JOWETT'S THUCYDIDES.*

JOWETT'S *Plato* has now a worthy companion in Jowett's *Thucydides*. The place and interest of the two works are different, but their execution and value are the same. Greek prose followed upon Greek poetry, and in Greek prose history holds the foremost place. If Herodotus were the founder of Greek history — it might almost be said of all history — Thucydides was the first of philosophical historians. Herodotus was content with the relation of events; Thucydides sought to trace events back to their causes and forward to their consequences. Thucydides was the son of an Athenian citizen, and a contemporary of Herodotus. He was born 471 B. C., a year earlier than Socrates, a few years before the time of Ezra and Esther of the Bible, and twenty-five years before the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Nehemiah. He was a younger cousin of the statesman Cimon. He was forty years old when the Peloponnesian war began, which is the subject of his immortal work. Of it he was more than a spec-

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*Thucydides translated into English, with introduction, marginal analysis, notes, and indices. By B. Jowett, M.A. In two volumes. Oxford: The Clarendon Press. $8.00.

tator. He took actual part in its fortunes. In 424 B. C., he was in command of an Athenian fleet off the coast of Thrace, where, opposite the Island of Thasos, he owned a gold mine. A serious disaster to the Athenian arms under these circumstances cost him his command, but did not interrupt his literary purpose, which had been constant throughout the war, and which kept by him till its close. He died about the year 400, before his great work was finished. Of its three parts, the first, in four books, follows the course of the war from its beginning in 431 to the peace of Nicias in 421; the second part covers the events of the next eight years, including the expedition against Sicily; the third ought to proceed to the surrender of Athens to Lysander in 404, but breaks off in the middle of chapter 109, shortly after the victory of the Athenians at Cynossêma.

The plan, method, and style of the work are striking. As we have before observed, Thucydides goes beneath the surface in search of causes and effects. His tone is judicial and impartial. He usually exercises a wise reserve. And if he is sometimes awkward and obscure he is often strongly and finely eloquent. The absence of romance in his work, he says, may lose it the popular ear. But he will be content if it be judged useful by those who desire a knowledge of the past as a key to the future, and who prefer history composed not as the feat of an hour, but as a durable possession.

Professor Jowett's translation is by no means the first of note offered to English readers. One of the earliest was that of Nicolls in 1550. There are others by Hobbes and William Smith (1753), Bloomfield (1829), Dale (1856), and Crawley (1874). Professor Jowett's will, however, easily take rank with the best of these, and in many respects goes ahead of all. It is based on the text of the first edition of Poppo (1843–51), whose eight volumes of prolegomena, text, and notes were "epoch-making" in the study of Thucydides. Of the two volumes the first contains the text and a full index; the second an essay on the inscriptions of the age of Thucydides, and elaborate and exhaustive notes on the text and on the Bodleian MSS. of it. These two MSS. are of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

A peculiarity of the history of Thucydides is that much of the thought is conveyed in the form of speeches attributed to various personages. Many of these fairly represent speeches that were actually made. Others are purely imaginative, but always truthful in the impressions they present. The longest of these speeches, and one constituting what is perhaps the most famous passage of the entire work, is the oration pronounced by Pericles over the victims of the first year of the war — a splendid and glowing tribute to the genius of Athens. The extract with which we close this notice may serve to illustrate not only the quality of the original, but the fidelity, force, and beauty of the translation:

Our city is equally admirable in peace and war. For we are lovers of the beautiful, yet simple in our tastes, and we cultivate the mind without loss of manliness. Wealth we employ, not only for talk and ostentation, but when there is a real use for it. To avow poverty with us is no disgrace; the true disgrace is in doing nothing to avoid it. An Athenian citizen does not neglect the state because he takes care of his own household; and even those of us who are engaged in business have a very fair idea of politics. We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs not as a harmless, but as a useless, character; and if few of us are originators, we are all sound judges of a policy. The great impediment to action is, in our opinion, not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action. For we have a peculiar power of thinking before we act and of acting too, whereas other men are courageous from ignorance but hesitate upon reflection. And they are surely to be esteemed the bravest spirits, who, having the clearest sense both of the pains and pleasures of life, do not on that account shrink from danger. In doing good, again, we are unlike others; we make our friends by conferring, not by receiving favours.

These are lofty sentiments; enough to commend the pages of *Thucydides* to modern statesmen.