hedge-sparrows (see Spa rrow). In these, as opposed to the warblers, the young are spotted. (2) Myiodectinac, a small group, chiefly South American, with strong bristles round the gape. (3) Sylviinae (see Warblers). (4) Polioptilinae or gnat-catchers of North and South America. (5) Miminae or mocking-birds (*q.v.).* The so- called “ babbling-thrushes ” which occur throughout the Old World are usually referred to a distinct family, the Timeliidae, characterized by strong bills and feet, and short, rounded and in­curved wings. The “ ant thrushes" belong to a different family (see Pitta). (A. N.)

**THUCYDIDES** *(θoυκυδiδηs),* Athenian historian. Materials for his biography are scanty, and the facts are of interest chiefly as aids to the appreciation of his life’s labour, the *History of the Peloponnesian War.* The older view that he was probably born in or about 471 b.c., is based on a passage of Aulus Gellius, who says that in 431 Hellanicus “ seems to have been” sixty-five years of age, Herodotus fifty-three and Thucydides forty (*Noct. att.* xv. 23). The authority for this statement was Pamphila, a woman of Greek extraction, who compiled bio­graphical and historical notices in the reign of Nero. The value of her testimony is, however, negligible, and modern criticism inclines to a later date, about 460@@1 (see Busolt, *Gr. Gesch.* iii., pt. 2, p. 621). Thucydides’ father Olorus, a citizen of Athens, belonged to a family which derived wealth and influence from the possession of gold-mines at Scaptē Hylē, on the Thracian coast opposite Thasos, and was a relative of his elder namesake, the Thracian prince, whose daughter Hegesipyle married the great Miltiades, so that Cimon, son of Miltiades, was possibly a connexion of Thucydides (see Busolt, ibid., p. 618). It was in the vault of the Cimonian family at Athens, and near the remains of Cimon’s sister Elpinice, that Plutarch saw the grave of Thucydides. Thus the fortune of birth secured three signal advantages to the future historian: he was rich; he had two homes—one at Athens, the other in Thrace—no small aid to a comprehensive study of the conditions under which the Pelo­ponnesian War was waged; and his family connexions were likely to bring him from his early years into personal intercourse with the men who were shaping the history of his time.

The development of Athens during the middle of the 5th century was, in itself, the best education which such a mind as that of Thucydides could have received. The expansion and consolidation of Athenian power was completed, and the inner resources of the city were being applied to the embellishment and ennoblement of Athenian life (see Cimon; Pericles). Yet 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. 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. He alludes to the newly- built Parthenon only as containing the treasury; to the statue of Athena Parthenos which it enshrined, only on account of the gold which, at extreme need, could be detached from the image; to the Propylaea 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. He makes no reference to Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes; the architect Ictinus; the sculptor Pheidias; the physician Hippo­crates; the philosophers Anaxagoras and Socrates. Herodotus, if he had dealt with this period, would have found countless occasions for invaluable digressions on men and manners, on letters and art; and we might almost be tempted to ask whether his more genial, if laxer, method 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 did not belong to his subject.

The biography which bears the name of Marcellinus states that Thucydides was the disciple of Anaxagoras in philosophy and of Antiphon in rhetoric. There is no evidence to confirm this tradition. But Thucydides and Antiphon at least belong to the same rhetorical school and represent the same early stage of Attic prose. Both writers used 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.@@2 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. He never sacrifices thought to language, but he will sometimes sacrifice language to thought. A student may always be consoled by the reflection 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.

The uncertainty as to the date of Thucydides’ birth renders futile any discussion of the fact that before 431 he took no prominent part in Athenian politics. If he was born in 455, the fact needs no explanation; if in 471, it is possible that his opportunities were modified by the necessity of frequent visits to Thrace, where the management of such an important property as the gold-mines must have claimed his presence. The manner in which he refers to his personal influence in that region is such as to suggest that he had sometimes resided there (iv. 105, 1). He was at Athens in the spring of 430, when the plague broke out. If his account of the symptoms has not enabled physicians to agree on a diagnosis of the malady, it is at least singularly full and vivid. He had himself been attacked by the plague; and, as he briefly adds, “ he had seen others suffer.” The tenor of his narrative would warrant the inference that he had been one of a few who were active in ministering to the sufferers.

The turning-point in the life of Thucydides came in the winter of 424. He was then forty seven (or, according to Busolt, about thirty-six), and for the first time he is found holding an official position. He was one of two generals entrusted with the com­mand of the regions towards Thrace (τά *M* θpςiκηs), a phrase which denotes the whole Thracian seaboard from Macedonia

@@@1 Christ (*Gesch. der griech. Litt.)* gives the date of birth as “about 455."

@@@2 See Jebb's *Attic Orators,* i. 35.