foreigner, lived more happily at Athens than at Lacede­mon, or perhaps any other city of Greece, especially during a time of war, when their services were needful to the state.@@1 Slavery, therefore, acted probably less injuriously on the character of the Athenian master, than it did else­where in Greece. It was tempered by the social humour of the people. But the facility thus afforded to the citi­zens of living in indolence and ease, and abandoning all do­mestic employment for the excitement of the public assem­blies, and the courts, and the spectacles, naturally induced a neglect of the private and domestic duties. There is reason to believe, that whilst the Athenians appeared in the face of the world the most light-hearted of men, they were secretly unhappy in their homes ; living in listlessness from day to day on the alms of their public pay ; many of them reduced from affluence to poverty through the loss of lands and property by the ravages and pressure of war, and yet unable or unwilling to use the necessary exertions to relieve themselves from their distress. It is evidently no singular in­stance which Xenophon has given of this state of things at Athens, when he tells us of Aristarchus complaining to Socrates of the number of poor female relatives who, from losses in the course of the Peloponnesian war, were thrown on him for support. The difficulty which Aristar­chus felt, was, that he could not expect persons who were free-born and his own kindred, to undertake any manual la­bour, so as to assist in maintaining themselves. Happily, however, he adopts the friendly suggestion of Socrates, and makes the experiment of setting them actively to work. The experiment succeeds; and thus contentment and cheer­fulness are introduced to a home where before all was gloom and mutual suspicion.@@2

In the meantime, a great number of mechanics and trades­men had risen to wealth and importance, in consequence of the demand for every species of labour and trade, resulting from the multiplied population of the city and its numerous foreign dependencies and connexions, and, in particular, from the magnificent public works carried on during the ad­ministration of Pericles. All this while, Athens was be­coming more and more a mercantile community, in the midst of strong aristocratic prejudices, still surviving, and rendered, indeed, more intense by the opposition growing up around them. In many instances, the older families would be declining in wealth, exhausted by the burthens of the state or the extravagance of individual expenditure ; whilst new families, the creations of successful trade and enterprize, would be obtaining influence by the force of their wealth, and encroaching on the privileged ground hi­therto occupied only by right of birth. It may be easily conceived, therefore, that the mass of the society of the city would be now all fermentation and restlessness ; the one class pushing their interests and their claims to equality founded on their personal title, whilst the other obstinate­ly clung to the exclusiveness and the pride of hereditary right.

But we shall best judge of the distempered state of the social atmosphere of Athens, by adverting to the character of female society as it existed there. It has often been re­marked, as the glory of modern and Christian civilization, that it has restored woman to her due place in the scale of social importance, and thus most effectually chastened and elevated the general intercourse of human life. In a country so essentially social as Greece, and especially at Athens, it was practically impossible to impose on the women the absolute

seclusion of eastern despotism. Still it was even at Athens con­sidered the rule of propriety, that the wives and daughters of citizens should live in the strict privacy of their homes, and be known and noticed as little as possible among the other sex, even for their virtues.@@3 But whilst the vir­tuous matron was excluded from the social circles, the place which she should have held in Athenian society was fill­ed by other females, strangers to family ties, and attract­ed to Athens by the licentiousness and wealth of an im­perial city. The union of high intellectual endowments, and a masculine dignity of understanding, in some distin­guished individuals of this class, with the graces of female loveliness, appealed with a powerful interest to the sensual elegance of Grecian taste. We find, accordingly, at Athens, at this time, forming, as it were, the female court of the sovereign people, the Milesian Aspasia, and others of less name, living in the profession of a scandalous course of life, not only without shame, but even in the enjoyment of public respect. It was not the general of the common­wealth only that felt the spell of the charms of Aspasia, but grave philosophers resorted to her house ; and even the ladies of private families, in violation of the restrictions of custom, were taken there by their friends ; all eager to hear those interesting conversations, and lectures in political and rhetorical science for which she was famed.@@1 We may judge how deeply corrupted must have been the standard of public opinion in Greece, when female profligacy could thus veil itself from the eye of moral observation, under the graces of splendid accomplishments of mind and per­son. So thoroughly had refinement of intellectual taste and of manners, together with the grossest impurity of morals, pervaded the whole society of Athens, that even those who were elevated above the world around them in talents, and strength of character, and kindliness of disposi­tion, as Socrates was, imbibed in some measure the poison of the infected atmosphere which they breathed.

Such, then, was that state of things in which Socrates was trained, and which will greatly account to us for that peculiar form which the character of his philosophical teach­ing exhibits. For he was ever an Athenian instructing Athenians. He spoke as one fully conversant with the habits of thought and action of his countrymen ; as knowing what kind of instruction they most needed, and by what mode of address he might best win their attention. We might ex­pect, therefore, to see in him some leading traits of the Athenian civilization of his time ; a teaching, admirable in­deed in its main features, but bearing, at the same time, some marks of that corrupt state of society which called it forth, and to which it was immediately addressed.

The son of Sophroniscus a sculptor, and Phænareté a midwife, and himself brought up in his father’s art, he yet enjoyed those advantages of mental culture and social re­finement which were common to every citizen of the de­mocratic Athens. The meanness of his birth and his po­verty, much as high birth and wealth were esteemed there, would not exclude him from familiar intercourse with per­sons of the highest rank and consideration in the state. Nor, indeed, could the advantages of education be restrict­ed to a privileged few, where every one lived in public, and where knowledge was for the most part acquired and communicated by conversation and oral discussion.

If, in the general relaxation of discipline at Athens, the citizen was no longer obliged to submit himself to a prescribed course of education under the eye of the state, and it was

@@@, Ari∙topb. Nub. 5, απ<fλoιo i⅞τ,, *ω πoλ<μe,* πολλών *oυv.κa ότι oυft κόλάσαι tξtστi μoι rois obuτas.*

@@@, The story is beautifully told by Xenophon in his simple manner in the *Memorabilia,* book ii. chapter 7. See also Mem. ii. 8.

@@@• Thucyd, ii. 45, τ⅞r *re yàp vπapχov<rηs φvσta>s μr∣ χtlpoσι γtviιrθaι vμiv μeyaλη ή δ<i(a,* κα> *ljt ar in iλaχιστor aptτηs nipι ⅞ ψόγου ir* τo⅞ *Sprtσι κλ<oc η∙*

@@@\* Plato, Menez.—Xenoph. Mem. ii. 6.—Plutarch. Pericles. 24. Καί *yap ∑ωκpaτηs iστu>* 5τe *μtτa ri>r γvopiμen> iφoiτa.* ml *rat γυvaικat aκpoaσoμtv<κ ol <rvvi∣iιιs iγγov ωs mτηv,* κ.τ.λ. Tom. i. p. 638, Reiske.