of the Parthenon; for Thucydides with his keenness of thought and elegance of style. And we shall remember it also for a name which is, in some respects, above all these; a name to which modern history pays reverent homage, a name which adorns that period as an lustrious diadem,—the name of Socrates.

In following the career of a public man, it is often well to examine the character of the times in which he lived. Surrounding influences may have had much to do with his success, and the wants of the period may have suggested his calling. Let us consider then more carefully the age of Socrates. Let us determine, if possible, how much his greatness was due to circumstances, and how much in turn that age was indebted to him.

As we have seen, Greece was enjoying the golden period of her existence. The Persian wars had closed and the mighty hosts of Darius and Xerxes had been driven back over the sea, from whence they came. The Hellenic states had risen to commence life anew in the sunshine of liberty. Athens, the "eye of Greece," the centre of art and culture, sat upon her crowned Acropolis and from her "throne of beauty" led, if she did not "rule, the world." As one author says "to have lived in such a city, in such an age, was no mean training for any man."

But, at the same time, the civilization of the day had a false basis; it was built solely upon talent. Power,—eloquence,—artistic skill,—these were the glittering crowns held aloft the goal of man's ambition. The Greeks had deified the intellect, and had forgotten all else in its adoration. Philosophers had come and gone, but had said little or nothing upon the great subject of moral responsibility. Thales and Pythagoras had contented themselves with studying the grand question of what is scientifically true; but none had, as yet, solved the grander problem of what is ethically right. Christianity with its attendant blessings, had not yet appeared. More than four centuries and a half must elapse before the star of Bethlehem should guide the wondering sages to the cradle of the new born child. Greece "by her wisdom knew not God" or his laws, and moral darkness brooded over the heathen world. It was in the midst of intellectual splendor so incomparably grand,—in the midst of moral desolation so unconceivably desolate that the labors of Socrates began.

It is a singular fact that he spent the first half of his life in obscurity. We know that his father was a sculptor, and it is claimed that his occupation suggested his own. For while the father chiseled naught but cold and lifeless marble, he would mould the future and shape the destiny of human souls.

When he began his life-work, he saw around him the youth of his native city, under the instruction of the Sophists, a class of men who cared less for the substance of their teachings, than for the manner in which they taught. They laid great stress upon the arts of rhetoric but spent their time in idle discussions and profitless argument. Socrates felt that the condition of the age demanded something more than these gilded baubles. He saw that the teachings of the Sophists were shallow, fallacious, and he resolved that he would overthrow their system and build a nobler structure on its ruins. His own view of his mission, was that of a disseminator of truth in the broadest sense of the term, and he sought, by directing the minds of men to lofty themes, to lift them also to a higher and nobler sphere of existence. Upon one occasion he said: "I pass my time in doing nothing but persuading you both, young, and old, that you care so earnestly neither for the body, nor for the treasures, nor for any other thing as for the soul, by what means it may be ennobled in the highest degree." He, endeavored therefore to quicken the moral sense in man for as Victor Hugo says: "An awakened conscience is greatness of soul." He believed that virtue could be taught, and should be studied, as one of the chief ends of living. His aim, as he professed, was only to teach men to think for themselves. He sought by his penetrating questions to arouse in each individual mind, a train of thought that would work out great results. Accordingly upon all occasions he interrogated men; on the street, in the Agora, at the Lyceum, wherever he could reach the ear of the multitude. His methods of instruction were the simplest; he employed none of the flowers of rhetoric, he assumed no dramatic postures, he taught in the plain conversational style represented in the dialogues of Plato. Unlike his great rivals—the Sophists—he demanded no pay, for his reward was the consciousness of work well done.

Before his time, philosophers generally looked upon death as an eternal sleep. Pythagoras, indeed, had brought forward the idea of the transmigration of the soul, but it was Socrates who first formulated the doctrine of the soul's immortality. There is something infinitely sad in the very word used by the ancient Greeks to designate the resting place of the dead. They looked upon the forms of their departed friends, they saw that life had gone, they knew not where, and they named the place Hades—the unseen—the unknown,—the unknowable. Let us imagine for a moment, an ancient Philosopher musing by a tomb of some friend lately deceased. How aptly might he have used those pathetic words of a great modern agnostic. "Again" he would have said, "we are face to face with the great mystery that shrouds the world. We question, but there is no reply. Out on the wide waste seas there floats no spar. Over the desert of death the Sphinx gazes forever but never speaks. The golden bridge of life, from gloom emerges and on shadow rests. Beyond this, we do not know. Fate is speechless; destiny is dumb, and the secret of the future has never yet been told." Such were the views of the most cultured of the Greeks, before the time of Socrates. Having made life so beautiful and sublime, death was the most awful thing that could befall them. They shrank from it as one would from the jaws of a hideous monster. Life was lovely; death was loathsome. Socrates came speaking words of hope. He came announcing his belief that while its frail tenement crumbled to the dust, the soul of man lives on, forever on, throughout the endless ages of eternity.

With a life so pure, so noble, so unselfish, it might seem that Socrates would have been the idol of his age. But the history of the human race, teaches a different lesson. Ingratitude is the proverbial vice of republics and the world at large has often been ungrateful towards its truest benefactors. The noble Aristides had been ban-