But in democracies their situation was peculiarly untoward. That form of government compelled the men to associate all with all. The general assembly necessarily called all together; and the vote of the meanest citizen being there of equal value with that of the highest, the more numerous body of the poor was always formidable to the wealthy few. Hence followed the utmost condescension, or something more than condescension, from the rich to the multitude; and not to the collected multitude only, nor to the best among the multitude, but principally to the most turbulent, illmannered, and worthless. Not those alone who sought honors or commands, but all who desired security for their property, must not only meet these men upon a footing of equality in the general assembly, but associate with them in the gymnasia and porticoes, flatter them, and sometimes cringe to them. The ladies, to avoid a society which their fathers and husbands could not avoid, lived with their female slaves, in a secluded part of the house; associating little with oneanother, and scarcely at all with the men, even their nearest relations; and seldom appearing in public, but at those religious festivals in which antient custom required the women to bear a part, and sacerdotal authority could insure decency of conduct toward them. Hence the education of the Grecian ladies in general, and particularly the Athenian, was scarcely above that of their slaves; and, as we find them exhibited in lively picture, in the little treatise upon domestic economy remaining to us from Xenophon, they were equally of uninstructed minds, and unformed manners:

See also
 Lysias
 against
 Diogeiton.

To the deficiencies to which women of rank were thus condemned, by custom which the new political circumstances of the country had superinduced upon the better manners of the heroic ages, was owing that comparative superiority, through which some of the Grecian courtezans attained extraordinary renown. Carefully instructed in every elegant accomplishment, and, from early years, accustomed to

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converse

converse among men, and men of the highest rank and most improved talents, if they possessed understanding it became cultivated; and to their houses men resorted, not merely in the low pursuit of sensual pleasure, but to enjoy, often in the most polished company, the charms of female conversation, which, with women of rank and character, was totally forbidden. Hence, at the time of the invasion under Xerxes, more than one Grecian city is said to have been engaged in the Persian interest through the influence of Thargelia, a Milesian courtesan, who was afterward raised to the throne of Thessaly.

Plut. vit.
Peric.

Aspasia was also a Milesian, the daughter of Axiochus; for her celebrity has preserved her father's name. With uncommon beauty were joined in Aspasia still more uncommon talents; and, with a mind the most cultivated, manners so decent, that, in her more advanced years, not only Socrates professed to have learned eloquence from her; but, as Plutarch relates, the ladies of Athens used to accompany their husbands to her house for the instruction of her conversation. Pericles became her passionate admirer, and she attached herself to him during his life: according to Plutarch he divorced his wife, with whom he had lived on ill terms, to marry her. We are informed, on higher authority, that he was not fortunate in his family, his sons being mentioned by Plato as youths of mean understanding. After he was once firmly established at the head of the Athenian administration, he passed his little leisure from public business mostly in company with Aspasia and a few select friends; avoiding that extensive society in which the Athenians in general delighted, and seldom seen by the people, but in the exercise of some public office, or speaking in the general assembly: a reserve perhaps as advantageous to him, as the contrary conduct was necessary to the ambitious who were yet but aspiring at greatness, or to the wealthy without power, who desired security to their property.

Plat. Menon.
p. 94. t. 2.
& Alcib. 1.
p. 118. t. 2.

Policy united with natural inclination to induce Pericles to patronize the arts, and call forth their finest productions for the admiration and delight of the Athenian people. The Athenian people were the despotic sovereign; Pericles the favorite and minister, whose business it was to indulge the sovereign's caprices that he might direct their measures; and he had the skill often to direct even their caprices. That fine taste
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SECT. I. SCIENCE, ARTS AND TASTE.

5

which he possessed eminently, was in some degree general among the Athenians; and the gratification of that fine taste was one mean by which he retained his influence. Works were undertaken, according to the expression of Plutarch, in whose time they still remained perfect, of stupendous magnitude, and in form and grace inimitable; all calculated for the accommodation, or in some way for the gratification, of the multitude. Pheidias was superintendant of the works: under him many architects and artists were employed, whose merit intitled them to fame with posterity, and of whose labors (such is the hardness of the Attic marble, their principal material, and the mildness of the Attic atmosphere) relics which have escaped the violence of men, still after the lapse of more than two thousand years, exhibit all the perfection of design, and even of workmanship, which earned that fame.

Meanwhile Pheidias himself was executing works of statuary which were, while they lasted, the admiration of succeeding times. Nor does the testimony to these works, which are now totally, or almost totally lost, rest merely upon Grecian report; for the Romans, when in possession of all the most exquisite productions of Grecian art, scanty relics of which have excited the wonder and formed the taste of modern ages, were at a loss to express their admiration of the sublimity of the works of Pheidias. When such was the perfection of the art of sculpture, it were a solecism to suppose that the sister art of painting could be mean, since the names of Panænus, kinsman of Pheidias, and Zeuxis, and Parrhasius, cotemporaries, remained always among the most celebrated of the Grecian school. At the same time the chaste sublimity of the great tragic poets Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and that extraordinary mixture of the most elegant satire with the grossest buffoonery, the old comedy, as it is called, were alternately exhibited in immense theaters, at the public expence, and for the amusement of the whole people.

Thus captivating the Athenians by their relish for matters of taste and their passion for amusement, Pericles confirmed his authority principally by that great instrument for the management of a people, his eloquence: but this was supported by unremitting assiduity in public business, and evident superiority of capacity for the conduct of it;

it; and, above all, by an ostentatious integrity. The whole Athenian commonwealth thus, with all its appurtenances, or, in the words of cotemporary authors, revenues, armies, fleets, islands, the sea, friendships and alliances with kings and various potentates, and influence that commanded several Grecian states and many barbarous nations, all were in a manner his possession. Plutarch says that, while thus, during fifteen years, ruling the Athenian empire, so strict and scrupulous was his economy in his private affairs, that he neither increased nor diminished his paternal estate by a single drachma: but, according to the more probable assertion, and higher authority of Isocrates, his private estate suffered in maintaining his public importance, so that he left it less to his sons than he had received it from his father.

But the political power of Pericles resting on the patronage, which he professed, of democracy, he was obliged to allow much, and even to bear much, that a better constitution would have put under more restraint. Such, under his administration, was the popular licentiousness, that the comic poets did not fear to vent, in the public theaters, the grossest jokes upon his person, the severest invectives against his administration, and even the most abominable calumnies upon his character. His connection with Aspasia was not likely to escape their satire. She was called, on the public stage, the Omphalë of her time, the Deianeira, and even the Juno. Many circumstances of the administration of Pericles were malevolently attributed to her influence, and much gross abuse and much improbable calumny was vented against both of them. It would indeed be scarcely possible to distinguish almost any truth amid the licentiousness of wit, and the violence, not to say the atrociousness, of party-spirit at Athens, had we not generally, for this interesting period of history, the guidance of a cotemporary author, Thucydides son of Olorus; of uncommon abilities and still more uncommon impartiality, and whose ample fortune, great connections, and high situation in the commonwealth, opened to him superior means of information. For what is omitted in the concise review of Grecian affairs, which he has prefixed to his history of the Peloponnesian war, we have sometimes some testimony from Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, or the orators. To later writers, when not in some

Apud Plut.
 in vit. Peric.
 Plat. Alcib. 1.
 Alcib. 1.
 p. 104. t. 2.

Isocr. de
 pace, p. 254.
 t. 2. ed.
 Auger.

Plut. vit.
 Peric.

SECT. I. ATHENIAN EMPIRE EXTENDED.

degree supported by these, it is seldom safe to trust. Sometimes they have adopted reports carelessly; and often, as we find Plutarch frequently acknowledging, they have been unable to unravel truth amid contradiction and improbability. Indeed Plutarch, tho often extremely negligent, is yet often, and especially for the life of Pericles, our best assistant. He frequently quotes his authorities; and where unbiassed by some evident prejudice, he is generally impartial.

We may then trust the united authorities of Thucydides, Isocrates, and Plutarch, notwithstanding the vague accusations reported by Diodorus and others, that the clear integrity of Pericles, not less than the wisdom of his public conduct, was his shield against the scurrility of the comic poets, so adapted to make impression on the popular mind, as well as against every effort of the opposing orators¹. One great point however of his policy was to keep the people always either amused or employed. During peace an exercising squadron of sixty trireme gallies was sent out for eight months in every year. Nor was this without a farther use than merely ingaging the attention of the people, and maintaining the navy in vigor. Himself occasionally took the command; and sailing among the distant dependencies of the empire, settled disputes between them, and confirmed the power and extended the influence of Athens. The Ægean and the Propontis did not bound his voyages: he penetrated into the Euxine; and finding the distant Grecian settlement of Sinopë divided between Timesileos, who affected the tyranny, and an opposing party, he left there Lamachus with thirteen ships, and a body of landforces, with whose assistance to the popular side the tyrant and those of his faction were expelled. Their houses and property, apportioned into six hundred lots, were offered to so many Athenian citizens; and volunteers were not wanting to go upon such conditions to settle at Sinopë. To disburthen the government at home, by providing advantageous establishments, in distant parts, for the poor and discontented among the sovereign citizens of Athens, was a policy often resorted to by Pericles.

¹ The expression of Thucydides is of that forcible kind which is almost peculiar to him, and to which his character gives an additional weight that it would hardly have from any other writer: Περικλης — δυνατὸς ὦν τῷ τε αξιώματι καὶ τῇ γνώμῃ χρημάτων τε διαφανῶς ἀδούροτατος γειόμενος. Thucyd. l. 2. c. 65.

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Ch. 12. s. 4.
 of this Hist.

Diod. 1. 12.
 c. 9, & seq.
 Ch. 2. s. 2.
 of this Hist.

We have already seen him conducting a colony to the Thracian Chersonese; and it was during his administration, in the same year, according to Diodorus, in which the thirty years truce was concluded, that the deputation came from the Thessalian adventurers, who had been expelled by the Crotoniats from their attempted establishment in the deserted territory of Sybaris, in consequence of which the colony was established, under his patronage, with which Herodotus and Lysias settled at Thurium.

Plutarch has attributed to Pericles a noble project, unnoticed by any earlier extant author, but worthy of his capacious mind, and otherwise also bearing some characters of authenticity and truth. It was no less than to unite all Greece under one great federal government, of which Athens should be the capital. But the immediate and direct avowal of such a purpose would be likely to raise jealousies so numerous and extensive, as to form insuperable obstacles to the execution. The religion of the nation, tho even in this every town, and almost every family claimed something peculiar to itself, was yet that alone in which the Grecian people universally claimed a clear common interest. In the vehemence of public alarm, during the Persian invasion, vows had been in some places made to the gods, for sacrifices, to an extent beyond what the votaries, when blessed with deliverance beyond hope, were able to perform; and some temples, destroyed by the invaders, probably also from the scantiness of means of those in whose territories they had stood, were not yet restored. Taking these circumstances then for his ground, Pericles proposed that a congress of deputies from every republic of the nation should be assembled at Athens, for the purpose first, of inquiring concerning vows for the safety of Greece yet unperformed, and temples, injured by the barbarians, not yet restored; and then of proceeding to concert measures for the lasting security of navigation in the Grecian seas, and for the preservation of peace by land also between all the states composing the Greek nation. The naval question, but still more the ruin which, in the Persian invasion, had befallen Northern Greece, and especially Attica, while Peloponnesus had felt nothing of its evils, gave pretension for Athens to take the lead in the business. On the motion of Pericles, a decree of the Athenian people directed the appointment
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SECT. I. PROJECT FOR UNION OF GREECE.

9

of ministers, to invite every Grecian state to send its deputies. Plutarch, rarely attentive to political information, has not at all indicated what attention was shown, or what participation proposed, for Lacedæmon. His prejudices indeed we find very generally adverse to the Lacedæmonian government, and favoring the Athenian democracy. But, judging from the friendship which, according to the authentic information of Thucydides, subsisted between Pericles and Archidamus, king of Lacedæmon, through life, it is little likely that, in putting forward the project for the peace of Greece, Pericles would have proposed anything derogatory to the just weight and dignity of Sparta; which would indeed have been, with the pretence of the purpose of peace, only to have put forward a project of contest. Pericles, when he formed his coalition with Cimon, seems to have entered heartily into the enlarged views of that great man, and with the hope that, through their coalition, both the oligarchal and the democratical powers in Athens might be held justly balanced, had early in view to establish the peace of Greece on a union between Athens and Lacedæmon. It is however evident, from the narrative of Thucydides, that Archidamus rarely could direct the measures of the Lacedæmonian government. On a view of all information then it seems most probable that the project of Pericles was concerted with Archidamus; and that the opposition of those in Lacedæmon of an adverse faction, concurred with opposition from those in Athens, who apprehended injury to their interest from a new coalition with the aristocratical party, to compel the great projector to abandon his magnificent and beneficent purpose in a stage so early, that it was no object for the notice of the able and accurate cotemporary historian, in that valuable abridgement of early Grecian history which precedes his narrative of the Peloponnesian war.

SECTION II.

War between Samos and Miletus: Interference of Athens: Armament under Pericles: Samos taken. Funeral Solemnity at Athens in honor of the Slain in their Country's Service.

PEACE between Lacedæmon and Athens was indispensable toward the quiet of the rest of the nation, but, in the want of such a union as Pericles had projected, was unfortunately far from insuring it; and when war began anywhere, tho among the most distant settlements of the Grecian people, how far it might extend was not to be foreseen. A dispute between two Asiatic states, of the Athenian confederacy, led Athens into a war, which greatly indangered the truce made for thirty years, when it had scarcely lasted six. Miletus and Samos, claiming each the sovereignty of Prienë, itself originally a free Grecian commonwealth, asserted their respective pretensions by arms. The Milesians, not till they were suffering under defeat, applied to Athens for redress, as of a flagrant injury done them. The usual feuds within every Grecian state furnished assistance to their clamor; for, the aristocracy prevailing at that time in Samos, the leaders of the democratical party joined the enemies of their country, in accusing the proceedings of its government before the Athenian people. The opposition at Athens maliciously imputed the measures, which followed, to the weak compliance of Pericles with the solicitations of Aspasia, in favor of her native city; but it appears clearly from Thucydides, that no such motive was necessary: the Athenian government would of course take cognisance of the cause; and such a requisition as might be expected, was accordingly sent to the Samian administration, to answer by deputies at Athens to the charges urged against them. The Samians, unwilling to submit their claim to the arbitration of those who they knew were always systematically adverse to the aristocratical interest, refused to send any deputies.

B. C. 440.
 Ol. 84. 4.
 Thucyd. l. 1.
 c. 115.

Plat. vit.
 Peric.