figure of the latter. A consciousness of such periods may be traced in the passage of the Funeral Oration where Pericles refers, first, to the acquisition of empire by the preceding generation, and then to the improvement of that inheritance by his own contemporaries (ii. 36. 5). It is a natural subject of regret, though it is not a just cause of surprise or complaint, that the History tells us nothing of the literature, the art, or the social life under whose in­fluences its author had grown up. The Funeral Oration contains, indeed, his general testimony to the value and the charm of those influences. There we have the very essence of the Athenian spirit condensed into a few preg­nant sentences, which show how thoroughly the writer was imbued with thai spirit, and how profoundly he appreci­ated its various manifestations. But he leaves us to supply all examples and details for ourselves. Beyond a passing reference to public “ festivals,” and to “ beauti­ful surroundings in private life,” he makes no attempt to define those “ recreations for the spirit ” which the Athenian genius had provided in such abundance. No writer of any age, perhaps, has rendered a more impressive tribute to the power of the best art than is implied in the terse phrase of Thucydides, when, speaking of the works which the Athenian daily saw around him, he declares that “ the daily delight of them banishes gloom ” (ὧv *καθ' ὴϻέρav ὴ τέρψιϛ τò λvπηρòv έκϻλὴσσϵι).* But it is not to Thucydides that we owe any knowledge of the particular forms in which that art was embodied. He alludes to the newly-built Parthenon only as containing the treasury ; to the statue of Athene Parthenos which it enshrined, only on account of the gold which, at extreme need, could be detached from the image ; to the Propylæa and other buildings with which Athens had been adorned under Pericles, only as works which had reduced the surplus of funds available for the war. Among the illus­trious contemporaries whose very existence would be unknown from his pages are the dramatists Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes ; the architect Ictinus ; the sculptor Phidias ; the physician Hippocrates ; the philosophers Anaxagoras and Socrates. If Thucydides had mentioned Sophocles' as a general in the Samian War, it may be doubted whether he would have noticed the circumstance that Sophocles also wrote dramas, unless it had been for the purpose of distinguishing him from a namesake. And, had he lived to carry his story down to the debate in the Athenian ecclesia after the battle of Arginusæ, we may conjecture that Socrates, if named at all, would have been barely mentioned as the one prytanis out of fifty who resisted an unconstitutional act,—with some expression, perhaps, of praise, but without any fuller characterization. We think of the countless occasions which Herodotus, if he had dealt with this period, would have found for invaluable digressions on men and manners, on letters and art ; we feel the severity of the loss which the reticence of Thucydides has caused to us ; and we might almost be tempted to ask whether the more genial, if laxer, method of Herodotus does not indeed correspond better with a liberal conception of the historian’s office. No one can do full justice to Thucydides, or appreciate the true completeness of his work, who has not faced this question, and found the answer to it. It would be a hasty judgment which inferred from the omissions of the History that its author’s interests were exclusively polit­ical. Thucydides was not writing the history of a period. His subject was an event—the Peloponnesian War,—a war, as he believed, of unequalled importance, alike in its direct results and in its political significance for all time. To his task, thus defined, he brought an intense concentra­tion of all his faculties. He worked with a constant desire to make each successive incident of the war as clear as possible. To take only two instances : there is nothing in literature more graphic than his description of the plague at Athens, or than the whole narrative of the Sicilian expedition. But the same temper made him resolute in excluding irrelevant topics. The social life of the time, the literature and the art, find no place in his picture simply because they did not belong to his subject. His work was intended to be “ a possession for ever.” He could conceive a day when Sparta should be desolate, and when only ruins of Athens should remain. But his imagination never projected itself into a time when the whole fabric of Hellenic civilization should have perished. Could his forecast have extended to an age when men of “ barbarian ” races and distant climes would be painfully endeavouring to reconstruct a picture of that civilization, —when his own narrative would need the help of side­lights which seemed to him wholly unnecessary,—then, assuredly, he would have added all that such readers could require. But he would not have done this in the manner of Herodotus, by free indulgence in digression; rather he would have gathered up the social and intel­lectual phenomena of his day in a compact and systematic introduction, specially designed for the non-Hellenic reader.

The biography which bears the name of Marcellinus states that Thucydides was the disciple of Anaxagoras in philosophy and of Antiphon in rhetoric. Such statements were often founded on nothing more than a desire to associate distinguished names, and to represent an eminent man as having profited by the best instruction in each kind which his contemporaries could afford. In this case there is no evidence to confirm the tradition. But it may be observed that Thucydides and Antiphon at least belong to the same rhetorical school, and represent the same early stage of Attic prose. Both writers use words of an antique or decidedly poetical cast ; both point verbal con­trasts by insisting on the precise difference between terms of similar import ; and both use metaphors somewhat bolder than were congenial to Greek prose in its riper age. The differences, on the other hand, between the style of Thucydides and that of Antiphon arise chiefly from two general causes. First, Antiphon wrote for hearers, Thucydides for readers ; the latter, consequently, can use a degree of condensation, and a freedom in the arrangement of words, which would have been hardly possible for the former. Again, the thought of Thucy­dides is often more complex than any which Antiphon undertook to interpret ; and the greater intricacy of the historian’s style exhibits the endeavour to express each thought.@@1 Few things in the history of literary prose are more interesting than to watch that vigorous mind in its struggle to mould a language of magnificent but im­mature capabilities. The obscurity with which Thucy­dides has sometimes been reproached often arises from the very clearness with which a complex idea is present to his mind, and his strenuous effort to present it in its entirety, when the strong consciousness of logical cohe­rence will make him heedless of grammatical regularity. He never sacrifices the thought to the language, but he will sometimes sacrifice the language to the thought. A student of Thucydides may always be consoled by the reflexion that he is not engaged in unravelling a mere rhetorical tangle. Every light on the sense will be a light on the words ; and, when, as is not seldom the case, Thucy­dides comes victoriously out of this struggle of thought and language, having achieved perfect expression of his meaning in a sufficiently lucid form, then his style rises into an intellectual brilliancy—thoroughly manly, and also penetrated with intense feeling—which nothing in Greek prose literature surpasses.

@@@1 See Jebb’s Attic Orators, vol. i. p. 35.