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THE

BIBLIOTHECA SACRA.

ARTICLE I.

ISOCRATES.

BY PROFESSOR R. D. C. ROBBINS, NEWTON HIGHLANDS, MASS.

THE EARLY YEARS OF ISOCRATES, AND THE INFLUENCES THAT MOULDED HIS CHARACTER.

THE birth of Isocrates, 436 B.C., was in the midst of the most brilliant period of the history of Athens. Eight years before, Pericles had acquired the sole direction of public affairs by the ostracism of Thucydides, the leader of the aristocratical party. At peace abroad and at home, he devoted himself to the planting of colonies dependent upon and tributary to the mother city, to the erection of magnificent and tasteful public buildings, the construction of other works, fitted to minister to the wants and contribute to the aggrandizement of Athens. The Parthenon, "the most perfect production of Grecian architecture," of the purest Doric order, with the most exquisite refinement in details, executed under the direction of Phidias, had been completed a year or two before.

The drama, which took the precedence of the other arts in its origin and development, attained its highest perfection about this time. Aeschylus had died several years before, but Sophocles, between fifty and sixty years old, was just at the height of his popularity, and but a little past the meridian of his long life. Euripides, too, about twenty years younger, had a few years before gained the first tragic prize. It was

during Isocrates' youth and early manhood that most of the plays of Euripides and Sophocles were exhibited. Aristophanes' "Acharnians," "Knights," "Clouds," "Wasps," and "Peace" were brought out between 425–419 B.C., when Isocrates was from eleven to seventeen years old.

In philosophy Socrates, thirty-three years old, had doubtless begun to frequent the gymnasia and the public walks and the market-place, to converse with and exert an influence over all whom he might meet. Plato was born seven years later than Isocrates, and it is said was intimately associated with him as he came to years of maturity. The historian Herodotus was fifty-three years old and Thucydides forty at the birth of Isocrates. The orator Lysias, too, was then twenty-two years old.

Erchia, a deme, or borough, of Athens, the birth-place of Isocrates, was the same where Xenophon, nine years earlier, first saw the light. His father, Theodorus, was a maker of musical instruments, and seems to have carried on his trade successfully, as he is said to have had other artisans under him, and acquired sufficient wealth to cause his election as, and to enable him to perform the duties of, Aedile[1] with benefit to the state.[2] From the occupation of his father, Aristophanes and other comic poets taunt the orator as a fiddle-maker, although there is no proof that his father ever intended him to follow his own trade. He, with his three brothers, seem to have been educated in a manner far superior to the youth of his own rank in that day.[3] "My father," he says, "caused us to be so carefully educated that I was then more an object of admiration and respect among my school-fellows of my own age than I now (at eighty-two) am among my fellow-citizens.[4] His brothers were Telesippus,

[1] See Antid., § 161: *Τῶν ὑπαρχόντων ἡμῖν ἀφ' ὧν ὁ πατὴρ ἅμα τῇ τε πόλει χρήσιμον αὐτόν, κ.τ.λ.*

[2] See Plutarch's Life of Isocrates prefixed to Wolf's edition of Is. Orat.

[3] *Παῖς μὲν ὢν ἐπαιδεύετο οὐδενὸς ἧττον Ἀθηναίων.* — Plutarch's Life, as above.

[4] Antid., § 161: *Ὁ πατὴρ . . . . . ἡμᾶς θ' οὕτως ἐπιμελῶς ἐπαίδευσεν ὥστ' ἐπιφανέστερον εἶναί, με τότε καὶ γνωριμώτερον ἐν τοῖς ἡλικιώταις καὶ συμπαιδευομένοις ἢ νῦν ἐν τοῖς συμπολιτευομένοις.*

Theodorus, and Diomnestus. His mother was called Hedyto, and he had one sister. But little, however, is known of the course of his life until he arrived at an age to show the bent of his mind for philosophical and rhetorical studies. To aid him in these he had the best teachers of the time; Prodicus of Ceos, who was also the teacher of Socrates, Euripides, and others; Gorgias, of Leontini, the most distinguished teacher of his age, immortalized by the Dialogue of Plato; Tisias of Syracuse, and Theramenes, Protagoras, and others. He was also, doubtless, sometimes found among those who listened to the dialectics of Socrates, since his code of morals and his political teachings are decidedly tinged by the Socratic dogmas. In order that he might receive the advantages of the training of Gorgias, his father is said to have sent him to Thessaly when about twenty years old. His studies should seem to have been pursued from a genuine love of knowledge, though doubtless youthful aspiration for influence over others as a public orator, and especially for moulding by oratory the public institutions of his own beloved Athens, were not without their effect upon his student life. Still, he soon found himself disqualified for distinction as a public speaker. His voice was too weak, and his natural timidity too strong to be overcome. Thus in his Philippus[1] he says: "I am by nature most unfit of all the citizens for political life, for I have neither sufficient voice or confidence to sway the multitude, or visit with merited rebuke those who prate before public assemblies." The disappointment felt by the young aspirant for public favor can hardly be appreciated without a knowledge of the favor in which public speakers were beginning at that time to be held at Athens. It was only the orator that could count upon a pervading influence in the councils of state; and hence not ambition only, but patriotism, incited the ingenuous youth to the best attainments in oratory.[2] He says, too, with some asperity, that

[1] Ἐγὼ γὰρ πρὸς μὲν τὸ πολιτεύεσθαι πάντων ἀφυέστατος ἐγενόμην τῶν πολιτῶν, οὔτε γὰρ φωνὴν ἔσχον ἱκανὴν οὔτε τόλμαν δυναμένην ὄχλῳ χρῆσθαι καὶ μολύνεσθαι καὶ λοιδορεῖσθαι τοῖς ἐπὶ τοῦ βήματος καλινδυμένοις. See also Panath. § 10.

[2] "In that country [Greece] the rhetorical art was not confined to the choice

he who is wanting in the two gifts which he the most of all the citizens is without, is more despised and utterly shut out from public life than he who is unable to pay a fine that has been imposed upon him by the state, since the latter may hope to retrieve his fortune, but the former cannot change his nature.[1]

Such were some of the quieter influences which surrounded Isocrates, and moulded his earlier literary life. But there were other circumstances which had not less power in forming his character and giving coloring to his trains of thought and directing his course of life. The Peloponnesian war commenced when he was five years old, 431 B.C. Before the end of the year Archidamus had made a descent upon Attica and again retired, and Pericles had made his powerful discourse in honor of those who had fallen in battle, so inspiriting to the Athenians from the glowing panegyric which it contained of their civil constitution and life and genius, and the stirring appeals to the citizens not to do dishonor to and fall below the achievements of their ancestors. The next year the Athenians were again invaded and their country ravaged, while a pestilence wasted them, crowded within their own walls. The seige of Plataea commenced in B.C. 429, and in the two following years were the third and fourth invasions of Attica by the Peloponnesians, and the latter year the final surrender and destruction of Plataea.

When Isocrates was ten years old the battle of Delium was fought, the most disastrous to Athenians of any in the earlier periods of the war. In this battle it will be remembered that Socrates exhibited great bravery, and rescued Xenophon, who had fallen, wounded, by bearing him away on his shoulders. Aristophanes during this same year first exhibited his "Knights." The varied fortunes of Athens in the subsequent years of the war could not fail to make a deep

and arrangement of words, or to the vain ornaments of oratory, but was supposed to include the principles of such practical knowledge as is necessary in conducting the affairs of nations. The title of orator was synonymous with that of statesman." — Gillies, Life and Writings of Isocrates.

[1] Panath., § 4.

impression upon the youth in his early training. In the nineteenth year of the Peloponnesian war came the destruction of the Athenian army and fleet in Syracuse, and two years after, the conspiracy of the four hundred, which ended the democracy at Athens. This revolution called forth the talents of those who were able to influence public opinion, and not improbably Isocrates about this time began to exert an influence through his writings as well as through his pupils.

But Isocrates was not only trained up amid the events of the Peloponnesian war, as in a school of adversity, but he also suffered pecuniarily,[1] with so many other Athenian citizens, and seems to have found it necessary, in order to retrieve the fortune of himself and family, to devote himself to some lucrative pursuit. He probably at first wrote defenses for those who were arraigned before courts of justice, for which he received compensation in money. But this was not congenial to the tastes of one who loved the truth, and wished ever to be found on the side of right, and was soon abandoned. Not improbably he, in connection with this work, commenced, in an informal way, the instruction of others in the art to which he was devoted.

Isocrates as Teacher: his Aims.

There are, however, no records to show at what age Isocrates first became a teacher of rhetoric. But he probably came gradually to the execution of this his life-work. When he found that nature had not fitted him to exert the influence that he so much desired as a public orator, he did not sit down in despair, but turned his attention to the influencing, in private, of those who where to be the moulders of public opinion, and to the preparation of discourses to be pronounced by others. His first formal school seems to have been at Chios, but at what time it was opened is not certainly known. Perhaps when Critias, a leading spirit among the Thirty Tyrants, had introduced a law (404 B.C.) that the art of

[1] See Antid., § 61.

speaking should not be taught at all at Athens;[1] though others place his journey to and abode in Chios ten or twelve years later.[2]

At that place he is reputed to have had at first nine pupils.[3] But these were not sufficient to occupy his whole time or thoughts. The political affairs of this island were in a confused state, and he interested himself in forming a government after the model of Athens.[4] But he soon found the little island too strait for him to exert such an influence as he desired, and felt himself capable of. He accordingly returned to Athens, where the youth, ere long, flocked to his school in great numbers, and at great expense; and some of the most distinguished orators were there trained. Not improbably Demosthenes was for a time an attendant upon the instruction of Isocrates, though his chief training was by Isaeus the distinguished pupil of Lysias.[5] Lycurgus, Hyperides, and many others, were distinguished examples of the result of his training in oratory, and Theopompus, Ephorus, and others, in other departments of learning. Cicero's testimony is explicit, if not entirely discriminating. "Then Isocrates arose, the superior of all these (i.e. Critias, Theramenes, Lysias, and others whom he has just mentioned), from whose school, as from the Trojan horse, went forth only great men, some of whom aspired to become distinguished in the more quiet walks of literature, and others in

[1] See Xen. Memorab., i. 2. 31.

[2] See Rauchenstein Einl., S. 4.

[3] Plutarch, in his Life, says: *σχολῆς δὲ ἡγεῖτο, ὅς τινες φασὶ, πρῶτον ἐπὶ Χίου, μαθητὰς ἔχων ἐννέα.*

[4] *Καὶ ἀρχὰς δὲ καὶ περὶ τὴν Χίον καθέστησε, καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν τῇ πατρίδα πολιτείαν.* — Plutarch's Life.

[5] The current report of an interview between Isocrates and Demosthenes as teacher and aspirant to discipleship is characteristic, if not literally true. "Demosthenes," they say, "also came full of enthusiasm to the teacher of rhetoric, and said that he could not pay the fee of 100 drachms, but that he had twenty, which he would give if he might learn a fifth part of the art." Isocrates replied, "we do not, Demosthenes, cut up our art into parts, but we sell it whole, as the beautiful fishes are sold; so if you wish to become a learner, we will impart it to you as a complete whole." — Plutarch's Life (Auger's ed.), p. xxiv.

the more public contests of genius."[1] The influence of the teacher was exhibited in all these. "So," he says, "these, such as Theopompus, Ephorus, Philistus, Nuncrates, and many others, differing in nature, were, in character and feeling like one another and their master."[2] So also Demosthenes, Hyperides, Lycurgus, Aeschines, Dinarchus, and many others, although they were not all equally eminent, yet they all followed the same method of exhibiting the truth. In his Brutus, too, Cicero speaks of the house of Isocrates as the school of all Greece and the laboratory of orators, and himself as the "perfect master" of his school.[3]

The popularity of the school of Isocrates, and its reputation as a place of culture for all classes, cannot be questioned. In a speech written in his eighty-second year (353 B.C.), he says: "My accuser [Lysimachus] says that not only private people are my pupils, but also orators and generals and kings and rulers, and that I not only have received, but am still receiving, immense sums of money from them"; and the reply that Isocrates makes is, that this is an exaggerated statement.[4] Aristotle, too, pays him the highest compliment by conforming his own manner of teaching to that of his senior; "because," as Cicero says, "he saw the success which Isocrates met with by having his school full of men of quality, ... of a sudden he entirely altered his form of teaching, and pronounced, with a little variation, that line concerning Philoctetes which says 'that it was scandalous to be silent and hear barbarians speak.' Aristotle said, 'and hear Isocrates speak.' He therefore embellished and enlightened his whole system, and joined the knowledge of theory to the practice of speaking." And he received his reward; for Cicero adds: "Philip, that wise prince, was not insensible

[1] Ecce tibi exortus est Isocrates, magister istorum omnium, cujus e ludo, tanquam ex equo Trojano, meri principes exierunt; sed eorum partim in pompa, partim in acie, illustres esse voluerunt. — De Orat., B. ii. 22.

[2] See B. ii. 23.

[3] See B. ii. c. 23: Isocrates, cujus domus cunctae Graeciae quasi ludus quidam potuit, atque officina dicendi. ..... perfectus magister, etc.

[4] Antid., § 30.

of this; he sent for and appointed him tutor to his son Alexander, who by his instructions improved in the exercise both of acting and speaking."[1] Neither were his pupils confined to his own country; but many came to him from Pontus and Sicily and other of the neighboring regions,[2] and remained often three or four years, and then left their teacher with profound sorrow and tears.[3] These pupils, it should seem, received not only stimulus and culture in the art of oratory, but carried away from their teacher distinct precepts of the art, which they not only applied to their own practical use, but communicated to others.[4]

Dionysius of Halicarnassus says that he was the most renowned of any man of his age, and that he taught the best young men both of Athens and the rest of Greece; some of whom distinguished themselves in the courts of justice, some in public life and in the government of the state, and others wrote the history of Greece and other nations.[5]

Quintilian also frequently refers with the highest approbation to the teachings of Isocrates, "the most renowned teacher, whose books are no better proof that he wrote well than his scholars of his ability in teaching."[6] His school sent forth the most distinguished orators,[7] and those, too, "eminent in all kinds of learning."[8]

At first he seems to have had very much the same feeling that Socrates so often expressed in reference to taking pay for his instruction. For when his first pupils brought their money to him, he says, according to Plutarch: "Soon I per-

[1] De Orat. B. iii. § 35 (Guthrie's Translation). [2] Cf. Antid., § 224.

[3] Antid., § 88: *καὶ τῶν μὲν ἔτη τρία, τῶν δὲ τέτταρα συνδιατηθέντων. . . . . ἐπεὶ, τελευτῆς, ὅτ' ἤδη μέλλοιεν ἀποπλεῖν ὡς τοὺς γονέας καὶ τοὺς φίλους τοὺς αὑτῶν, οὕτως ἠγάπων τὴν διατριβὴν ὥστε μετὰ πόθου καὶ δακρύων ποιεῖσθαι τὴν ἀπαλλαγήν.*

[4] Itaque ipse Aristoteles cum florere Isocratem nobilitate discipulorum videret, ... mutavit repente totam formam prope disciplinae suae, etc. — De Orat. 35.

[5] Vita Isoc., prefixed to Auger's edition of his works.

[6] Annon clarissimus ille praeceptor Isocrates, quem non magis libri bene dixisse, quam discipuli bene docuisse testantur, etc. — Instit. Orat. B. ii. c. 9.

[7] Isocratis schola principes oratorum dedit. — Instit. Orat., B. xii.

[8] Isocratis praestantissimi discipuli fuerunt in omni studiorum genere. — Instit., B. iii. c. 1.

ceive that I have sold myself to them."[1] But he doubtless soon lost the idea of servility, as students rushed to his school, anxious to exchange their money for the more coveted treasures which he had to give. He very soon began to amass property, and with it the envy of his fellow-citizens[2] came, who had exaggerated notions of his accumulations. He was accordingly, twice at least,[3] perhaps three times, designated as hierarch, but was at first able, by the aid of his adopted son (he himself being sick at the time), to excuse himself as not having the requisite means;[4] but he finally executed the office, without unnecessary display, but with a suitable expenditure."[5]

His aim as a teacher is, perhaps, as well as anywhere, exhibited in the Introduction to Demonicus, and what he would teach practically illustrated in that discourse. "You, I see," he says, "have a longing for instruction, and my business is to teach others; you are at the proper time of life for the attainment of knowledge,[6] and I point the way to those who devote themselves to it. Those who incite their friends to the study of eloquence undertake a good work, but do not employ themselves upon the highest objects of study. Not those who give the youth instruction in reference to the attainment of the highest influence through eloquence, but those who urge them on to the formation of characters of high excellence, profit them most; inasmuch as a good character is a far higher attainment than the simple ability to speak.

[1] *Ὅθεν καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν μισθὸν ἀριθμούμενον, εἶπε δακρύσας, ὡς ἐπέγνων ἐμαυτὸν νῦν τούτοις πεπραμένον.* — Vita. p. xxii.

[2] *Φθονοῦντας δὲ καὶ ταὐτὸν πεπονθότας τοῖς σοφισταῖς καὶ χαίροντας ἐπὶ τοῖς ψευδῆ περί μου δόξαν ἔχουσιν.* — Antid.

[3] Plutarch says three times: *τρὶς προεβλήθη τριπραρχεῖν*, and was twice plead off by his son: *δὶς ἀσθένειαν σκηψάμενος, διὰ τοῦ παιδὸς παρῃτήσατο.* — Vita, p. xxv.

[4] *Πρότερος μέν, εἰς ἀντίδοσιν, προκαλεσαμένου αὐτὸν Μεγακλείδου, πρὸς ὃν ἐκπέπτωκε διὰ νόσον, τὸν δὲ υἱὸν πέμψας Ἀφαρέα ἐνίκησε.* — Plutarch, Vita, p. xxxv.

[5] *Τὴν μὲν οὖν δαπάνην οὕτως ἠνέγκαμεν, ὥστερ προσήκει τοὺς μήτε λίαν ὑπὸ τῶν τοιούτων ἐκταραττομένους μήτε παντάπασιν ἀσώτως μηδ' ὀλιγώρως πρὸς χρήματα διακειμένους.* — Antid.

[6] *Σοὶ μὲν ἀχμὴ φιλοσοφεῖν.*

We, therefore, omitting precepts for the latter, propose to give encouragement for the former attainment, and point out what things the young should seek after, and what avoid, with whom they should associate, and in what manner order their lives; for only those who give attention to such things can truly attain to virtue, than which no possession is more honorable and permanent. For beauty either fades with age or wastes by disease; riches rather minister to vice than virtue, by inducing sloth or inciting the young to sensuous indulgence; strength, guided by wisdom is desirable, but without, it rather injures than benefits its possessor by obstructing the cultivation of the mind whilst it adorns the body; but the possession of virtue alone abides with those in whose thought it has grown up in purity, even in age. It is better than wealth, more useful than high birth; since it makes things, impossible to others, possible; it endures with fortitude what others shrink from with terror, counts idleness a disgrace, and labor worthy of praise."[1]

In urging Demonicus to imitate his father's virtues, he further shows that the drift of his instruction was to induce his pupils to exert themselves for the attainment of intellectual and moral worth, rather than mere physical superiority, so much prized in that age in Greece. "We have given," he says, "a glimpse of the character of Hipponicus,[2] who ought to be kept before you as an example for imitation, so that you may have his life as the law of your life, and be an imitator and emulous of your father's virtues. For it is disgraceful that painters should depict the most beautiful of animals, and that children should not imitate their parents who are pre-eminent in excellence. And be assured that it does not behoove the pugilist to use so great exertions against his opponent as it does for you that you may not fall behind your father in virtue. But the mind cannot attain to this, unless it is the recipient of much and varied instruction. For, as in accordance with the laws of nature the body gains in force with suitable exercises, so the mind by good learning. I

[1] Demonicus, § 2.

[2] The Father of Demonicus.

will therefore briefly indicate to you by what course of training you will make the greatest attainments in virtue and secure the highest praise among men." [1]

Isocrates endeavored to make his school a sort of miniature model of his native Athens, sending forth colonies not only to other parts of his own, but also to other lands.[2] So his scholars not only made a figure at home in the public assemblies, but distinguished themselves as ambassadors; they were honored by republics and princes on account of their talents, and wherever the Greek language extended they spread the glory of their country and master." [3]

The high estimation in which Isocrates held the art which he taught is exhibited in the Panegyricus, when he is setting forth the praises which belong to Athens, especially in the founding and sustaining her public assemblies: "Athens, too, is the home of philosophy which has contrived and executed all these things, which has trained us to action, softened our manners, and so distinguished between evils that come from ignorance and from necessity that we can guard against the former and bear manfully the latter. She also has fostered eloquence, in which all desire to make proficiency, and envy those who have it at their command; since she understands that man alone of living beings has the gift of speech, which gives him superiority over them in all things. She also perceives that fortune is fickle in reference to everything else, so that wise men make failures in them, and fools prosper; whilst in the art of speaking with force and beauty none but the gifted can succeed, and the learned men and the ignorant are especially distinguished by their ability to use language. Those liberally educated from their earliest years become conspicuous not from valor or wealth or any other such advantage, but from their eloquence, which is referred to as the most certain indication of the culture of

[1] Demonicus, § 3.

[2] See Dion. Halicarnassus, Vita Isoc.: Τὴς Ἀθηναίων πόλεως εἰκόνα ποιήσας τὴν ἑαυτοῦ σχολὴν κατὰ τὰς ἀποικίας τῶν λόγων, κ.τ.λ.

[3] Gillies, Lysias and Isocrates, p. 30.

each one of us. Those, too, who have the best command of language not only have influence in their own private affairs, but are honored among others.[1]

This, as well as many other passages, shows that Isocrates did not limit his instruction to the simple rules for the rhetorical construction of sentences, but strove to awaken in his pupils a love of all valuable learning. The philosophy (*φιλοσοφία*) and philosophizing (*φιλοσοφεῖν*), which he often claims as a designation of his pursuit and that of his scholars, is not, of course, philosophy in its technical sense, but all that knowledge which fitted his pupils by a ready utterance of good thoughts to engage with honor in practical, and especially in political, life.

That he was skilful in adapting his instruction to the character and capacity of his pupils Cicero's testimony is explicit. "The most remarkable instance of this [adaptation] — to confine myself to the art of eloquence — is what was said by the incomparable Isocrates, 'that Ephorus required a spur, and Theopompus a rein'; for he checked the one, who was quite wanton by his command of language; and he pushed on the other, who had a hesitancy and bashfulness in his nature. At the same time, he did not render them similar; but what he added to the one he filed off from the other, so as to accommodate both to as much excellence as the nature of each would admit."[2] Had he confined his labors entirely to the training of orators his success would, in his own estimation, be pitiably small; for he says that the best schools send forth scarcely two or three good orators.

Neither would he have his pupils confine themselves to his instructions merely, or to one kind of learning, as his final injunction to Demonicus shows. After enjoining upon him to have regard to the teaching of the gods as shown in their treatment of those most dear to them, as that of Jupiter to Hercules and to Tantalus, he says: "Taught by such

[1] See below, p. 429.

[2] Cic. de Orat, B. iii. § 9 (Guthrie), and also Quintil. Instit., § 9.

examples, it is necessary to strive for the honorable and the good, and you should not only give heed to my instructions, but also make yourself familiar with the best things of the poets, and read the writings of the sophists whenever they have said anything good."[1]

In his *Antidosis*, after giving his idea of philosophy as he taught it, he says: "I suppose you will still better learn its power, if I recount to you the promises which we make to those who wish to become our pupils. We tell them that it is necessary that those who will distinguish themselves in oratory, or in a life of action in any department of labor, should, first, be well endowed by nature for that particular course which each may choose to pursue; and secondly, they must be trained for and receive the requisite instruction in it; and thirdly, they must have practice,[2] so as to become familiar with and gain facility in it. By this means they will become perfected in their calling, and distinguished among their fellow-men. And whilst it is incumbent on the learner to bring a nature and character such as is demanded, and on the teacher to have ability to instruct, both must have practice in what they know. For it is necessary that the teacher carefully instruct, whilst the pupil must lay strong hold on what is taught. This applies to all the arts. If any one, individualizing, asks which of these things is the most important in training for oratory, I should say that natural endowments are indispensable and fundamental in their influence. For he who has a mind that can originate, learn, work, and remember, and strength of voice, and such clearness and sweetness of utterance that the hearers will be convinced not by what is spoken merely, but the pleasantness of the words; and, furthermore, has that confidence which is not indicative of impudence, but that which brings with it such control that the mind is as much at ease when

[1] Demonicus, § 5.

[2] He enjoined upon his pupils to go into the gatherings of citizens and recite what they had heard in his school. *Προσέττατε δὲ τοῖς γνωρίμοις, εἰς τὰς ἐκκλησίας ἀπαντῶσιν ἀναφέρειν αὐτῷ τὰ εἰρημένα.* — Vita, Plutarch.

addressing assemblages of citizens as when studying out a subject in solitude — who does not know that such a one, without accurate instruction, but such as is commonplace and within the reach of all, will be such an orator as I do not know as any one of the Greeks has been? But we also know that those who have less natural ability, but who devote themselves to diligent study and practice, will become not only better than they were by nature, but superior to those who, with distinguished ability, neglect to cultivate themselves. Hence either of these things — natural ability or practice — will make a man capable of speaking and action; but when both are united in the same individual he will far surpass others. Such is my view of these things; but of the influence of instruction in eloquence I cannot say so much. For it has not such nor so great power; since if one should hear all the instruction that can be given, and become more familiar with it than others, he may perchance write a discourse more eloquent than many others, but if placed before the multitude if he has not confidence he will not be able to utter a sentence." [1]

Isocrates as an Author — what he would Accomplish, and how — his Style.

Isocrates was not satisfied with the influence exerted through his pupils only; but he had recourse to the best substitute for the popular address which nature had denied to him. His appreciation of the superiority of spoken language over written for immediate influence he often expressed. "I am well aware," he says, "of the greater influence of things spoken than those written; and that all suppose that men speak upon matters of urgent importance, and write for the sake of display and for gain. This is not unnatural; for when language is separated from the prestige of the speaker, from the sound of the voice, and the various changes which are employed in speaking, and also from the immediate occasion and zeal for the accomplishment of the

[1] Antid., § 186 sq.

thing in hand, and when there is nothing present to give power to the words, and aid in persuading, — when all these things are utterly wanting, and the words are read as if merely strung together without a persuasive accent, as a single utterance of articulate sounds, who can wonder that the discourse falls powerless upon the hearers." [1]

Still he did not despair in reference to exerting an influence with his pen in favor of his country, which he always placed uppermost in his labors, and for his own reputation at home and abroad, which he valued especially as a means of bringing him into contact with leading men who swayed the public mind. Indeed, his training with his teachers and by himself was mainly in the formation of finished style of composition. It was for this purpose that he went even to Thessaly and paid the high price demanded by the new and much admired teacher, Gorgias of Leontini.[2] His labors in his own school in correcting the faults of others, would also have a reflex influence upon his own style.

Although in earlier years, as has been said, he occasionally wrote defences for individuals to be used in courts of justice; he soon gave up this practice as requiring him to exert an influence contrary to strict justice, and confined his labors to themes of more public interest.[3]

Since not only his personal peculiarities, and probably his taste too, debarred him from political life, he determined to exert an influence upon those holding office, which should be even more beneficent and extended than his own direct influence as magistrate could possibly be.

[1] Philip., § 10.

[2] Benseler, in Life of Isocrates, prefixed to his edition of Isocrates' Works, says: "Mochte ein Gorgias aus Leontinoi in Sicilien, der neue, vielbewunderte Kunstredner, gleich hundert Minen, d. h. 2291; Thlr. 16 gr. für seinen Unterricht fordern, Isocrates eilte dennoch zu ihm nach Thessalien um hier die Kunst zu lernen, die prosaische Rede," etc.

[3] Cicero, in his Brutus, well says: "Isocratem, scribere, aliis solitum orationes, quibus in judiciis uterentur; sed, cum ex eo (quia quasi committeret contra legem, quo quis judicio circumveniretur) saepe ipse in judicium vocaretur, orationes aliis destitisse scribere, totumque se ad artes componendas transtulisse, § 12."

So in his Panathenaicus after bemoaning his want of endowment for public speaking, he says: "I did not, disheartened by these things, consign myself to a life entirely inglorious and obscure; but as the qualifications necessary to a successful political career were denied me, I devoted myself to the careful study of wisdom, and to the writing out of the results of thought. Neither did I turn my attention to trivial matters of private import, about which others declaim, but to the interests of Greece, of kings, and governments. Thus I supposed that I deserved so much the more honor than those who frequent the orator's stand, as the themes upon which I wrote were higher and more important."[1]

Although Isocrates could not but acknowledge the advantages of spoken over written discourse, still he could not quite forgive the people for not appreciating better the superiority of his thoughts and the themes which he made prominent in his writings, especially as they so nearly concerned the public weal, whilst the orator's declamations were of so private and personal a character. He says: "Whilst their style of thought differs so much from mine, and my purpose in writing is so far superior to theirs, the judgments of the people are not just, but confused and wholly devoid of reason. For, although they disapprove of the conduct of the orators, they make them leaders in the government and tyrants over themselves; but while they praise my discourses they envy me for no other than the very things which they approve. So my relation to them is not in accordance with right and justice."[2]

In his Philip, after enumerating his defects as above, he says: "Where soundness of mind and ability to teach come into requisition (although I may seem to speak arrogantly) I claim to be ranked among those who have the preeminence; and so, in the manner to which I am accustomed, and in which I have ability, I attempt to give counsel to my own country, to Greece, and to men of rank and authority."[3]

[1] Panath., § 10 sq. [2] Ibid., § 15. [3] Phil., § 82.

Still, no feeling of want of appreciation or timidity kept him from giving the advice and admonition that was suggested to a wise observer, to those even in the highest authority at home and abroad, if he could but aid in retrieving the fortunes of his country. The king is no more an object of terror to him, with his pen in his hand, in his study, than his most familiar friend. To Philip of Macedon, or Archidamus of Sparta, or Nicocles, king of Salamis in Cyprus, he speaks with the utmost freedom, though always with respect. To the latter he says: "Others, O Nicocles, accustomed to bring to you, rings, garments, or objects wrought in silver and gold, or other such like possessions, of which they have few and you many, manifestly do not make a gift, but sell these things far more adroitly and profitably than those who profess to traffic in them; but I thought that I should make you the most honorable gift, and the most profitable and the most becoming for me to give and you to receive, if I could prescribe to you, by engaging in what duties and abstaining from what deeds, you can best rule your state and administer your government. There are many things that hedge the way of private citizens, especially the absence of the allurements of wealth and luxury, and the necessity of gaining by labor daily sustenance; and then the laws of the state in which each lives; and besides the freedom which is allowed to friends for mutual and open admonition, and to enemies for reproof, when one falls into error or wrong-doing. ..... But to rulers there are no such guards; but when established in authority, although most of all needing it, no monitor is found; for only the few have access to them, and these few speak what alone will please."[1]

To Archidamus, king of the Lacedemonians, he writes with the utmost fearlessness, combined with the respect due one in authority: "Since, O Archidamus, many have eagerly taken upon themselves to praise you and your father and your lineage, I have given up to them this topic, but have

[1] Ad. Nicoc., § 1 sq.

myself chosen to exhort you to undertake labors far different from those now engaged in, and such as shall make you the cause of the greatest good to your own state as well as to all Greece, ... than which no more honorable work can offer itself." He did not shrink from a criticism of the father of the king. "Agesilaus always was influenced by the greatest desire of vindicating the liberty of the Greeks and waging war with the barbarians ..... but do not be surprised if I point out to you one matter in which he was in the wrong, ... i.e. in not striving to reconcile the Grecian states with one another before he engaged in an expedition against Persia. ..... I hesitate not to say, then, that it is incumbent on you, laying aside all other interests, to give your attention to the freeing of the Greeks from wars and other internal evil, and to restraining the insolence of the barbarians, and reducing their unjustly acquired good fortune to proper bounds."[1] Similar admonitions are scattered through his discourse addressed to Philip of Macedon.

The plainness with which he deals with his own fellow citizens shows no less fearlessness in dealing with their faults than confidence in his own rectitude and expectation that his words will not, notwithstanding the injurious and enervating flatteries of the demagogues with which Athens abounded, fall powerless upon the hearts of his readers.[2]

The high aims that Isocrates had as a writer are well set forth in his Antidosis, written when he was eighty-two years old. "First, then," he says, "it is fitting that you should understand that the kinds of prose writing are as various as those of verses written in measure. For some pass their lives in inquiring into the genealogies of the gods; others in learned disquisitions upon the poets; others are fond of collecting and portraying deeds of valor in war; and still others employ themselves in reasoning in dialogue, which they call disputation [dialectics]. If any one should attempt to describe all these kinds of writing, it would be a long labor. ..... I will

[1] Epist. 8th to Archidamus.

[2] See especially the Discourse upon Peace and the Areopagitica.

then designate that only with which I have now any concern; I omit others. There are some who, although they are not without skill in these kinds of writing enumerated, yet have applied themselves to writing discourses not pertaining to the petty affairs of your every-day life, but to Greece and matters of interest to the state and fitted to be communicated to the larger assemblages of the people, which all will confess to be more like verses written in rhythm and measure than those orations employed in courts of justice. For they express, in language more poetical and varied, thoughts more elevated and new, and also adorn their compositions with figures of speech both more frequent and more striking. All who hear them are as much pleased as if they had listened to a poem; and many wish to become their pupils, because they suppose that those who excel in this kind of writing are far wiser and better and more able to aid others than those who excel in courts of justice. For the latter become skilled in suits by a bustling meddlesomeness in others' affairs; whilst the former gain influence by a careful study of such kinds of writing as I have before indicated. And whilst those versed in courts of justice seem to be, if they appear but rarely, tolerable for that day only in which they are engaged in suits, the others are welcome in all assemblies and at all times, and are constantly adding to their reputation. They, too, can, if they choose, make speeches at the bar; whilst the others have not the requisite ability for finished discourse. Thus, judging and considering this pursuit of literature to be far more desirable, others wish to avail themselves of instruction in it. In this kind of writing I have the reputation of not being without skill, and, indeed, have obtained favor and distinction.

"In reference to my activity, — whether you call it ability, or accurate study, or labor, — you have heard the whole truth. But for myself I wish to establish a law more severe than I do for others, and to make a claim more bold than comports with my age. For I count myself worthy not only not to receive pardon if I use injurious words, but to bear the most

severe penalty if I do not use such forms of speech as you find in no other writer." [1]

The style of Isocrates has been the subject of high praise from some and moderate criticism from others. Even those most appreciative of his excellences are ready to grant imperfections in style, though claiming that even these lean to virtue's side, so based are they upon, and so plainly the outgrowth of, highly meritorious qualities.

Dionysius says of him that " his style is not less pure than that of Lysias. He never uses a word heedlessly, but bestows the highest care upon those which are common and familiar. He avoids the inelegance of obsolete or harsh language. He arranges his words with equal symmetry and clearness and perspicuity; and his style, too, is of a moral tone, and fitted to persuade. In respect to the use of tropical language, he is somewhat inferior to Lysias; since his figures are less terse and compact, and not so well adapted to forensic use, but too full and extended, without sufficient progress (the reason I will give subsequently). His style, too, is less simple and natural and energetic than that of Lysias, but more stately and varied, with more show, and so sometimes of a higher cast, and sometimes too labored. He sought for eloquence of language in every way, and thus strove more for beauty than simplicity of speech. He carefully avoided too great a concurrence of vowels as marring the harmony of sound and ease of utterance. He labored to express his thoughts in rounded sentences and in rhythmical language too nearly akin to poetry, and more adapted to reading than speaking. His orations especially court exhibition in celebrating public games, or perusal in retirement, but shrink from the strife of forensic use and judicial assemblies. The reason is, that the latter require more impassioned discourse, which belongs not to measured and rounded periods. For rhythmical endings, comparisons, antitheses, and such like ornamentation are made prominent by Isocrates to such an extent as to weary the ear, and injure the structure of his sentences." [2]

[1] Antid., § 45 sq. [2] Isoc. Vita, prefixed to Auger's edition, pp. 50, 51.

After dwelling at some length upon the greater simplicity and naturalness of Lysias, Dionysius proceeds to say that Isocrates excels Lysias in dignity and sublimity of style. "Admirable," he says, "is the majesty indicated in the writings of Isocrates, rather appropriate to heroic than to prosaic human life. Therefore, if any one should compare the style of Isocrates, on account of its majestic fulness and dignity, to the works of Polycletus and Phidias, and that of Lysias, on account of simple elegance and grace, to the productions of Calamidis and Callimachus, he would seem to me not to go far astray."

Whilst Dionysius is doubtless right in his general criticism upon the style of Isocrates as compared with Lysias, — since in simple, graceful flow of words, such as would fall easily from the mouth of the orator and glide quietly and soothingly into the minds of the hearers, Lysias excels, — yet it should be taken into account that Isocrates wrote rather for private perusal, even where in form his compositions were addressed to assemblages of men; and, of course, a more studied style is entirely in place. One can easily feel, in reading Isocrates, that there is occasionally an air of artificiality and elaboration; but even in these cases the real artist shines forth so conspicuously as to incline one to excuse the defect of style, if it be one, in admiring the perfect artistic eloquence of the elaboration. The words with which he would forestall the critics of his own day, near the beginning of the Panegyricus, might well be addressed to those of subsequent ages. "Some men," he says, "are inclined to find fault with all writings elaborated beyond the common capacity and highly finished, and have not the sense to understand that such works should not be compared with the unlabored pleadings of courts of justice; since the latter are designed merely to confirm or set aside private contracts, whilst the former are intended to give an honorable reputation to their author. Do not such critics know that he who can array his thoughts in an elaborate and highly finished dress can, if occasion require it, write with the utmost simplicity and

plainness? They do not escape detection that they make the limit of their own capacity the law of praise for others."[1]

In respect to high-toned, cultured sentiment, it cannot be doubted that Isocrates stands nearly or quite unrivalled in his age. In the grouping of his thoughts and graceful introduction of matters accessory to his main design, too, he excels. And, as Dionysius says, "he especially merits praise in the choice of the subjects of his speeches and in fairness of the arguments [in general, though he sometimes descended to special pleading] that he employs in accomplishing his purpose. And in this way he was able to influence those who studied his works, whether they were orators, or men of superior character in the relation of the family, of the state, or all of Greece; for the most excellent precepts of virtue are found in Isocrates' works."[2]

There cannot be the least doubt that all the educated men of his and the immediate subsequent ages set a high value upon the writings of Isocrates, as well as respected his character. Although there was some difference of opinion whether Isocrates or Lysias were the superior writer, according to the taste of different individuals, and the opportunity in his own age of personal intercourse, still, the preference was generally given to Isocrates. Socrates was decided in his judgment. Phaedrus introduces him in his conversation with Socrates as one who is his friend, and should not be forgotten in messages sent to different literary friends.

"Isocrates is still young, Phaedrus," Socrates says; "but I am willing to risk a prophecy concerning him." "What would you prophecy?" Phaedrus asks.

"I think that he has a genius which soars above the orations of Lysias, and he has a character of a finer mould. My impression of him is that he will marvellously improve as he grows older, and that all former rhetoricians will be as children in comparison of him. And I believe that he will not be satisfied with this, but that some divine impulse

[1] Panegyricus, § 11. [2] See Dionysius, Vita, p. 55.

will lead him to things higher still. For there is an element of philosophy in his nature. This is the message which comes from the gods dwelling in this place, and which I will myself deliver to Isocrates, who is my delight; and do you give the other to Lysias, who is yours." [1]

This sentiment of Socrates was adduced by Plato when Isocrates had advanced in life, and if, in the estimation of Plato, he had failed to fulfil the prediction, he would probably have indicated it. So Cicero says, in quoting this passage, that "Isocrates, with the testimony of Plato in his favor, need not care for the opinion of others." [2] "These are the auguries of Socrates concerning the youth; and these things Plato writes of the old man, and writes as a contemporary, and as a despiser of all the rhetoricians. This one only he admires." [3]

Cicero often speaks of Isocrates, and always with the highest approbation. His opinion of him as a teacher we have previously sufficiently portrayed. As a writer, too, he commends him variously, and not merely as approving the testimony of Socrates and Plato in the passage above quoted. He gives as the special characteristis of Isocrates, *sweetness;* of Lysias, *delicacy;* of Hyperides, *pointedness;* of Aeschines, *pomp;* of Demosthenes, *energy*." [4] Isocrates' sweetness was especially based upon his employment in prose of measure and rhythm without the number which constitutes poetic form.[5] In this way he contrived to soften the harshness of the style of his predecessors, and throw some of the charms of poetry about it.

[1] Plato, Phaedrus (Jowett's translation), p. 584.

[2] Sic Isocrates videtur testimonio Platonis aliorum judicia debere contemnere. — Orator, § 13.

[3] Haec de adolescente Socrates auguratur, ea de seniore scribit Plato, et scribit equalis, et quidem exagitator omnium rhetorum. Hunc miratur unum. — Orator, § 13.

[4] De Orat., iii. § 7.

[5] Nam qui Isocratem maximi mirantur, hoc in ejus summis laudibus ferunt, quod verbis solutis numeros primus adjunxerit, etc. — Orator. So in Brutus, § 8: Cum cetera melius, quam superiores, tum primus intellexit, etiam in soluta oratione, dum versum effugeres, modum tamen, et numeram quendum oportere servari.

Quintilian, too, is not sparing of his praise of the writings of Isocrates, although he thinks that elaboration is carried too far in them. He says: "Isocrates, polished and artistic in all kinds of writing, and adapted rather to the schools than to actual life, exhibits all the charms of speech; and with reason, too, for he wrote for the public assembly, rather than the judges. He is ready in invention, studious of honor and honesty, and so painstaking in style that it becomes faulty." [1]

[1] See Instit. Lib. 10, and cf. also Lib. 2. c. 9; Lib. 3. 1; Lib. 9, etc.; Hremog.; Πολὺ τὸ καθαρὸν τῆς λέξεως παρ' Ἰσοκράτει.; Plin. Ep. Lib. 6: Nec vero Isocrati, quominus haberetur summus orator effecit, quod infirmitate vocis et mollitia frontis, quominus in publico diceret, impediebatur.

(To be continued.)