PERICLES AND ASPASIA.

BY

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR, Esq.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

E. L. CAREY & A. HART.

1839.

Printed by
Haswell, Barrington, and Haswell.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE EARL OF MULGRAVE,

LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND.

My Lord,

When an author is desirous of prefixing an illustrious name to his title-page, it has usually been thought proper, of late, to solicit the permission. I, who never ask any thing of any man, would least of all ask this; and, were it peradventure in my hands, I should be apt to let it drop out of them. Long before you were in possession of power (you will remember) I prognosticated it from the aspect of the times. I clearly saw the necessity of your becoming more than a man of rank, or even of genius. Your Excellency will correct the faults, and inasmuch as sagacity,

integrity, firmness, and moderation can do it, will compensate for the iniquities and atrocities of six centuries: you will unite Great Britain and Ireland; which our princes and parliaments, until now, have never wisely planned nor honestly intended.

With the high respect due to your Excellency from every friend of peace and justice in both countries,

I am,

&c., &c.,

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

He who opens these Letters for a History of the Times, will be disappointed. Did he find it in a Montague's or a Walpole's? And yet perhaps he ran over them with pleasure. If he cannot do the same here, if he regrets that many are wanting of Pericles, let him take comfort in learning by heart the two first "*Years*" of Thucydides, and in repeating, as he walks along, the sterling and strenuous orations they contain. It is easy to throw pieces of history into letters: many have done it: but there is no species of composition so remote from verisimilitude. Who can imagine to himself a couple of correspondents sitting down for such a purpose, and never turning their eyes toward any other object? Better stand on the fragments of antiquity, and look about us.

It was difficult to avoid every expression and every thought attributed to Pericles by the ancients, and particularly in composing the orations: yet this has been done. The longer of them, which he might be conceived to have spoken on many occurrences, as general and statesman, have been omitted.

Villa Fiesolana, July 4, 1835.

PERICLES AND ASPASIA.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Cleone! I write from Athens. I hasten to meet your reproaches, and to stifle them in my embrace. It was wrong to have left Miletus at all: it was wrong to have parted from you without entrusting you with my secret. No, no, neither was wrong. I have withstood many tears, my sweet Cleone, but never your's; you could always do what you would with me; and I should have been windbound by you on the Meander, as surely and inexorably as the fleet at Aulis by Diana.

Ionia is far more beautiful than Attica, Miletus

than Athens; for about Athens there is no verdure — no spacious and full and flowing river; few gardens, many olive-trees, so many indeed that we seem to be in an eternal cloud of dust. However, when the sea-breezes blow, this tree itself looks beautiful; it looks, in its pliable and undulating branches, irresolute as Ariadne when she was urged to fly, and pale as Orythyia when she was borne away.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Come out, Aspasia, from among those olives. You would never have said a word about any such things, at such a time, unless you had met with an adventure. When you want to hide somewhat, you always run into the thickets of poetry. Pray leave Ariadne with Bacchus, she cannot be safer; and Orythyia with Boreas, if you have any reverence for the mysteries of the

gods. Now I have almost a mind to say, tell me nothing at all of what has happened to you since you left us. This would punish you as you deserve, for you know that you are dying to tell it. The venerable and good-natured old widow, Epimedea, will have trouble enough, I foresee, with her visiter from Asia. The Milesian kid will overleap her garden-wall, and browze and butt everywhere. I take it as a matter of certainty that you are with her, for I never heard you mention any other relative in Athens, and she was, I remember, the guest of your house. How she loved you, dear good woman! She would have given your father, Axiochus, all her wealth for you. But when you were seven years old you were worth seven times over what you are now. I loved you then myself. Well, I am resolved to relieve you of your secret.

Prodigal scatterer of precious hopes, and of smiles that seem to rise from the interest you feel, and not from the interest you excite, what victim have you crowned with flowers, and selected to fall at your altar?

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Spirit of divination! how dared you find me out? And how dared you accuse me of poetizing? You who poetize more extravagantly yourself. Mine, I do insist upon it, is no worse than we girls in general are apt to write; "and no better," you will reply, "than we now and then are condemned to listen to, or disposed to read."

Poetry is the weightless integument that our butterflies always shed in our path ere they wing their way toward us. It is precisely of the same form, colour, and substance, for the whole generation. Are all mine well? and all yours? I shall be very angry to hear that mine are. If they do not weep, and look wan, and sicken, why then I must, out of very spite. But may the Gods, in their wisdom, keep not only their hearts, but their persons too, just where they are! I intend to be in love here at Athens. It is true, I do assure you, when I have time, and idleness, and courage for it.

Ay, ay, now your eyes are running over all the rest of the letter. Well, what have you found? where is the place? I will keep you in suspense no longer. As soon as there was any light at all, we discovered, on the hill above the city, crowds of people and busy preparations. You are come to it.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I was determined to close my letter when your curiosity was at the highest, that you might flutter and fall from the clouds like Icarus. I wanted two things; first, that you should bite your lip, an attitude in which you alone look pretty; and secondly, that you should say half angrily, "This now is exactly like Aspasia." I will be remembered; and I will make you look just as I would have you.

How fortunate! to have arrived at Athens, at

dawn, on the 12th of Elaphebolion. On this day begin the festivals of Bacchus, and the theatre is thrown open at sunrise.

What a theatre! what an elevation! what a prospect of city and port, of land and water, of porticos and temples, of men and heroes, of demi-gods and gods!

It was indeed my wish and intention, when I left Ionia, to be present at the first of the Dionysiacks; but how rarely are wishes and intentions so accomplished, even when winds and waters do not interfere!

I will now tell you all. No time was to be lost, so I hastened on shore in the dress of an Athenian boy, who came over with his mother from Lemnos. In the giddiness of youth, he forgot to tell me that, not being yet eighteen years old, he could not be admitted, and left me on the steps. My heart sank within me, so many young men stared and whispered; yet never was stranger treated with more civility. Crowded as the theatre was, (for the tragedy had begun,) every one made room for me. When they were seated,

and I too, I looked towards the stage; and behold there lay before me, but afar off, bound upon a rock, a more majestical form, and bearing a countenance more heroic, I should rather say more divine, than ever my imagination had conceived! I know not how long it was before I discovered that as many eyes were directed towards me as towards the competitor of the gods. I was neither flattered by it nor abashed. Every wish, hope, sigh, sensation, was successively with the champion of the human race, with his antagonist Jove, and his creator Eschylus. How often, O Cleone, have we throbbed with his injuries! how often hath his vulture torn our breasts! how often have we thrown our arms around each other's neck, and half-renounced the religion of our fathers! Even your image, so inseparable at other times, came not across me then; Prometheus stood between us. He had resisted in silence and disdain the cruellest tortures that Almightiness could inflict; and now arose the Nymphs of Ocean, which heaved its vast waves before us; and now they descended with

open arms and sweet benign countenances, and spake with pity; and the insurgent heart was mollified and quelled.

I sobbed — I dropt.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Is this telling me all? you faithless creature! There is much to be told when Aspasia faints in the theatre: and Aspasia in disguise!

My sweet and dear Aspasia! with all your beauty, of which you cannot but be conscious, how is it possible you could have hoped to be undetected? Certainly there never was any woman, or any man, so little vain as you are. Formerly you were rather so about your poetry; but now you really write it well, you have overcome this weakness; nay, you doubt whether your best verses are tolerable. You have told me this several times, and you always say what you think, unless when any one might be hurt or

displeased. I am glad the observation comes across me, for I must warn you upon it.

Take care then, Aspasia! do not leave off entirely all dissimulation. It is as feminine a virtue, and as necessary to a woman, as religion. If you are without it, you will have a grace the less, and (what you could worse spare) a sigh the more.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I was not quite well when I wrote to you. When I am not quite well I must always write to you; I am better after it.

Where did I leave off?

Ah, Cleone! Cleone! I have learnt your lesson; I am dissembling; it must not be with you. My tears are falling. I acted unworthily. And are these tears indeed for my fault against you? I cannot tell; if I could, I would candidly. Every thing that has happened, every thing that

shall happen hereafter, I will lay upon your knees. Counsel me—direct me. Even were I as sensible as you are, I should not be able to discover my own faults. The clearest eyes do not see the cheeks below, nor the brow above them.

To proceed then in my narrative. Every thing appeared to me an illusion but the tragedy. What was divine seemed human, and what was human seemed divine.

An apparition of resplendent and unearthly beauty threw aside, with his slender arms, the youths, philosophers, magistrates, and generals, that surrounded me, with a countenance as confident, a motion as rapid, and a command as unresisted as a god.

"Stranger!" said he, "I come from Pericles, to offer you my assistance."

I looked in his face; it was a child's.

"We have attendants here who shall conduct you from the crowd," said he.

"Venus and Cupid!" cried one.

"We are dogs," growled another.

"Worse!" rejoined a third, "we are slaves."

"Happy man! happy man! if thou art theirs,"

whispered the next in his ear, and followed us close behind.

I have since been informed that Pericles, who sate below us on the first seat, was the only man who did not rise. No matter; why should he? why did the rest? But it was very kind in him to send his cousin; I mean it was very kind for so proud a man.

Epimedea wept over me when I entered her house, and burned incense before the Gods, and led me into my chamber.

"I have a great deal to say to you, my dear Aspasia; but you must go to sleep: your bath shall be ready at noon; but be sure you sleep till then," said she.

I did indeed sleep, and (will you believe it?) instantly and soundly. Never was bath more refreshing, never was reproof more gentle, than Epimedea's.

I found her at my pillow when I awoke, and she led me to the marble conch.

"Dear child!" said she, when I had stept in, "you do not know our customs. You should have come at once to my house; you never should

have worn men's clothes: indeed you should not have gone to the theatre at all; but, being there, and moreover in men's habiliments, you should have taken care not to have fainted, as they say you did. My husband, Thessalus, would never hear of fainting; he used to tell me it was a bad example. But he fainted at last, poor man! and —I minded his admonition. Why! what a lovely child you are grown, my little Aspasia! Is the bath too hot? Aspasia! can it be? why, you are no child at all!"

I really do believe that this idle discourse of Epimedea, which will tire you perhaps, was the only one that would not have wearied out my spirits. It neither made me think nor answer. What a privilege! what a blessing! how seldom to be enjoyed in our conferences with the silly! Ah! do not let me wrong the kind-hearted Epimedea! Those are not silly who have found the way to our hearts; and far other names do they deserve who open to us theirs.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

The boy about whom I wrote to you in my letter of yesterday, is called Alcibiades.* He lisps and blushes at it. His cousin, Pericles, you may have heard, enjoys the greatest power and reputation, both as an orator and a general, of

* Alcibiades had no right to be at the theatre; but he might have been sent for on the occasion, or have taken the liberty to come in, hearing a bustle, for there was nobody in Athens whom he feared or cared for, either in his childhood or after. Thucydides calls Alcibiades *a youth* in the twelfth year of the Peloponnesian war, nine years after the death of Pericles. Alcibiades was, on the mother's side, grandson of Megacles, whose grand-daughter, Isodoce, married Cimon. Her father, Euryptolemus, was cousin-germain of Pericles. It is impossible that men so prudent and well-tempered as Pericles and Cimon, the two most perfect models of a gentleman that ever existed upon earth, could have been enemies. They headed two opposite parties, and conscientiously. On this principle, Thessalus, son of Cimon, was the accuser of his cousin, Alcibiades.

The leaders in Athens looked beyond and over their own families. Dangerous precedent! laudably avoided by popular statesmen since.

any man in Athens. Early this morning the beautiful child came to visit me, and told me that when his cousin had finished his studies, which he usually had done about three hours after sunrise, he would desire him to come also.

I replied, "By no means do it, my beautiful and brave protector! Surely, on considering the matter, you will think you are taking too great a liberty with a person so distinguished."

"I take no liberties with any other," said he.

When I expressed in my countenance a little surprise at his impetuosity, he came forward and kissed my brow. Then, said he, more submissively, "Pardon my rudeness. I like very well to be told what to do by those who are fond of me; but never to be told what not to do; and the more fond they are of me the less I like it. Because when they tell me what to do, they give me an opportunity of pleasing them; but when they tell me what not to do, it is a sign that I have displeased, or am likely to displease them. Besides —I believe there are some other reasons, but they have quite escaped me.

"It is time I should return," said he, "or I

shall forget all about the hour of his studies, (I mean Pericles,) and mine too."

I would not let him go, however, but inquired who were his teachers, and repeated to him many things from Sappho, and Alcæus, and Pindar, and Simonides. He was amazed, and told me he preferred them to Fate and Necessity, Pytho and Pythonissa.

I could now have kissed him in my turn, but he drew back, thinking (no doubt) that I was treating him like a child — that a kiss is never given but as the price of pardon, and that I had pardoned him before for his captiousness.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Aspasia! I foresee that henceforward you will admire the tragedy of Prometheus more than ever. But do not tell any one, excepting so fond a friend as Cleone, that you prefer the author to Homer. I agree with you that the conception of

such a drama is in itself a stupendous effort of genius; that the execution is equal to the conception; that the character of Prometheus is more heroic than any in heroic poetry; and that no production of the same extent is so magnificent and so exalted. But the Iliad is not a region, it is a continent; and you might as well compare this prodigy to it as the cataract of the Nile to the Ocean. In the one we are overpowered by the compression and burst of the element; in the other we are carried over an immensity of space, bounding the earth, not bounded by her, and having nothing above but the heavens.

Let us enjoy, whenever we have an opportunity, the delight of admiration, and perform the duties of reverence. May others hate what is admirable! We will hate likewise, O my Aspasia! when we can do no better. I am unable to foretell the time when this shall happen: it lies, I think, beyond the calculations of Meton.

I am happy to understand that the Athenians have such a philosopher among them. Hitherto we have been inclined to suppose that philosophy at Athens is partly an intricate tissue of subtile

questions and illusory theories, knotted with syllogisms; and partly an indigested mass of unexamined assertions and conflicting dogmas. The Ionians are more silent, contemplative, and recluse. Knowing that Nature will not deliver her oracles in the crowd, nor by sound of trumpet, they open their breasts to her in solitude, with the simplicity of children, and look earnestly in her face for a reply. Meton, and Democritus, and Anaxagoras, may perhaps lay their hands upon the leapings of your tettinxes, and moderate their chirping, but I apprehend that the genius of the people will always repose upon the wind-skins of the sophists. Comedy might be their corrector; but Comedy seems to think she has two offices to perform; from one side of the stage to explode absurdity, and from the other to introduce indecency. She might, under wise regulations (and these she should impose upon herself,) render more service to a state than Philosophy could in whatsoever other character. And I wonder that Aristophanes, so strong in the poetical faculty, and unrivalled in critical acuteness, should not perceive that a dominion is within his reach

which is within the reach of no mortal beside; a dominion whereby he may reform the manners, dictate the pursuits, and regulate the affections of his countrymen. Perhaps he never could have done it so effectually, had he been better and begun otherwise; but having, however unworthy might have been the means and methods, seized upon their humours, they now are as pliable to him as waxen images to Thessalian witches. He keeps them before the fire he has kindled, and he has only to sing the right song.

Beware, my dear Aspasia, never to offend him. He holds more terrors at his command than Eschylus. The tragic poet rolls the thunder that frightens, the comic wields the lightning that kills. Aristophanes has the power of tossing you among the populace of a thousand cities for a thousand years.

A great poet is more powerful than Sesostris, and a wicked one more formidable than Phalaris.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Epimedea has been with me in my chamber. She asked me whether the women of Ionia had left off wearing ear-rings. I answered that I believed they always had worn them, and that they were introduced by the Persians, who had received them from nations more remote.

"And do you think yourself too young," said she, "for such an ornament?" producing at the same instant a massy pair, inlaid with the largest emeralds. "Alas! alas!" said she, "your mother neglected you strangely. There is no hole in the ear, right or left! We can mend that, however; I know a woman who will bring us the prettiest little pan of charcoal, with the prettiest little steel rod in it; and, before you can cry out, one ear lets light through. These are yours," said she, "and so shall every thing be — house, garden, quails, leveret."

"Generous Epimedea!" said I, "do not say things that pain me. I will accept a part of the present; I will wear these beautiful emeralds on

one arm. Thinking of nailing them in my ears, you resolved to make me steady, but I am unwilling they should become dependencies of Attica."

"All our young women wear them; the Goddesses too."

"The Goddesses are in the right," said I; "their ears are marble, but I do not believe any one of them would tell us that women were made to be the settings of pearls and emeralds."

I had taken one, and was about to kiss her, when she said, "Do not leave me an odd earring: put the other in the hair."

"Epimedea," said I, "I have made a vow never to wear on the head any thing but one single flower, one single wheat-ear, green or yellow, and ivy or vine-leaves: the number of these are not mentioned in the vow."

"Rash child!" said Epimedea, shaking her head; "I never made but two vows; one was when I took a husband."

"And the other? Epimedea!"

"No matter," said she; "it might be, for what I know, never to do the like again."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Pericles has visited me. After many grave and gentle inquiries, often suspended, all relating to my health; and after praises of Miletus and pity for my friends left behind, he told me that, when he was quite assured of my perfect recovery from the fatigues of the voyage, he hoped I would allow him to collect from me, at my leisure-hours, the information he wanted on the literature of Ionia. Simple-hearted man! in praising the authors of our country, he showed me that he knew them perfectly, from first to last. And now indeed his energy was displayed: I thought he had none at all. With how sonorous and modulated a voice did he repeat the more poetical passages of our elder historians! and how his whole soul did lean upon Herodotus! Happily for me, he observed not my enthusiasm. And now he brought me into the presence of Homer. "We claim him," said he; "but he is yours." Observe with what partiality he always dwells on Asia! How infinitely more civilized are Glaucus

and Sarpedon than any of the Grecians he was called upon to celebrate! Priam, Paris, Hector, what polished men! Civilisation has never made a step in advance, and never will, on those countries: she had gone so far in the days of Homer. He keeps Helen pretty rigorously out of sight, but he opens his heart to the virtues of Andromache. "What a barbarian is the son of a goddess! Minerva must seize him by the hair to avert the murder of his leader; but at the eloquence of the Phrygian king the storm of the intractable homicide bursts in tears."

"And Eschylus," said I, but could not continue; blushes rose into my cheek, and pained me at the recollection of my weakness.

"He has left us," said Pericles, who perceived it, but pretended not — "I am grieved that my prayers were inadequate to detain him. But what prayers or what expostulations can influence the lofty mind, labouring and heaving under injustice and indignity? Eschylus knew he merited, both by his genius and his services, the gratitude and admiration of the Athenians. He saw others preferred before him, and hoisted sail. At the

rumour of his departure, such was the consternation, as if the shield of Minerva in the Parthenon had dropt from her breast upon the pavement. That glory shines now upon the crown of Hiero which hath sunk for Athens."

"You have still great treasures left," said I; for he was moved.

"True," replied he, "but will not every one remark, who hears the observation, that we know not how to keep them, and have never weighed them?"

I sate silent; he resumed his serenity.

"We ought to change places," said he, "at the feet of the poets. Eschylus, I see, is yours; Homer is mine. Aspasia should be a Pallas to Achilles; and Pericles a subordinate power, comforting and consoling the afflicted demi-god. Impetuosity, impatience, resentment, revenge itself, are pardonable sins in the very softest of your sex: on brave endurance rises *our* admiration."

"I love those better who endure with constancy," said I.

"Happy!" replied he, "thrice happy! O

Aspasia, the constancy thus tried and thus rewarded!"

He spoke with tenderness; he rose with majesty; bowed to Epimedea; touched gently, scarcely at all, the hand I presented to him, bent over it, and departed.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I told you I would love, O Cleone! but I am so near it that I dare.

Tell me what I am to do; I can do any thing but write and think.

Pericles has not returned.

I am nothing here in Athens.

Five days are over; six almost.

O what long days are these of Elaphebolion!

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Take heed, Aspasia! All orators are deceivers; and Pericles is the greatest of orators.

I will write nothing more, lest you should attend in preference to any other part of my letter.

Yes; I must repeat my admonition: I must speak out plainly; I must try other words — stronger — more frightful. Love of supremacy, miscalled political glory, finds most, and leaves all, dishonest.

The Gods and Goddesses watch over and preserve you, and send you safe home again!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Fear not for me, Cleone! Pericles has attained the summit of glory; and the wisdom and virtue that acquired it for him are my sureties.

A great man knows the value of greatness; he dares not hazard it; he will not squander it. Imagine you that the confidence and affection of a people, so acute, so vigilant, so jealous, as the Athenians, would have rested so firmly and constantly on one inconstant and infirm?

If he loves me the merit is not mine; the fault will be if he ceases.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I must and will fear for you, and the more because I perceive that you are attracted as the bees are, by an empty sound, the fame of your admirer. You love Pericles for that very quality which ought to have set you on your guard against him. In contentions for power, the philosophy and the poetry of life are dropped and trodden down. Domestic affections can no more bloom and flourish in the hardened race-course of politics, than flowers can find nourishment in

the pavement of the streets. In the politician the whole creature is factitious; if ever he speaks as before, he speaks either from memory or invention.

But such is your beauty, such your genius, it may alter the nature of things. Endowed with the power of Circe, you will exert it oppositely, and restore to the most selfish and most voracious of animals the uprightness and dignity of man.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

It is not wisdom in itself, O Aspasia! it is the manner of imparting it that affects the soul, and alone deserves the name of eloquence. I have never been moved by any but yours.

Is it the beauty that shines over it, is it the voice that ripens it, giving it those lovely colours, that delicious freshness; is it the modesty and diffidence with which you present it to us, looking for nothing but support? Sufficient were any one of them singly; but all united have come forward

to subdue me, and have deprived me of my courage, my self-possession, and my repose.

I dare not hope to be beloved, Aspasia! I did hope it once in my life, and have been disappointed. Where I sought for happiness, none is offered me: I have neither the sunshine nor the shade.

If, then, I was so unfortunate in earlier days, ought I, ten years later, to believe that she, to whom the earth, with whatever is beautiful and graceful in it, bows prostrate, will listen to me as her lover? I dare not; too much have I dared already. But if, O Aspasia! I should sometimes seem heavy and dull in conversation, when happier men surround you, pardon my infirmity.

I have only one wish — I may not utter it: I have only one fear — this at least is not irrational, and I will own it; — the fear that Aspasia could never be sufficiently happy with me.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

Do you doubt, O Pericles, that I shall be sufficiently happy with you? This doubt of yours assures me that I shall be.

I throw aside my pen to crown the Gods; and I worship thee first, O Pallas! who protectest the life, enlightenest the mind, establishest the power, and exaltest the glory of Pericles.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I tremble both for you and your lover. The people of Athens may applaud at first the homage paid to beauty and genius; nevertheless there are many whose joy will spring from malignity, and who will exult at what they think (I know not whether quite unjustly) a weakness in Pericles.

I shall always be restless about you. Let me confess to you, I do not like your sheer democracies.

What are they good for? Why, yes, they have indeed their use; the filth and ferment of the compost are necessary for raising rare plants.

O how I wish we were again together in that island on our river, which we called the *Fortunate!* It was almost an island when your father cut across the isthmus of about ten paces, to preserve the swan-nest.

Xeniades has left Miletus. We know not whither he is gone, but we presume to his mines in Lemnos. It was always with difficulty he could be persuaded to look after his affairs. He is too rich, too young, too thoughtless. But since you left Miletus, we have nothing here to detain him.

I wish I could trifle with you about your Pericles. Any wager upon it, he is the only lover who never wrote verses upon you.

In a politician a verse is an ostracism.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

My Pericles (mine, mine he is) *has* written verses upon me; not many, nor worth his prose, even the shortest sentence of it. But you will read them with pleasure for their praises of Miletus.

No longer ago than yesterday an ugly young philosopher declared his passion for me, as you shall see. I did not write any thing back to Pericles — I did to the other. I will not run the risk of having half my letter left unread by you, in your hurry to come into the poetry.

Here it all is.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Flower of Ionia's fertile plains,
Where Pleasure leagued with Virtue reigns,
Where the Pierian Maids of old,
Yea, long ere Ilion's tale was told,
Too pure, too sacred for our sight,
Descended with the silent night

To young Arctinus, and Mæander
Delay'd his course for Melesander!
If there be city on the earth
Proud in the children of her birth,
Wealth, science, beauty, story, song,
These to Miletus all belong.
To fix the diadem on his brow
For ever, one was wanting — thou.

I could not be cruel to such a suitor, even if he asked me for pity. Love makes one half of every man foolish, and the other half cunning. Pericles touched me on the side of Miletus, and Socrates came up to me straitforward from Prometheus.

SOCRATES TO ASPASIA

1.

He who stole fire from heaven,
Long heav'd his bold and patient breast, 'twas riven
By the Caucasian bird and bolts of Jove.
Stolen that fire have I,
And am enchain'd to die
By every jealous Power that frowns above.

2.

I call not upon thee again
To hear my vows and calm my pain,
Who sittest high enthron'd
Where Venus rolls her gladsome star,
Propitious Love! But thou disown'd
By sire and mother, whosoe'er they are,
Unblest in form and name, Despair!
Why dost thou follow that bright demon? why
His purest altar art thou always nigh?

I was sorry that Socrates should suffer so much for me.

Pardon the fib, Cleone! — let it pass — I was sorry just as we all are upon such occasions, and wrote him this consolation.

1.

O thou who sittest with the wise,
And searchest higher lore,
And openest regions to their eyes
Unvisited before!
I'd run to loose thee if I cou'd,
Nor let the vulture taste thy blood.
But, pity! pity! Attic bee!
'Tis happiness forbidden me.

2.

Despair is not for good or wise,
And should not be for love;
We all must bear our destinies
And bend to those above.
Birds flying o'er the stormy seas
Alight upon their proper trees,
Yet wisest men not always know
Where they should stop, or whither go.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I am quite ashamed of Alcibiades—quite angry with him. What do you imagine he has been doing? He listened to my conversation with Pericles, on the declaration of love from the *Philosopher Bound*, and afterwards to the verses I repeated in answer to his, which pleased my Pericles extremely, not perhaps for themselves, but because I had followed his advice in writing them, and had returned to him with the copy so speedily.

Alcibiades said he did not like them at all, and could write better himself. We smiled at this; and his cousin said, "Do then, my boy!"

Would you believe it? he not only wrote, but I fear (for he declares he did) actually sent these:

O Satyr-son of Sophroniscus!
Would Alcon cut me an hibiscus,
I'd wield it as the goatherds do,
And swing thee a sound stroke or two,
Bewilder, if thou canst, us boys,
Us, or the sophists, with thy toys,
Thy *kalokagathons* — beware!
Keep to the good, and leave the fair.

Could he really be the composer? what think you? or did he get any of his wicked friends to help him? The verses are very bold, very scandalous, very shocking. I am vexed and sorry; but what can be done? We must seem to know nothing about the matter.

The audacious little creature — not very little, he is within three fingers of my height — is half in love with me. He flames up at the mention of Socrates — can he be jealous?

Pericles tells me that the philosophers here are as susceptible of malice as of love. It may be so, for the plants which are sweet in some places are acrid in others.

He said to me, smiling, "I shall be represented in their schools as a sophist, because Aspasia and Alcibiades were unruly. O that boy! who knows but his mischievous verses will be a reason sufficient, in another year, why I am unable to command an army or harangue an assembly of the people?"

XENIADES TO ASPASIA.

Aspasia! Aspasia! have you forgotten me? have you forgotten *us?* Our childhood was one, our earliest youth was undivided. Why would you not see me? Did you fear that you should have to reproach me for any fault I have committed? This would have pained you formerly; ah, how lately!

Your absence—not absence, flight—has broken my health, and left me fever and frenzy. Eumedes is certain I can only recover my health by composure. Foolish man! as if composure were more easy to recover than health. Was there ever such a madman as to say, "You will never have the use of your limbs again unless you walk and run!"

I am weary of advice, of remonstrance, of pity of every thing; — above all, of life.

Was it anger (how dared I be angry with you?) that withheld me from imploring the sight of you? Was it pride? Alas! what pride is left me? I am preferred no longer; I am rejected, scorned, loathed. Was it always so? Well may I ask the question; for every thing seems uncertain to me but my misery. At times I know not whether I am mad or dreaming. No, no, Aspasia! the past was a dream, the present is a reality. The mad and the dreaming do not shed tears as I do. And yet in these bitter tears are my happiest moments; and some angry demon knows it, and presses my temples that there shall fall but few.

You refused to admit me. I asked too little, and deserved the refusal. Come to me. This you will not refuse, unless you are bowed to slavery. Go, tell your despot this, with my curses and defiance.

I am calmer, but insist. Spare yourself Aspasia, one tear, and not by an effort, but by a duty.

ASPASIA TO XENIADES.

I am pained to my innermost heart that you are ill.

Pericles is not the person you imagine him. Behold his billet! And cannot you think of me with equal generosity?

True, we saw much of each other in our childhood, and many childish things we did together. This is the reason why I went out of your way as much as I could afterwards. There is another too. I hoped you would love more the friend that

I love most. How much happier would she make you than the flighty Aspasia! We resemble each other too much, Xeniades! we should never have been happy, so ill-mated. Nature hates these alliances: they are like those of brother and sister. I never loved any one but Pericles. None else attracts the admiration of the world. I stand, O Xeniades! not only above slavery, but above splendour, in that serene light which Homer describes as encompassing the Happy on Olympus. I will come to visit you within the hour; be calm, be contented! love me, but not too much, Xeniades!

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

Xeniades, whom I loved a little in my childhood, and (do not look serious now, my dearest Pericles!) a very little afterwards, is sadly ill. He was always, I know not how, extravagant in his wishes, although not so extravagant as many

others; and what do you imagine he wishes now? He wishes — but he is very ill, so ill he cannot rise from his bed, — that I would go and visit him. I wonder whether it would be quite considerate: I am half inclined to go, if you approve of it.

Poor youth! He grieves me bitterly.

I shall not weep before him; I have wept so much here. Indeed, indeed, I wept, my Pericles, only because I had written too unkindly.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Do what your heart tells you: yes, Aspasia, do *all* it tells you. Remember how august it is. It contains the temple, not only of Love, but of Conscience; and a whisper is heard from the extremity of the one to the extremity of the other.

Bend in pensiveness, even in sorrow, on the flowery bank of youth, whereunder runs the stream that passes irreversibly! let the garland

drop into it, let the hand be refreshed by it — but — may the beautiful feet of Aspasia stand firm.

XENIADES TO ASPASIA.

You promised you would return. I thought you only broke hearts, not promises.

It is now broad daylight: I see it clearly, although the blinds are closed, A long sharp ray cuts off one corner of the room, and we shall hear the crash presently.

Come; but without that pale silent girl: I hate her. Place her on the other side of you not on mine.

And this plane-tree gives no shade whatever. We will sit in some other place.

No, no; I will not have you call her to us. Let her play where she is — the notes are low — she plays sweetly.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

See what incoherency! He did not write it, not one word. The slave who brought it, told me that he was desired by the guest to write his orders, whenever he found his mind composed enough to give any.

About four hours after my departure, he called him, mildly, and said, "I am quite recovered."

He gave no orders, however, and spake nothing more for some time. At last he raised himself up, and rested on his elbow, and began (said the slave) like one inspired. The slave added, that finding he was indeed quite well again, both in body and mind, and capable of making as fine poetry as any man in Athens, he had written down every word with the greatest punctuality; and that, looking at him for more, he found he had fallen into as sound a slumber as a reaper's.

"Upon this I ran off with the verses," said he.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Tears, O Aspasia, do not dwell long upon the cheeks of youth. Rain drops easily from the bud, rests on the bosom of the maturer flower, and breaks down that one only which hath lived its day.

Weep, and perform the offices of friendship. The season of life, leading you by the hand, will not permit you to linger at the tomb of the departed; and Xeniades, when your first tear fell upon it, entered into the number of the blessed.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

What shall I say to you, tender and sweet Cleone! The wanderer is in the haven of happiness — the restless has found rest.

Weep not; I have shed all your tears — not all — they burst from me again.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

O! he was too beautiful to live! Is there any thing that shoots through the world so swiftly as a sunbeam! Epialtes has told me every thing. He sailed back without waiting at the islands; by your orders, he says.

What hopes could I, with any prudence entertain? The chaplet you threw away would have cooled and adorned my temples; but how could he ever love another who had once loved you? I am casting my broken thoughts before my Aspasia: the little shells upon the shore, that the storm has scattered there, and that feet have trampled on.

I have prayed to Venus; but I never prayed her to turn toward me the fondness that was yours. I fancied, I even hoped, you might accept it; and my prayer was — "Grant I may never love!" Afar from me, O Goddess! be the malignant warmth that dries up the dews of friendship.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Pericles has insisted on it that I should change the air, and has recommended to me an excursion to the borders of the state.

"If you pass them a little way," said he, "you will come to Tanagra, and that will inflame you with ambition."

The honour in which I hold the name of Corinna induced me to undertake a journey to her native place. Never have I found a people so hospitable as the inhabitants. Living at a distance from the sea, they are not traders, nor adventurers, nor speculators, nor usurers, but cultivate a range of pleasant hills, covered with vines. Mercury is the principal God they worship; yet I doubt whether a single prayer was ever offered up to him by a Tanagrian for success in thievery.

The beauty of Corinna is no less celebrated than her poetry. I remarked, that the women speak of it with great exultation, while the men

applaud her genius; and I asked my venerable host, Agesilaus, how he could account for it?

"I can account for nothing that you ladies do," said he, "although I have lived amongst you seventy-five years: I only know that it was exactly the contrary while she was living. We youths were rebuked when we talked about her beauty; and the rebuke was only softened by the candid confession, that she was *clever—in her way.*"

"Come back with me to Athens, O Agesilaus!" said I, "and we will send Aristophanes to Tanagra."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I have been reading all the poetry of Corinna that I could collect. Certainly it is better than Hesiod's, or even than Myrtis's, who taught her and Pindar, — not the rudiments of the art, for

this is the only art in which the rudiments are incommunicable, — but what was good, what was bad, in her verses, why it was so, and how she might correct the worse and improve the better.

Hesiod, who is also a Bœotian, is admirable for the purity of his life and soundness of his precepts, but there is hardly a trace of poetry in his ploughed field.

I find in all his writings but one verse worth transcribing, and that only for the melody.

"In a soft meadow and on vernal flowers."

I do not wonder he was opposed to Homer. What an advantage to the enemies of greatness (that is, to mankind) to be able to match one so low againts one so lofty!

The Greek army before Troy would have been curious to listen to a dispute between Agamemnon and Achilles, but would have been transported with ecstasy to have been present at one between the king of men and Thersites.

There are few who possess all the poetry of any voluminous author. I doubt whether there are ten families in Athens in which all the plays of Eschylus are preserved. Many keep what pleases them most: few consider that every page of a really great poet has something in it which distinguishes him from an inferior order: something which, if insubstantial as the aliment, serves at least as a solvent to the aliment, of strong and active minds.

I asked my Pericles what he thought of Hesiod.

"I think myself more sagacious," said he. "Hesiod found out that half was more than all; I have found out that one is."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

A slave brought to me, this morning, an enormous load of papers, as many as he could carry under both arms. They are treatises by the most

celebrated philosophers. Some hours afterwards, when the sun was declining, Pericles came in, and asked me if I had examined or looked over any portion of them. I told him I had opened those only which bore the superscription of famous names, but that, unless he would assist me, I was hopeless of reconciling one part with another in the same writers.

"The first thing requisite," said I, "is, that as many as are now at Athens should meet together, and agree upon a nomenclature of terms. From definitions we may go on to propositions; but we cannot make a step unless the foot rests somewhere."

He smiled at me. "Ah, my Aspasia!" said he, "Philosophy does not bring her sons together; she portions them off early, gives them a scanty stock of worm-eaten furniture, a chair or two on which it is dangerous to sit down, and at least as many arms as utensils; then leaves them: they seldom meet afterwards."

"But could not they be brought together by some friend of the mother?" said I, laughing.

"Aspasia!" answered he, "you have lived but

few years in the world, and with only one philosopher — Yourself."

"I will not be contented with a compliment," said I, "and least of all from you. Explain to me the opinions of those about you."

He traced before me the divergencies of every sect — from our countryman Thales to those now living. Epimedea sat with her eyes wide open, listening attentively. When he went away, I asked her what she thought of his discourse. She half closed her eyes, not from weariness, but (as many do) on bringing out of obscurity into light a notable discovery; and, laying her forefinger on my arm, "You have turned his head," said she. "He will do no longer; he used to be plain and coherent; and now — did ever mortal talk so widely? I could not understand one word in twenty, and what I could understand was sheer nonsense."

"Sweet Epimedea!" said I, "this is what I should fancy to be no such easy matter."

"Ah! you are growing like him already," said she; "I should not be surprised to find, some morning, a cupola at the top of this pretty head."

Pericles, I think I never told you, has a little elevation on the crown of his; I should rather say his head has a crown, others have none.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Do, my dear Aspasia, continue to write to me about the poets; and if you think there is any thing of Myrtis or Corinna, which is wanting to us at Miletus, copy it out. I do not approve of the Trilogues. Nothing can be more tiresome — hardly any thing more wicked — than many of them. It may be well, occasionally, to give something of the historical form to the dramatic, as it is, occasionally, to give something of the dramatic to the historical; but never to turn into ridicule and buffoonery the virtuous, the unfortunate, or the brave. Whatever the Athenians may boast of their exquisite judgment, their delicate perceptions, this is a perversion of intellect in its highest place, unworthy of a Thracian. There are many

bad tragedies both of Eschylus and Sophocles, but none without beauties — few without excellencies. I tremble then at your doubt. In another century it may be impossible to find a collection of the whole, unless some learned and rich man, like Pericles, or some protecting king, like Hiero, should preserve them in his library.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Prudently have you considered how to preserve all valuable authors. The cedar doors of a royal library fly open to receive them: ay, there they will be safe — and untouched.

Hiero is, however, no barbarian. He deserves a higher station than a throne; and he is raised to it. The protected have placed the protector where neither the malice of men nor the power of Gods can reach him — beyond Time — above Fate.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

From the shortness of your last, I am quite certain that you are busy for me in looking out pieces of verse. If you cannot find any of Myrtis or Corinna, you may do what is better; you may compose a panegeric on all of our sex who have excelled in poetry. This will earn for you the same good office, when the world shall produce another Aspasia.

Having been in Bœotia, you must also know a great more of Pindar than we do. Write about any of them; they all interest me; and my mind has need of exercise. It is still too fond of throwing itself down on one place.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

And so, Cleone, you wish me to write a eulogy on Myrtis and Corinna, and all the other poetesses

that ever lived; and this is for the honour of our sex! Ah, Cleone! no studied eulogy does honour to any one. It is always considered, and always ought to be, as a piece of pleading, in which the pleader says every thing the most in favour of his client, in the most graceful and impressive manner he can. There is a city of Greece, I hear, in which reciprocal flattery is so necessary, that, whenever a member of the assembly dies, his successor is bound to praise him before he takes the vacant seat.

I do not speak this from my own knowledge; indeed I could hardly believe in such frivolity, until I asked Pericles if it were true; or rather, if there were any foundation at all for the report.

"Perfectly true," said he; "but the citizens of this city are now become our allies; therefore do not curl your lip, or I must uncurl it, being an archon."

Myrtis and Corinna have no need of me. To read and recommend their works, to point out their beauties and defects, is praise enough.

"How!" methinks you exclaim. "To point out defects! is that praising?"

Yes, Cleone; if with equal good faith and accuracy you point out their beauties too. It is only thus a fair estimate can be made; and it is only by such fair estimate that a writer can be exalted to his proper station. If you toss up the scale too high, it descends again rapidly below its equipoise; what it contains drops out, and people catch at it, scatter it, and lose it.

We not only are inclined to indulge in rather more than a temperate heat (of what we would persuade ourselves is very wholesome severity) towards the living, but even to peer sometimes into the tomb, with a wolfish appetite for an unpleasant odour.

We must patronise, we must pull down; in fact, we must be in mischief, men or women.

If we are capable of showing what is good in another, and neglect to do it, we omit a duty; we omit to give rational pleasure, and to conciliate right good-will; nay more, we are abettors, if not aiders, in the vilest fraud, the fraud of purloining from respect. We are entrusted with letters of great interest; what a baseness not to deliver them!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

It is remarkable that Athens, so fertile in men of genius, should have produced no women of distinction; while Bœotia, by no means celebrated for brightness of intellect in either sex, presented to the admiration of the world her Myrtis and Corinna. At the feet of Myrtis it was, that Pindar gathered into his throbbing breast the scattered seeds of poetry; and it was under the smile of the beautiful Corinna that he drew his inspiration and wove his immortal crown.

He never quite overcame his grandiloquence. The animals we call *half-asses*, by a word of the sweetest sound, although not the most seducing import, he calls

"The daughters of the tempest-footed steeds!"

O Fortune! that the children of so illustrious a line should carry sucking-pigs into the market-place, and cabbage-stalks out of it!

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Will you always leave off, Aspasia, at the very moment you have raised our expectations to the highest? A witticism, and a suuden spring from your seat, lest we should see you smile at it — these are your ways; shame upon you! Are you determined to continue all your life in making every one wish something?

Pindar should not be treated like ordinary men.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I have not treated Pindar like an ordinary man; I conducted him into the library of Cleone, and left him there. However, I would have my smile out, behind the door. The verse I quoted, you may be sure, is much admired by the learned, and no less by the brave and worthy men whom he celebrates for charioteership, and other such

dexterities; but we, of old Miletus, have been always taught that words should be subordinate to ideas, and we never place the pedestal on the head of the statue.

Now, do not tell any body that I have spoken a single word in dispraise of Pindar. Men are not too apt to admire what is admirable in their superiors, but, on the contrary, are very apt to detract from them, and to seize on any thing which may tend to lower them. Pindar would not have written so exquisitely if no fault had ever been found with him. He would have wandered on among such inquiries as those he began in: —

"*Shall I sing the wide-spreading and noble Ismenus? or the beautiful and white-ankled Melie? or the glorious Cadmus? or the mighty Hercules? or the blooming Bacchus?*"

Now, a poet ought to know what he is about before he opens his lips. He ought not to ask, like a poor fellow in the street, "*Good people! what song will you have?*" This, however, was not the fault for which he was blamed by Corinna. In our censures, we are less apt to consider the

benefit we may confer than the ingenuity we can display.

She said, "*Pindar! you have brought a sack of corn to sow a perch of land; and, instead of sprinkling it about, you have emptied the sack at the first step.*"

Enough: this reproof formed his character: it directed his beat, it singled his aim, it concentrated his forces. It was not by the precepts of Corinna, it was not by her example, it was by one witticism of a wise and lovely woman, that he far excels all other poets in disdain of triviality and choice of topics. He is sometimes very tedious to us in his long stories of families, but we may be sure he was not equally so to those who were concerned in the genealogy. We are amused at his cleverness in saving the shoulder of Pelops from the devouring jaw of a hungry God. No doubt he mends the matter; nevertheless he tires us.

Many prefer his Dithyrambicks to his Olympian, Isthmian, Pythian, and Nemean Odes: I do not; nor is it likely that he did himself. We may well suppose that he exerted the most power on the composition, and the most thought on the

correction, of the poems he was to recite before kings and nations, in honour of the victors at those solemn games. Here the chorusses and bands of music were composed of the first singers and players in the world; in the others there were no performers but such as happened to assemble on ordinary festivals, or at best at a festival of Bacchus. In the Odes performed at the games, although there is not always perfect regularity of corresponding verse, there is always enough of it to satisfy the most fastidious ear. In the Dithyrambicks there is no order whatsoever, but verses and half-verses of every kind, cemented by vigorous and sounding prose.

I do not love dances upon stilts; they may excite the applauses and acclamations of the vulgar, but we, Cleone, exact the observance of established rules, and never put on slippers, however richly embroidered, unless they pair.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

We hear that between Athens and Syracuse there has always been much communication. Let me learn what you have been able to collect about the lives of Pindar and Eschylus in Sicily.

Is it not strange that the two most high-minded of poets should have gone to reside in a foreign land, under the dominion of a king?

I am ashamed of my question already. Such men are under no dominion. It is not in their nature to offend against the laws, or to think about what they are, or who administers them; and they may receive a part of their sustenance from kings, as well as from cows and bees. We will reproach them for emigration, when we reproach a man for lying down in his neighbour's field, because the grass is softer in it than in his own.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Not an atom have I been able to collect in regard to the two poets, since they went to the court of Hiero; but I can give you as correct and as full information as if I had been seated between them all the while.

Hiero was proud of his acquisition; the courtiers despised them, vexed them whenever they could, and entreated them to command their services and rely upon their devotion. What more? They esteemed each other; but poets are very soon too old for mutual love.

He who can add one syllable to this, shall have the hand of Cleone.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Torturing girl! and you, Aspasia, may justly say, *ungrateful girl!* to me. You did not give

me what I asked for, but you gave me what is better, a glimpse of you. This is the manner in which you used to trifle with me, making the heaviest things light, the thorniest tractable, and throwing your own beautiful brightness wherever it was most wanted.

But do not slip from me again. Eschylus, we know, is dead; we hear that Pindar is. Did they die abroad?

Ah poor Xeniades! how miserable to be buried by the stranger!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Eschylus, at the close of his seventieth year, died in Sicily. I know not whether Hiero received him with all the distinction he merited, or rewarded him with the same generosity as Pindar; nor indeed have I been able to learn, what would very much gratify me, that Pindar, who survived him four years, and died lately, paid those honours

to the greatest man of the most glorious age since earth rose out of chaos, which he usually paid with lavish hand to the prosperous and powerful. I hope he did; but the words *wealth* and *gold* occur too often in the poetry of Pindar.

Perhaps I may wrong him, for a hope is akin to a doubt: it may be that I am mistaken, since we have not all his poems even here in Athens. Several of these too, particularly the Dithyrambicks, are in danger of perishing. The odes on the victors at the games will be preserved by the vanity of the families they celebrate; and, being thus safe enough for many years, their own merit will sustain them afterwards. It is owing to a stout nurse that many have lived to an extreme old age.

Some of the odes themselves are of little value in regard to poetry, but he exercises in all of them as much dexterity as the worthies he applauds had displayed in their exploits.

To compensate the disappointment you complained of, I will now transcribe for you an ode of Corinna to her native town, being quite sure it is not in your collection. Let me first inform you

that the exterior of the best houses in Tanagra is painted with historical scenes, adventures of Gods, allegories, and other things; and under the walls of the city flows the rivulet Thermodon. This it is requisite to tell you of so small and so distant a place.

CORINNA TO TANAGRA.

From Athens.

1.

Tanagra! think not I forget
Thy beautifully-storied streets;
Be sure my memory bathes yet
In clear Thermodon, and yet greets
The blythe and liberal shepherd-boy,
Whose sunny bosom swells with joy
When we accept his matted rushes
Upheav'd with sylvan fruit; away he bounds, and blushes.

2.

I promise to bring back with me
What thou with transport will receive,
The only proper gift for thee,
Of which no mortal shall bereave

In later times thy mouldering walls,
Until the last old turret falls;
A crown, a crown from Athens won,
A crown no God can wear, beside Latona's son.

3.

There may be cities who refuse
To their own child the honours due,
And look ungently on the Muse;
But ever shall those cities rue
The dry, unyielding, niggard breast,
Offering no nourishment, no rest,
To that young head which soon shall rise
Disdainfully, in might and glory, to the skies.

4.

Sweetly where cavern'd Dirce flows
Do white-arm'd maidens chaunt my lay,
Flapping the while with laurel-rose
The honey gathering tribes away;
And sweetly, sweetly, Attick tongues
Lisp your Corinna's early songs;
To her with feet more graceful come
The verses that have dwelt in kindred breasts at home.

5.

O let thy children lean aslant
Against th tender mother's knee,

And gaze into her face, and want
To know what magic there can be
In words that urge some eyes to dance,
While others as in holy trance
Look up to heaven; be such my praise!
Why linger? I must haste, or lose the Delphick bays.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Epimedea, it appears, has not corrupted very grossly your purity and simplicity in dress. Yet, remembering your observation on armlets, I cannot but commend your kindness and sufferance in wearing her emeralds. Your opinion was formerly, that we should be careful not to subdivide our persons. The arm is composed of three parts; no one of them is too long. Now the armlet intersects that very portion of it which must be considered as the most beautiful. In my idea of the matter, the sandal alone is susceptible of gems, after the zone has received the richest. The zone is necessary to our vesture, and encom-

passes the person, in every quarter of the humanized world, in one invariable manner. The hair too is divided by nature in the middle of the head. There is a cousinship between the hair and the flowers; and from this relation the poets have called by the same name the leaves and it. They appear on the head as if they had been seeking one another. Our national dress, very different from the dresses of barbarous nations, is not the invention of the ignorant or the slave; but the sculptor, the painter, and the poet, have studied how best to adorn the most beautiful object of their fancies and contemplations. The Indians, who believe that human pains and sufferings are pleasing to the deity, make incisions in their bodies, and insert into them imperishable colours. They also adorn the ears and noses and foreheads of their Gods. These were the ancestors of the Egyptian; we chose handsomer and better-tempered ones for our worship, but retained the same decorations in our sculpture, and to a degree which the sobriety of the Egyptian had merely reduced and chastened. Hence we retain the only mark of barbarism which dishonours our

national dress, the use of ear-rings. If our statues should all be broken by some convulsion of the earth, would it be believed by future ages that, in in the country and age of Sophocles, the women tore holes in their ears to let rings into, as the more brutal of peasants do with the snouts of sows!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Cleone, I do not know whether I ought to write out for you any thing of Mimnermus. What is amatory poetry without its tenderness? and what was ever less tender than his? Take however the verses, such as they are. Whether they make you smile or look grave, without any grace of their own they must bring one forward. Certainly they are his best, which cannot be said of every author out of whose rarer works I have added something to your collection.

I wish not Thasos rich in mines,
Nor Naxos girt around with vines,

Nor Crete nor Samos, the abodes
Of those who govern men and Gods,
Nor wider Lydia, where the sound
Of tymbrels shakes the thymy ground,
And with white feet and with hoofs cloven
The dedal dance is spun and woven:
Meanwhile each prying younger thing
Is sent for water to the spring,
Under where red Priapus rears
His club amid the junipers;
In this whole world enough for me
Is any spot the Gods decree;
Albeit the pious and the wise
Would tarry where, like mulberries,
In the first hour of ripeness, fall
The tender creatures, one and all.
To take what falls with even mind
Jove wills, and we must be resign'd.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

There is less effrontery in those verses of Mimnermus than in most he has written, He

is among the many poets who never make us laugh or weep; among the many whom we take into the hand like pretty insects, turn them over, look at them for a moment, and toss them into the grass again. The earth swarms with these; they live their season, and others similar come into life the next.

I have been reading works widely different from theirs; the Odes of the lovely Lesbian. I think she has injured the phaleucian verse, by transposing one foot, and throwing it backward. How greatly more noble and more sonorous are those hendecasyllabicks commencing the Scholion on Harmodius and Aristogiton, than the very best of her's, which, to my ear, labor and shuffle in their movement. Her genius was wonderful, was prodigious. I am neither blind to her beauties nor indifferent to her sufferings. We love for ever those whom we have wept for when we were children: we love them more than even those who have wept for us. Now, I have grieved for Sappho, and so have you, Aspasia! we shall not therefore be hard judges of her sentiments or her poetry.

Frequently have we listened to the most absurd

and extravagant praises of the answer she gave Alcæust, when he told her he wished to say something, but shame prevented him. This answer of her's is a proof that she was deficient both in delicacy and in tenderness. Could Sappho be ignorant how infantinely inarticulate is early love? Could she be ignorant that shame and fear seize it unrelentingly by the throat, while hard-hearted impudence stands at ease, prompt at opportunity and profuse in declarations?

There is a gloom in deep love, as in deep water: there is a silence in it which suspends the foot; and the folded arms and the dejected head are the images it reflects. No voice shakes its surface: the Muses themselves approach it with a tardy and a timid step, and with a low and tremulous and melancholy song.

The best Ode of Sappho, the Ode to Anactoria,

"Happy as any God is he," &c.

shows the intemperance and disorder of passion. The description of her malady may by quite correct, but I confess my pleasure ends at the first strophe, where it begins with the generality of

readers. I do not desire to know the effects of the distemper on her body, and I run out of the house into the open air, although the symptoms have less in them of contagion than of unseemliness. Both Sophocles and Euripides excite our sympathies more powerfully and more poetically.

I will not interfere any farther with your reflections; and indeed when I began, I intended to remark only the injustice of Sappho's reproof to Alcæus in the first instance, and the justice of it in the second, when he renewed his suit to her after he had fled from battle. We find it in the only epigram attributed to her.

> He who from battle runs away
> May pray and sing, and sing and pray;
> Nathless, Alcæus, howsoe'er
> Dulcet his song and warm his pray'r
> And true his vows of love may be,
> He ne'er shall run away with me.

In my opinion no lover should be dismissed with contumely, or without the expression of commiseration, unless he has committed some bad action. O Aspasia! it is hard to love, and not to

be loved again. I felt it early; I still feel it. There is a barb beyond the reach of dittany; but years, as they roll by us, benumb in some degree our sense of suffering. Season comes after season, and covers as it were with soil and herbage the flints that have cut us so cruelly in our course.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Alcæus, often admirable in his poetry, was a vain-glorious and altogether worthless man. I must defend Sappho. She probably knew his character at the beginning, and sported a witticism (not worth much) at his expense. He made a pomp and parade of his generosity and courage with which in truth he was but scantily supplied, and all his love lay commodiously at the point of his pen, among the rest his first.

He was unfit for public life, he was unfit for private. Perverse, insolent, selfish, he hated tyranny because he could not be a tyrant. Suf-

ficiently well-born, he was jealous and intolerant of those who were nothing less so, and he wished they were all poets that he might expose a weakness the more in them. For rarely has there been one, however virtuous, without some vanity and some invidiousness ; despiser of the humble, detractor of the high, iconoclast of the near, and idolater of the distant.

Return we to Alcæus. Factitious in tenderness, factitious in heroism, addicted to falsehood, and unabashed at his fondness for it, he attacked and overcame every rival in that quarter. He picked up all the arrows that were shot against him, recocted all the venom of every point, and was almost an Archilochus in satire.

I do not agree with you in your censure of Sappho. There is softness by the side of power, discrimination by the side of passion. In this, however, I do agree with you, that her finest ode is not to be compared to many chorusses in the tragedians. We know that Sappho felt acutely; yet Sappho is never pathetic. Euripides and Sophocles are not remarkable for the purity, the intensity, or the fidelity of their loves, yet they

touch, they transfix, the heart. Her imagination, her whole soul, is absorbed in her own breast: she is the prey of the passions; they are the lords and masters.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Do you remember the lively Hegemon, whose curls you pressed down with your forefinger to see them spring up again? Do you remember his biting it for the liberty you had taken; and his kissing it to make it well; and his telling you that he was not quite sure whether some other kisses, here and there, might not be requisite to prevent the spreading of the venom? And do you remember how you turned pale? and how you laughed with me, as we went away, at his thinking you turned pale because you were afraid of it? The boy of fifteen as he was then, hath lost all his liveliness, all his assurance, all his wit; and his radiant beauty has

taken another character. His cousin Praxinoe, whom he was not aware of loving until she was betrothed to Callias, a merchant of Samos, was married a few months ago. There are no verses I read oftener than the loose dithyrambics of poor Hegemon. Do people love any where else as we love here at Miletus? But perhaps the fondness of Hegemon may abate after a time; for Hegemon is not a woman. How long and how assiduous are we in spinning that thread, the softest and finest in the web of life, which Destiny snaps asunder in one moment!

HEGEMON TO PRAXINOE.

Is there any season, O my soul,
When the sources of bitter tears dry up,
And the uprooted flowers take there places again
Along the torrent-bed?

Could I wish to live, it would be for that season,
To repose my limbs and press my temples there.
But should I not speedily start away
In the hope to trace and follow thy steps!

Thou art gone, thou art gone, Praxinoe!
And hast taken far from me thy lovely youth,
Leaving me naught that was desirable in mine.
Alas! alas! what hast thou left me?

The helplessness of childhood, the solitude of age,
The laughter of the happy, the pity of the scorner,
A colourless and broken shadow am I,
Seen glancing in troubled waters.

My thoughts too are scattered; thou has cast them off;
They beat against thee, they would cling to thee,
But they are viler than the loose dark weeds,
Without a place to root or rest in.

I would throw them across my lyre; they drop from it;
My lyre will sound only two measures;
That Pity will never, never come,
Or come to the sleep that awakeneth not unto her.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Tell Hegemon that his verses have made a deeper impression than his bite, and that the Athe-

nians, men and women, are pleased with them. He has shown that he is a poet, by not attempting to show that he is overmuch of one. Forbear to inform him that *we* Athenians disapprove of irregularity in versification: we are little pleased to be rebounded from the end of a line to the beginning, as it often happens, and to be obliged to turn back and make inquiries in regard to what we have been about. There have latterly been many compositions in which it is often requisite to read twice over the verses which have already occupied more than a due portion of our time in reading once. The hop-skip-and-jump is by no means a pleasant or a graceful exercise, but it is quite intolerable when we invert it to a jump-skip-and-hop. I take some liberty in these strange novel compounds, but no greater than our friend Aristophanes has taken, and not only without reproof or censure, but with great commendation for it. However, I have done it for the first and last time, and before the only friend with whom they can be pardonable. Henceforward, I promise you, Cleone, I will always be Attick, or, what is gracefuller and better still, Ionian. You shall for

ever hear my voice in my letters, and you shall know it to be mine, and mine only, Already I have had imitators in the style of my conversations, but they have imitated others too, and this hath saved me. In mercy and pure beneficence to me, the Gods have marred the resemblance. Nobody can recognise me in my metempsychosis. Those who had hoped and heard better of me, will never ask themselves, "*Was Aspasia so wordy, so inelegant, affected, and perverse?*" Inconsiderate friends have hurt me worse than enemies could do: they have hinted that the orations of Pericles have been retouched by my pen. Cleone! the Gods themselves could not correct his language. Human ingenuity, with all the malice and impudence that usually accompany it, will never be able to remodel a single sentence, or to substitute a single word, in his speeches to the people. What wealth of wisdom has he not thrown away lest it encumber him in the Agora! how much more than ever was carried into it by the most popular of his opponents! Some of my expressions may have escaped from him in crowded places; some of his cling to me in retirement:

we cannot love without imitating; and we are as proud in the loss of our originality as of our freedom. I am sorry that poor Hegemon has not had an opportunity of experiencing all this. Persuade his friends never to pity him, truly or feignedly, for pity keeps the wound open: persuade them rather to flatter him on his poetry, for never was there poet to whom the love of praise was not the first and most constant of passions. His friends will be the gainers by it: he will divide among them all the affection he fancies he has reserved for Praxinoe. With most men, nothing seems to have happened so long ago as an affair of love. Let nobody hint this to him at present, It is among the many truths that ought to be held back; it is among the many that excite a violent opposition at one time, and obtain at another (not much later) a very ductile acquiescence; he will receive it hereafter (take my word for him) with only one slight remonstrance—*you are too hard upon us lovers*: then follows a shake of the head, not of abnegation, but of sanction, like Jupiter's.

Praxinoe, it seems, is married to a merchant, poor girl! I do not like these merchants. Let

them have wealth in the highest, but not beauty in the highest; cunning and calculation can hardly merit both. At last they may aspire, if any civilized country could tolerate it, to honours and distinctions. These too let them have, but at Tyre and Carthage.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

How many things in poetry, as in other matters, are likely to be lost because they are small! Cleobuline of Lindos wrote no long poem. Her lover was Cycnus of Colophon. There is not a single verse of her's in all that city; proof enough that he took no particular care of them. At Miletus she was quite unknown, not indeed by name, but in her works until the present month, when a copy of them was offered to me for sale. The first that caught my eyes was this;

Where is the swan of breast so white
It made my bubbling life run bright
On that one spot, and that alone,
On which he rested; and I stood
Gazing: now swells the turbid flood;
Summer and he for other climes are flown!

I will not ask you at present to say any thing in praise of Cleobuline, but do be grateful to Myrtis and Corinna?

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Grateful I am, and shall for ever be, to Myrtis and Corinna; but what odour of bud or incense can they wish to be lavished on the empty sepulchre, what praises of the thousand who praise in ignorance, or of the learned who praise from tradition, when they remember that they subdued and regulated the proud unruly Pindar, and agitated with all their passion the calm pure breast of Cleone!

Send me the whole volume of Cleobuline; transcribe nothing more. To compensate you as well as I can, and indeed I think the compensation is not altogether an unfair one, here are two little pieces from Myrtis, autographs, from the library of Pericles.

Artemia, while Arion sighs,
Raising her white and taper finger,
Pretends to loose, yet makes to linger,
The ivy that o'ershades her eyes.

"Wait, or you shall not have the kiss."
Says she; but he, on wing to pleasure,
"Are there not other hours for leisure?
For love is any hour like this?"

Artemia! faintly thou respondest,
As falsely deems that fiery youth;
A God there is who knows the truth,
A God who tells me which is fondest.

Here is another, in the same hand, a very clear and elegant one. Men may be negligent in their hand-writing, for men may be in a hurry about the business of life; but I never knew either a

sensible woman or an estimable one whose writing was disorderly.

Well, the verses are prettier than my reflection, and equally true.

I will not love!
. . . These sounds have often
Burst from a troubled breast;
Rarely from one no sighs could soften,
Rarely from one at rest.

Myrtis and Corinna, like Anacreon and Sappho who preceded them, were temperate in the luxuries of poetry. They had enough to do with one feeling; they were occupied enough with one reflection. They culled but few grapes from the bunch, and never dragged it across the teeth, stripping off ripe and unripe.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

The verses of Myrtis, which you sent me last, are somewhat less pleasing to me than those

others of hers which I send you in return. A few loose ideas on the subject (I know not whether worth writing) occur to me at this moment. Formerly we were contented with schools of philosophy; we now begin to talk about schools of poetry. Is not that absurd? There is only one school, the universe; one only school-mistress, Nature. Those who are reported to be of such or such a school, are of none; they have played the truant. Some are more careful, some more negligent, some bring many dishes, some fewer, some little seasoned, some highly. Ground however there is for the fanciful appellation. The young poets at Miletus are beginning to throw off their allegiance to the established and acknowledged laws of Athens, and are weary of following in the train of the graver who have been crowned. The various schools, as they call them, have assumed distinct titles; but the largest and most flourishing of all would be discontented, I am afraid, with the properest I could inscribe it with, the *queer*. We really have at present in our city more good poets than we ever had; and the *queer* might be among the best if they pleased. But

whenever an obvious and natural thought presents itself, they either reject it for coming without imagination, or they *phrygianize* it with such biting and hot curling-irons, that it rolls itself up impenetrably. They declare to us that pure and simple imagination is the absolute perfection of poetry; and if ever they admit a sentence or reflection, it must be one which requires a whole day to unravel and wind it smoothly on the distaff.

To me it appears that poetry ought neither to be all body nor all soul. Beautiful features, limbs compact, sweetness of voice, and easiness of transition, belong to the Deity who inspires and represents it. We may loiter by the stream and allay our thirst as it runs, but we should not be forbidden the larger draught from the deeper well.

FROM MYRTIS.

Friends, whom she lookt at blandly from her couch
And her white wrist above it, gem-bedewed,
Were arguing with Pentheusa: she had heard
Report of Creon's death, whom years before
She listened to, well-pleas'd; and sighs arose;
For sighs full often fondle with reproofs
And will be fondled by them.

When I came,
After the rest, to visit her, she said,

Myrtis! how kind! Who better knows than thou
The pangs of love? and my first love was he!

Tell me, if ever, Eros! are reveal'd
Thy secrets to the earth, have they been true
To any love who speak about the first?
What! shall these holier lights, like twinkling stars
In the few hours assign'd them, change their place,
And, when comes ampler splendour, disappear?
Idler I am, and pardon, not reply,
Implore from thee, thus questioned; well I know
Thou strikest, like Olympian Jove, but once.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Lysicles, a young Athenian, fond of travelling, has just returned to us from a voyage in Thrace. A love of observation, in other words curiosity, could have been his only motive, for he never was addicted to commerce, nor disciplined in

philosophy; and indeed were he so, Thrace is hardly the country he would have chosen. I believe he is the first that ever travelled with no other intention than to see the cities and know the manners of barbarians. He represents the soil as extremely fertile in its nature, and equally well cultivated, and the inhabitants as warlike, hospitable, and courteous. All this is credible enough, and perhaps as generally known as might be expected of regions so remote and perilous. But Lysicles will appear to you to have assumed a little more than the fair privileges of a traveller in relating that the people have so imperfect a sense of religion as to bury the dead in the temples of the Gods, and the priests so avaricious and shameless as to claim money for the permission of this impiety. He told us, furthermore, that he had seen a magnificent temple, built on somewhat of a Grecian model, in the interior of which there are many flat marbles fastened with iron cramps against the walls, and serving for monuments. Continuing his discourse, he assured us that these monuments, although none are ancient, are of all forms and dimensions, as if the Thracians were

resolved to waste and abolish the symmetry they had adopted, and that they are inscribed in an obsolete language; so that the people whom they might animate and instruct, by recording brave and virtuous actions, pass them carelessly by, breaking off now and then a nose from a conqueror, and a wing from an agathodemon.

Thrace is governed by many princes. One of them, Teres of Odrysæ,* has gained great advantages in war. No doubt, this is uninteresting to you, but it is necessary to the course of my narration. Will you believe it? yet Lysicles is both intelligent and trustworthy—will you believe that, at the return of the Thracian prince to enjoy the fruits of his victory, he ordered an architect to

* Teres not only governed the larger part of Thrace, but influenced many of the free and independent states in that country, and led into the field the Getæ, the Agrianians, the Leæans, and the Pœonians. Thucydides says that to coast his kingdom required four days and four nights for the swiftest vessel sailing before the wind; and that by land an expeditious walker would hardly cross it in thirteen days. Sitalces, the son of Teres, ravaged all Macedonia in the reign of Perdiccas.

build an arch for himself and his army to pass under, on their road into the city? As if a road, on such an occasion, ought not rather to be widened than narrowed! If you will not credit this of a barbarian, who is reported to be an intelligent and prudent man in other things, you will exclaim, I fear, against the exaggeration of Lysicles and my credulity, when I relate to you on his authority that, to the same conqueror, by his command, there has been erected a column sixty cubits high, supporting his effigy in marble!

Imagine the general of an army standing upon a column of sixty cubits to show himself! A crane might do it after a victory over a pygmy; or it might aptly represent the virtues of a rope-dancer, exhibiting how little he was subject to dizziness.

I will write no more about it, for really I am beginning to think that some pretty Thracian has given poor Lysicles a love-potion, and that it has affected his brain a little.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Never will I believe that a people, however otherwise ignorant and barbarous, yet capable of turning a regular arch and of erecting a lofty column, can be so stupid and absurd as you have represented. What! bury dead bodies in the temples! cast them out of their own houses into the houses of the gods! Depend upon it, Aspasia, they were the bones of victims; and the strange uncouth inscriptions commemorate votive offerings, in the language of the priests, whatever it may be. So far is clear. Regarding the arch, Lysicles saw them removing it, and fancied they were building it. This mistake is really ludicrous. The column, you must have perceived at once, was erected, not to display the victor, but to expose the vanquished. A blunder very easy for an idle traveller to commit. Few of the Thracians I conceive, even in the interior, are so utterly ignorant of Grecian arts, as to raise a statue at such a height above the ground, that the vision shall not comprehend all the features easily, and

the spectator see and contemplate the object of his admiration, as nearly and in the same position as he was used to do in the Agora.

The monument of the greatest man should be only a bust and a name. If the name alone is insufficient to illustrate the bust, let them both perish.

Enough about Thracians; enough about tombs and monuments. Two pretty Milesians, Agapenthe and Peristera, who are in love with you for loving me, are quite resolved to kiss your hand. You must not detain them long with you: Miletus is not to send all her beauty to be kept at Athens. We have no such treaty.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

There is such a concourse of philosophers, all anxious to show Alcibiades the road to Virtue, that I am afraid they will completely block it up before him. Among the rest is my old friend

Socrates, who seems resolved to transfer to him all the philosophy he designed for me, with very little of that which I presented to him in return.

And (would you believe it?) Alcibiades, who began with ridiculing him, now attends to him with as much fondness as Hyacynthus did to Apollo. The graver and uglier philosophers, however they differ on other points, agree in these; that beauty does not reside in the body, but in the mind; that philosophers are the only true heroes; and that heroes alone are entitled to the privilege of being implicitly obeyed by the beautiful.

Doubtless there may be very fine pearls in very uninviting shells; but our philosophers never wade knee-deep into the beds, attracted rather to what is bright externally.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Alcibiades ought not to have captious or inquisitive men about him. I know not what the sophists

are good for; I only know they are the very worst instructors. Logic, however unperverted, is not for boys; argumentation is among the most dangerous of early practices, and sends away both fancy and modesty. The young mind should be nourished with simple and grateful food, and not too copious. It should be little exercised until its nerves and muscles show themselves, and even then rather for air than any thing else. Study is the bane of boyhood, the aliment of youth, the indulgence of manhood, and the restorative of age.

I am confident that persons like you and Pericles see little of these sharpers who play tricks upon words. It is amusing to observe how they do it, once or twice. As there are some flowers which you should smell but slightly to extract all that is pleasant in them, and which, if you do otherwise, emit what is unpleasant or noxious, so there are some men with whom a slight acquaintance is quite sufficient to draw out all that is agreeable, a more intimate one would be unsatisfactory and unsafe.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Pericles rarely says he likes anything; but whenever he is pleased, he expresses it by his countenance, although when he is displeased he never shows it, even by the faintest sign. It was long before I ventured to make the observation to him. He replied,

"It would be ungrateful and ungentle not to return my thanks for any pleasure imparted to me, when a smile has the power of conveying them. I never say that a thing pleases me while it is yet undone or absent, lest I should give somebody the trouble of performing or producing it. As for what is displeasing, I really am very insensible in general to matters of this nature; and when I am not so, I experience more of satisfaction in subduing my feeling than I ever felt of displeasure at the occurrence which excited it. Politeness is in itself a power, and takes away the weight and galling from every other we may exercise. I foresee," he added, "that Alcibiades will be an elegant man, but I apprehend he will

never be a polite one. There is a difference, and a greater than we are apt to perceive or imagine. Alcibiades would win without conciliating: he would seize and hold, but would not acquire. The man who is determined to keep others fast and firm, must have one end of the bond about his own breast, sleeping and waking."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Agapenthe and Peristera, the bearers of your letter, came hither in safety and health, late as the season is for navigation. They complain of our cold climate in Athens, and shudder at the sight of snow upon the mountains in the horizon.

Hardly had they been seen with me, before the housewives and sages were indignant at their effrontery. In fact they gazed in wonder at the ugliness of our sex in Attica, and at the gravity of philosophers, of whom stories so ludicrous are related. I do not think I shall be able to find them

lovers here. Peristera hath lost a little of her dove-like faculty, (if ever she had much,) at the report which has been raised about her cousin and herself. Dracontides was very fond of Agapenthe; she, however, was by no means so fond of him, which is always the case when young men would warm us at their fire before ours is kindled. For, honestly to confess the truth, the very best of us are more capricious than sensitive, and more sensitive than grateful. Dracontides is not indeed a man to excite so delightful a feeling. He is confident that Peristera must be the cause of Agapenthe's disinclination to him; for how is it possible that a young girl of unperverted mind could be indifferent to Dracontides? Unable to discover that any sorceress was employed against him, he turned his anger toward Peristera, and declared in her presence that her malignity alone could influence so abusively the generous mind of Agapenthe. At my request the playful girl consented to receive him. Seated upon an Amphora in the aviary, she was stroking the neck of a noble peacock, while the bird pecked at the berries on a branch of arbutus in her bosom. Dracontides

entered, conducted by Peristera, who desired her cousin to declare at once whether it was by any malignity of her's that he had hitherto failed to conciliate her regard.

"O the ill-tempered, frightful man!" cried Agapenthe; "does any body that is not malicious ever talk of malignity?"

Dracontides went away, calling upon the gods for justice.

The next morning a rumour ran throughout Athens, how he had broken off his intended nuptials, on the discovery that Aspasia had destined the two Ionians to the pleasures of Pericles. Moreover, he had discovered that one of them, he would not say which, had certainly threads of several colours in her threadcase, not to mention a lock of hair, whether of a dead man or no, might by some be doubted; and that the other was about to be consigned to Pyrilampes, in exchange for a peacock and sundry smaller birds.

No question could be entertained of the fact, for the girls were actually in the house, and the birds in the aviary.

Agapenthe declares she waits only for the

spring, and will then leave Athens for her dear Miletus, where she never heard such an expression as malignity.

"O what rude people the Athenians are!" said she.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Rather than open my letter again, I write another.

Agapenthe's heart is won by Mnasylus. I never suspected it.

On his return out of Thessaly (whither I fancy he went on purpose) he brought a cage of nightingales. There are few of them in Attica; and none being kept tame, none remain with us through the winter. Of the four brought by Mnasylus, one sings even in this season of the year. Agapenthe and Peristera were awakened in the morning by the thrilling song of a bird, like a nightingale, in the aviary. They went down

together; and over the door they found these verses.

Maiden or youth, who standest here,
Think not, if haply we should fear
A stranger's voice or stranger's face,
(Such is the nature of our race,)
That we would gladly fly again
To gloomy wood or windy plain.
Certain we are we ne'er should find
A care so provident, so kind,
Altho' by flight we repossest
The tenderest mother's warmest nest.
O may you prove, as well as we,
That even in Athens there may be
A sweeter thing than liberty.

"This is surely the hand-writing of Mnasylus," said Agapenthe.

"How do you know his hand-writing?" cried Peristera.

A blush and a kiss. and one gentle push, were the answer.

Mnasylus, on hearing the sound of footsteps, had retreated behind a thicket of laurustine and pyracanthus, in which the aviary is situated,

fearful of bringing the gardener into reproof for admitting him. However, his passion was uncontrollable; and Peristera declares, although Agapenthe denies it, that he caught a kiss upon each of his cheeks by the interruption. Certain it is, for they agree in it, that he threw his arms around them both as they were embracing, and implored them to conceal the fault of poor old Alcon, "who showed me," said he, "more pity than Agapenthe will ever show me."

"Why did you bring these birds hither?" said she, trying to frown.

"Because you asked," replied he, "the other day, whether we had any in Attica, and told me you had many at home."

She turned away abruptly, and, running up to my chamber, would have informed me why.

Superfluous confidence! Her tears wetted my cheek.

"Agapenthe!" said I, smiling, "are you sure you have cried for the last time, *O! what rude people the Athenians are!*"

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

I apprehend, O Pericles, not only that I may become an object of jealousy and hatred to the Athenians, by the notice you have taken of me, but that you yourself, which affects me greatly more, may cease to retain the whole of their respect and veneration.

Whether, to acquire a great authority over the people, some things are not necessary to be done on which Virtue and Wisdom are at variance, it becomes not me to argue or consider; but let me suggest the inquiry to you, whether he who is desirous of supremacy should devote the larger portion of his time to one person.

Three affections of the soul predominate; Love, Religion, and Power. The first two are often united; the other stands widely apart from them, and neither is admitted nor seeks admittance to their society. I wonder then how you can love so truly and tenderly. Ought I not rather to say I *did* wonder? Was Pisistratus affectionate? Do not be angry? It is certainly the first time a

friend has ever ventured to discover a resemblance, although you are habituated to it from your opponents. In these you forgive it; do you in me?

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Pisistratus was affectionate: the rest of his character you know as well as I do. You know that he was eloquent, that he was humane, that he was contemplative, that he was learned; that he not only was profuse to men of genius, but cordial, and that it was only with such men he was familiar and intimate. You know that he was the greatest, the wisest, the most virtuous, excepting Solon and Lycurgus, that ever ruled any portion of the human race. Is it not happy and glorious for mortals, when, instead of being led by the ears, under the clumsy and violent hand of vulgar and clamorous adventurers, a Pisistratus leaves the volumes of Homer and the conversation of Solon, for them?

We may be introduced to Power by Humanity, and at first may love her less for her own sake

than for Humanity's, but by degrees we become so accustomed to her as to be quite uneasy without her.

Religion and Power, like the Cariatides in sculpture, never face one another; they sometimes look the same way, but oftener stand back to back.

We will argue about them one at a time, and about the other in the triad too: let me have the choice.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

We must talk over again the subject of your letter: no, not talk, but write about it.

I think, Pericles, you who are so sincere with, me are never quite sincere with others. You have contracted this bad habitude from your custom of addressing the people. But among friends and philosophers, would it not be bettter to speak exactly as we think, whether ingeniously or not? Ingenious things, I am afraid, are never perfectly true: however, I would not exclude them,

the difference being very wide between perfect truth and violated truth; I would not even leave them in a minority; I would hear and say as many as may be, letting them pass current for what they are worth. Anaxagoras rightly remarked that Love always makes us better, Religion sometimes, Power never.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Pericles was delighted with your letter on education. I wish he were as pious as you are; occasionally he appears so. I attacked him on his simulation, but it produced a sudden and powerful effect on Alcibiades. You will collect the whole from a summary of our conversation.

"So very true," said he, "is the remark of Anaxagoras, that it was worth my while to controvert it. Did you not observe the attention paid to it by young and old? I was unwilling that the graver part of the company should argue to-morrow with Alcibiades, on the nature of love,

as they are apt to do, and should persuade him that he would be the better for it.

"On this consideration, I said, while you were occupied, 'O Anaxagoras! if we of this household knew not how religious a man you are, your discourse would in some degree lead us to countenance the suspicions of your enemies. Religion is never too little for us; it satisfies all the desires of the soul. Love is but an atom of it, consuming and consumed by the stubble on which it falls. But when it rests upon the gods, it partakes of their nature, in its essence pure and eternal. Love indeed works great miracles. As in the Ocean that embraces the Earth, whatever is sordid is borne away and disappears in it, so the flame of Love purifies the temple it burns in.'"

"Only when first lighted," said Anaxagoras. "Generally the heat is either spent or stifling soon afterwards; and the torch, when it is extinguished, leaves an odour very different from myrrh and frankincense."

He had turned the stream. Pericles then proceeded.

"Something of power," said he, "hath been consigned to me by the favour and indulgence of the Athenians. I do not dissemble that I was anxious to obtain it; I do not dissemble that my vows and supplications for the prosperity of the country were unremitted. It pleased the gods to turn toward me the eyes of my fellow citizens, but had they not blessed me with religion they never would have blessed me with power, better and more truly called an influence on their hearts and their reason, a high and secure place in the acropolis of their affections. Yes, Anaximander! yes, Meton! I do say, had they not *blessed* me with it; for in order to obtain it, I was obliged to place a daily and a nightly watch over all my thoughts and actions. In proportion as authority was consigned to me, I found it both expedient and easy to grow better, time not being left me for sedentary occupations or frivolous pursuits, and every desire being drawn on and absorbed in that mighty and interminable, that rushing, renovating, and purifying one, which comprehends our country. If any young man would win to himself the hearts

of the wise and brave, and is ambitious of being the guide and leader of them, let him be assured that his virtue will give him power, and power will consolidate and maintain his virtue. Let him never then squander away the inestimable powers of youth in tangled and trifling disquisitions, with such as perhaps have an interest in perverting or unsettling his opinions, and who speculate into his sleeping thoughts and dandle his nascent passions; but let him start from them with alacrity, and walk forth with firmness; let him early take an interest in the business and concerns of men, and let him, as he goes along, look stedfastly at the statues of those who have benefited his country, and make with himself a solemn compact to stand hereafter among them."

I had heard the greater part of this already, all but the commencement. At the conclusion Alcibiades left the room; I feared he was conscious that something in it was too applicable to him. How I rejoiced when I saw him enter again, with a helmet like Minerva's on his head, a spear in his hand, crying, "To Sparta, boys! to Sparta!"

Pericles whispered to me, but in a voice audible

to those who sate farther off, "Alcibiades, I trust, is destined to abolish the influence and subvert the power of that restless and troublesome rival."

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

I disbelieve, O Pericles, that it is good for us, that it is good for men, women, or nations, to be without a rival.

Acquit me now of any desire that, in your generosity, you should resolve on presenting me with such a treasure, for I am without the ability of returning it. But have you never observed how many graces of person and demeanour we women are anxious to display, in order to humble a rival, which we were unconscious of possessing until opposite charms provoked them?

Sparta can only be humbled by the prosperity and liberality of Athens. She was ever jealous and selfish; Athens has been too often so. It is only by forbearance toward dependent states, and

by kindness toward the weaker, that her power can long preponderate. Strong attachments are strong allies. This truth is so clear as to be colourless, and I should fear that you would censure me for writing what almost a child might have spoken, were I ignorant that the important truth has made little impression on the breasts of statesmen. I admire your wisdom in resolving to increase no farther the domains of Attica; and in designing to surround her with the outworks of islands, and to encompass her more closely with small independent communities. It is only from such as these that Virtue can come forward neither hurt nor heated; the crowd is too dense for her in larger. But what is mostly our consideration, it is only such as these that are sensible of benefits. They cling to you afflictedly in your danger; the greater look on with folded arms, nod knowingly, cry *sad work!* when you are worsted, and turn their backs on you when you are fallen.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

There are things, Aspasia, beyond the art of Phidias. He may represent Love leaning upon his bow and listening to Philosophy; but not for hours together: he may represent Love, while he is giving her a kiss for her lesson, tying her arms behind her: loosing them again must be upon another marble.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

The philosophers are less talkative in our conversations, now Alcibiades has given up his mind to mathematics and strategy, and seldom comes among them.

Pericles told me they will not pour out the rose-water for their beards, unless into a Corinthian or golden vase.

"But take care," added he, "to offend no

philosopher of any sect whatever. Indeed, to offend any person is the next foolish thing to being offended. I never do it, unless when it is requisite to discredit somebody who might otherwise have the influence to diminish my estimation. Politeness is not always a sign of wisdom; but the want of it always leaves room for a suspicion of folly, if folly and imprudence are the same. I have scarcely had time to think of any blessings that entered my house with you, beyond those which encompass myself; yet it cannot but be obvious that Alcibiades hath now an opportunity of improving his manners, such as even the society of scholastic men will never countervail. This is a high advantage on all occasions, particularly in embassies. Well-bred men require it, and let it pass: the ill-bred catch at it greedily; as fishes are attracted from the mud, and netted, by the shine of flowers and shells."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

At last I have heard him speak in public.

Apollo may shake the rocks of Delphi, and may turn the pious pale; my Pericles rises with serenity; his voice hath at once left his lips and entered the heart of Athens. The violent and desperate tremble in every hostile city; a thunderbolt seems to have split in the center, and to have scattered its sacred fire unto the whole circumference of Greece.

The greatest of prodigies are the prodigies of a mortal; they are, indeed, the only one: with the gods there are none.

Alas! alas! the eloquence and the wisdom, the courage and the constancy of my Pericles, must have their end; and the glorious shrine, wherein they stand pre-eminent, must one day drop into the deformity of death!

O Aspasia! of the tears thou art shedding, tears of pride, tears of fondness, are there none (in those many) for thyself? Yes; whatever was attributed to thee of grace or beauty, so valuable for his

sake whose partiality assigned them to thee, must go first, and all that he loses is a loss to thee! weep then on.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Do you love me? do you love me? Stay, reason upon it, sweet Aspasia! doubt, hesitate, question, drop it, take it up again, provide, raise obstacles, reply indirectly. Oracles are sacred, and there is a pride in being a diviner.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

I will do none of those things you tell me to do; but I will say something you forgot to say, about the insufficiency of Phidias.

He may represent a hero with unbent brows, a sage with the lyre of Poetry in his hand, Ambition with her face half-averted from the city, but he cannot represent, in the same sculpture, at the same distance, Aphrodite higher than Pallas. He

would be derided if he did; and a great man can never do that for which a little man may deride him.

I shall love you even more than I do, if you will love yourself more than me. Did ever lover talk so? Pray tell me, for I have forgotten all they ever talked about. But, Pericles! Pericles! be careful to lose nothing of your glory, or you lose all that can be lost of me; my pride, my happiness, my content; every thing but my poor weak love: keep glory then for my sake!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I am not quite certain that you are correct in your decision, on the propriety of sculpturing the statues of our deities from one sole material. Those, however, of mortal and nymphs and Genii should be marble, and marble only. But you will pardon a doubt, a long doubt, a doubt for the chin to rest upon in the palm of the hand, when Cleone thinks one thing and Phidias another. I debated with Pericles on the subject.

"In my opinion," said he, "no material for statuary is so beautiful as marble; and, far from allowing that two or more materials should compose one statue, I would not willingly see an interruption made in the figure of a god or goddess, even by the folds of drapery. I would venture to take the cestus from Venus, distinguishing her merely by her own peculiar beauty. But in the representations of the more awful Powers, who are to be venerated and worshipped as the patrons and protectors of cities, we must take into account the notions of the people. In their estimate, gold and ivory give splendour and dignity to the gods themselves, and our wealth displays their power! Beside . . but bring your ear closer . . when they will not indulge us with their favour, we may borrow their cloaks and ornaments, and restore them when they have recovered their temper."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

After I had written to you, we renewed our conversation on the same subject. I inquired of

Pericles whether he thought the appellation of *golden* was applied to Venus for her precious gifts, or for some other reason. His answer was:

"Small statues of Venus are more numerous than of any other deity; and the first that were gilt in Greece, I believe, were hers. She is worshipped, you know, not only as the goddess of beauty, but likewise as the goddess of fortune, In the former capacity we are her rapturous adorers for five years perhaps; in the latter we persevere for life. Many carry her image with them on their journeys, and there is scarcely a house in any part of Greece wherein it is not a principal ornament."

I remarked to him that Apollo, from the colour of his hair and the radiance of his countenance, would be more appropriately represented in gold, and yet that the poets were unmindful to call him the *golden*.

"They never found him so," said he; "but Venus often smiles upon them in one department. Little images of her are often of solid gold, and are placed on the breast or under the pillow. Other deities are seldom of such diminutive size,

or such precious materials. It is only of late that they have even borne the semblance of them. The Egyptians, the inventors of all durable colours, and indeed of every thing else that is durable in the arts, devised the means of investing other metals with dissolved gold; the Phœnicians, barbarous and indifferent to elegance and refinement, could only cover them with lamular incrustations. By improving the inventions of Egypt, bronze, odious in its own proper colour for the human figure, and more odious for divinities, assumes a splendour and majesty which almost compensate for marble itself."

"Metal," said I, "has the advantage in durability."

"Surely not," answered he; "and it is more exposed to invasion and avarice. But either of them, under cover, may endure many thousand years, I apprehend, and without corrosion. The temples of Egypt, which have remained two thousand, are fresh at this hour as when they were first erected; and all the violence of Cambyses and his army, bent on effacing the images, have done little more harm, if you look at them from a

short distance, than a single fly would do in a summer day, on a statue of Pentelican marble. The Egyptians have labored more to commemorate the weaknesses of man than the Grecians to attest his energies. This however must be conceded to the Egyptians; that they are the only people on earth to whom destruction has not been the first love and principal occupation. The works of their hands will outlive the works of their intellect: here at least I glory in the sure hope that we shall differ from them. Judgment and perception of the true and beautiful will never allow our statuaries to represent the human countenance, as they have done, in granite, and porphyry, and basalt. Their statues have resisted Time and War; ours will vanquish Envy and Malice.

"Sculpture has made great advances in my time; Painting still greater: for until the last forty years it was inelegant and rude. Sculpture can go no farther; Painting can: she may add scenery and climate to her forms. She may give to Philoctetes, not only the wing of the sea-bird, wherewith he cools the throbbing of his wound; not only the bow and the quiver at his feet, but

likewise the gloomy rocks, the Vulcanian vaults, and the distant fires of Lemnos, the fierce inhabitants subdued by pity, the remorseless betrayer, and the various emotions of his retiring friends. Her reign is boundless, but the fairer and the richer part of her dominions lies within the Odyssea. Painting by degrees will perceive her advantages over Sculpture; but if there are paces between Sculpture and Painting, there are parasangs between Painting and Poetry. The difference is that of a lake confined by mountains, and a river running on through all the varieties of scenery, perpetual and unimpeded. Sculpture and Painting are moments of life; Poetry is life itself, and every thing around it and above it.

"But let us turn back again to the position we set out from, and offer due reverence to the truest diviners of the gods. Phidias in ten days is capable of producing what would outlive ten thousand years, if man were not resolved to be the subverter of man's glory. The gods themselves will vanish away before their images."

O Cleone! this is painful to hear. I wish Pericles, and I too, were somewhat more religious: it is so sweet and graceful.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

She, O Aspasia, who wishes to be more religious, hath much religion, although the volatility of her imagination and the velocity of her pursuits do not permit her to settle fixedly on the object of it. How could I have ever loved you so, if I believed the gods would disapprove of my attachment, as they certainly would if you underrated their power and goodness! They take especial care both to punish the unbeliever, and to strike with awe the witnesses of unbelief. I accompanied my father, not long since to the temple of Apollo; and when we had performed the usual rites of our devotion, there came up to us a young man of somewhat pleasing aspect, with whose family ours was anciently on terms of intimacy. After my father had made the customary inquiries, he conversed with us about his travels. He had just left Ephesus, and said he had spent the morning in a comparison between Diana's temple and Apollo's. He told us that they are similar in design; but that the Ephesian goddess is an ugly lump of dark-coloured stone;

while our Apollo is of such transcendent beauty that, on first beholding him, he wondered any other god had a worshipper, My father was transported with joy at such a declaration.

"Give up the others," said he; "worship here, and rely on prosperity."

"Were I myself to select," answered he, "any deity in preference to the rest, it should not be an irascible, or vindictive, or unjust one."

"Surely not," cried my father . . "it should be Apollo; and *our* Apollo! What has Diana done for any man, or any woman? I speak submissively . . with all reverence . . I do not question."

The young man answered, "I will forbear to say a word about Diana, having been educated in great fear of her: but surely the treatment of Marsyas by Apollo was bordering on severity."

"Not a whit," cried my father, "if understood rightly."

"His assent to the request of Phaëton," continued the young man, "knowing (as he did) the consequence, seems a little deficient in that foresight which belongs peculiarly to the god of prophecy."

My father left me abruptly, ran to the font, and sprinkled first himself, then me, lastly the guest, with lustral water.

"We mortals," continued he gravely, "should not presume to argue on the gods after our own inferior nature and limited capacities. What appears to have been cruel might have been most kindly provident."

"The reasoning is conclusive," said the youth; "you have caught by the hand a benighted and wandering dreamer, and led him from the brink of a precipice. I see nothing left now on the road-side but the skin of Marsyas, and it would be folly to start or flinch at it."

My father had a slight suspicion of his sincerity, and did not invite him to the house. He has attempted to come, more than once, evidently with an earnest desire to explore the truth. Several days together he has been seen on the very spot where he made the confession to my father, in deep thought, and, as we hope, under the influence of the deity.

I forgot to tell you that this young person is Thraseas, son of Phormio the Coan.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

If ever there was a youth whose devotion was ardent, and whose face (I venture to say, although I never saw it) was prefigured for the offices of adoration, I suspect it must be Thraseas, son of Phormio the Coan.

Happy the man who, when every thought else is dismissed, comes last and alone into the warm and secret foldings of a letter!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Alcibiades entered the library one day when I was writing out some verses. He discovered what I was about, by my hurry in attempting to conceal them.

"Alcibiades!" said I, "we do not like to be detected in any thing so wicked as poetry. Some day or other I shall perhaps have my revenge, and

catch you committing the same sin with more pertinacity."

"Do you fancy," said he, "that I cannot write a verse or two, if I set my heart upon it?"

"No," replied I; "but I doubt whether your heart, in its lightness and volubility, would not roll off so slippery a plinth. We remember your poetical talents, displayed in all their brightness on poor Socrates."

"Do not laugh at Socrates," said he. "The man is by no means such a quibbler and impostor as some of his disciples would represent him, making him drag along no easy mule-load, by Hercules! no summer robe, no every-day vesture, no nurse of an after-dinner nap, but a trailing, troublesome, intricate piece of sophistry, interwoven with flowers and sphynxes, stolen from an Egyptian temple, with dust enough in it to blind all the crocodiles as far as to the cataracts, and to dry up the Nile at its highest overflow. He is rather fond of strangling an unwary interloper with a string of questions, of which it is difficult to see the length or the knots, until the two ends are about the throat; but he lets him off easily

when he has fairly set his mark on him. Anaxagoras tells me that there is not a school in Athens where the scholars are so jealous and malicious, while he himself is totally exempt from those worst and most unphilosophical of passions; that the parasitical weed grew up together with their very root, and soon overtopt the plant, but that it only hangs to his railing. Now Anaxagoras envies nobody, and only perplexes us by the admiration of his generosity, modesty, and wisdom.

"I did not come hither to disturb you, Aspasia! and will retire when I have given you satisfaction or *revenge*; this, I think, is the word. Not only have I written verses, and, as you may well suppose, long after those upon the son of Sophroniscus, but verses upon love."

"Are we none of us in the secret?" said I.

"You shall be," said he; "attend and pity."

I must have turned pale, I think, for I shuddered. He repeated these, and relieved me.

I love to look on lovely eyes,
And do not shun the sound of sighs,

If they are level with the ear;
But if they rise just o'er my chin,
O Venus! how I hate their din!
My own I am too weak to bear.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

We are but pebbles in a gravel walk,
Some blacker and some whiter, pebbles still,
Fit only to be trodden on.

These words were introduced into a comedy, lately written by Polus, a remarkably fat person and who appears to have enjoyed life and liberty as much as any citizen in Athens. I happen to have rendered some services to Philonides, the actor, to whom the speech is addrest. He brought me the piece before its representation, telling me that Polus and his friends had resolved to applaud the passage, and to turn their faces toward Pericles. I made him a little present, on condition that, in the representation, he should repeat the following verses in reply, instead of the poet's.

. . . . . Fair Polus!
Can such fierce winds blow over such smooth seas!
I never saw a pebble in my life
So richly set as thou art: now, by Jove,
He who would tread upon thee can be none
Except the proudest of the elephants,
The tallest and the surest-footed beast
In all the stables of the kings of Ind.

The comedy was interrupted by roars of laughter: the friends of Polus slunk away, and he himself made many a violent effort to do the same; but Amphicydes, who stood next, threw his arms round his neck, crying,

"Behold another Codrus! devoting himself for his country. The infernal Powers require no black bull for sacrifice; they are quite satisfied. Eternal peace with Bœotia! eternal praise to her! what a present! where was he fatted?"

We had invited Polus to dine with us, and now condoled with him on his loss of appetite. The people of Athens were quite out of favour with him.

"I told them what they were fit for," cried he, "and they proved it. Amphicydes . . I do not

say he has been at Sparta . . I myself saw him, no long time ago, on the road that leads to Megara . . that city rebelled soon after. His wife died strangely: she had not been married two years, and had grown ugly and thin: he might have used her for a broom if she had hair enough . . perhaps he did; odd noises have been heard in the house. I have no suspicion or spite against any man living . . and, praise to the gods! I can live without being an informer."

We listened with deep interest, but could not understand the allusion, as he perceived by our looks.

"You will hear to-morrow," said he, "how unworthily I have been treated. Wit draws down Folly upon us, and she must have her fling. It does not hit; it does not hit."

Slaves brought in a ewer of water, with several napkins. They were not lost upon Polus, and he declared that those two boys had more sagacity and intuition than all the people in the theatre.

"In your house and your administration, O Pericles, every thing is timed well and done well, without our knowing how. Dust will rise," said

he, "dust will rise; if we would not raise it we must never stir. They have begun with those who would reform their manners; they will presently carry their violence against those who maintain and execute the laws."

Supper was served.

"A quail, O best Polus!"*

"A quail, O wonderful! may hurt me; but being recommended. ."

It disappeared.

"The breast of that capon . ."

"Capons, being melancholic, breed melancholy within."

* O *best* Polus! O *wonderful!* O *lady!* &c.

The editor has thought it his duty to be quite literal in translating, Ω βελτιστε : Ω θαυμασιε : Ω δεσποινα, &c. Conversation was never carried on without them, even among philosophers, as we see in Plato, &c. An apology ought to be offered for not adorning the text with the Greek, it being the fashion to enrich the toilet with antiquities. Poverty must plead for the editor; when he publishes the *Letters of Cleopatra*, he promises his fair friends that he will be more liberal of the Coptic; the original Greek being lost, and the Coptic being the only known version.

"Coriander-seed might correct it, together with a few of those white plump pine-seeds."

"The very desideration!"

It was corrected.

"Tunny under oil, with marjoram and figs, pickled locusts, and pistachioes—for your stomach seems delicate."

"Alas! indeed it is declining. Tunny! tunny! I dare not, O festoon of the Graces! I dare not verily. Chian wine alone can appease its seditions."

They were appeased.

Some livers were offered him, whether of fish or fowl, I know not, for I can hardly bear to look at that dish. He waved them away, but turned suddenly round, and said, "Youth! I think I smell fennel."

"There is fennel, O mighty one!" replied the slave, "and not fennel only, but parsley and honey, pepper and rosemary, garlic from Salamis, and . ."

"Say no more, say no more; fennel is enough for moderate men, and brave ones. It reminds me of the field of Marathon."

The field was won; nothing was left upon it.

Another slave came forward, announcing loudly and pompously, "Gosling from Brauron! Sauce . . prunes, mustard-seed, capers, fenugreek, sesamum, and squills."

"Squills!" exclaimed Polus, "they soothe the chest. It is not every cook that is deep in the secrets of nature. Brauron! an ancient city: I have friends in Brauron; I will taste, were it only for remembrance of them."

He made several essays, several pauses.

"But when shall we come to the squills?" said he, turning to the slave; "the qualities of the others are negative."

The whole dish was presently.

"Our pastry," said I, "O illustrious Polus! is the only thing I can venture to recommend at table; the other dishes are merely on sufference; but, really, our pastry is good: I usually dine entirely upon it."

"Entirely!" cried he, in amaze.

"With a glass of water," added I, "and some grapes, fresh or dry."

"To accompany you, O divine Aspasia! though

in good truth this said pastry is but a sandy sort of road; no great way can be made in it."

The diffident Polus was not a bad engineer however, and he soon had an opportunity of admiring the workmanship at the bottom of the salver.

Two dishes of roast meat were carried to him. I know not what one was, nor could Polus easily make up his mind upon it: experiment following experiment. Kid however was an old acquaintance.

"Those who kill kids," said he, "deserve well of their country, for they grow up mischievous: the gods, aware of this, make them very eatable. They require some management, some skill, some reflection: mint, shalot, dandelion, vinegar: strong coercion upon 'em. Chian wine, boy!"

"What does Pericles eat?"

"Do not mind Pericles. He has eaten of the quails, and some roast fish, besprinkled with dried bay-leaves for sauce."

"Fish! ay, that makes him so vigilant. Cats.."

Here he stopt, not however without a diversion in his favour from me, observing that he usually dined on vegetables, fish, and some bird: that his

earlier meal was his longest, confectionary, honey, and white bread, composing it."

"Chian or Lesbian?"

"He enjoys a little wine after dinner, perferring the lighter and subacid."

"Wonderful man!" cried he; "and all from such fare as that!"

When he rose from table he seemed by his countenance to be quiet again at heart; nevertheless he said in my ear, with a sigh, "Did I possess the power of Pericles, or the persuasion of Aspasia, by the Immortals! I would enrich the gallies with a grand dotation. Every soul of them would I—yes, every soul of them—monsters of ingratitude, hypocrites, traitors, they should for Egypt, for Carthage, Mauritania, Numidia. He will find out before long what dogs he has been skimming the kettle for."

It required an effort to be perfectly composed, at a simily which I imagine has never been used in the Greek language since the days of Medea; but I cast down my eyes, and said consolatorily, "It is difficult to do justice to such men as Pericles and Polus."

He would now have let me into the secret, but others saved me.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Anaxagoras is the true, firm, constant friend of Pericles; the golden lamp that shines perpetually on the image I adore. Yet sometimes he speaks severely. On one of these occasions, Pericles took him by the hand, saying,

"O Anaxagoras! sincere and ardent lover of Truth! why do not you love her in such a manner as never to let her see you out of humour?"

"Because," said Anaxagoras, "you divide my affections with her, much to my shame."

Pericles was called away on business; I then said,

"O Anaxagoras! is not Pericles a truly great man?"

He answered, "If Pericles were a truly great man, he would not wish to appear different from

what he is; he would know himself, and make others know him; he seems to guard against both. Much is wanting to constitute his greatness. He possesses, it is true, more comprehensiveness and concentration than any living; perhaps more than any since Solon; but he thinks that power over others is better than power over himself; as if a mob were worth a man, and an acclamation were worth a Pericles."

"But," said I, "he has absolute command over himself; and it is chiefly by exerting it that he has obtained an ascendency over the minds of others."

"Has he rendered them wiser and more virtuous?" said he.

"You know best," replied I, "having lived much longer among them."

"Perhaps," said Anaxagoras, "I may wrong him; perhaps he has saved them from worse disasters."

"You think him then ambitious!" said I, with some sadness.

"Ambitious!" cried he, "how so? He might have been a philosopher, and he is content to be a ruler."

I was ill at ease.

"Come," said I, "Anaxagoras! come into the garden with me. It is rather too warm indeed out of doors, but we have many evergreens, high and shady, and those who, like you and me, never drink wine, have little to dread from the heat."

Whether the ilexes and bays and oleanders struck his imagination, and presented the simily, I cannot tell, but he thus continued in illustration of his discourse.

"There are no indeciduous plants, Aspasia! the greater part lose their leaves in winter, the rest in summer. It is thus with men. The generality yield and are stript under the first chilly blasts that shake them. They who have weathered these, drop leaf after leaf in the sunshine. The virtues by which they arose to popularity, take another garb, another aspect, another form, and totally disappear. Be not uneasy; the heart of Pericles will never dry up, so many streams run into it."

He retired to his studies; I spoke but little that evening, and slept late.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

How can I ever hope to show you, in all its brightness, the character of my friend? I will tell you how; by following Love and Truth. Like most others who have no genius, I do not feel the want of it, at least not here.

A shallow water may reflect the sun as perfectly as a deeper.

The words of Anaxagoras stuck to me like thistles. I resolved to speak in playfulness with the object of our conversation. First I began to hint at enemies. He smiled.

"The children in my orchard," said he, "are not yet grown tall enough to reach the fruit; they may throw at it, but can bring none down."

"Do tell me, O Pericles!" said I, "now we are inseparable for ever, how many struggles with yourself (to say nothing of others) you must have had, before you attained the position you have taken."

"It is pleasanter," answered he, "to think of our glory than of the means by which we acquired it.

"When we see the horses that have won at the Olympian games, do we ask what oats they have eaten to give them such velocity and strength? Do those who swim admirably ever trouble their minds about the bladders they swam upon in learning, or inquire what beasts supplied them? When the winds are filling our sails, do we lower them and delay our voyage, in order to philosophise on the particles of air composing them, or to speculate what region produced them, or what becomes of them afterwards?"

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

At last, Aspasia, you love indeed. The perfections of your beloved interest you less than the imperfections, which you no sooner take up for reprehension, than you admire, embrace, and defend. Happy, happy, Aspasia! but are you wise, and good, and equable, and fond of sincerity as formerly? Nay, do not answer me. The gods forbid that I should force you to be ingeni-

ous, and love you for it. How much must you have lost before you are praised for that!

Archelaus, of all our philosophers the most quiet man, and the most patient investigator, will bring you this. He desires to be the hearer of Anaxagoras.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I received our countryman with great pleasure. He was obliged to be *my* hearer for several hours: I hope his patience will never be so much tried by Anaxagoras. I placed them together at table; but Anaxagoras would not break through his custom; nothing of philosophy. Our repast would have been even less talkative than usual, had not Anaxagoras asked our guest whether the earlier Milesian authors, poets or historians, had mentioned Homer.

"I find not a word about him in any one of them," replied he, "although we have the works

of Cadmus and Phocylides, the former no admirable historian, the latter an indifferent poet, but not the less likely to mention him, and they are supposed to have lived within three centuries of his age. Permit my first question to you, in my search after truth, to be this; whether his age were not much earlier?

"This is not the only question," said Anaxagoras, "on which you will hear from me the confession of my utter ignorance. I am interested in every thing that relates to the operations of the human mind; and Pericles has in his possession every author whose works have been transcribed. The number will appear quite incredible to you: there cannot be fewer than two hundred. I find poetry to which is attributed an earlier date than to Homer's; but stupidity and barbarism are no convincing proofs. I find Cretan, Ionian, Laconian, and Bœotian, written certainly more than three centuries ago; the language is not copious, is not fluent, is not refined. Pericles says it is all of it inharmonious: of this I cannot judge, he can. Dropides and Mimnermus wrote no better verses than the servant girls sing upon our stair-cases. Archilochus

and Alcman, who lived a century earlier, composed much grander; but where there is at once ferocity and immodesty, either the age must have been barbarous or the poet must have been left behind it. Sappho was in reality the reviver of poetry, teaching it to humanize and delight; Simonides brought it to perfection. The muse of Lesbos, as she is called, and Alcæus, invented each a novel species of strophe. Aspasia prefers the poetry of Sappho, and the metre of Alcæus, which however, I think she informs us, is less adapted to her subjects than her own is."

"It appears to me," said I, "that every one who felt strong in poetry was ambitious of being an inventor in its measures. Archilochus, the last of any note, had invented the iambick."

"True, O Aspasia!" said Pericles, "but not exactly in the sense usually received. He did not invent, as many suppose, the senarian iambick, which is coeval almost with the language itself, and many of which creep into the closest prose composition, but he was the first who subjoined a shorter to it, the harb to the bart, so fatal to Cleobule and Lycambes."

"His first," said I, "is like the trot of a mastiff, his second is like the spring at the throat.

"Homer alone has enriched the language with sentences full of harmony. How long his verse was created, how long his gods had lived before *him*, how long he himself before *us*, is yet uncertain, although Herodotus is of opinion that he is nearer to us than Pericles and Anaxagoras admit. But these two philosophers place sun, moon, and stars, beyond all reasonable limits; I know not how far off."

"We none of us know," said Pericles; "but Anaxagoras hopes that, in a future age, human knowledge will be more extensive and more correct; and Meton has encouraged us in our speculations. The heavenly bodies may keep their secrets two or three thousand years more, but one or other will betray them to some wakeful favourite, some Endymion beyond Latmos, perhaps in regions undiscovered, certainly in uncalculated times. Men will know more of them than they will ever know of Homer. Our knowledge on this miracle of our species is unlikely to increase."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Pericles, who is acknowledged to have a finer ear than any of our poets or rhetoricians, is of opinion that the versification in all the books, of both Iliad and Odyssea, was modulated by the same master-key. Sophocles too, certainly less jolted than you would suppose, by the deep ruts, angular turns, and incessant jerks of the iambick, tells me that he finds no other heroick verses at all resembling it in the rythm, and that to his apprehension, it is not dissimilar in the two poems.

But I must continue, while I remember them perfectly, the words of Pericles.

"The Ulysses of the Iliad and Odyssea is not the same, but the Homer is. Might not the poet have collected, in his earlier voyages, many wonderful tales about the chieftain of Ithaca; about his wanderings and return: about his wife and her suitors? Might not afterwards the son or grandson have solicited his guest and friend to place the sagacious, the courageous, the enduring man, among the others whom we was celebra-

ting in detached poems, as leaders against Troy? He describes with precision everything in Ithaca: it is evident he must have been upon the spot. Of all other countries, of Sicily, of Italy, of Phrygia, he quite as evidently writes from tradition and representation. Phrygia was subject to the Assyrian kings at the time when he commences his siege. The Greeks, according to him, had been ravaging the country many years, and had swept away many cities. What were the Assyrian kings doing? Did the Grecians lose no men by war, by climate, by disease, by time, in the whole ten years? Their horses must have been strong and long-lived; an excellent breed! to keep their teeth and mettle for five-and-twenty. I should have imagined that some of them must have got lamed, some few perhaps foundered; surely here and there a chariot can have had but one remaining, and he, in all probability, not in the very best condition. How happened it that the Trojans had Greek names, and the leader of the Greeks an Egyptian one? When I was at Byzantion, I had the curiosity to visit the imaginary scene of their

battles. I saw many sepulchral monuments, of the most durable kind, conical elevations of earth, on which there were sheep and goats at pasture. There were ruins beyond, but neither of a great city nor of an ancient one. The only ancient walls I saw were on the European coast; those of Byzantion, which Aspasia claims as the structure of Miletus, and which the people of Megara tell us were founded by their forefathers, less than two centuries ago. But neither Miletus nor Megara was built when these walls were entire. They belong to the unknown world, and are sometimes called Pelasgian, sometimes Cyclopian; appellations without meaning; signs that signify nothing; inscriptions that point out the road to places where there is neither place nor road. Walls of this massive structure surround the ruins of Phocœa, destroyed by Cyrus; they are also found in Etruria."

Cleone! are you tired? rest then.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Several times had Pericles been silent, expecting and inviting our guests to assist him in the investigation.

"I have no paradox to maintain, no partiality to defend," said he. "Some tell us that there were twenty Homers, some deny that there was ever one. It were idle and foolish to shake the contents of a vase in order to let them settle at last. We are perpetually laboring to destroy our delight, our composure, our devotion to superior power. Of all the animals upon earth we least know what is good for us. My opinion is, that what is best for us is our admiration of good. No man living venerates Homer more than I do. He was the only author I read when I was a boy, for our teachers are usually of opinion that wisdom and poetry are like fruit for children, unwholesome if too fresh. Simonides had indeed grown somewhat sound; Pindar was heating: Eschylus.. ay, but Eschylus was almost at the next door. Homer then nourished my fancy, animated my

dreams, awoke me in the morning, marched with me, sailed with me, taught me morals, taught me languages, taught me music, and philosophy, and war.

"Ah, were he present at this hour among us! that I might ask him how his deities entered Troy. In Phrygia there was but one goddess, the mother of all the gods, Cybele. Unlike our mortal mothers, she was displeased if you noticed her children; indeed she disowned them. Her dignity, her consequence, her high antiquity, induced the natives of the islands, and afterwards the other Greeks, to place their little gods under her protection, and to call her their mother. Jupiter had his Ida, but not the Phrygian; and Pallas was worshipped in her citadels, but not above the streams of Simois and Scamander. Our holy religion has not yet found its way far beyond us; like the myrtle and olive, it loves the sea-air, and flourishes upon few mountains in the interior. The Cabiri still hold Samothrace; and we may almost hear the cries of human victims in the north.

"If there were any true history of the times

we are exploring, perhaps we might find in it that many excursions, combined and simultaneous, had utterly failed; and that the disasters of many chiefs engaged in them were partly concealed from the nations they governed by the sacred veil of poetry. Of those who are reputed to have sailed against Troy, none returned prosperous, none with the men he had led out; most were forbidden to land again upon their native shores, and some who attempted it were slain. Such is usually the fate of the unsuccessful. It is more probable that the second great naval expedition of the Greeks went out to avenge the disasters of the first, the Argonautick; and the result was nearly the same. Of the Argonauts few returned. Sparta lost her Castor and Pollux; Thessaly her Jason; and I am more disposed to believe that the head of Orpheus rolled down the Phasis than down the Hebrus.

"The poets gave successes which the gods denied. But these things concern us little; the poet is what we seek. Needless is it to remark that the Iliad is a work of much reflection and various knowledge; the Odyssea is the marvellous result of a vivid and wild imagination. Aspasia

prefers it. Homer, in nearly the thirty years which I conceive to have intervened between the fanciful work and the graver, had totally lost his pleasantries. Polyphemus could amuse him no longer; Circe lighted up in vain her fires of cedar-wood; Calypso had lost her charms; her maidens were mute around her; the Lestrigons lay asleep; the Syrens sang,

> "Come hither, O passer by! come hither,
> O glory of the Achaians!

and the smooth waves quivered with the sound, but the harp of the old man had no chord that vibrated.

"In the Odyssea he invokes the Muse; in the Iliad he invokes her as a goddess he had invoked before. He begins the Odyssea as the tale of a family, to which he would listen as she rehearsed it; the Iliad as a song of warriors and divinities, worthy of the goddess herself to sing before the world.

"Demonstrate that metaphors are discoverable, drawn from things believed to have been uninvented in the Homerick age; what does it prove? merely that Homer, who lived among the islands, and

among those who had travelled into all the known regions of the world, had collected more knowledge than the shepherds and boar-hunters on the continent.

"Demonstrate that some books in the compilation retain slight traces of a language not exactly the same as the others. What then? Might they not have been composed while he visited countries in which that dialect was indigenous? or might they not have been found there at the first collection of the songs, having undergone some modification from the singers, adapted to the usages and phraseology of the people?

"Who doubts that what was illegible or obscure in the time of Lycurgus, was rendered clearer by the learned Spartan? That some Cretan words, not the Dorian of Sparta, had crept in; that others were substituted; that Solon, Pisistratus, and Hipparchus, had also to correct a few of these corrections, and many things more? They found a series of songs; never was there a series of such length without an oversight or gap.

"Shall the *salpinx* be sounded in my ear? Homer may have introduced it by way of allusion

in one poem, not wanting it in the other. The Grecians of his time never used it in battle; eastern nations did; and perhaps had he known the Phrygians better, its blasts would have sounded on the plains of Troy. He would have discovered that trumpets had been used among them for many ages. We possess no knowledge of any nation who cultivated the science of musick so early, or employed so great a variety of wind instruments. Little did he know of Phrygia, and as little do we know of him. His beautiful creation lies displayed before us; the creator is hidden in his own splendour. I can more easily believe that his hand constructed the whole, than that twenty men could be found, at nearly the same time, each of genius sufficient for the twentieth part; because in many centuries there arose not a single one capable of such a production as that portion.

"Archilochus and Simonides are excellent only in their shorter poems; they could not have whistled so well throughout a long march. Difficulties are to be overcome on both sides. We have no grammarians worthy of the appellation; none in any district of Greece hath studied the

origin and etymology of his language. We sing like the birds, equally ignorant whence our voice arises. What is worse, we are fonder of theories than of truth, and believe that we have not room enough to build up any thing, until we subvert what we find before us. Be it so; but let it be only what is obnoxious, what opposes our reason, what disturbs our tranquillity of mind; not what shows us the extent of the one, the potency of the other, and, consoling us for being mortal, assures us that our structures may be as durable as those of the gods themselves. The name of Homer will be venerated as long as the holiest of theirs; I dare not say longer; I dare not say by wiser men. I hope I am guilty of no impiety; I should aggravate it by lowering Homer, the loftiest of their works."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Aristophanes often dines with us; nevertheless he is secretly an enemy of Pericles, and, fearing

to offend him personally, is satirical on most of our friends. Meton, whose character you know already, great in astronomy, great in geometry, great in architecture, was consulted by Pericles on beautifying the streets of the city, which are close and crooked. No sooner had Aristophanes heard this, than he began to compose a comedy, entitled *The Birds.* He has here represented our quiet contemplative Meton, with a rule and compass in his hands, uttering the most ludicrous absurdities. Meton is a plain, unassuming, inoffensive man, and never speaks inconsiderately. The character is clumsily drawn; but that fault was easily corrected, by representing poor Meton under the chastisement of the cudgel. There is so much wit in this, I doubt whether any audience can resist it. There is magic in every stroke, and what was amiss is mended and made whole again ere the hammer falls. How easy a way of setting all things to rights, with only one dissentient voice!

In the same Comedy is ridiculed the project of Pericles, on a conformity of weights and measures

in Attica and her dependencies. More wit! another beating!

When Aristophanes made us the next visit, Pericles, after greeting him with much good-nature, and after various conversation with him, seemed suddenly to recollect something, and, with more familiarity than usual, took him gently by the elbow, led him a little aside, and said with a smile, and in a low voice,

"My dear friend Aristophanes! I find you are by no means willing to receive the same measure as you give; but remember, the people have ordered the adjustment, the surest preservative against fraud, particularly that by which the poorer are mostly the sufferers. Take care they do not impeach you, knowing as you do how inefficient is my protection. It is chiefly on such an occasion I should be sorry to be in a minority."

Aristophanes blushed and looked alarmed. Pericles took him by the hand, whispering in his ear, "Do not let us enter into a conspiracy against Equity, by attacking the uniformity of weights and measures; nor against Comedy, by

giving the magistrates a pretext to forbid its representation."

Aristophanes turned toward Pantarces, who stood near him, and said,

"I can write a comedy as well as most; Pericles can act one better than any."

Aristophanes, in my opinion, might have easily been the first lyric poet now living, except Sophocles and Euripides; he chose rather to be the bitterest satirist. How many, adorned with all the rarities of intellect, have stumbled on the entrance into life, and have made a wrong choice in the very thing which was to determine their course for ever! This is among the reasons, and perhaps is the principal one, why the wise and the happy are two distinct classes of men.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I had retired before Aristophanes went home. On my return, it was evident that some one present had inveighed against the poet's effrontery, for I was in time to catch these words of Pericles.

"Why should I be angry with the writers of comedy? Is it because they tell me of the faults I find in myself? Surely not; for he who finds them in himself may be quite certain that others have found them in him long before, and have shown much forbearance in the delay.

"Is it because I am told of those I have not discovered in me? Foolish indeed were this. I am to be angry, it seems, because a man forewarns me that I have enemies in my chamber, who will stab me when they find me asleep, and because he helps me to catch them and disarm them.

"But it is such an indignity to be ridiculed. I incurred a greater when I threw myself into the way of ridicule: a greater still should I suffer if I tried whether it could be remedied by resentment."

Ridicule often parries resentment, but resentment never yet parried ridicule.

ASPASIA TO HERODOTUS.

Herodotus! if there is any one who admires your writings more than another, it is I. No

residence in Attica will ever make me prefer the dialect to ours; no writer will charm my ear as you have done; and yet you cannot bring me to believe that the sun is driven out of his course by storms; nor any of the consequences you deduce from it, occasioning the overflow of the Nile. The opinion you consider as unfounded, namely, that it arises from the melting of the snows, and from the periodical rains on the mountains of Ethiopia, is however that of Pericles and Anaxagoras, who attribute it also to Thales, in their estimation the soundest and shrewdest of philosophers. They appear to have very strange notions about the sun, about his magnitude, his position, and distance; and I doubt whether you could persuade them that the three stoutest winds are able to move him one furlong. I am a great doubter, you see; but they, I do assure you, are greater. Pericles is of opinion that natural philosophy has made but little progress; and yet that many more discoveries have burst open before the strenuous inquirer than have been manifested to the world; that some have been supprest by a fear of the public, and some by a contempt for it.

"In the intellectual," said he, "as in the physical, men grasp you firmly and tenaciously by the hand, creeping close at your side, step for step, while you lead them into darkness; but when you conduct them into sudden light, they start and quit you."

O Herodotus! may your life and departure be happy! But how can it be expected! No other deities have ever received such honours as you have conferred upon the Muses; and alas, how inefficient are they to reward or protect their votaries!

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

The tragedy of Phrynicus, on the devastation of our city by the Persians, will outlast all the cities now flourishing on earth.* Heavy was the mulct to which the poet was condemned by

*This tragedy, which produced a more powerful effect than any other on record, has failed however to fulfil the prophecy of Cleone: the Ode of Aletheia, on which she places so small a value, has outlived it.

the Athenians for the tears he drew from them in the theatre.

Is it not remarkable that we have never found any Milesian poem on the same subject? Surely there must have been several. Within how short a period have they perished! Lately, in searching the houses of such inhabitants as were suspected of partiality to the interests of Lacedæmon, these verses were discovered. They bear the signature of *Aletheia, daughter of Charidemus and Astyage.*

We have often heard her story. Often have we sat upon the mound of ruins under which she lies buried: often have we plucked from it the white cyclamen, sweetest of all sweet odours, and played with its stiff reverted little horns, pouring forth a parsimonious fragrance, won only when we applied to them tenderly and closely.

Whether poor Aletheia gave for life more than life's value, it were worse than curiosity to inquire She loved her deliverer; and at the instigation of many less gentle, she was slain for loving him. When the city was again in possession of the citizens, she was stoned to death for favouring the

invader; and her mother rushed forward and shared it. These are things you know; her poem, her only one extant, you do not. You will find in it little of poetry, but much of what is better and rarer, true affection.

ALETHEIA TO PHRAORTES.

1.

Phraortes! where art thou?
The flames were panting after us, their darts
Had pierced to many hearts
Before the Gods, who heard nor prayer nor vow;

2.

Temples had sunk to earth, and other smoke
O'er riven altars broke
Than curled from myrrh and nard,
When like a god among
Arm'd host and unarm'd throng
Thee I discern'd, implored, and caught one brief regard.

2.

Thou passest: from thy side
Sudden two bowmen ride
And hurry me away.
Thou and all hope were gone . .
They loost me . . and alone
In a closed tent mid gory arms I lay.

4.

How did my tears then burn
When dreading thy return,
Behold thee reappear!
Nor helm nor sword nor spear. . .

5.

In violet gold-hem'd vest
Thou camest forth . . too soon!
Fallen at thy feet, clasp't to thy breast,
I struggle, sob, and swoon.

6.

"O send me to my mother! . . bid her come,
And take my last farewell!
One blow! . . enough for both . . one tomb . .
'Tis there *our* happy dwell."

7.

Thou orderest: call'd and gone
At once are they who breathe for thy command.
Thou stoodest nigh me, soothing every moan,
And pressing in both thine my hand,

8.

Then, and then only, when it tore
My hair to hide my face;
And gently did thy own bend o'er
The abject head war-doom'd to dire disgrace.

9.

Ionian was thy tongue,
And when thou badest me to raise
That head, nor fear in aught thy gaze,
I dared look up . . but dared not long.

10.

"Wait, maiden, wait! if none are here
Bearing a charm to charm a tear,
There may (who knows?) be found at last
Some solace for the sorrow past."

11.

My mother, ere the sounds had ceast,
Burst in, and drew me down:
Her joy o'erpowered us both, her breast
Covered lost friends and ruin'd town.

12.

Sweet thought! but yielding now
To many harsher! By what blow
Art thou dissevered from me? War,
That hath career'd too far,
Closeth his pinions . . "Come, Phraortes come
To thy fond friends at home!"

13.

Thus beckons Love . . Away then, wishes wild!
O may thy mother be as blest
As one whose eyes will sink to rest
Blessing thee for her rescued child!

14.

Ungenerous still my heart must be:
Throughout the young and festive train
Which thou revisitest again
May none be happier (this I fear) than she!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Perhaps I like the Ode of Aletheia more than you do, because you sent it me; and you perhaps would have liked it more than I, had I sent it you. There are writings which must lie long upon the straw before they mellow to the taste; and there are summer fruits that cannot abide the keeping.

My heart assures me that Aletheia, had she lived, might have excelled in poetry; and the loss of a lover is a help to it. We must defer our attempts to ascertain her station in the world of poetry: for we never see the just dimensions of what is close before our eyes. Faults are best discovered near, and beauties at some distance.

Aletheia, who found favour with Cleone, is

surely not unworthy to take her seat in the library of Pericles.

I will look for a cyclamen to place within the scroll: I must find it and gather it, and place it there myself. Sweet hapless Aletheia!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Nothing is pleasanter to me than exploring in a library. What a delight in being a discoverer! Among a loose accumulation of poetry, the greater part excessively bad, the verses I am about to transcribe are perhaps the least so.

Life passes not as some men say,
If you will only urge his stay,
And treat him kindly all the while.
He flies the dizzy strife of towns,
Cowers before thunder-bearing frowns,
But freshens up again at song and smile.

Ardalia! we will place him here,
And promise that nor sigh nor tear

Shall ever trouble his repose.
What precious seal will you impress
To ratify his happiness?
That rose thro' which you breathe? — Come, bring that rose.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Knowing how desirous I have always been to learn the history of Athens for these last fifty years, and chiefly that part of it in which my Pericles has partaken so largely; and to reward my forbearance in abstaining from every close and importunate inquiry, he placed a scrap of paper in my hands this morning.

"Read that," said he.

It was no easy matter: few sentences would have been legible without my interpreter; indeed there were not many unerased.

"This speech," replied he, "occupied me one whole night, and somewhat of the next morning: I had so very much *not* to say."

Aware that the party of Cimon would interest the people in his behalf, so that a leader from

among his relatives or friends might be proposed and brought forward, Pericles has resolved to anticipate these exertions. See his few words.

"We have lost, O Athenians! not a town, nor a battle; these you would soon regain; but we have lost a great man, a true lover of his country, Cimon, son of Miltiades.

"I well remember the grief you manifested at the necessity of removing him, for a time, from among the insidious men who would have worked upon his generous temper, ductile as gold. Never could I have believed I had sufficient interest with some I see before me, firm almost unto hardness, whose patriotism and probity had been the most alarmed; but thy listened in me with patience, and revoked the sentence of banishment. Cimon returned from Sparta, took the command of your armies, vanquished the Persians, and imposed on them such conditions as will humble their pride for ever.

"Our fathers were ungenerous to his: we will, as becomes us, pay their debts, and remove the dust from their memory. Miltiades was always great, and only once unsuccessful; Cimon was greater, and never unfortunate, but in the tem-

porary privation of your affections. History offers us no example of so consummate a commander.

"I propose that a statue be erected to Cimon, son of Miltiades, vanquisher of the Persians."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

There are secrets which not even love should try to penetrate. I am afraid of knowing who caused the banishment of Cimon: certainly he was impeached by Pericles, who nevertheless praised him highly whenever his name was mentioned. He has allowed me to transcribe his speech after the sentence of the judges, and with it his letter of recal.

TO THE ATHENIANS,

On the Banishment of Cimon.

In your wisdom, O Athenians, you have decreed that Cimon, son of Miltiades be exiled from our city.

Whatever may have been the errors or the crimes of Cimon, much of them should, in justice to yourselves, and in humanity to the prosecuted, be ascribed to the perversity of that faction, which never ceases or relaxes in its attempts to thwart your determinations, and to deprive you of authority at home, of respect in the sight of Greece.

But I adjure you to remember the services both of Cimon and of Miltiades; and to afford the banished man no reason or plea to call in question your liberality. Permit the rents of his many farms in Attica to be carried to him in Sparta; and let it never be said that a citizen of Athens was obliged to the most illiberal and penurious of people for a sustenance. Not indeed that there is any danger of Sparta entertaining him too honourably. She may pay for services; but rather for those which are to be performed, than for those which have been; and to the man rather who may do her harm, than to him who can do it no longer.

Let us hope that, at some future day, Cimon may be aware of his mistake, and regard with more veneration the image of his father, than the throne of his father's enemy.

LETTER OF PERICLES TO CIMON.

There are few cities, O Cimon, that have men for their inhabitants. Whatever is out of Greece and not Grecian, is nearer the animal world than the intellectual: some even in Greece are but midway. Leave them behind you; return to your country, and conquer her assailants. Wholesome is the wisdom that we have gathered from misfortune, sweet the repose that dwells upon renown, and beautiful the life that is the peristyle of immortality.

SPEECH OF PERICLES.

On the defection of Eubœa and Megara.

Eubœa has rejected our authority and alliance, Megara our friendship. Under what pretext? That we have employed in the decoration of our city the sums of money they stipulated to contribute annually; a subsidy to resist the Persians. What! must we continue a war of extermination with Persia, when she no longer has the power to molest us? when peace has been sworn and proclaimed?

Do we violate the compact with our confederates? No; men of Athens! our fleets are in harbour, every ship in good condition; our arsenals are well-stored; and we are as prompt and as able now to repel aggression as we ever were.

Are our dues then to be withholden from us, because we have anticipated our engagements, because our navy and our army are in readiness before they are wanted? because while our ungrateful allies were plotting our ruin, we were watching over their interests and providing for their security? States, like private men, are subject to the distemper of ingratitude, erasing from the memory the impression of past benefits; but it appears to be peculiar to the Megarians to recompense them with hatred and animosity. Not only have we protected them from aggression, by building for them the very walls from which they now defy us; but, when Mardonius sent against them at Mount Cithæron, the whole force of the Median cavalry, under the command of Magestius, and when they called aloud to every near battalion of the Grecian army, and when Pausanias in vain repeated the exortation, three hundred Athenians,

led by Olympiodorus son of Lampen, threw themselves forward from Erythræ, and, after losing many brave comrades, rescued from imminent death the fathers of those degenerate men who are now in the vanguard of conspirators against us. Ingratitude may be left to the chastisement of the gods, but the sword must consolidate broken treaties. No state can be respected if fragment after fragment may be detached from it with impunity; if traitors are permitted to delude and discompose the contented, and to seduce the ignorant from their allegiance; if loyalty is proclaimed a weakness, sedition a duty, conspiracy wisdom, and rebellion heroism. It is a crime then for us to embellish our city! it is a reproach to enlarge and fortify our harbours! In vain have we represented to the clamorous and refractory, that their annual contributions are partly due to us for past exertions, and partly the price of our protection at this time, and in future; and not against Persia only, but against pirates. Our enemies have persuaded them that rebellion and war are better things . . our enemies, who were lately theirs, and who by this perfidious instigation are about to become so

more cruelly than ever. Are Athenians avaricious? are Athenians oppressive? Even the slaves in our city have easier access to the comforts and delights of life than the citizens of almost any other. Until of late the Megarians were proud of our consanguinity, and refused to be called the descendants of Apollo, in hopes to be acknowledged as the children of Pandion. Although in later times they became the allies of Sparta, they cannot but remember that we have always been their friends, often their deliverers; and it is only for their dishonesty and perfidy that we now are resolved at last to prohibit them from the advantages of our ports. Sparta and Corinth have instigated them; Corinth, whose pride and injustice have excited Corcyra, with her fleets, to seek deliverance in the Piræus. What have we to fear from so strange a union as that of Corinth and Sparta? Are any two nations so unlike? so little formed for mutual succour or for mutual esteem? Hitherto we have shared both our wealth and our dangers with Eubœa. At the conclusion of a successful war, at the signature of a most honourable and advantageous peace, we are

derided and reproached. What is it they discover to despise in us? I will tell you what it is. It is the timid step of blind men: this they saw in us while they were tampering with Sparta. Not ashamed of their seduction, they now walk hand in hand, with open front, and call others to join in their infamy. They have renounced our amity, they have spurned our expostulations, they have torn our treaties, and they have defied our arms. At the peril of being called a bad citizen, I lament your blindness, O Megara and Eubœa!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I find, among the few records in my hands, that Pericles went in person, and conquered the faithless Megara and the refractory Eubœa. Before he sailed to attack the island, he warned the Athenians against an inconsiderate parsimony, which usually terminates in fruitless expenditure. He told them plainly that Eubœa was capable of a protracted and obstinate resistance; and he admonished them that, whatever reverses the arms

of Athens might experience, they should continue the war, and consider the dominion of the island a thing necessary to their existence as a nation; that whoever should devise or counsel the separation of Eubœa from Athens, be declared guilty of treason, and punished with death.

"If Thebes, in a future war," said he, "should take possession of this productive country, and shut up, as she easily might, the passage of the Euripus, she would gain an ascendency over us, from which we never could recover. Losses, defeats, inadequate supplies, may tempt her; she would always have Sparta for an allie on such an occasion. Indeed it is wonderful that the Bœotians, as brave a race of men as any in Greece, and stronger in the body, should not have been her masters. Perhaps it is the fertility of her own territory that kept her content with her possessions and indisposed the cultivators of so rich a soil from enterprize and hazard. Eubœa is no less fertile than Bœotia, from which she is separated by the distance of a stone's throw. Give me fifty gallies, and five thousand men, and Eubœa shall fall ere Sparta can come to her assistance."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Perpetual as have been the wars of Attica, she is overpeopled. A colony hoisted sail for the Chersonese; another to repeople the ruined walls of Sybaris. Happy the families whose fathers give them lands to cultivate, instead of keeping them in idleness at home; such are the founders of colonies. The language of this city is spoken in Italy, in Sicily, in Asia, in Africa, and even on the coast of Gaul, among the yelpings and yells of Cimbers and Sicambers.

Surely the more beneficent of the gods must look down with delight on these fruit-trees planted in the forest. May the healthfullest dews of heaven descend upon them!

We are now busied in the Propylæa; they, although unfinished, are truly magnificent. Which will remain the longest, the traces of the walls or of the colonies? Of the future we know nothing, of the past little, of the present less; the mirror is too close to our eyes, and our own breath dims it.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

I have only time to send you a few perfumes and a few verses. These I transcribe out of a little volume of Erinna: the perfumes came to me from Syria.

Blessed be the man whose beneficent providence gave the flowers another life! We seem to retain their love when their beauty has departed.

ERINNA TO LEUCONÖE.

If comfort is unwelcome, can I think
Reproof aught less will be!
The cup I bring to cool thee, wilt thou drink,
Fever'd Leuconöe?

Rather with Grief than Friendship wouldst thou dwell,
Because Love smiles no more!
Bent down by culling bitter herbs, to swell
A cauldron that boils o'er.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Thanks for the verses! I hope Leuconöe was as grateful as I am, and as sensible to their power of soothing.

Thanks too for the perfumes! Pericles is ashamed of acknowledging he is fond of them; but I am resolved to betray one secret of his: I have caught him several times *trying* them, as he called it.

How many things are there that people pretend to dislike, without any reason, as far as we know, for the dislike or the pretence!

I love sweet odours. Surely my Cleone herself must have breathed her very soul into these! Let me smell them again: let me inhale them into the sanctuary of my breast, lighted up by her love for their reception.

But, ah Cleone! what an importunate and exacting creature is Aspasia! Have you no willows fresh-peeled? none lying upon the bank for baskets, white, rounded, and delicate as your fingers! How very fragrant they were formerly! I have seen none lately. Do you remember the cross old Hermesionax? how he ran to beat us for breaking his twigs? and how, after looking in our faces, he seated himself down again, finished his basket, disbursed from a goat-skin a corroded clod of rancid cheese, put it in, pushed it to us, forced it

under my arm, told us to carry it home *with the gods!* and lifted up both hands and blest us.

I do not wish *that* one exactly; cheese is the cruellest of deaths to me, and Pericles abhors it.

I am running over trifling occurrences which you must have forgotten. You are upon the spot, and have no occasion to recal to memory how the munificent old basket-maker looked after us, not seeing his dog at our heels; how we coaxed the lean, shaggy suspicious animal; how many devices we contrived to throw down, or let slip, so that the good man might not see it, the pestilence you insisted on carrying; how many names we called the dog by, ere we found the true one, *Cyrus;* how, when we had drawn him behind the lentiscus, we rewarded him for his assiduities, holding each an ear nevertheless, that he might not carry back the gift to his master; and how we laughed at our fears, when a single jerk of the head served at once to ingulph the treasure and to disengage him.

I shall always love the smell of the peeled willow. Have you none for me? Is there no young poplar then, with a tear in his eye on

bursting into bud? I am not speaking by metaphor and asiatically. I want the poplars, the willows, the water-lilies, and the soft green herbage. How we enjoyed it on the Meander! what liberties we took with it! robbing it of the flowers it had educated, of those it was rearing, of those that came confidently out to meet us, and of those that hid themselves; none escaped us. For these remembrances, green is the colour I love best. It brings me to the *Fortunate Island* and my Cleone; it brings me back to Childhood, the proud little nurse of Youth, brighter of eye and lighter of heart than Youth herself.

These are not regrets, Cleone, they are respirations, necessary to existence. You may call them half-wishes, if you will. We are poor indeed, when we have no half-wishes left us. The heart and the imagination close the shutters the instant they are gone.

Do not chide me then for coming to you after the blossoms and buds and herbage: do not keep to yourself all the grass on the Meander. We used to share it; we will now. I love it wherever I can get a glimpse of it. It is the home of the

eyes, ever ready to receive them, and spreading its cool couch for their repose.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Demophile, poor honest faithful creature! has yielded to her infirmities. I have spent almost as many hours with her in these last autumnal months, as I did in the earliest of my existence. She could not carry me in her arms again, but she was happy when mine were about her neck, and said they made her stronger. Do you remember how often she dropt my hand to take yours, because you never cried? saying,

"People never weep nor work, themselves, who can make others weep and work for them. That little one will have weeper and worker too about her presently. Look at her, Cleone! Cannot you look like that? Have not you two lips and two eyes? Aspasia has not three. Try now! Mind how I do it!"

Good simple heart!

When she was near her end, she said to me,

"Do you ever go and read those names and bits of verses on the stones yonder? You and Aspasia used formerly. Some of them tell us to be sad and sorry for folks who died a hundred years ago; others to imitate men and woman we never should have had a chance of seeing, had they been living yet. All we can learn from them is this, that our city never had any bad people in it, but has been filled with weeping and wailing from its foundation upwards."

These things puzzled Demophile: she was somewhat vext that she could not well comprehend them, but praised the gods that our house was safe, when many others must have been rent asunder: such a power of lamentation!

"My name," said she, "I believe, is a very difficult and troublesome one to pinfold in a tombstone: nobody has ever tried how it would sound in verse: but, if you and Aspasia think me worth remembering, I am sure you could do more with it than others could; and you would lead your little ones, when the gods have given you any, to come and see it, and tell them many things of old Demophile."

I assured her that, if I outlived her, I would prove, in the manner she wished, that my memory and love outlived her likewise.

She died two days afterwards.

Nothing is difficult, not even an epitaph, if we prefer the thoughts that come without calling, and receive the first as the best and truest. I would not close my eyes to sleep until I had performed my promise.

> Demophile rests here: we will not say
> That she was aged, lest ye turn away;
> Nor that she long had suffered; early woes
> Alone can touch you; go, and pity those!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Ah poor Demophile! she remembered me then. How sorry I am I cannot tell her I remember her!

Cleone! there are little things that leave no little regrets, I might have said kind words, and perhaps have done kind actions, to many who now are beyond the reach of them. One look on the unfortunate might have given a day's happiness; one sigh over the pillow of sickness might have

ensured a night's repose; one whisper might have driven from their victim the furies of despair.

We think too much upon *what* the Gods have given us, and too little *why*.

We both are young; and yet we have seen several who loved us pass away; and we cannot live over again as we lived before. A portion of our lives is consumed by the torch we follow at their funerals. We enter into another state of existence, resembling indeed and partaking of the former but another! it contains the substance of the same sorrows, the shadow of the same joys. Alas! how true are the words of the old poet.

> We lose a life in every friend we lose,
> And every death is painful but the last.

I often think of my beautiful nurse, Myrtale, now married very happily in Clazomene. My first verses were upon her. These are the verses I thought so good, that I wrote a long dissertation on the trochaick meter, to prove it the most magnificent of meters: and I mentioned in it all the poets that ever wrote, from epigrammatick to epick, praising some and censuring others, a judge without appeal upon all.

How you laughed at me! Do you remember the lines? I wonder they are not worse than they are.

Myrtale! may heaven reward thee
For thy tenderness and care!
Dressing me in all thy virtues,
Docile, duteous, gentle, fair.

One alone thou never heededst,
I can boast that one alone;
Grateful beats the heart thy nursling,
Myrtale! 'tis all thy own.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Receive old Lycoris, and treat her affably. She has much influence in her tribe. The elderly of your sex possess no small authority in our city, and I suspect that in others too they have their sway. She made me tremble once. Philotus asked her how she liked my speech, I forgot upon what occasion: she answered,

"His words are current words, and ring well: but unless he gives me more of them for the trouble of our attendance, he shall not be archon, I promise him."

Now I know not how long I could protract a speech, nor how long I could keep my head under water: these are accomplishments I have never studied. Lycoris and I are still friends however. In my favour she has waved her promise, and lets me be archon.*

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

Send me a note whenever you are idle and thinking of me, dear Aspasia! Send it always by some old slave, ill-drest. The people will think it a petition, or something as good, and they will be sure to observe the pleasure it throws into my countenance. Two winds at once will blow into my sails, each helping me onward.

If I am tired, your letter will refresh me; if occupied, it will give me activity. Beside, what a deal of time we lose in business!

* Plutarch says he never was archon; he means perhaps *first* archon.

ASPASIA TO PERICLES.

Would to heaven, O Pericles! you had no business at all, but the conversation of your friends. You must always be the greatest man in the city, whoever may be the most popular. I wish we could spend the whole day together; must it never be? Are you not already in possession of all you ever contended for?

It is time, methinks, that you should leave off speaking in publick, for you begin to be negligent and incorrect. I am to write you a note whenever I am idle and thinking of you!

Pericles! Pericles! how far is it from idleness to think of you! We come to rest before we come to idleness.

PERICLES TO ASPASIA.

In our republick it is no easy thing to obtain an act of divorce from power. It usually is delivered to us by the messenger of Death, or presented in due form by our judges where the oyster keeps open house.

Now, oysters are quite out of season in the summer of life; and life, just about this time, I do assure you, is often worth keeping. I thought so even before I knew you, when I thought but little about the matter. It is a casket not precious in itself, but valuable in proportion to what Fortune, or Industry, or Virtue, has placed within it.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

When Pericles is too grave and silent, I usually take up my harp and sing to it; for musick is often acceptable to the ear when it would avoid or repose from discourse. He tells me that it not only excites the imagination, but invigorates eloquence and refreshes memory: that playing on my harp to him is like besprinkling a tessellated pavement with odoriferous water, which brings out the images, cools the apartment, and gratifies the senses by its fragrance.

"That instrument," said he, "is the rod of Mercury; it calls up the spirits from below, or conducts them back again to Elysium. With what

ecstacy do I throb and quiver under those refreshing showers of sound!"

Come sprinkle me soft musick o'er the breast,
Bring me the varied colours into light
That now obscurely on its tablet rest,
Show me its flowers and figures fresh and bright.
Waked at thy voice and touch, again the chords
Restore what restless years had moved away,
Restore the glowing cheeks, the tender words,
Youth's short-lived spring and Pleasure's summer-day.

I believe he composed these verses while I was playing, although he disowns them, asking me whether I am willing to imagine that my execution is become so powerless.

You remember my old song: it was this I had been playing.

(*Song.*)

The reeds were green the other day,
Among the reeds we loved to play,
We loved to play while they were green.
The reeds are hard and yellow now,
No more their tufted heads they bow
To beckon us behind the scene.

"*What is it like?*" my mother said,
And laid her hand upon my head;
"Mother I cannot tell indeed.
I've thought of all hard things I know,
I've thought of all the yellow too;
It only can be like the reed.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Panenus is our best painter: he was educated by Phidias, who excels all the painters in correctness of design. Panenus has travelled into Egypt, in which country, he tells us, the colours are as fresh upon the walls of the temples as when they were painted; two thousand years ago. Pericles wishes to have a representation of me in the beginning of every Olympiad. Alas! what an imprudence! the most youthful lover never committed one greater.

I will not send a stranger to you, Cleone! I will send the fugitive of Miletus when Epimedea was giving her the lecture in the bath. Be quiet now; say nothing; even the bath itself is quite imaginary.

Panenus plays upon the harp. I praised him for the simplicity and melody of the tune, and for his execution. He was but little pleased.

"Lady," said he to me, "a painter can be two things; he can be a painter and statuary, which is much the easier: make him a third, and you reduce him to nothing."

"Yet Pericles," said I, "plays rather well."

"*Rather well*, I can believe," said he, "because I know that his master was Damon, who was very skilful and very diligent. Damon, like every clever composer I have met with, or indeed ever heard of, was a child in levity and dissipation. His life was half feast, half concert."

"But, Panenus," said I, "surely we may be fond of musick, and yet stand a little on this side of idiocy."

"Aspasia!" he replied, "he who loves not musick is a beast of one species; he who overloves it is a beast of another, whose brain is smaller than a nightingale's, and his heart than a lizard's. Record me one memorable saying, one witticism, one just remark, of any great musician, and I consent to undergo the punishment of Marsyas. Some among them are innocent and worthy men; not many, nor the first. Dissipation, and what is strange, selfishness, and disregard to punctuality in engagements, are common and nearly general in the more distinguished of them.

"O Musick! how it grieves me, that imprudence, intemperance, gluttony, should open their channels into thy sacred stream!"

Panenus said this: let us never believe a word of it. He himself plays admirably, although no composer.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

O Aspasia! have you heard (you surely must) that the people of Samos have declared war against us? It is hardly sixty years since our beautiful city was captured and destroyed by the Persians. In vain hath she risen from her ashes with fresh splendour! Another Phrynicus will have perhaps to write another tragedy upon us.

Is it an offence to be flourishing and happy?

The unfortunate meet and embrace: the fortunate meet and tear each other to pieces. What wonder that the righteous gods allow to prosperity so brief a space!

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Be composed and tranquil: read the speech of Pericles to the Athenians.

SPEECH OF PERICLES.

"The Milesians, it appears, have sent embassadors to you, O men of Athens! not entreating the coöperation of your arms, but the interposition of your wisdom and integrity. They have not spoken, nor indeed can they deem it necessary to speak, of dangers recently undergone together with you, of ancient, faithful, indissoluble alliances, or the glory of descending from the same forefathers. On this plea Miletus might have claimed as a right what she solicits as a favour.

"Samos, O Athenians, has dared to declare war against the people of Miletus. She envies us our commerce, and unable to find a plea for assailing us, strikes our friend in our sight, and looks impudently in our faces to see whether we will resent it.

"No, Athenians, we will not resent it, until we have sent embassadors, to ask her why she has taken up arms against the peaceful and unoffending? It were well were it permitted us to abstain. Yes, I feel I am hazarding your favour by recommending delay and procrastination: but I do not apprehend that we are losing much time. We

have weapons, we have ships, we have the same soldiers who quelled braver enemies. The vanquished seem again to be filling up the ranks we have thinned. They murmur, they threaten, they conspire, they prepare (and preparation denounces it) hostility. Let them come forth against us. Wealth rises up to our succour in that harbour: Glory stands firm and bids them defiance on those walls.

"Wait, wait! twenty days only; ten; not ten?

"Little becomes it me, O Athenians! to oppose your wishes or to abate your ardour.

"Depart then, heralds! and carry with you war."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

I have asked Pericles to let me see all his speeches. He declared to me that he has kept no copies, but promised that he would attempt to recover some of them from his friends. I was disappointed and grieved, and told him I was angry with him. He answered thus, taking me by the hand.

"So, you really are angry that I have been negligent in the preservation of my speeches, after all my labour in modelling and correcting them. You are anxious that I should be praised as a writer, by writers who direct the publick in these matters. Aspasia! I know their value. Understand me correctly and comprehensively. I mean partly the intrinsick worth of their commendations, and partly (as we pay in the price of our utensils) the fashion. I have been accused of squandering away both the publick money and my own: nobody shall ever accuse me of paying three obols for the most grandly embossed and most sonorous panegyrick. I would excite the pleasure (it were too much to say the admiration) of judicious and thoughtful men; but I would neither soothe nor irritate these busybodies. I have neither honey nor lime for ants. We know that good writers are often gratified by the commendation of bad ones; and that even when the learned and intelligent have brought the materials to crown their merits, they have looked toward the door, at some petulant smirking page, for the thread that was to bind the chaplet. Little do I wish to hear what I

am, much less what I am not. Enough for me to feel the consciousness and effect of health and strength: surely it is better than to be told by those who salute me, that I am looking very well.

"You may reply that the question turns not upon compliments, but upon censure.

"Really I know not what my censurers may write, never having had the advantage of reading their lucubrations; all I know is this, if I am not *their* Pericles, I am at least the Pericles of Aspasia and the Athenians."

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

We were conversing on oratory and orators, when Anaxagoras said, looking at Pericles and smiling,

"They are described by Hesiod in two verses, which he applies to himself and the poets:

> Lies very like the truth we tell
> And, when we wish it, truth as well."

Meton relaxed from his usual seriousness, but had no suspicion of the application, although he said,

"Cleverly applied indeed!"

Pericles enjoyed equally the simplicity of Meton and the slyness of Anaxagoras, and said,

"Meton! our friend Anaxagoras is so modest a man, that the least we can do for him is to acknowledge his claims as heir general to Hesiod. See them registered."

I have never observed the temper of Pericles either above or below the enjoyment of a joke: he invites and retaliates, but never begins, lest he should appear to take a liberty.

There are proud men of so much delicacy, that it almost conceals their pride, and perfectly excuses it.

Meton never talks, but answers questions with great politeness, although with less clearness and precision than you would expect. I remarked to him, one evening, that mathematicians had great advantages over others in disputation, from the habitude they had acquired of exactness in solving their problems.

"We mathematicians," answered he, "lay claim to this precision. I need not mention to you, Aspasia, that of all the people who assemble at

your house, I am the only one that ever wants a thought or word. We are exact in our own proper workmanship. Give us time, and we can discover what is false in logick; but I never was acquainted with a mathematician who was ready in correcting in himself a flaw of ratiocination, or who produced the fitting thing, in any moderate time. Composition is quite beyond our sphere. I am not envious of others; but I often regret in myself that, while they are delivering their opinions freely and easily, I am arranging mine: and that in common with all the mathematicians of my acquaintance, I am no prompt debater, no acute logician, no clear expositor, but begin in hesitation and finish in confusion."

I assure you, Cleone, I have been obliged to give order and regularity to these few words of the wise and contemplative Meton, and to remove from among them many that were superfluous and repeated. When he had paused, I told him I sometimes wished he would exercise his powerful mind in conversation.

"I have hardly time," said he, "for study, much less for disputation. Rarely have I known

a disputant who, however dexterous, did not either drive by Truth or over her, or who stopped to salute her, unless he had something fine or novel to display. He would stumble over my cubes and spheres, and I should leave my leg in his noose."

"And yet Anaxagoras and you agree well together," said I.

"Anaxagoras," replied he, "usually asks me short questions, and helps me himself to explain them. He comes to me when I am alone, and would find no pleasure in showing to others my perplexity. Seldom do I let him go again, until he has given me some help or some incitement in my studies. He suggests many things—"

"Silence, good Meton!" cried Anaxagoras, "or I may begin to talk of a luminary whose light has not yet reached the earth."

The three men smiled, they have some meaning uncommunicated to me. Perhaps it is a remark of Pericles, in encouragement of Anaxagoras, that, while others pass before us like a half-obol tow-link across a dark alley, and dazzle and disappear, his loftier light has not yet come down to the intellects of his fellow-citizens; or perhaps it

may really have a reference to some discovery in astronomy.

Pericles goes in person to command the expedition against Samos. He promises me it will soon be ready to sail, and tells me to expect him back again within a few months. Artemon is preparing machines of great magnitude for the attack of the city. He teaches me that the Samians are brave and wealthy, and that no city is capable of such a resistance. Certainly never were such preparations. I hope at least that the report of them will detain your enemies at home, and at all events that before they land, you will leave Miletus and come to me. The war is very popular at Athens: I dare say it is equally so at Samos—equally so at Miletus. Nothing pleases men like renewing their ancient alliance with the brutes, and breaking off the more recent one with their fellow-creatures.

War is it, O grave heads! that ye
With stern and stately pomp decree?
Inviting all the gods from far
To join you in the game of war?
Have ye then lived so many years
To find no purer joy than tears?
And seek ye now the highest good
In strife, in anguish, and in blood?

Your wisdom may be more than ours,
But you have spent your golden hours,
And have methinks but little right
To make the happier fret and fight
Ah! when will come the calmer day
When these dark clouds shall pass away?
When (should two cities disagree)
The young, the beauteous and the free,
Rushing with all their force, shall meet,
And struggle with embraces sweet,
Till they who may have suffer'd most
Give in, and own the battle lost.

Philosophy does not always play fair with us. She often eludes us when she has invited us, and leaves us when she has led us the farthest way from home. Perhaps it is because we have jumped up from our seats at the first lesson she would give us, and the easiest, and the best. There are few words in the precept,

Give pleasure: receive it:
Avoid giving pain: avoid receiving it.

For the duller scholar, who may find it difficult to learn the whole, she cuts each line in the middle, and tells him kindly that it will serve the purpose, if he will but keep it in his memory.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Will you never be serious, even upon the most serious occasions? There are so many Grecian states, on both continents and in the islands, that surely some could always be found both willing and proper to arbitrate on any dissension. If litigations are decided by arbiters when two men contend, (as they often are,) surely it would be an easier matter with cities and communities; for they are not liable to the irritation arising from violent words, nor to the hatred that springs up afresh between two men who strive for property, every time they come within sight. I believe the Greeks are the happiest people upon earth, or that ever are likely to exist upon it; and chiefly from their separation into small communities, independent governments, and laws made by the people for the people! But unless they come to the determination that no war whatever shall be undertaken until the causes of quarrel are examined, and the conditions of accommodation both proposed and enforced by others, from whom impartiality is most reasonably to be expected, they will exist without enjoying the

greatest advantage that the gods have offered them. Religious men, I foresee, will be sorry to displease the god of battles. Let him have all the kingdoms of the world to himself, but I wish he would resign to the quieter deities our little Greece.

Preparations are going on here for resistance to the Samians, and we hear that Athenian ships are cruizing off their island.

In case of necessity, every thing is ready for my departure to the sources of the Meander. I will prove to you that I am not hurried nor frightened; I have leisure to write out what perhaps may be the last verses written in Miletus, unless we are relieved.

LITTLE AGLÄE,

TO HER FATHER, ON HER STATUE BEING CALLED LIKE HER.

Father! the little girl we see
Is not, I fancy so like me . .
You never hold her on your knee.

When she came home the other day
You kist her, but I cannot say
She kist you first and ran away.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Herodotus, on returning from his victory at the Olympian games, was the guest of Pericles. You saw him afterwards; and he might have told you that Pericles was urgent with him to remain at Athens. True, as a stranger, he would have been without influence here in political affairs. It is evident that he desires no such thing, but prefers, as literary men should always do, tranquillity and retirement. These he may enjoy in perfection where he is, and write the truth intrepidly. Pericles has more than once heard from him. Life passes in no part of the world so easily and placidly as among the Grecian colonies in Italy. They rarely quarrel, they have room enough, men enough, wealth enough, and not too much. One petty tyrant has sprung up amongst them lately, and has imprisoned, exiled, and murdered the best citizens.

Pericles was asked his advice what should be done with him. He answered,

"I never interfere in the affairs of others. It appears to me that, where you have nothing but a weazel to hunt, you should not bring many dogs

into the field, nor great ones; but in fact the rat-catcher is the best counsellor on these occasions: he neither makes waste nor noise."

The tyrant, we hear, is sickening, and many epitaphs are already composed for him; the shortest is,

> The pigmy despot Mutinas lies here!
> He was not godless; no: his God was Fear.

Herodotus tells, that throughout the lower Italy, poverty is unknown; every town well governed, every field well ploughed, every meadow will irrigated, every vineyard pruned scientifically. The people choose their higher magistrates from the most intelligent, provided they are not needy. The only officers that are salaried are the lower, which all the citizens have an equal chance of attaining; some by lot, some by suffrage. This is the secret why the governments are peaceful and durable. No rich man can become the richer for them; every poor man may, but honestly and carefully.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Corinna was honoured in her native place as greatly as abroad. This is the privilege of our sex. Pindar and Eschylus left their country, not because the lower orders were indifferent or unjust to them, but because those who were born their equals could not endure to see them rise their superiors.

What a war against the gods is this!

It seems as if it were decreed by a publick edict, that no one shall receive from them any gift above a certain value; and that if they do receive it, they shall be permitted to return the gods no thanks for it in their native city.

So then! republicks must produce genius, and kings reward it!

So then! Hiero and Archelaüs must be elevated to the rank of Cimon and Pericles! O shame! O ignominy!

What afflicts me deeply is the intelligence we receive that Herodotus has left Ionia. He was crowned at the Olympian games; he was invited to a publick festival in every city he visited through-

out the whole extent of Greece, even his own was pleased with him, yet he too has departed—not to Archelaüs or to Hiero, but to the retirement and tranquillity of Italy.

I do believe, Aspasia, that studious men, who look so quiet, are the most restless men in existence.

ORATION OF PERICLES TO THE SOLDIERS ROUND SAMOS.

Little time is now left us, O Athenians, between the consideration and the accomplishment of our duties. The justice of the cause, when it was first submitted to your decision in the Agora, was acknowledged with acclamations; the success of it you have ensured by your irresistible energy. The port of Samos is in our possession, and we have occupied all the eminences round her walls. Patience is now as requisite to us as to the enemy. for, although every city which can be surrounded, can be captured, yet in some, where courage and numbers have been insufficient to drive off the

besieger, Nature and Art may have thrown up obstacles to impede his progress. Such is Samos; the strongest fortress in Europe, excepting only Byzantion. But Byzantion fell before our fathers; and, unless she become less deaf to the reclamations of honour, less indifferent to the sanctitude of treaties; unless she prefer her fellow-soldiers to her common enemy, freedom to aristocracy, friends to strangers, Greeks to Asiaticks, she shall abase her Thracian fierceness before *us*. However, we will neither spurn the suppliant nor punish the repentant: our arms we will turn for ever, as we turn them now, against the malicious rival, the alienated relative, the apostate confederate, and the proud oppressor. Where a sense of dignity is faint and feeble, and where reason hath lain unexercised and inert, many nations have occasionally been happy, and even flourishing under kings: but oligarchy hath ever been a curse to all, from its commencement to its close. To remove it eternally from the vicinity of Miletus, and from the well-disposed of that very city by which hostilities are denounced against her, is at once our interest and our duty. For oligarchs in every part

of the world are necessarily our enemies, since we have always shown our fixt determination to aid and support with all our strength the defenders of civility and freedom. It is not in our power, (for against our institutions and consciences we Athenians can do nothing,) it is not in our power, I repeat it, to sit idle by, while those who were our fellow-combatants against the Persian, and who suffered from his aggression even more than we did, are assailed by degenerate Ionians, whose usurpation rests on Persia. We have enemies wherever there is injustice done to Greeks; and we will abolish that injustice, and we will quell those enemies. Wherever there are equal laws we have friends; and those friends we will succour, and those laws we will maintain. On which side do the considerate and religious look forward to the countenance of the gods? Often have they deferred indeed their righteous judgments, but never have they deserted the long-suffering and the brave. Upon the ground where we were standing when you last heard my appeal to you, were not Xerxes and his myriads encamped? What drove them from it? The wisdom, force, and fortitude,

breathed into your hearts by the immortal gods. Preserve them with equal constancy; and your return, I promise you, shall not have been more glorious from Salamis than from Samos.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Samos has fallen. Pericles will have given you this information long before my letter can reach you, and perhaps the joy of the light-hearted Athenians will be over ere then. So soon dies away the satisfaction of great exploits, even of such as have swept a generation from before us, have changed the fortunes of a thousand more, and indeed have shaken the last link in the remotest. We hear, but perhaps the estimate is exaggerated, that the walls of Miletus, of Ephesus, of Priene, are, in comparison to Samos, as the fences of a farm-yard are to them. Certain it is that the vanquished fleet was more formidable than the united navies of Corinth and of Carthage, which are rated as next in force to the Athenian.

By this conquest, we are delivered from im-

minent danger; yet, I am ashamed to say it, our citizens are ungrateful already. It is by the exertions of the Athenians that they are not slaves; and they reason as basely as if they were. They pretend to say that it was jealousy of Samos, and the sudden and vast increase of her maritime power, but by no means any affection for Miletus, which induced them to take up arms! Athens had just reason for hostility; why should she urge, in preference, unjust ones? Alas! if equity is supported by violence, little can be the wonderment if power be preceded by falsehood. Such a reflection may be womanish; but are not all peculiarly so which are quiet, compassionate, and consistent? The manly mind, in its continual course of impediment and cataracts, receives and gives few true images; our stagnant life in this respect has greatly the advantage.

Xanthus, the friend (you remember) of poor Xeniades, fought as a volunteer in the Athenian army, and was entrusted with the despatches to our government.

"Xanthus!" said the General, "your countrymen will hereafter read your name, although it is

not written here; for we conquerors of Samos are no little jealous one of another. Go and congratulate the Milesians: they will understand us both."

I asked him many questions. He replied with much simplicity, "I was always too much in it to know anything about it. The principal thing I remember is, that Pericles (I was told) smiled at me for a moment in the heat of battle, and went on to another detachment."

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

The wind, I understand, has delayed my last letter in harbour, and continues adverse. Every day we receive some fresh vessel from Samos, and some new intelligence. True is it, we discover, that the prevailing party had been supported at once by the Peloponnesians and the Persians. The chastisement of the delinquents is represented as very much too mild. "They would have made us slaves, let us make them so." Such, with scourges and tortures, were the denunciations of the people and the soldiery; and more vehe-

mently in Samos than in Miletus. The leaders of the oligarchy (now suppressed for ever) were two men of low extraction, Lysimachus and Elpenor. We daily hear some story, well known in Samos only, of these incendiaries. Lysimachus was enriched by the collocation of his wife with an old dotard, worn out by gluttony and disordered in intellect. By his last testament, made when he had lost his senses, he bequeathed her fifty talents. The heirs refused to pay them; and Lysimachus would have pleaded her cause before the people, had they not driven him away with shouts and stones. Nevertheless he was thought a worthy champion of the faction, and the rather as his hatred of his fellow-citizens and former companions must be sincere and inextinguishable. Elpenor is far advanced in age. His elder son was wounded by accident, and died within the walls. Avarice and parsimony had always been his characteristicks, under the veil however of morality and religion. The speech he made at the funeral is thus reported,

"It hath been, O men of Samos! the decree of the immortal gods, whose names be ever blessed! . . ."

"Hold hard there! Cannot you see that there are no sparks in the pyre? . . . the wine smells sadly . . throw no more on them . . take it home to the cellar" . . . "to remove from my aged eyes, from my frail embraces, the delight of my life, the staff of my declining years, all spent in the service of my beloved country. It is true I have another son, rising out of his adolescence . . here beside me . . O my child! Molismogis! Molismogis! on such a melancholy occasion dost thou, alas! tie indissolubly and wastefully that beautiful piece of pack-thread? Hard knots! hard knots! hard fate! hard fate! Thy poor bereaved mother may want it; and it will fail her in the hour of need."

Two torches were borne before the funeral. One of them presently gave signs rather prematurely emblematical of our mortal state, and could be restored to its functions by no exertion of the bearer, first waving it gently toward its companion, then shaking it with all his might, horizontally, vertically, diagonally, then holding it down despondently to the earth. Elpenor beckoned to him, and asked him in his ear how much he had paid for it.

"Half a drachma."

"Fraud!" cried Elpenor, "fraud, even at the tomb! before the dead, and before the gods of the dead! From whom did you make the purchase?"

"From Gylippides, son of Agoracles."

"Tell Gylippides, son of Agoracles," calmly said Elpenor, "that in my love of equity, in my duty to the state, in my piety to the gods, in my pure desire to preserve the tranquility of his conscience, I cite him before the tribunal, unless he refund an obol." Then aloud, "It was not in this manner, O Athenians! that our forefathers reverenced the dead."

He gave way under his grief, and was carried back with little commiseration. Elpenor is among the richest men in Greece, unless the conquerors have curtailed his treasures. It is but reasonable that everything such men possess should compensate the people for years of rapine, disunion, and turbulence; for the evil laws they enacted, and for the better they misadministered and perverted.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

Enough, enough is it for me to see my Pericles safe at home again. Not a word has he spoken, not a question have I asked him, about the odious war of Samos. He made in Samos, I hear, a most impressive oration, to celebrate the obsequies of those brave soldiers who fell. In Athens, where all is exultation, he has rendered the slain the most glorious of the triumphant, and the fatherless the proudest of the living. But at last of how little worth is the praise of eloquence! Elpenor and Lysimachus lead councils and nations! Great gods! surely ye must pity us when we worship you . . we who obey, and appear to reverence, the vilest of our species! I recover my step; I will not again slip into this offal. Come, and away to Xanthus. Ay, ay, Cleone! Simplicity, bravery, well-merited and well-borne distinction! . . Take him, take him: we must not all be cruel . . to ourselves.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Aspasia! you mistake. Grant me the presence of friendship and the memory of love! It is only

in this condition that a woman can be secure from fears and other weaknesses. I may admire Xanthus; and there is pleasure in admiration. If I thought I could love him, I should begin to distrust and despise myself. I would not desecrate my heart, even were it in ruins; but I am happy, very happy; not indeed altogether as I was in early youth . . perhaps it was youth itself that occasioned it. Let me think so! Indulge me in the silence and solitude of this one fancy. If there was any thing else, how sacred should it ever be to me! Ah yes, there was! and sacred it is, and shall be.

Laodamia saw with gladness, not with passion, a god, conductor of her sole beloved. The shade of Xeniades follows the steps of Xanthus.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Parties of pleasure are setting sail, every day almost, for Samos. We begin to be very brave; we women, I mean. I suspect that no few of us take an unworthy delight in the humiliation and misery of the fair Samians. Not having seen,

nor intending to see them myself, I can only tell you what I have heard of their calamities.

Loud outcries were raised by the popular orators against such of them as were suspected of favoring the Persian faction, and it was demanded of the judges that they should be deported and exposed for slaves. This menace, you may well imagine, caused great anxiety and alarm, even among those who appeared to be quite resigned to such a destiny while the gallant young Athenians were around the walls. But, to be sold! and the gods alone know to whom! Old morose men, perhaps, and jealous women! We suspect it was at the instigation of Pericles that a much severer chastisement has befallen them. They have been condemned to wear the habiliments of Persians. Surely no refinement of cruelty can surpass the decree, by which a Greek woman is divested of that beautiful dress which alone can be called an ornament to the female form. This decree has been carried into execution; and you would pity even the betrayers of their country. Whether in ignorance of what the Persian habit is, or from spite and malice, the Samian ladies are obliged to wear sleeves of

sufficient amplitude to conceal a traitor in each; and chains, intersecting the forehead with their links and ornaments; and hair not divided along the whole summit of the head, but turned back about the centre, to make them resemble the heads of some poisonous snakes. This barbarian garb has already had such an effect on many, that they have cast themselves into the sea; and others have entreated that they may, as was first threatened, rather be sold for slaves.

CLEONE TO ASPASIA.

Odious, as undoubtedly was the conduct of the Samian oligarchy and priesthood, and liable as are all excesses to a still farther exaggeration in the statement of them, you will hardly believe the effrontery of the successful demagogues. Not contented with undeniable proofs, in regard to the enormous and mismanaged wealth torn away from the priests of Bacchus, they have invented the most improbable falsehood that the malevolence of faction ever cast against the insolence of power. They pretend that certain men, some of ancient family, more of recent, had conspired

to transmit the reins of government to their elder sons. Possession for life is not long enough! They are not only to pass laws, but (whenever it so pleases) to impede them! They decree that the first-born male is to be the wisest and best of the family, and shall legislate for all Samos! Democracy has just to go one step farther, and to persuade the people (ready at such times to believe anything) that the oligarchy had resolved to render their power hereditary, not only for one generation, but for seven. The nation, so long abused in its understanding, would listen to and believe the report, ignorant that arbitrary power has never been carried to such extravagance even in Persia itself, although it is reported, that in India the lower orders of people were hereditarily subject to the domination of a privileged class. But this may be false; and indeed it must be, if what is likewise told us concerning them be true, which is, that they have letters among them.

ASPASIA TO CLEONE.

You have given me in your two last letters a great deal of curious information, about the dis-

coveries that the demagogues made, or pretended to have made, in Samos. It is credible enough that the oligarchs were desirous of transmitting their authority to their children: but that they believed so implicitly in the infatuation of the citizens, or the immutability of human events, as to expect a continuation of power in the same families for seven generations, is too gross and absurd, even to mislead an insurgent and infuriated populace. He indeed must be composed of mud from the Nile, who can endure with patience this rancorous fabrication. In Egypt, we are told by Herodotus in his *Erato*, that *the son of a herald is of course a herald; and, if any man hath a louder voice than he, it goes for nothing.*

Hereditary heralds are the proper officers of hereditary lawgivers; and both are well worthy of dignity where the deities are cats.

Strange oversight! that no provision should ever have been devised, to ensure in these tutelar and truly household gods an equal security for lineal succession!

END OF VOL. I.