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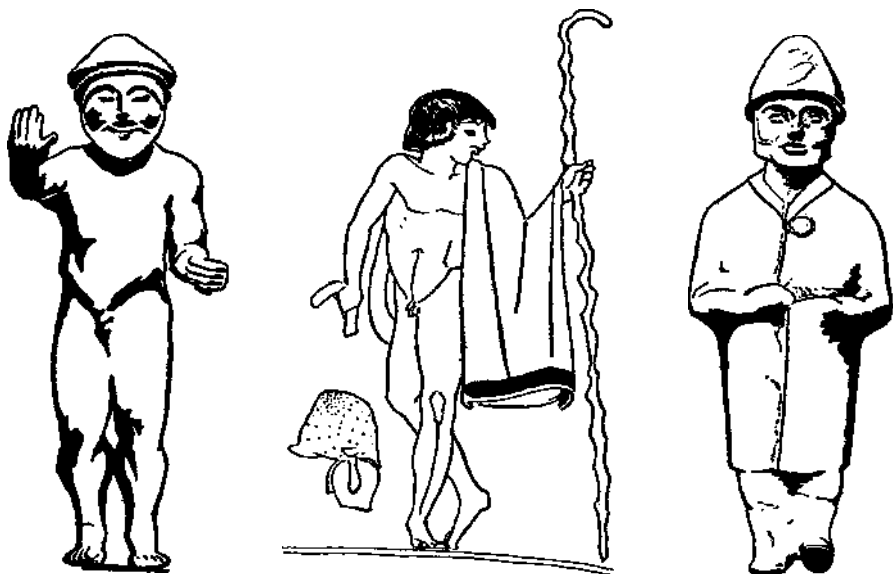
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THE HOW-&-WHY SERIES NO. 1

THE GREEKS



THREE GREEKS: A BEGGAR, A BOY, AND A SHEPHERD

*From a Aronxe in the Alteo Museum, Berlin; a vase in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts;
and a bronxe in the Providence, R.I., School of Design*

THE GREEKS

BY

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WITH A PREFACE BY

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THE HOW- & -WHY SERIES

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P R E F A C E

T H E question why we still study the Greeks would be answered differently by almost every student, or at least with different emphasis. To the historian, the philologist, the philosopher," the artist, the poet, the religious thinker or the enthusiast for human progress, Greece makes a separate and characteristic appeal, and each appeal needs some explanation. If I personally had to say in a sentence why the Greeks specially interested me, I think I should select two reasons: because they seem to show human nature or, as they would put it, 'the Soul', singularly free from mere trappings and upholstery, and because their books are the most beautiful that I can find.

That would be an arbitrary statement of personal taste. My daughter in this tiny book has had to select out of an enormous field, and to reject masses of matter almost, if not quite, as interesting as what she has accepted. It is for others to judge the degree of her success, and how far the result is neither so personal as to be lop-sided nor so impersonal as to be merely flat. To me her book seems to have drawn a true picture. I have enjoyed reading it and I have learnt from it.

G.

M.

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THE GREEKS

CHAPTER I

WHY THEY MATTER TO US

CHILDREN all over Europe learn Latin and Greek, and they learn the history of the Ancient Greeks and Romans. This is strange when you think that these languages are not spoken by anyone in the world to-day, and that the people they are learning about have been dead for two thousand years or more. Many people think it waste of time to learn so much about things of long ago; but the Ancient Greeks and Romans are important to us and interesting to us in quite a special way, and when we are learning about them we learn about many other things as well.

The first reason for this is that the Ancient Greeks are our spiritual great-grandfathers. Almost all our 'ideas', our thoughts about things and our ways of thinking, come from them. Just as our bodies, the shapes of our mouths and noses, the colours of our eyes and hair, come down to us, through many generations of ancestors, from the Normans and Saxons and Ancient Britons that once lived in England, so the shapes of our thoughts, **our** ideas of right and wrong, of what is beautiful or ugly or clever or stupid, and the ways in which we try to express these ideas, **come down to us,**

through even more generations of spiritual ancestors, from the Ancient Greeks. Even our language, though it is not what is called a Latin language, takes more than half its words from Latin or Greek. 'History' and 'geography*' and 'astronomy' are all Greek words, so is 'cinematograph' and 'telegram' and 'gramophone'. 'Virtue' and 'prudence' and 'tradition' are Latin words, and so are 'order' and 'commonsense'.

Although the Romans and Greeks were different nations and their languages are different, you cannot really learn about one without the other: they belong to each other in a special way, and much of what we get from the Greeks comes to us through the Romans.

So, because people's minds and thoughts are really more important and more interesting than their bodies, the Ancient Greeks are more important and interesting to us than the Ancient Britons or the Saxons and Normans.

The second reason why we should learn about them is that they are our 'common' great-grandfathers; they are a bond between us and those other nations who, like us, are their spiritual great-grandchildren. When cousins meet at the house of their grandparents, they find that although they live in different places, and their own parents are different, they have something important in common; the same grandfather and grandmother, and the same house and garden to play in, where they all belong equally. The little French or German boy speaks a different language from yours and **you cannot** understand each other when you talk,

but the Latin and Greek you all learn is the same everywhere; you read in your Greek and Latin books about the same things and people, and you do so for the same reasons. We share this common background with all other European nations.

The third reason why the Greeks are important to us is perhaps the chief reason of all; it is that although they lived such a long time ago and were in many ways such simple primitive people, they did quite a lot of things better than anyone has ever been able to do them since.

They had no machinery, but they did discover some of the most important principles of mechanics. A Greek named Archimedes discovered the use of the lever in the third century B.C. and another Greek, Hero of Alexandria, actually invented a steam-engine in the third century A.D. and made a model of it, about fifteen hundred years before James Watt. But the Greeks did not give their main energy to this kind of invention nor consider it very important.

They were the first people to try to reason everything out and decide what is good or bad by thinking clearly about it; and they were the first people to think of ways in which people could govern themselves instead of being ruled by a king. They probably did govern themselves better and with more freedom than most of the states that have been formed since their time.

Another thing that the Greeks did as well as anyone since, or even better, was building. Some of the temples they built nearly three thousand years ago are still standing, and we can see how

wonderfully they were planned and made. It is very unlikely indeed that any of our buildings will last for three thousand years.

Greek statues, too, and Greek carving are as perfect as anything that anyone has ever produced since; and Greek poetry, to the people who know Greek and can really read it, is perhaps the finest poetry that has been written.

We modern Western people do not do any of these things very well, and because we do not do them well, we are apt to consider them unimportant. We are good at making railways, and engines, and drains, and at making great quantities of things, all exactly alike, and cheap. But we have almost forgotten how to make a few things well. It is good that we should look at Greek statues and buildings, and read Greek books, and so remind ourselves that there is another way of living than our own.

Now I will try to tell you about the Greeks themselves, and the country they lived in.

CHAPTER II

THE HEROIC AGE

THE people we call Greeks came down into the Greek Peninsula at different times between 2000 and 1000 B.C.

If you take the map of Europe and look for this country of Greece, you will be surprised to see how very small it is, A little odd-shaped place with a

queer jagged coast-line down at the extreme south-east corner of the map. It is a mountainous country, very rocky and bare, with few trees and little grass. It has never been a rich country for agriculture; even in the fifth century B.C. the people of Athens had to import their corn from Russia, as we did until lately, but we know from descriptions in the old Greek poems and stories that there used to be great forests and green trees, and pasture for cattle. The trees must have been cut down, and the soil that their roots kept together on the mountains must have got washed away by rain on the steep hill-sides, so that in the end there was no more soil for other trees to grow or for grass. The country we must imagine when we think of the Ancient Greeks is a gentler greener country than the Greece we can visit now, but it was always small and poor and the life that people lived there rather hard. The islands round the coast were Greek too, and there were Greek settlements all over the coast of Asia Minor, yet even counting these, this homeland was a tiny spot from which to spread a force throughout the world.

We do not know much about these first Greek invaders, but they were evidently warlike conquering people who lived by fighting, just as the Gauls and Germans who spread westwards over Europe later were, and they belonged to the same great family of nations, what is called the 'Indo-European' race. We know this because all languages spoken by nations of that race have so many words alike, the common important words like 'father*' and 'mother' and 'brother' and 'sister', but

this does not tell us much about them, for most of the European nations belong to this same great race.

We have no books or writings from this early age of Greece, what is now called the 'Heroic Age', but we have later books which tell us something about it.

The two chief stories of the Heroic Age are called the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and they are supposed to have been written by a blind poet called Homer. They are all in verse, but people now think that they were not written by one poet at all, but that they are more like our Folk-songs or the old Sagas of the Norsemen; that is, songs or poems that have grown up gradually through a very long time, learnt from one minstrel by another without being written down.

A great many of the earliest poems in all countries were like that; each minstrel who sang the songs changed them a little, and added bits of his own in the same style, and the people who study them can tell what parts of them have been written later than others, and that all are describing things that happened long before.

These two poems tell the story of a great war that the kings of Greece waged against the city of Troy in Asia Minor; how they sailed across the sea and besieged Troy for ten years because a prince of Troy called Paris had stolen the Greek queen Helen from King Menelaus of Sparta. After ten years they succeeded in capturing Troy by a trick. They built a great wooden horse, and hid inside it, and the Trojans did not know what the wooden

horse could be, and dragged it up into their city; then in the night, when the Trojans were asleep, the Greek soldiers came out of the wooden horse, and fell upon them, and killed the king of Troy, and most of his people, and destroyed the city and burned it down.

Part of this story is told in the first poem, which is called the *Iliad*, from 'Ilium,' which is the Greek name for Troy. The second poem is called the *Odyssey*, because it is about Odysseus, one of the Greek kings who fought in the Trojan war. It is the story of his return from Troy and all the adventures and misfortunes that happened to him on his way home to his island of Ithaca. It took him another ten years to get there, for he was shipwrecked and had all kinds of misfortunes, but he did reach home in the end.

Now the people in these poems are not quite real people, and the things that happened to them are clearly not all true; they are not what we should call 'historical accounts' of the Trojan war; but they are not exactly invented stories either.

There probably were real people called Menelaus and Agamemnon, and they probably did live in Mycenae and Sparta; they may really have sailed across the sea to Troy and sacked it; but as the various minstrels or bards have sung about them, the stories have got changed, and made more wonderful.

These minstrels used to be at every court or little group of fighters round a chief; often someone blind or lame was a minstrel, because he could not fight, and when the soldiers were tired after a day's

fighting, they liked to have someone there to tell them stories, or to sing. At first, he would sing about the chief who was listening to him and praise his deeds and his bravery, and then gradually the songs about some of the special chiefs became favourite songs, to sing anywhere; they were more sung than others, perhaps because that particular chief had been a more interesting person than the others, or perhaps because his minstrel who made the song had been a better minstrel. In this way, certain of the songs or legends were handed on from one minstrel to another, and instead of making up quite new songs of his own, the new singer would sing the old songs again about the first great heroes of the early days, only he would change them a little to suit his audience, or add something to them which might interest them. Nothing was written down until much later, the stories and songs were just repeated and remembered, often no doubt changes came by accident, through some mistake in remembering or repeating.

The nearest thing that we have in England to these legends are the stories about King Arthur and his knights. There, too, we know that there was really a King Arthur, but the legend about him has made him much more important than he really was, and added a lot of magic and fairy story.

We know that there was really a town of Troy and that it was really sacked, for people have been digging and excavating in the place where they thought it must have been, and they have found the ruins of not one, but seven cities, one below

the other, and the stones of two of them are charred by fire.

More lately, too, people have been digging at Mycenae, in Greece, and they have found tombs of kings and queens, with beautiful gold ornaments in them, and carvings and inscriptions, and they think that they may be the tombs of Menelaus and Helen.

Quite apart from the question of how true these stories are, they tell us a great deal about those early Greeks; the sort of way they lived and how they were governed, what weapons they used and how they used them, and the kinds of ships they had.

They were evidently very like the Northern heroes that we can read about in Icelandic legends; the same sort of people as the Vikings who came and raided England in the time of King Alfred; brave, rather noble barbarians, who lived by fighting and raiding.

By the time the poems of Homer came to be written down, somewhere about 550 B.a, the Greeks had become very different from these 'heroes'. They had become much gentler and more thoughtful. They had found out that there are a great many other things to do besides fighting and raiding, and we can see that a great deal has been added to the simple hero stories by much later poets who looked at things differently from the early minstrels.

CHAPTER III

CITIES AND COLONIES

THE first six hundred years after the Greek invasions were a kind of Dark Age in Greece, like the Dark Age in Western Europe, after the Roman Empire, when the Goths and Huns came down from the north and destroyed the old Greek civilization of Rome. These early Greek invaders destroyed the Minoan culture that they found, but they had none of their own at that time.

Their sons and grandsons were not such great fighters and adventurers as they had been. They did not go on and conquer more new countries, they just settled down and went on raiding among themselves and fighting each other, and telling the stories of their great-grandfathers and all they had done.

We have no records of the life in this Dark Age, we do not know exactly how or why it began to change, nothing much seems to happen, but we find that somehow or other, between the Homeric Age and about 750 B. C., a great change had taken place in Greek life and customs and ways of doing things.

Instead of living in separate castles on the hills, sort of robber strongholds from which they could sally forth to raid their neighbours, they had collected into cities and were cultivating the land.

As soon as people began to cultivate the land and grow crops, they need a settled life and order

and laws, for you cannot leave your fields and go off fighting without losing the result of all your year's work.

These early Greek cities were not at all like our modern towns; they were more like a group of villages clustered round a walled citadel. At first these groups of villages were on the hills for safety; people would go down from the city in the morning to plough and sow the fertile lands in the valley, and then go back to sleep in the shelter of the citadel at night. But as time went on, more and more people took to cultivating the fields, and fewer robbers and wild brigands were left. People thought more about their harvests and less about protection against attack, and in time the cities themselves were formed in the plains or valleys quite near to the fields.

This living together in groups meant a great change in every way. It became necessary to arrange how they should live together, how the land should be divided, and the work, and how disputes between citizens should be settled. They could not simply fight every quarrel out as they had done before when they lived separately, and so they began to make laws and to govern themselves.

We hear a great deal to-day about democracy and democratic government. Democracy is a Greek word which means 'government by the people', and the Greeks were the first people to try this sort of government.

In all the other ancient societies a king or a priest governed the people under him, but in these Greek City States, as they were called, the citizens

made their own laws by agreeing together, and appointed their own judges to carry them out.

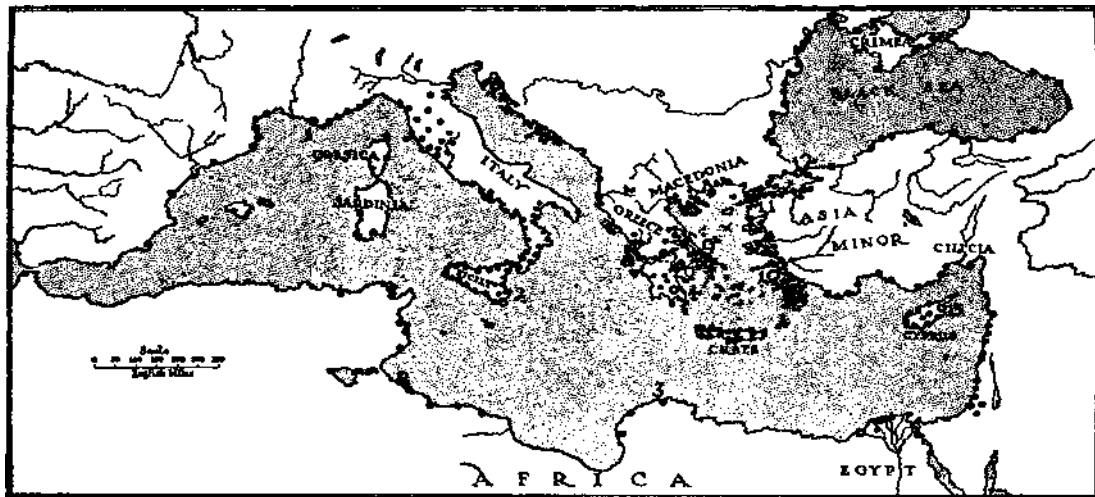
This system did not always work in Greece, and it did not always last; most of the City States had times when they got into muddles, and some strong man took charge of affairs and ruled them for a while, but in general this 'democratic' idea of government lasted; most Greeks at most times thought it the best way, and tried to carry it out, and this is one of the many important ideas we have got from Greece.

By 750 B.C. this process of collecting themselves into City States, or groups, was going on all over the Greek mainland and the coast of Asia Minor, for that coast was quite as much a part of Greece at this time as the European country that we think of as Greece now. Indeed, the City States probably started first in Asia Minor, or 'Ionia' as the Greeks called their Asiatic coast.

By about the year 700 B.C. hundreds of cities great and small were established all over the Greek world. Some of the more famous of these were Miletus in Asia Minor, Corinth, Argos, Thebes, and Athens and Sparta, on the European side. Then another problem began.

Everyone now was settled on the land, and wanting to work and to own it, but there was not enough good land to go round, for the people were not being killed in wars so much as before, and the population was growing. So most of the City States began to send out colonists to settle in new undeveloped countries and cultivate new land.

This was very much the same as what we did



A MAP OF THE GREEK COLONIES

The colonies are shown by small circles

1. Massilia (Marseilles)
2. Syracuse
3. Cyrene

4. Sparta
5. Megara
6. Corinth

7. Athens
8. Rhodes
9. Thebes

10. Miletus
11. Troy
12. Byzantium
13. Salamis

After the map in the Cambridge Ancient History

when Englishmen went out to settle in North America and Australia and New Zealand, and founded new communities of English-speaking people all over the world. The chief difference was that the English colonization was more haphazard; the English colonists mostly went of their own accord, they chose which colony they wished to go to, and when they wished to go, while the Greek colonies were organized by the governments of the different parent cities, who decided which of their citizens to send, and where to send them. This 'colonization*' was one of the chief ways that Greek ideas and ways of living spread, as we said before, through all the other states round the Mediterranean.

Before 700 B.C. Greek Colonies were founded as far west as Sicily and South Italy; before 600 B.C. as far north as the Black Sea; soon after 600 B.C. from Marseilles in the west to Cilicia in the east, and from the Crimea on the north to Cyrene in Africa.

The whole world at this time centred round the Mediterranean Sea. It ended to the west at the Straits of Gibraltar, which the Greeks called the Pillars of Herakles, and somewhere about Persia to the east; to the north in southern Russia, and to the south, at the boundaries of Egypt, so you will see if you look at the map that the Greek colonies in 600 B.C. were scattered over very nearly all the known world.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION

T H E religion of the first Greek invaders had been very simple and primitive. Each tribe or group of fighters had its own tribal god, who was supposed to help it when it fought against other tribes with other gods.

In all stages of civilization we find that men think of God as like themselves only better and more powerful at doing what they do; so when men live by fighting, their gods are fighters, when they become cultivators and live by ploughing and sowing, their gods are lords of harvest and fertility and the tilling of the soil.

Then, later, when the human communities who worship them become more civilized, and more complicated, they think of their gods as more civilized and more complicated still; the primitive gods of the fighters and cultivators do not satisfy them, they need gods who are wise and just and understanding, who embody for them the feelings and the thoughts and the ideals by which they themselves live.

We find all these stages and changes in Greek religion.

The earliest Greeks of the Heroic Age thought of their gods as heroes like themselves, and mighty fighters. The gods that we read about in the two great poems of Homer are of this kind; they take part in the human quarrels on one side or the

other, and their motives in siding with the Greeks or Trojans are not at all high motives, they act from spite or envy or jealousy very often, though sometimes their anger is just and their punishments deserved.

This is apt to shock people who read Homer for the first time, and do not realize how primitive and long ago the society which made these poems was.

The gods in Homer belong to the earliest stage of Greek civilization, the stage before they were really civilized at all. They are very like the Icelandic gods that the Vikings worshipped, because the people who thought of them first, and wrote about them, were living themselves in the same sort of way that the Vikings lived.

Then, later, when the different Greek tribes stopped fighting each other and joined together into cities, their different tribal gods were merged together into fewer more powerful gods, and as the life of the city depended more and more on the harvest and less and less on successful raids, we find that the gods are becoming different in what they do and in the things for which they are important.

Certain names remain from the earlier times, they do not reject the older more primitive gods, but they think of them differently.

We can see examples of this in the case of Zeus, the king and father of all the gods. In the earliest writings, he is simply Zeus the thunderer, a fighting king who has seized his kingdom by force from older gods who were there before him, just as the

Greek invaders who worshipped him had taken Greece itself from the earlier populations that they found there.

Then, later, we find Zeus spoken of as the 'Father', the 'Protector of the Homestead', and from that he becomes the 'Moral Law', the final judge and decider of right and wrong. In the great Greek plays of the fifth century, Zeus is different again; he suffers with and for men, and learns through suffering; he becomes, before all else, 'Zeus of the Suppliant', of the person who begs for mercy, he is now the god of Pity, whose compassion is infinite. This god of Pity is completely unlike the Zeus of Homer, although the name is the same.

Then there is Pallas Athene, the protectress of Athens; we find her in the *Iliad* a fighting goddess; she is always shown in armour, with helmet and shield and spear; the legend was that she had sprung fully armed from the head of her father Zeus, but in the next stage she has become the goddess of the olive-tree, which was the chief crop in the country round Athens, and the patroness of the City State of Athens; from that, she becomes the goddess of all wisdom.

The distinction that is often made between Christian ideas of religion and of right and wrong, and the ideas which people had before Christ, is an unreal one.

As a matter of fact, a very great many of the earliest Christian ideas are Greek, for Jesus lived and taught in a world that was as much Greek as Jewish; St. Paul had a Greek education, and one

of the great strengths of the new religion was that it joined together into one the two great lines of religious thought which were active in the world at that time, the Greek idea and the Jewish idea. That was one of the reasons why many Jews would not accept it, for the Jews were the one people who had resisted the Greek ideas all around them. They were accustomed to think of Greek ideas as bad, and they found in the new religion too much Greek heresy.

About the year 700 B.C. religion in general was still in a rather primitive stage, but the worship of certain gods was collecting round certain places that were established as sacred for the whole of Greece. The chief of these holy-places was Delphi, which was sacred to Apollo, and there was a temple of Apollo there where the god was supposed to speak, and give advice and warning to those that asked. We do not know how the importance of this particular temple and 'oracle', as the speaking of the god was called, began, but soon after 600 B.C. it was established as the most important oracle for the whole of Greece. If anyone in any of the Greek cities or islands wanted advice on some serious question, he would go to Delphi and ask the 'Delphic Apollo' what to do. The questions were given to a priestess, and she would go into the cave where the god spoke, and sit on a little stool with three legs called a tripod, and listen for his answer; it was supposed to come from a cleft in the rock, from which steam or smoke rose up, and where there was a rumbling noise. The priestess gave the answers to the priests of the

temple and they gave them out to the questioner in a sort of riddle. These riddles were often very hard to understand, and it sometimes needed wise men to explain what the oracle had really meant you to do, but there was always some meaning in them, and the Delphic oracle played a very important part in Greek life.

The counsel that came from Delphi was generally good counsel; it was a real religious centre and the priests who were responsible for it must have been very gifted people.

Over the entrance of the temple were written two words: 'Know thyself. You should not enter and ask counsel from the god unless you were sure that your own heart was pure and your motives in coming honest.

The oracle always counselled gentleness, forgiveness of enemies, justice, and tolerance

There is a Greek word, ([^]sophrosyni) which is very difficult to translate into English; it means a sort of wise gentleness, a knowing where to stop, and controlling yourself. This was a quality which the Greeks valued very much and thought a great deal about, and it was the Delphic oracle which first taught the importance' of sophrosynfi.

It also gave advice on practical questions such as the founding of new colonies, and it encouraged the freeing of slaves and kept a record of the owners who set their slaves free.

Another important religious centre of a different kind was Olympia. There there was a temple of Zeus which was specially sacred. It did not give oracles

like the temple at Delphi, but it became the centre for the 'Olympic Games', the great athletic contest to which athletes from all over the Greek world would come to compete. The prize for winning a contest at the Olympic Games was merely a crown of wild olive, but to win one of these crowns was the greatest honour which any Greek athlete could gain; other less important Games gave grander prizes, for instance at Athens the prize was several vases full of olive oil, but everyone would prefer to win the Olympic olive crown.

There were all sorts of contests at the Olympic Games, races on foot and in chariots, wrestling, jumping, throwing weights. The Games were supposed to have been started in 776 B.C. and they were held every four years; they were so important that the Greek calendar was dated by them. They would say that something happened in the third 'Olympiad', or the sixth 'Olympiad', each Olympiad being the period of four years between two Olympic Games.

It may seem odd to you that Games should be connected with a temple or a religious festival, but, to the Greeks, religion was not a thing apart from ordinary life as it has too often been in later times. Their life was more a whole than our lives are; they did not separate it up into serious ideas and business and pleasure, all separate from each other, as modern people are very apt to do. They felt that all their interests fitted together. There is a Greek word 'kalos' which means 'beautiful' or 'good'; we have two separate words, but they had one. If a thing was beautiful, to them, it was good;

if an action was good, it was beautiful. To do a thing well was good and beautiful, so it was beautiful to be merciful or truthful or just, and it was good to carve fine statues or sing lovely songs, or to run swiftly and jump high, and the gods were pleased with all that was *kalos\

This is a very fine and true idea, but it is an idea which is more likely to be held when people are prosperous and happy, and succeeding in the things they want to do. In our own Dark Ages, when the world was a bad place to live in, and it was very hard to be good, or to make beautiful things, this idea dropped out of religion very much. People began to separate goodness and beauty; they began to think of goodness as something hard and unpleasant, often they seemed to value ugliness and to think all beautiful and happy things were bad. This false idea has done a lot of harm to religion, for it is very hard to get rid of when it comes. It got into the minds of the Greeks later on, when things went badly with them, and they were unhappy, but it never took possession of Greek thought as it did of thought in Western Europe, and in some Oriental countries.

CHAPTER V

THE FIRST PHILOSOPHER

WHEN people begin to wake up, as the Greeks were doing in the sixth century B.C., they begin to wonder about all sorts of things which before they took for

granted. About this time in Greece we find people asking what the Earth was made of, and what it really was, and what human beings were made of, and plants and animals; and they began to wonder what the sun was, and the moon and the stars, and why it was light by day and dark by night. There was a wise man called Thales who tried to answer these questions; he wrote books about them, and taught people what he had discovered. He tried to find a single element out of which everything was made, and he thought that that final element was water, and he found out how to predict an eclipse of the sun or moon. Since the time of Thales many other wise men have studied these same questions, and we know now that many of Thales's answers were mistaken. He had no instruments to test his theories by, and the astonishing thing is not that he made mistakes in some of his answers, but that he should have been so nearly right.

Thales was the first of the Greek philosophers. The word 'philosopher*' comes from two Greek words which mean 'love' and 'wisdom'; a philosopher means simply a lover of wisdom. There are of course many different kinds of wisdom; anyone who studies anything seriously might be called a lover of wisdom, but this particular word, philosopher, has always been used for this particular kind of wisdom or knowledge, the trying to find out about what things really are.

Thales and the philosophers who followed immediately after him were interested in what we call 'material' things, the actual things they saw

in the world about them. It was the first step to find out about these.

Later on there were other philosophers in Greece who were interested in still more puzzling questions: what goodness is, and badness, and beauty, and truth, and what it is we mean when we say something is real. These questions are more complicated, and much harder to answer; the invention of scientific instruments cannot help us to answer these. Nobody can give a final and definite answer to questions of this sort, but the later Greek philosophers were as near to finding an answer as anyone has been in all the centuries after them.

CHAPTER VI

SPARTA

WE have spoken already about the Greek colonies that were being founded all over the Mediterranean world between 700 and 600 B.C. and how the Greek City States sent out their citizens to settle abroad because there was not land enough for all at home. This problem of 'land shortage' or 'over-population' came to the Greek cities like a sort of challenge. It was as if someone had said to them: 'See, here is a difficulty. Is it going to beat you?'

The different City States answered the challenge in different ways, just as different people will deal with a private difficulty in different ways, and the different ways in which they answered the chal-

lenge affected their own development and made them themselves grow more different from each other.

Most of the City States met the challenge by colonizing; that seemed the simplest and most obvious way, as long as there remained enough vacant land across the sea to go to. These Greek colonies were very valuable to the Ancient World, and therefore to us as well. They were just as advanced and cultivated as the cities that founded them, and a great many famous Greek writers and learned men came from the colonies that were founded in this way. Some of the principal City States to found colonies were: Corinth, which founded Corcyra and Syracuse; Megara, which founded Byzantium; Phocaea in Asia Minor, which founded Marseilles.

You can find these cities and their colonies on the map on page 19.

But the vacant land overseas was not without limits, and there were two important cities that did not send out their people to colonize when the others were doing so, but met their challenge in two different ways. These cities were Athens and Sparta, which became in the end the two most important States in all Greece.

In the eighth century B. C., when the other Greek States were founding colonies and sending out peaceful people overseas, the Spartans sent a military expedition against their nearest neighbour, Messene, and conquered it and took possession of all the Messenian land.

They made the Messenian people into slaves

that belonged to the land, and were portioned out with it; so many families to each plot of land, to work it for the Spartan conqueror, to whom it was allotted. These land-slaves were called 'Helots', which means 'conquered', and they were a great weakness and danger to Sparta, for they were naturally unhappy and discontented; they had no share in the fortune of the Spartan State, and no interest in its prosperity. They cultivated the land for their Spartan masters and supplied them with food because they were obliged to, but they were always waiting for an opportunity to get free, and the Spartans knew this and were always anxious.

About a hundred years after the conquest of Messene, the Helots did revolt; it was a long and fierce rebellion, and the Spartans only just succeeded in putting it down.

After this the whole Spartan State was organized more strictly and severely in a special way of its own.

This is supposed to have been done by a Spartan called Lycurgus, but we do not know much about him, nor even whether there was a real person called Lycurgus at all. He is what we should call a 'mythical' or 'legendary' figure like Agamemnon or Achilles, or King Arthur, but whether Lycurgus himself was real or not, the system of government in Sparta was very real and important.

The idea of this Spartan system was to organize the whole State for war; it was really based on the primitive organization of a fighting tribe, though it was developed in a much more thorough and

elaborate way. Fighting was the only occupation fit for a Spartan citizen, any other kind of work they thought beneath them, and this was all done by Helots. All Spartan boys and men between the ages of seven and sixty were organized into classes according to age, a different class for each year of age. When a boy was seven, he was taken from his mother and put into the first class with all the other seven-year-old boys; they were trained by a special officer or teacher, and at the end of their first year they had to pass examinations or tests to qualify for the next year's class, and so it went on every year till they were qualified for the twenty-one-year-old class and became full fighting-men.

Only pure-born Spartan boys could enter these classes at all, but if any boy failed to pass the tests at any of the stages of his training, he would be rejected from the body of citizens for good, and could never count himself a Spartan. The tests were very severe and became much harder after each year's training, and there might only be a fixed number of full citizens at any time, so that some boys from every age-class were bound to be rejected; these rejected Spartans led a miserable existence, for they belonged nowhere, and nobody wanted them.

The training was entirely military with a great deal of drill and physical exercises, and practice in standing hardship of every kind; in particular they were trained to stand pain without showing it, and to endure cold and hunger.

The historian Herodotus tells us that the order given to Spartan troops before a battle, was always

the same: 'In action, it is forbidden to retire in face of enemy forces, of whatever strength. Troops are to keep their formation, and to conquer or die.'

Although the Spartans were so strong and well trained, they were not allowed to compete in the Olympic Games, for such things were too frivolous a use of physical powers, and might distract their minds from the serious business of war. Everything else was sacrificed to this cult of courage and endurance, and there was no time, either, for art or learning or literature.

Before this system of Lycurgus was introduced, we find that the Spartans were making statues and carvings and gold ornaments, and there were Spartan poets and writers, but all these activities stopped abruptly then, and there are no more Spartan artistic works for four hundred years. They begin again in the second century B.C. after the system of Lycurgus had broken down and Spartan life had become like the life in an ordinary Greek city.

The Spartan army was all infantry. They were armed with heavy round shields and short spears, and they fought in a very closely arranged formation. The Spartan Hoplites, as the soldiers were called, became famous all over the Greek world. Their commanders could carry out tactics that no other Greek commanders could attempt, because of the absolute discipline of their troops.

Inside the rigid frame of 'age-classes' all Spartans were equal. Everyone of whatever family had to pass through the same tests, and no one had any privileges or advantages over another in the

same class. Even the kings had to go through the same training and the same tests as their subjects. There were always two equal kings from two separate families, but they had to obey the laws of the State and could not make them or change them. The laws were administered by five 'overseers', who were chosen each year from the body of citizens.

We still use the word 'Spartan' when we want to describe something very hard or unluxurious. We say that the system in some school is 'Spartan', or that some family is 'Spartan' in the way it brings up its children. We use the word as praise, but not unmixed praise; there is a suggestion in it of 'too hard'.

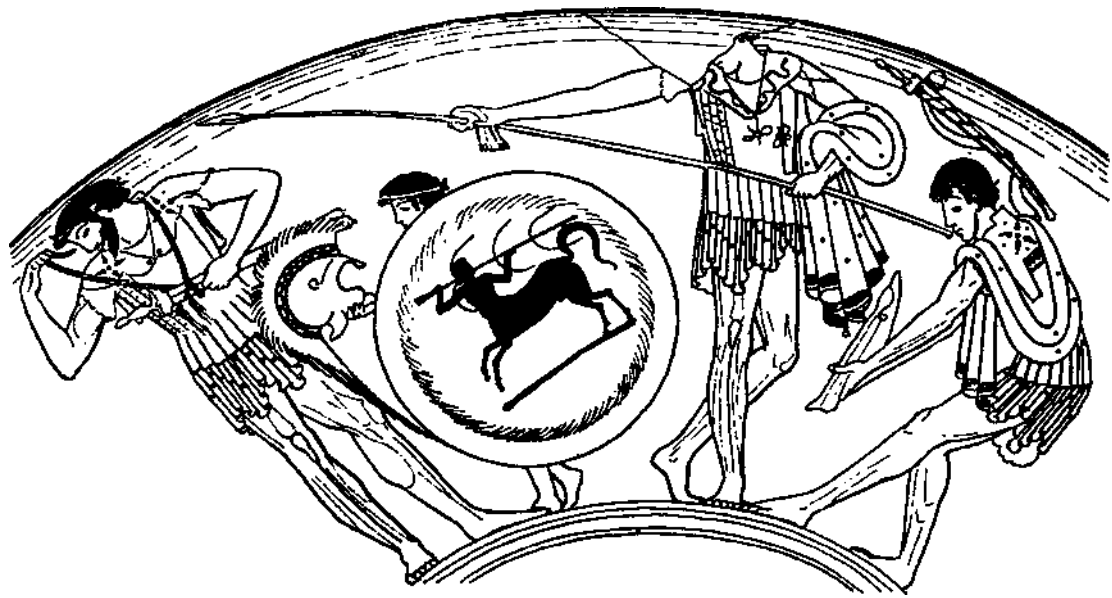
There is another word, 'laconic', which comes from the other name for the Spartans, the Laconians. We sometimes say that a person answers us 'laconically' and we mean that he answers in as few words as possible; he says very little, but what he does say is to the point.

The Spartans were supposed to speak very shortly and to the point. There is a story about them which shows us this.

A messenger, who was not a Spartan, came and told them that the Persian army which was marching to attack them was so numerous that when the Persian archers drew their bows the arrows darkened the sun.

The messenger was excited and wanted to excite the Spartans too, but they only answered: 'Then we shall be fighting in the shade'.

That was a laconic answer.



SPARTAN HOPLITES ARMING

From a vase in the Vatican

There is something magnificent about the Spartans. We cannot help admiring them, but they sacrificed too much to their one idea of courage. There was no freedom in Sparta for anyone, neither Helot nor king, and this lack of freedom destroyed them in the end.

CHAPTER VII

ATHENS

THE other city which answered its challenge in a special way was Athens. At the time when the other City States were founding their colonies, and when Sparta was conquering her neighbours, we hear nothing of Athens. When the Spartan craftsmen and artists were active, we hear nothing of Athenian artists and craftsmen. Athens seems to have been somehow a slow grower, later to wake up than the other City States. Yet when Athens did wake up, she developed faster and went further than any of the other cities in Greece.

It was not until about 600 B.C. that Athens began to deal with her challenge. Up to this time, we hear very little of the Athenians. They do not seem to have made their mark in anything, neither in fighting, nor in making poems about the fighting, nor in building ships, nor in making statues or buildings, nor in any of the other arts which were being practised in other places, but in 594 B.C., when the land shortage in Athens was becoming acute, a wise man called Solon became governor.

He saw that something must be done; that there could never be enough land at home for everyone in Athens to live upon, and that the time had passed when more land could be found by sailing across the sea to an empty country, for the empty places were now all filled by other cities.

He decided that the best thing to do was to find some other means of living besides the land. He encouraged people to become sailors and to build ships. Athens was not actually on the sea, but she was quite near it; he developed the ports of Athens which are called Phalerum and the Piraeus, and linked them up with the city, and he encouraged trade with other countries. He saw that what land there was would be more profitable, and so support more people, if it were cultivated to grow olive trees and vines instead of corn, for it suited olives and vines and grew them well, whereas it was never really good for corn.

So, under Solon, Athens became a port and a centre for sea trade, and the Athenian peasants and farmers made wine and oil from their vines and olives, and Athenian ships took the wine and oil all over the Mediterranean, to Marseilles, and to Tunis, and through the Dardanelles, and they brought back corn to Athens from the places where corn grows well, from Egypt and from South Russia and the ports on the Black Sea from which we too got corn till a few years ago.

As many men were employed in the ships as on the land, and others were employed in the ship-yards, building them, and repairing them between voyages; and because the wine and oil had to be

carried in something, pots had to be made, and a new industry of pottery started in Athens.

A great many of the Greek vases which we value so highly now, and keep carefully in museums, were simply the jars made to carry oil and wine in to be sold. That does not mean that we are wrong to value them and think them beautiful, but it shows us how the Greek craftsman loved beautiful things. If he had to make a jar to take oil to Russia in, he made it carefully, and a good shape, and just for the pleasure of it he drew patterns and pictures on it. In China and Japan, even to-day, the common things for use are made carefully like this, but we, when we pack up food for transport, seal it up in ugly tins, and we paste a label on it to say what is in the tin, and who made it, and sometimes there is a picture on the lid, showing us what is inside and how good it is, but it is not a beautiful picture, only an ugly advertisement, something to encourage people to buy, not to please them for its own sake.

We should count it waste of time to pack tongues and sardines in beautiful tins, for we know that the tins will be thrown away as soon as the food is used, but to the Greeks it was never waste of time to make beautiful things, and many of our Greek vases and fragments of vases have been dug up from ancient rubbish heaps.

This making of pottery became an important industry in Athens. The best potters from all over Greece collected there, for Solon encouraged foreigners to come and settle if they were good craftsmen and so good for industry*.

Soon Athenian potters were making pots for other merchants to pack other merchandise in, as well as for their own shippers of oil and wine, and there grew up in Athens an artisan class, much more the kind of people that we find now in towns, and with the growth of these town workers, the potters, and shipwrights, and dockyard workers, there was more need for other town professions, for clerks, and doctors, and schoolmasters.

This was the way in which Athens responded to the challenge of land shortage; she found new ways of employing people and giving them a means of life without their possessing land.

The Greek ships were of course very different from ours, and they changed a good deal in the course of Greek history, getting larger and more complicated as time went on, but they were never so large and roomy as ships built for use in the Atlantic had to be. Sailors in the old world round the Mediterranean seldom slept in their ships at night; they could always put to shore when the night fell; they did not put to sea in the winter either, for though it is not very cold in the Mediterranean, sudden storms sweep down, and the ships were not built to withstand heavy storms. The Greek sailors had not learned how to sail against the wind either, which is curious when we think how much they lived in ships and how far they travelled. By the seventh century B.C. they had sailed through the Straits of Gibraltar to trade with Tarshish on the Spanish coast beyond, and after the time of Alexander the Great, who conquered Egypt for the Greeks in the fourth century B.C.,

Greek ships learned to sail from the Red Sea to Ceylon,

All the Greek ships used both sails and rowers, but a difference soon developed between war-ships and merchant ships. The war-ships depended chiefly on men rowing; in the later ships there were three rows of them, one above the other, the top row having much longer oars than the lower ones. They were very fast, but there was no room for anything else beyond the rowing-benches, and the sails were extras to help in a favourable wind.

The merchant ships, on the other hand, needed as much space as possible for cargo, so they were chiefly sailing-ships, with a few rowers as extras when the wind was against them.

The chief cargoes they carried from Greece were wine and oil, and the special pottery jars in which they both were sold. Even to-day the chief products of Greece are wine and oil, but now in the modern world olive oil is little used, and Greek wine, which was once much prized, is hardly drunk at all outside Greece. In the ancient world, oil was used for a great many purposes: it was used for cooking and for washing—you rubbed yourself with oil instead of soap when you had a bath; and it was used|as we use butter now, and for burning in lamps for light. So the making of oil from the olive fruit was a very important industry indeed.

CHAPTER VIII

PERSIA

T H E Greeks were not the only people in the civilized world at this time. There were civilized people in Egypt as long ago as 3000 B.a, and in Babylon and in Palestine.

The Babylonians were the first people to study astronomy, and the Greek philosophers learnt a great deal from Babylon about the stars, and about mathematics, and the science of numbers, but in general these Eastern civilizations had not come into contact much with the Greeks up to this time. Later, as the Greek world spread still more, both the Egyptians and the Jews were affected by it, but up to about the year 525 B.C. the Greeks spread their colonies westwards through the Mediterranean, and north to the Black Sea, without meeting resistance or question.

About this time, however, a new power rose up in Asia, the Empire of Persia. The Persians also belonged to the Indo-European race; they had the same kind of language as the Greeks had, and as we have now, but they came from much farther east and belonged to a different civilization, or way of living, from the people in the Mediterranean world.

The first great Persian king was called Cyrus; he ruled from about 550 to 525 B. C, and formed a powerful empire in the south-west of Asia.

All that part of Western Asia had been conquered by the Assyrians and smashed up; Cyrus

collected into his kingdom all the fragments; he built up again the little states which the Assyrians had broken, and restored the Jews to their own country out of their captivity in Babylon.

We read of Cyrus in the Bible as the great benefactor, the saviour of the oppressed. To all the little Eastern peoples, Assyrians and Babylonians were the enemy, the ruthless conquering powers of whom they were always in fear, and Cyrus came as deliverer from their enemy. He established law and order throughout his great kingdom. Persian justice was famous for its fairness and its strength; even now we say of some rule that is very firmly fixed, *it is like the law of the Medes and Persians', and Greek writers writing about this time speak of the 'truth and order of the Persians'.

The Persian religion also was interesting; they worshipped one god instead of many, which was rare at this time. They were not fierce about their religion like the Jews, but tolerant like the Greeks. They did not interfere with the beliefs of the subject peoples in their empire, but they held to their own, and this early Persian religion, Zoroastrianism, soon developed into an advanced and fine one that was very like Christianity.

But although the Persian Empire was, on the whole, a good one, and although the Eastern peoples looked on Cyrus as a friend, to the Greeks he appeared as a formidable enemy.

The Greeks were spreading eastward and the Persians westward; they could not both go on without getting in each other's way, and this led to a great war between the Greeks and the Persians.

The trouble began about 546 B.C. when the Persian king, Cyrus, conquered the kingdom of Lydia in Asia Minor, for although Lydia was not actually a Greek kingdom, it was in the Greek world; King Croesus of Lydia had conquered most of the Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor, so there were now many Greeks, subject to the king of Lydia, and the Lydians had adopted many Greek customs and ways of doing things; they were what is called 'Hellenized', which means the same as 'Greek-ized', for the Greek's name for himself is a 'Hellene', and for his country, 'Hellas'.

To both Lydians and Greeks alike the Persians seemed outlandish barbarians. They wore different kinds of clothes, had different kinds of weapons and ways of living, and belonged, in fact, to a different world. They were more severe in their love of law and order, and at the same time to the Western Greeks and Lydians they appeared luxurious and Oriental, coming suddenly out of the East into the Greek world.

It was a shock to the Greeks of the mainland when Cyrus conquered Lydia and so took into his empire all the Greek subjects of Lydia.

About twenty years later, the next Persian king, Cambyses, conquered Egypt, and in Egypt too there were Greek settlements and cities, though the kingdom of Egypt was not Greek.

About the year 510 B.C. the third Persian king, Darius, sent out a force to conquer Scythia in the south of Russia, and here too there were Greek colonies. He did not succeed in this expedition,

the Scythians resisted successfully, but the Greeks felt themselves threatened in every direction.

The Egyptians were constantly revolting against the Persians, and the Greeks sympathized and helped them when they could, but it did not come to an open war between Greeks and Persians till 499 B.C., when the Greek cities in Asia, which the Persians had taken over in taking Lydia, revolted themselves; then the Athenians came to help them against Persia, and the Persian War began.

The ancient world was divided in its feelings at this time into two groups: the Jews and Phoenicians supported the Persians, and were grateful to them, because they had saved them from the Babylonians; the Babylonians were as naturally against them, and so were the Egyptians. Now the Greeks came out on the anti-Persian side.

The Phoenicians were the chief rivals of the Greeks as sailors; they were the only other great sea traders and colonists of the Mediterranean, and Greek ships and Phoenician ships were constantly competing against each other. The Phoenicians therefore supported the Persians all the more actively when they saw that they were going to fight the Greeks.

The war between the Greeks and the Persians lasted on and off for fifty years. It was an important one for all the ancient world, and, through them, for us to-day, for it really decided the question as to which civilization, Greek or Persian, Western or Oriental, should dominate the Mediterranean world.

If the Persians had spread across into Europe

and swamped the 'Hellenic' or Greek culture with their own, the world would be very different from the world we know to-day. We should, like the Turks and Indians, have ancient Persian for our 'classical' language, our thoughts and ideas would all be based on Eastern thoughts and ideas, instead of Greek; there would not, in fact, be in the modern world what we call 'Western' or 'European' culture.

The war was begun by the Athenians as a war for freedom. It seemed at first almost a forlorn hope, for the Greeks were few and poor compared to the Persians. They were unorganized separate little groups of people without wealth or resources for resisting a great imperial army that had been conquering all the countries of Asia that crossed its path.

It was the Athenians only that began the resistance, but gradually, with great efforts, they persuaded the other Greek States to join with them—even the Spartans joined the united Greeks for a few years—and the small body of Greeks fighting for their existence achieved quite astonishing results; they were the first people to hold up the great westward advance of the Persians.

What had seemed almost impossible became true, the Persians were defeated and turned back.

But in the course of this war for freedom a great deal of freedom amongst the Greeks themselves was lost. As the Athenians liberated the various Greek cities from the Persians, they organized these freed Greeks into units under

Athens; they were called 'Allies* of Athens, and at first they really were so, but as the war went on, through its fifty years, the relation of Athens to her allies changed. At the beginning of the war, the other Greek States that came to fight with the Athenians came of their own accord as free helpers; by the end of the war, we find an Athenian Empire forcing its subject States to support the Athenian navy whether they liked or no. And, as the organization of the Athenians had changed, so had their aims changed too. They were no longer content to keep the Persians out of Greece. Why should not the Greek language and Greek culture spread eastward over Asia, as it had already spread westward to France and Spain?

The Athenians might indeed have succeeded in their ambition, if they could have kept the friendship of the other Greeks, but they had become too proud and overbearing, as often happens with successful people. So much of their energy and attention was taken up with keeping order at home among their allies that there was not enough to spare for wars of conquest, and when peace was finally signed in 448 B.C., fifty years after the first Athenians had declared war on Persia, it was an agreed peace. Both Greeks and Persians agreed to give up certain towns and territories in exchange for others.

Neither side had done all they had set out to do, and the balance of power between them was delicate, like a carefully adjusted scale.

This treaty of peace was arranged by an

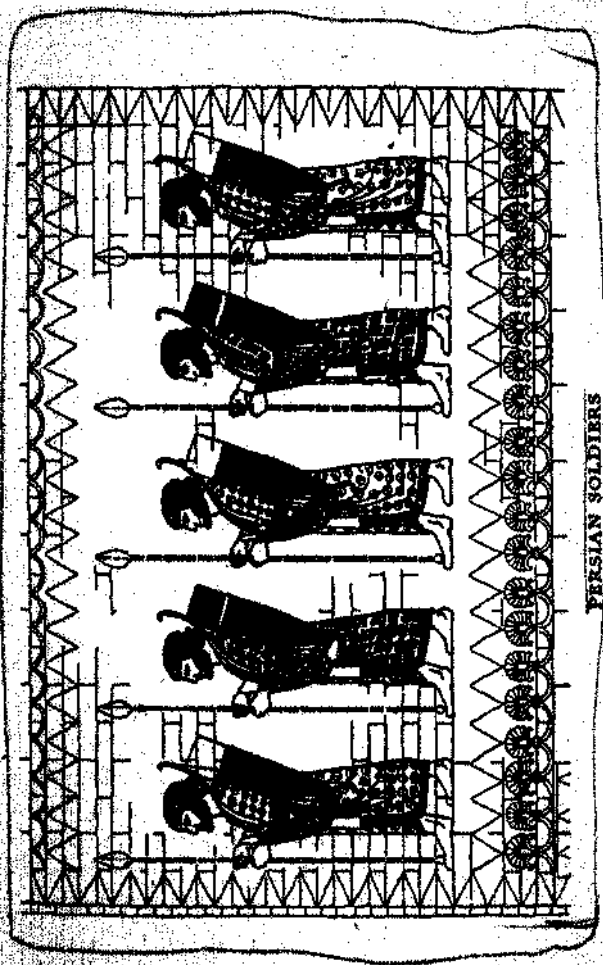
Athenian called Pericles; he was a great statesman and leader, and many of the most wonderful achievements of Athens were accomplished during the time when he led the Athenian people; but we will speak about Pericles later on; now we must go back to the Persian War,

CHAPTER IX

THE PERSIAN WAR

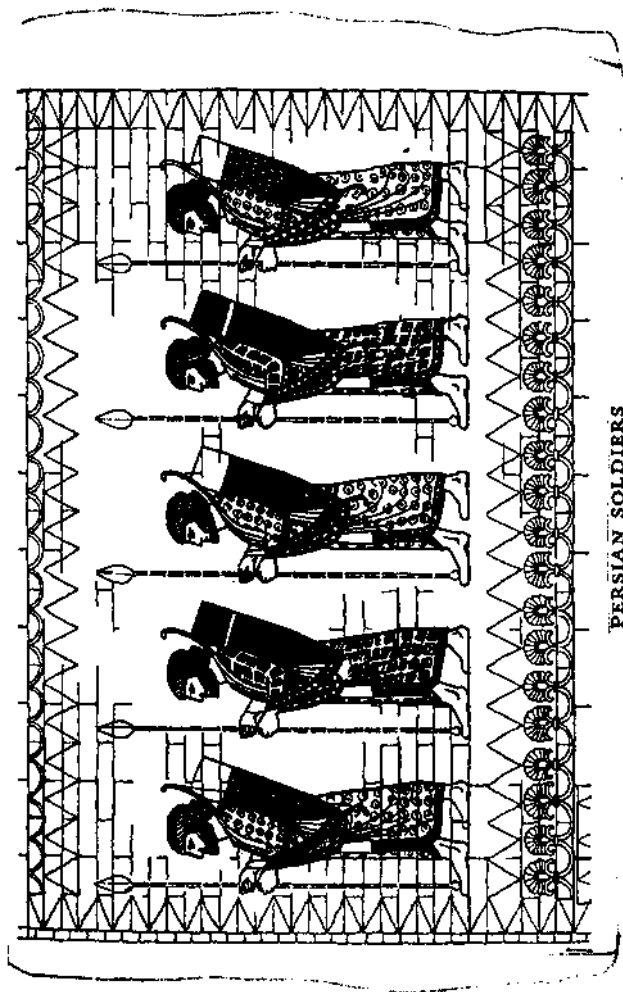
ALTHOUGH the Persian War lasted fifty years, it did not go on continuously all that time. There would be a bout of fighting and then a pause of several years with no fighting at all. In between these bouts of fighting, the ordinary life of ordinary people in both Greece and Persia would go on much as usual, then sometimes the Greeks would begin the fighting again, and sometimes the Persians, according to which were most ready for war just then.

In the first contest, the Persians won; Darius put down the revolt of his Greek cities and defeated the Athenians who had come to help them. He was annoyed with the Athenians for interfering; to him, they were little unimportant people who had butted in in what was not their affair. It was tiresome, too, for him to have the Ionian or Asiatic Greeks inside his empire and the others still outside; he foresaw constant trouble with the Ionians as long as their cousins across the sea were independent. So, soon after, in 490 B.a, he sent



PERSIAN SOLDIERS

From a frieze in the Louvre



PERSIAN SOLDIERS
From a frieze in the Louvre

decided to make this attack on a grand scale, and he collected together the largest army that the world had yet seen. We do not know the actual numbers of Xerxes' army; it is probable that he himself did not know how many men he had, for more and more were gathered in as they marched towards the coast, and some of those he collected escaped and ran home again. All sorts of people from all sorts of tribes and nations were in his army, for the Persian Empire spread at this time from the borders of India to the Mediterranean, and so large a mass of men marching to war had never been seen. The historian Herodotus tells us most of what we know about the Persian War, and he says that the rivers failed as they passed by, because they were so many ¹ That does not mean, of course, that they drank up full-flowing rivers, which would not be a possible thing to do; but the rivers in Asia Minor are often almost dried up in the summer—wide stony beds, and pools of water and shallow trickles of water among the stones. A great army might well find these rivers not enough.

At the same time that Xerxes was preparing his great attack from the east, his friends, the Phoenicians who had founded the city of Carthage in North Africa, attacked the Greeks in Sicily from the west.

The Athenians saw themselves threatened from each side; they sent envoys to the other chief City States to ask for help; together there was just a chance that they might withstand the Persians, singly they never could.

It was one of the chief weaknesses of the Greeks that they could not work together for long without disagreeing. Time and again, throughout their history, we see them try to join for some special purpose; while they remain together, they are strong, but they do not remain together long enough, and what they are out to do is not quite done; so it was in this case. In the face of this imminent danger from the Persians, all the Greek cities gathered to the Athenians, even the Spartans, the great rivals of Athens, came. In order to keep their help, the Athenians allowed the Spartans to take command of the united Greeks, and the next famous battle in the Persian War, the battle of Thermopylae, was a Spartan feat of arms, as the battle of Marathon had been an Athenian one.

This battle was fought in the mountains north of Athens. The Persian army had crossed the Dardanelles into Europe by a bridge of boats and was marching down towards Attica. The combined Greek forces under the Spartan king Leonidas were collected in the Pass of Thermopylae to try to stop this advance. The main body of the Spartans had not yet arrived, there was only an advance guard of three hundred picked men with Leonidas at the time of the battle.

Some of the Greek commanders wanted to retire when they saw the immense size of the Persian army and realized how slight their chances of holding them back must be, but Leonidas decided to remain where he was and to hold the Pass of Thermopylae till reinforcements could arrive. Xerxes could not believe at first that so small a

body of men could really mean to defy him; it seemed to him ridiculous, and he waited four days before he attacked them, expecting that they would run away without a battle. When he found, however, that they had no intention of running away, he attacked them on the fifth day with some of his picked troops; the Spartans resisted the repeated attacks of the Persians, and at the end of the first day's fighting the attackers had to retire.

The second day's fighting followed the same course; the Persians failed to gain any ground in the Pass and were obliged to retreat.

It seemed indeed as though Leonidas and his few men might indeed have held the Pass against these immense odds until reinforcements came, but at this point he was betrayed by a native of the district called Epialtes, who probably did not think of Spartans or Athenians as being his fellow-countrymen at all. He showed the Persians a secret path over the mountains by which they could get round to the other side of Thermopylae and attack the Spartans in the rear. This treachery decided the battle, for the Greek forces were now caught in a trap. When news reached the Greek camp from the outposts on the hills that the Persians had been shown the secret path, most of the allies decided to retreat while retreat was still possible, but Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans refused to retire even now; and the Thebans and the Thespians remained behind with him. The Thebans he forced to stay because it was known that they would go over to the Persian side if they got the chance, but the Thespians

remained of their free will, Refusing to take their departure and to abandon Leonidas and his companions, they remained on the spot to die with them/

These then remained knowing that there could be no chance of escape for any of them, and that their reinforcements could not possibly reach them in time to help.

The last day's fighting was desperate; before the last of the Spartans were cut down they had broken their swords and spears and were fighting with their teeth and nails. They were all killed (except the Thebans who ran away) and were buried afterwards in the exact spot where they fell.

Afterwards, monuments were put up to their memory; one was to the memory of all the Greeks who fell at Thermopylae (for many of the allies had fallen before they retired), and on it was written:

Against three million battled here of yore
From Pelops island, thousands four;

and there was another one to the Spartans alone, on which was written:

Go, friend, tell Lacedaemon in this land
We lie, obeying her command.

Lacedaemon was the other name for Sparta, and this inscription is, you see, more 'laconic' than the other.

The battle of Thermopylae was not a victory for Greece from the military point of view, for the Persians succeeded in forcing their way through

the mountains and marching down against Athens* but the very fact that it was not in the ordinary sense a victory makes Thermopylae all the more interesting. It is perhaps the most famous battle in history, and the heroes of it are the Spartans who were defeated and killed. Because they were so brave, and fought so heroically though they knew they were bound to be overpowered and could not by any possibility win the battle, we feel their fight to be a victory in a way that is much more important than the Persian victory. When we speak of Thermopylae, we think of the three hundred Spartans and Leonidas, we do not think of the victorious Persians who marched over them.

After Thermopylae, but in the same year, there was a sea battle between the Greek and Persian fleets off the island of Salamis. This was a Greek victory and was really the decisive battle of the war.

The battle of Salamis was again a victory for the Athenians, though the Spartans also took part in it. The next year the Spartans had a victory in a land battle at Plataea, and the Athenians won another sea battle at Mycale. The honours were in fact pretty equally divided, but the Spartans were not satisfied at the part they were playing. It was not enough for them to have fought heroically at Thermopylae and to have won Plataea. They felt that the navy and the sea fighting was becoming more and more important in the war and that they were not great sailors like the Athenians. They were accustomed to be the principal soldiers and to gain the most glory, and they felt that, as things were

going, the Athenians were gaining more honour and fame than they were, and that they themselves were of secondary importance. Another reason that made the Spartans unwilling to go on with the war was the fear of their 'Helots' revolting while they were away.

We have already explained that this subject population of the Spartans was a weakness and anxiety to the Spartan State; there were perhaps six times as many Helots as true Spartans, and there was always a danger of their rising, if their masters were much occupied elsewhere.

So now, after two years' fighting side by side with the Athenians, the Spartans went home again, and left the Athenians to carry on the war as best they could with their own special allies.

In this same year, 479 B.C., the Asiatic or Ionian Greeks revolted again against the Persians, more successfully this time, and in the following winter an Athenian force captured the Dardanelles, which were then as always the key to any sea war in that region. After this there was again a pause in the war; the Athenians went on organizing their allies and making themselves as strong as they could without the Spartans.

They called a great meeting of their allies in the island of Delos, and arranged exactly what each city should pay towards the war; how much in money, in men, and in ships. This meeting was arranged by an Athenian called Aristides; he was known as Aristides the Just because he took such pains to arrange it justly, and to see that little and **poor States** should not be unfairly treated, nor,

asked to pay more than they could afford to the common store.

At this time the Athenians were still treating their allies fairly; they wanted to form a free 'confederacy' or company of cities, and perhaps if they had not been all the time at war they might have succeeded in joining all the Greeks together for good. They might have made a 'United States of Greece', like the United States of America now, but all the time, while they were trying to do this, the war with Persia was hanging over them, and in times of war people's minds get turned away from freedom and fairness and gentle ways of doing things, and so it was that the Athenians took advantage of their weaker allies in later years; they altered the arrangement that Aristides had made, and demanded more ships and money than the little cities could pay.

This was not done all of a sudden, nor was it exactly on purpose, but, by degrees, first in one way, and then in another, the relation between Athens and her allies was changing, and every change that came about gave more power and privilege to Athens, and less to the little States. Some movement of this sort was almost bound to happen when the main and immediate object of their alliance was the keeping up of a war. More and more ships were needed, and more and more money; it was in the interest of the little States as well as of Athens that the Persians should be held back.

It would be untrue, and unfair to Athens, to say that she set out deliberately to subdue her allies and take advantage of them, but the circumstances

of the war all tended in that direction, and she did not withstand them.

In 454 B.C., twenty-five years after the meeting at Delos, the treasury of the confederacy was moved from Delos to Athens. This was done for safety, because it would have been much easier for the Persians to capture the treasure from the island of Delos than from Athens, and it would have been disastrous for them all if this treasure, on which they all depended, were to fall into the hands of the enemy; but, at the same time, it did mean that the money which had been raised by them all was removed from the reach or control of the other cities, and became to all intents and purposes the property of Athens. Athens was now openly the capital of an empire, and the federated States were no longer equal allies, but subjects of Athens.

The other City States were naturally angry at this change, and resisted it; all the time there were little wars going on between some of them and Athens, and that was why the Persian War dragged on, till at last, in 448 B.C., Pericles made peace between Greece and Persia, and then, two years later, in 446 B.C., another peace between Athens and the rest of Greece.

CHAPTER X

PERICLES

PERICLES belonged to one of the old noble families of Athens, the Alcmaeonidae, but he was the leader

of the democratic or people's party in the city. He first came to power in 461 B.C. when there was a kind of democratic revolution in Athens against the existing government.

The leader of the government which he turned out was called Cimon; he was a moderate man, rather conservative as the Athenians went, and his policy had been to keep on good terms with Sparta, and concentrate all their energies against the Persians.

Pericles looked on Sparta as a dangerous backward place; he felt that friendship with Sparta would hamper Athenian freedom, and hold back the changes he was anxious to make in the government of Athens, so he broke the agreement between the two cities that Cimon had made, and made war on Sparta at the same time as Persia. This was about twenty years after they had fought together at Salamis and Plataea. It was a bad thing to do, and foolish as well, for it was impossible for Athens to fight them both at once. Pericles failed in this first step of his; a truce had to be made with Sparta and with Cimon, and Cimon came back to power.

Afterwards, when Cimon died, Pericles became powerful again, but he had changed his ideas and become wiser. He had seen that what Athens needed most was peace, and so it was he who made the final peace with Persia, and then a second decisive peace with Sparta and the allies of Sparta.

Pericles was a very great statesman, and the fifteen years that followed these two treaties of peace are known as the 'Periclean Age' or **the** 'Golden Age' of Athens, because under his guid-

ance Athens achieved more and seemed more successful than ever before or since.

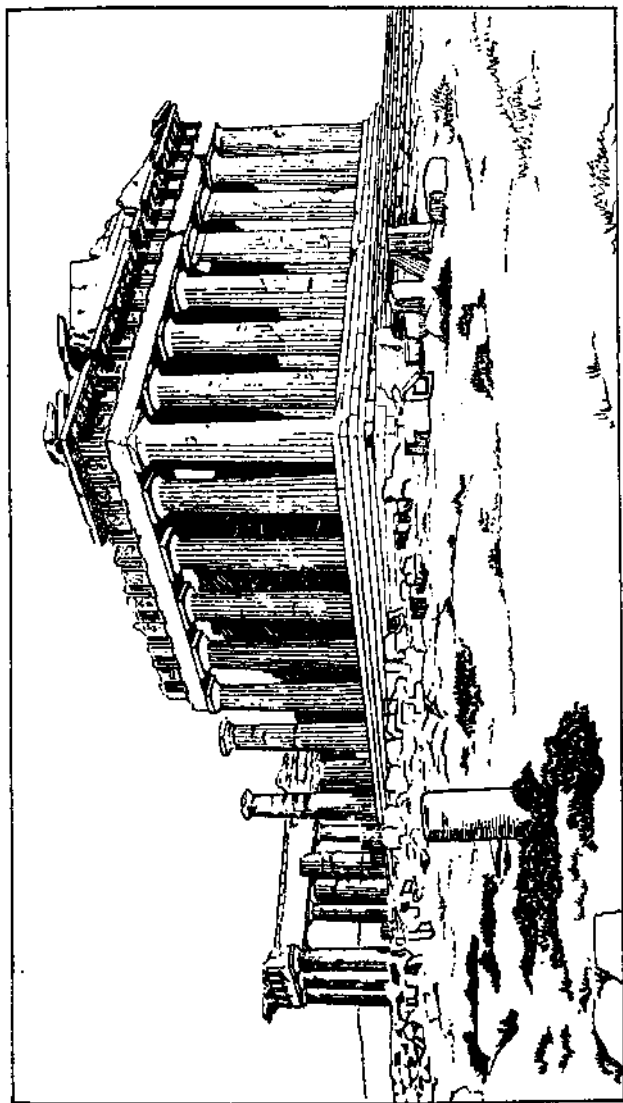
It was during these fifteen years that the great temple of Pallas Athene, called the Parthenon, on the Acropolis or citadel of Athens was built. Most of the Parthenon is still standing and we can still see what a beautiful building it is, and how wonderfully constructed. When we realize that each drum of its marble pillars had to be hewn by hand from the marble quarries of Pentelicus, more than twenty miles from Athens, and then had to be dragged by oxen all that way, and then raised up to the top of the Acropolis, we get some faint idea of the actual work involved in such a building; but work alone would not make it beautiful; the most wonderful thing about the Parthenon is the proportion of it and the skill of its design. It is so simple; compared with any of the mediaeval cathedrals any Greek temple seems plain and unornamental. The architect who designed the Parthenon did not depend on elaborate decoration for his effect, but on the form and proportion of his actual building, and a plain thing needs to be much more perfect than an elaborate one if it is to succeed. Any dressmaker will tell you that to make a plain dress well is a far harder test of her skill than to make one covered with frills or embroidery or lace. There was decoration on the Parthenon, fine carvings and painting, but it was of much less importance to the whole than the decoration in a Gothic church. It is hard for us now who see these white marble temples to realize that once they were painted in bright colours, but that is also true

of Gothic churches, and we see both to-day in uncoloured stone or marble and must compare them so.

There is extreme technical skill in these plain Greek temples; for instance, each pillar is made wider in the middle, in order that, when standing, it should look straight; if the pillars were really the same thickness all the way up, they would appear to get thinner in the middle. The exact distance apart of every column, and its exact proportions of height and girth, these are the points on which the temple depends for its beauty; if any one of these measurements were altered the whole effect would be lost, and the Greek architects could calculate every detail exactly beforehand.

Pericles built other buildings of importance besides the Parthenon; he built another temple called the Erechtheum and also a great gateway called the Propylaea, all on the Acropolis of Athens. He employed the best architects and builders and stone-cutters from all over Greece. The chief of his sculptors was called Phidias; some of Phidias's sculptures, from the Parthenon, are now preserved in the British Museum; but the great statue of Athene which he made for the Parthenon has been destroyed.

Pericles did not mind the nationality of his craftsmen so long as they were good at their craft, and everyone who worked was paid the same wage, from the architect who designed the whole building to the stone-mason slave. Slaves in Athens were treated very well; they were allowed by their masters to go out to work and to keep part of



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their money. If they earned enough, they could sometimes buy their freedom from their masters*

An Athenian writing to describe Athens to other Greeks at this time tells us that in the streets of Athens, unlike other cities, you could not tell a slave from a free man. They all dressed alike, and seemed equally independent.

In the Athens of Pericles people did not count money so important as most of us do to-day. They lived much more simply than we do, and were much more equal. It would not have occurred to Phidias that he ought to be paid more for carving his statues than the working mason was paid; they each did their own part, and were all needed.

Pericles also encouraged writers and poets. The three great writers of plays, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, wrote most of their plays and had them acted during his government. Every year there were dramatic festivals and contests. All the Athenian playwrights wrote sets of plays for these; the plays were acted and then judged, and a prize awarded to the winning set of plays. A great deal of what we know about the Athenians comes from these plays, for though the stories of the plays are actually about the ancient heroes, and the old folk-tales and legends, what the characters in them say shows us much more what Athenians, at the time the play was written, were thinking or feeling than what the ancient heroes thought or felt.

The Athenian plays had developed from a sort of song and dance performed at religious festivals by a chorus of singers. Gradually one or two

characters came out and recited speeches apart from the chorus, until in the end the main action of the play was acted by these characters, as it is in our plays to-day. But the chorus still remained an important part of the Greek play, and some of the finest poetry we know is from these choruses.

There is a famous chorus from the *Antigone* by Sophocles, written perhaps in the year 441 B.C. It is supposed to be sung by a chorus of Theban elders, but it shows us perhaps better than anything else the triumphant feeling of the Athenians in the time of Pericles, how they seemed to themselves, as to the world outside, to have become masters of everything. This is what they sing:

Wonders are many, but none there be
 So strange, so fell, as the Child of Man.
 He rangeth over the whitening sea,
 Of the winds of winter he makes his plan;
 About his going the deeps unfold,
 The crests o'erhang, but he passeth clear.
 Oh, Earth is patient, and Earth is old,
 And a mother of Gods, but he breaketh her,
 To-ing, fro-ing, with the plough teams going,
 Tearing the soil of her, year by year.

Light are the birds and swift with wings,
 But his hand is round them and drags them low;
 He prisons the tribes of the wild-wood things,
 And the salt-sea swimmers that dart and glow.
 The nets of his weaving are cast afar,
 And his thought in the midst of them circleth full,
 Till his engines master all beasts that are.
 Where the horses drink at the desert pool,
 That mane that shaketh for his slave he taketh,
 And the tireless shoulder of the mountain bull.

Speech he hath taught him and wind-swift thought,
And the temper that buildeth a City's wall,
Till the arrows of winter he sets at naught,
The sleepless cold and the long rainfall.
All-armed he: unarmèd never
To meet new peril he journeyeth:
Yea, his craft assuageth each pest that rageth,
And help he hath gotten against all save Death.¹

Herodotus, the historian of the Persian War, lived and wrote in Athens at this time too, though he was not by birth an Athenian, but came from Halicarnassus in Asia Minor,

It was not in Athens alone that there was this burst of life at this time. All over the Greek world, except perhaps in Sparta, there seemed to be a quickening of life, a new interest and excitement over the arts of peace instead of war.

When we think of all that the Athenians did in this Periclean Age, the temples, the statues, the plays, and books they produced, we are amazed at the short time that this flowering lasted. Fifteen years may seem long to you who have not yet been alive for fifteen years, but in the history of a nation it is a very short time indeed.

Of course, not everything was done during that exact time; Aeschylus, the first of the great playwrights, fought in the battle of Marathon, and died in 456 B.a, eight years before peace was made with Persia, and the temple of Zeus at Olympia, which was one of the great temples, was finished in that same year; but with the years of

¹ Professor Gilbert Murray's translation, by permission, from A. J. Toynbee's *Greek Civilization and Character* (Dent).

peace there came a new burst of energy, the building and the writing that had been going on, with difficulty, in spare time from the war, leaped into importance then as the chief things in life.

When we consider how short this time of peace lasted, we begin to wonder what Athens might have done and discovered and created if she could have kept at peace, if the war cloud that had lifted for a while could have been blown away and dispersed altogether.

That is one of the questions that no one can answer, for it was not blown away. The skill and wisdom of Pericles had arranged a balance of power between Athens and Sparta; he had kept the rivalry between them in limits, as it were, checking the ambition of both, but he had not really healed their enmity. He could not undo his earlier mistake when he had made war on Sparta against the advice of Cimon.

Perhaps it was not his fault; the Spartans were certainly difficult to deal with; they were touchy and easily offended, and very jealous of Athens. It is quite possible that war between these two great rivals would have come sooner or later without that first mistake; certainly, in all his second time of power, Pericles did everything he could to keep it off.

But Pericles was what we call an 'Imperialist', and wanted Athens to be great and important; it was he who had turned her into the mistress of an empire instead of the leader of a group of free States, just working together; it was he who had moved the treasure from Delos to Athens. Al-

though that made people angry, it had probably been a wise thing to do at that stage in the war, but now that the war was over, it should have been given back, or at any rate used for the common benefit of the allies to whom it belonged. Instead, what was left of the money was treated as though it belonged to Athens alone, and it was with this 'common' treasure that Pericles beautified Athens, and carried out the great buildings of which we have spoken.

He felt that it must be for the good of everyone that beautiful things should be made, and he felt sincerely that it would be better for everyone to be ruled by Athens, because she would rule them better than they could rule themselves, and they would learn from Athens many things that they could not learn by themselves.

All this was true in a way, but he made the mistake of supposing that he could make other people love Athens, and want to learn from her, by force.

One of the things that Pericles valued in Athens was the love of freedom, the way that slaves and poor men were well treated and given their fair share, but you cannot spread a love of freedom by force.

Pericles did not allow the allies of Athens to be free at all; he made them subject States who had to obey, instead of free allies who voted and could help to decide.

The Greek cities which the Athenians had freed from the Persians were now not much more free than they had been inside the Persian Empire, they had merely exchanged one master for another.

In some ways it was more exasperating to belong to Athens than to Persia, for the Persians did not expect to be admired and loved for ruling you as the Athenians did, and they interfered much less with ordinary life in their subject States.

To Pericles, and the other Athenians who helped him, it was a privilege for any city to be accounted part of the Athenian Empire. He loved Athens so passionately himself that he could not see how a little unimportant city in Asia Minor, or a little rocky island in the Aegean, could ever prefer to be just itself, instead of one stone in the great building of Athens. A few years after this, he made a famous speech in which he said:

\ . . I maintain that the Commonwealth of Athens is the School of Hellas, and that the individual Athenian will never meet his equal for self-reliance, versatility, and gallantry in whatever situation he may find himself. . . . Athens alone is a power by whom it is no dishonour to her enemies to be worsted and no grievance to her subjects to be ruled. • . . Our daring has forced an entrance into every sea and every land, and everywhere we have raised imperishable monuments of our presence, for good or for evil.'

And so it came about that even in these years of the great age of Athens, when all that was finest and most special in her was at its best, the rest of the Greek world was hostile to her. Not only Sparta and the allies of Sparta, but the subject States inside the Athenian Empire itself, were waiting and hoping for the break-up of the empire. Even during these fifteen years they revolted once.

We have spoken already about the word 'sophrosynfi', wise gentleness or wise moderation, and how that was the quality which the Greeks most prized. There was another word which meant one of its opposites; this other word was 'hubris', and it describes what sometimes happens to people who have too much of something, especially too much power or too much success or too much pride. We use a word in English now, 'hybristic', that comes from that Greek word; if a rich person drives about in a very gorgeous motor-car, that looks specially expensive, we say they are 'hybristic', or if someone who is very clever shows everyone else how much more he can do than they can, we say he is 'hybristic'. The tower of Babel was 'hybristic', and so was the Spanish Armada. It is a useful word, for it means more than pride or showiness or inconsiderateness, though all these qualities are contained in it.

The Greeks believed that 'Hybris' was always punished. There is another word, 'Atfe', which means 'blindness', and which was used in especial for the blind fate which befell Hybris.

We say, 'Pride goes before a fair. The Greeks said, 'Atfi overtakes Hybris*'; it was more tragic, more relentless, and more certain than our proverb. The Athenians in their greatness were 'hybristic', and Atg overtook them. To the rest of the Greeks, and to themselves afterwards, this seemed inevitable and, in a sense, right.

CHAPTER XI

THE PELOPONNESIAN WAR

THE AtS which overtook Athens was a great war with Sparta which lasted twenty-seven years and destroyed them both. Indeed, it destroyed Greece, for, before the end of it, all the Greek cities were involved in it, on one side or the other, and it was much bitterer and more violent than the Persian War, as civil wars are very apt to be.

Most of what we know about this Peloponnesian War, as it is called, comes from the history of it which was written by an Athenian called Thucydides, who fought in it himself. Although he was an Athenian and loved Athens, he did not always think what she did right, and he finished his history after the war was over, and he had seen how disastrous it had been. This is what he says at the beginning of his history:

'This war was indeed the greatest upheaval ever experienced by Hellas, and by a part of the non-Hellenic world (it would hardly be an exaggeration to say, by the human race)¹

And again:

'The greatest war before the last was the Persian War, and that was quickly decided by two engagements on sea and two on land. But the late war **was** long drawn out, and involved Hellas in more **terrible** catastrophes than she had ever before ex-

¹ The extracts from Thucydides are taken, with permission, from A. J. Toynbee's *Greek Historical Thought* (Dent).

perienced in an equal period of time. Never before had so many towns been captured and devastated, . . . never had so many individuals been driven from their homes or massacred, some in the war itself and others in civil disorders.'

The war between Athena and Sparta began in 431 B.C. The actual occasion of its outbreak is not important. There was a quarrel between two cities, Corinth and Corcyra, which was a colony of Corinth; Corinth was an ally of Sparta, and Corcyra appealed to Athens for help against Corinth. The Athenians knew that if they fought against Corinth, the Spartans were bound to come in on the other side; they did not want war, nor did Sparta; nor did Corinth or Corcyra want such a war as followed, but they all felt caught in a net, and carried on to destruction against their wills.

Athens felt:

'If I do not fight now, my enemy will become much stronger than I; if I do not fight now, I shall lose my position in the world; I shall have admitted that Sparta is mistress of Greece, and that I dare not fight against a friend of Sparta/

And Sparta felt:

'If I do not fight now, if I do not back up Corinth against Athens, I shall lose my position in the world. People will say: Sparta dare not defend her allies against Athens; I shall have admitted that Athens is mistress of Greece.'

It is very often for reasons such as this that nations go to war, when neither of them wants war and both are ruined by it.

Even Pericles thought that Athens was bound

to fight now, although for years he had been working for peace. And the king of Sparta who declared for war said: 'This day will be the beginning of great evils for Hellas/

Pericles was a general as well as a statesman; it was he who decided on the tactics of the war. He decided that the best policy for the Athenians on land was to stay on the defensive and let the Spartans exhaust themselves in attack. He summoned all the Athenians to leave their lands and collect for safety inside the city walls. The Spartans invaded Attica and ravaged the fields, but they could not get into the city, and the Athenian fleet was free and controlled the sea. The Spartans had to retire to Sparta again in the autumn, and nothing decisive had happened on either side.

The second year the Spartans invaded Attica again and ravaged the fields, and the Athenians collected again inside the walls and let them do it, but this year a great plague fell on the crowded city of Athens; one in four of the population died, and of those that were left many had had the illness and were left weak; Pericles himself lost his son.

The Athenians began to lose heart and to turn against Pericles. They did not like this method of waiting and doing nothing while the Spartan army made havoc in their crops. They had stores of food in the city because of their ships; their war-ships still policed the sea and escorted the grain ships that bought corn from Russia; but the Athenians wanted to be doing something; this waiting policy that Pericles pressed upon them was very unpopular.

In the third year of the war Pericles died, and

the Athenians were left like a ship without a captain; their last hope died with Pericles.

The leader that came to power in Athens now was a very different man and had very different ideas of how to pursue the war. His name was Cleon, and he was a violent and unscrupulous man.

Pericles had wanted Athens to be great, but he had wanted always that she should be worthy of greatness. But Cleon did not mind about the good name of Athens; he thought any bad deed worth while, if it paid; he would use any means to reach his end. Cleon was a clever orator, and he was clever in a special way; he knew how to work the crowd up to what he wanted. Pericles had appealed to what was noble in the Athenian crowd, but Cleon appealed to what was base and savage. In time of war, the savage in everybody is nearer to the surface and easier to rouse than in peaceful times, and Cleon had great power with the people of Athens.

In the first year of his power, the city of Mitylene on the island of Lesbos revolted against Athens. The Athenian fleet soon put down the revolt, and the city surrendered and begged for mercy, but Cleon wanted to put the whole population to death, men, women, and children. He made an eloquent speech to the Athenian Assembly, and persuaded them to agree to this horrible massacre. A ship was sent off to Mitylene with orders to the commander there to wipe out the whole population; but when they reflected a little on what they had done, and had got away from Cleon's persuasive words, the Athenians were horrified at their own decision, and

ashamed of having been talked over by Cleon. In spite of his anger, they called another meeting and repealed the order they had sent a few hours before; a second ship was sent off to Mitylene with instructions to try and overtake the first. The second ship started a day later, but the crew understood that the lives of some thousands of people depended on their arriving at the island before the order of the first ship was carried out. They rowed desperately all through the night, eating their food as they rowed, without leaving the oars, and reached Mitylene just in time, as the commander was reading the order brought by the first ship.

Afterwards, by Cleon's orders, a large number of the men whom he thought most responsible for the revolt were executed, but the complete massacre he had wished for was prevented.

Even under Cleon the Athenian land forces continued on the defensive, and almost every year the Spartans invaded Attica and destroyed the crops, while the Athenian fleet made raids on different coastal towns in the Peloponnese. The fighting was inconclusive; both sides were getting weary of this fighting, and neither felt that they were getting any victory worth having.

In the seventh year of the war, the Spartans made offers of peace, and Cleon rejected them, but two years later he was killed, and Athens made peace on the same terms that he had refused two years before.

This peace was called the Peace of Nikias after the Athenian commander Nikias who signed it. It was really more of a truce than a real peace, for nothing was settled by it; it was merely another

attempt at a balance of power between the Athenian group and the Spartan group, each side promising to keep the peace and to remain as it was; but, if anything, it was in favour of Athens, because, by it, she retained almost the whole of her empire.

The Peace of Nikias was signed in 421 B.C., after about ten years' fighting, and it lasted after a fashion for seven years, then the war broke out again. Thucydides says:

'The signatories now found themselves at peace, but Corinth and other States of the Peloponnese started to undermine the settlement, with the result that Sparta was immediately involved in trouble with her own allies. As time went on, the Spartans also became suspect to the Athenians through their failure to carry out certain points in the agreement, and although, for six and a half years, they kept back from invading each other's territories, they lost no opportunity of injuring one another in other ways.'

In the year 416 B.C, during the seven years' truce, the Athenians did a dreadful thing. There was a little island in the Aegean called Melos, which had never belonged to the Athenian Empire; it was quite small and poor, but independent, and had never paid tribute to Athens. It could not in any case have paid much, but the Athenians could not tolerate an independent group in the midst of their empire; now they sent an expedition to the island of Melos and demanded tribute.

The Melians refused this unjust demand and appealed to the Athenians' reputed sense of justice;

the Athenians mocked at their appeals to Justice, and said that for them 'might was right', and announced that the only law they recognized was the law of the stronger; they called on the Melians to surrender unconditionally, and when they still refused, they attacked them in force. For a time the Melians resisted, hoping that the Spartans might come to their help, but the Spartans did not come, and they were obliged to give in and throw themselves on the mercy of Athens.

'The Athenians used their discretion to put to death all Melian prisoners of military age and to sell the women and children into slavery. They afterwards colonized the place themselves with five hundred Athenian settlers.'

In this way Cleon's policy towards Mitylene, which the Athenians had resisted with horror in his lifetime, was put into practice now against Melos after his death. This shows us the direction in which the Athenians were moving. In the eleven years between Mitylene and Melos the public opinion in Athens had grown much more savage and vindictive and desperate.

Our account of the sack of Melos is written by Thucydides, who was an Athenian himself and loved Athens, and it shows us two things.

Firstly, it shows us how changed the Athenians were by the war and the war spirit that had taken possession of them; such a brutal and horrible action would not have been possible under the government of Pericles. The sack of Melos was a denial of all those ideas of justice and freedom that had made the greatness of Athens, and the Athen-

ians of an earlier generation would not have recognized their countrymen in the streets of Melos.

Even if Cleon's massacre at Mitylene had been carried out, it would not have been so bad as this, for this was so unprovoked. The people of Mitylene had at least belonged to the empire, and revolted from it in a time of danger; it was natural that the Athenians should feel angry with them; but the Melians had done nothing at all to deserve punishment by any standard of Justice. So our first feeling when we read this account of Thucydides is indignation at the injustice and cruelty of Athens. 'They deserved to come to grief, if they were like this!' we feel.

But the second point to notice and think about is this: this account of the misdoing and shame of the Athenians was written by one of themselves. Thucydides did not take part in the actual sack of Melos, but he was an Athenian soldier, and fought for Athens in this war. He was in no sense a traitor to his country, but the Athens that he loved and was fighting for was the Athens of Pericles, and not the Athens of Cleon and the men who succeeded Cleon. He cared intensely about the fate of Athens, about her ultimate victory or defeat, but he minded even more that she should remain faithful to her own ideals, that she should deserve to be what she claimed to be, the mistress of the world.. This is a more real kind of patriotism than the kind that wants to win at any price. In any war in any country you will come across both kinds of patriot, but Cleon's sort of patriotism is much commoner than Thucydides' sort, and it is one of the very

notable things about ancient Athens that in this dreadful crisis of her history there were so many of these rarer patriots, men who stood out against their violent war leaders because they cared more for the good name of their city than for its material power.

Euripides, the third and latest of the three great playwrights, wrote plays that showed quite clearly how he was feeling about it.

Just after the sack of Melos he wrote a play called *The Trojan Women*^ which is all about the pity and waste of war, and the way it makes quite good people cruel and bad. The play is supposed to be about the sack of Troy many hundreds of years before, but everyone who read it or saw it in Athens then must have understood quite well that Euripides was thinking about their own war and the sack of Melos. That play was acted in Athens the next year, in 415 B.C. Some of the people who saw it were angry with Euripides, and disapproved of the play, but that is not surprising; what is surprising is that it could have been acted at all. If some English writer had written a play about the wrongness of war in the middle of our great war with Germany, no English theatre manager would have dared to produce it; it would have been too unpopular. The great comic writer, Aristophanes, also wrote plays against the war, and they too were acted in Athens at this time. We can see from this that there must have been a great many other Athenians who felt as badly about the sack of Melos as Thucydides or Euripides did,

Athens was not peculiar in becoming brutal

through war; all nations do become more or less brutal when they are fighting desperately, but it is rare to find in a nation that has become brutal in this way so many people who stand out against the crowd and protest against it. We must remember this when we start to condemn Athens.

The final fall of Athens did not come till eleven years later, but these eleven years were a series of defeats. In 415, the same year that *The Trojan Women* of Euripides was acted, the Athenians sent out their fleet to conquer Sicily. It was a very foolish thing to do, for they had not strength enough for a war of conquest at this time, and the Sicilians had not provoked them especially. Nikias, who was sent in charge of the expedition, himself advised against it, but the war party in Athens had lost its head and would not listen to reason.

A Spartan general went to help the Sicilians, and in 413 B.C. the whole Athenian fleet was destroyed in a great sea battle off Syracuse in Sicily. After this defeat there was no hope for Athenian victory, but the war dragged on for another nine years.

The Spartans and their allies now invaded Athenian territory and stayed there; the subject allies of Athens revolted one after the other; at last the Persians joined with the Spartans and Sicilians and they all attacked Athens together, and defeated her utterly.

In 405 B.C. the allied Spartan and Persian fleets* blockaded the Piraeus, the port of Athens, for there was now no Athenian fleet to keep them off; in 404 Athens surrendered; the long walls of defence between Athens and the sea were pulled

down, and a Spartan garrison took possession of the Acropolis.

CHAPTER XII

THE END OF THE CITY STATES

THIS was the end of Athens as an empire. Athens had fallen, but no one had really won. No one was able to take over the empire and build up the broken fragments of the Greek world again.

The Spartans tried to do it at first, but they could not hold it together. They too were exhausted by the war, and they made themselves more hated than the Athenians had been, for they treated all their subject allies as they treated their subject population at home. So much so, that the very cities which had begged the Spartans to free them from Athens during the Peloponnesian War, now begged Athens to take them back again (though they soon broke away from Athens for the second time). In 383 B.C. the Spartans made a disgraceful treaty with the Persians by which they gave back to Persia all the Ionian Greeks for whose freedom they and the Athenians had first made war on Persia a hundred years before.

Soon after this treaty, the Spartans themselves were defeated in a battle with the people of Thebes, who had been their allies.

The Thebans invaded Spartan territory and liberated the Helots in Messene; and this was the final blow to the leadership of Sparta.

For the next few years it seemed as though the

Thebans might become the leaders of Greece, but they were less successful than the Spartans had been; their power lasted an even shorter time, and ended in general confusion and lack of rule. This was now about half-way through the fourth century B.C.

All the old City States seemed exhausted and finished; no leader or statesman showed himself anywhere, and then some quite new people began to be important.

The people of Macedon, in the north of Greece, had somehow stayed outside the general civilization of the other Greeks. They had never formed themselves into City States at all, but had remained in the primitive condition that the rest of Greece had been in in the Heroic Age. They had no democratic government like the other Greek States, but a king with barons or chiefs under him, and they lived by fighting and raiding as all the first Greeks had done. They seem to have kept apart from both the progress and the downfall of the other Greek States, and now they were not exhausted and discouraged as the others were.

At this time, in 459 B.C., there was a king in Macedon called Philip. He had spent his boyhood in Thebes as a hostage of war, during the years when Thebes was powerful, and he had learned the ways of advanced Greeks and was filled with admiration for them.

When he got back to his kingdom of Macedon, he determined to civilize and 'Hellenize' it, to make it modern on the advanced Greek lines.

He engaged Greeks from the City States to

come to Macedon as teachers and artists and sculptors.

This new Greek culture brought immense new strength to the Macedonians. They were not tired like the City States, but ready and hungry for learning and development of every kind.

King Philip resolved to remodel his whole kingdom and to lead the Greeks. First, he suppressed his own barons and put them in order, and then he annexed the Greek colonies on his own coast; then he attacked the barbarians to the north* and brought them into his kingdom. Macedon was by this time by far the strongest single State in Greece. The Thebans and Athenians combined against him, but he defeated them and brought all the independent City States except Sparta into a Macedonian League, with himself as president. Athens and Thebes had joined as well as all the less important cities, and this was a far more complete Greek Federation or joining together than the Athenian Empire; there had been nothing like it since the few years when Athens and Sparta had joined together against Xerxes. But the Ionian cities in Asia Minor, which the Spartans had given back to the Persians, did not belong to the Macedonian League, and in 336 B.C. Philip sent an army into Asia. This army came back again because he was assassinated in the same year by one of his own Macedonians who had a personal quarrel with him, but his son Alexander succeeded him and carried on his invasion of Asia.

Alexander at last carried out the Athenian idea of taking over the whole Persian Empire. He

marched right through Persia from west to east, and came out into unknown India beyond.

He reached the Ganges, and would have crossed it, but his troops refused to follow him any farther; he had to be contented with his existing conquests.

Alexander was a man of great ideas and imagination as well as a conqueror. He had been trained by Greeks in Greek ideas, and his ambition was to combine the two great civilizations of Greece and Persia into one whole. He himself married a Persian wife, and ordered all his generals to do the same, as a sign of the joining together of East and West.

If Alexander had lived, he might have carried out his idea successfully, and the civilization we have inherited might have been richer and wider than it is, but he died suddenly, in Babylon, in 322 B.C., when he was only thirty, and there was no one to carry on his ideas after him.

Alexander was too advanced and enlightened for the people he had worked with. The Greeks thought it unpatriotic to treat the Persians as equals, and the Macedonians thought that they ought to have advantages over the other Greeks. After Alexander's death, the whole of his empire fell to pieces, and was divided up among his generals.

Under Philip and Alexander, the ancient world was more nearly united and brought together than it had ever been, but after them its state was worse than before, for before Philip, only Greece was in confusion, while Asia was united under the strong Persian government, while after Alexander the Persian Empire also was broken up, and Asia as



ALEXANDER'S MARCH TO INDIA

- | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Miletus | 5. Tyre | 9. (Baghdad) Ctesiphon | 13. Tashkend |
| 2. Sardis | 6. Damascus | 10. Persepolis | 14. Kashmir |
| 3. Ancyra (Angora) | 7. Memphis | 11. Alexandria (Herat) | 15. River Tigris |
| 4. Alexandria | 8. Nineveh (Mosul) | 12. Alexandria (Kandahar) | 16. River Euphrates |

After the map in the Cambridge Ancient History

well as Greece was in confusion. There was no strong or orderly government anywhere.

The Macedonians were the last Greeks to attempt world power. After them, there followed three centuries of disorder and muddle before the new power of Rome at last established the 'Pax Romana' or Roman Peace, but this was not till the time of Julius Caesar and Augustus, just before the time of Christ.

The Romans succeeded where the Greeks had failed, and organized the Western world into a lasting union of City States, which Athens, Sparta, Thebes, and Macedon had all tried in vain to do. They were less gifted than the Greeks, less interesting, less creative, but somehow more capable in achieving what they wanted. The Roman Empire was really a Greek idea; its plan and arrangement was all on the Greek model, though carried out rather differently.

The old City States like Athens and Thebes and Sparta became cities of the Roman Empire but still remained City States; so did the newer cities founded by the Macedonians, such as Philippi, to which St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Philippians, and Gadara where the Gadarene swine ran into the sea, and Alexandria, in Egypt, where Alexander's successors founded the great Greek library; all these, both new and old, were Greek cities, and the Roman Empire took them on in their Greek form while the new colonial cities which the Romans themselves now founded in their Western provinces were arranged on the same model: Lincoln and St. Albans in England, Cologne in Germany,

Lyons and Narbonne in France were new colonial cities of the Roman Empire, and were also new City States of the old kind.

CHAPTER XIII

WHAT HAS GONE ON

IF we look at the story of Greece now, as a whole, we may be inclined to think it a sad story. * These gifted people', we may think, 'might have done great things for themselves, and for the world, but they spoiled all their chances by quarrels among themselves. We see, when we look at Greek History, how fatal it is to quarrel and fight. If the Greeks had only been able to work together, what might they not have done? As it is, they are nothing but a warning to us. If Athens and Sparta had worked together, instead of fighting each other, they would have been all-powerful in the Mediterranean world; if Alexander's generals had worked together instead of fighting each other, they would have been masters of the world as far as India. As it is, we can be sorry for them all, and learn by their failures, but we cannot admire people who make such bad mistakes.'

If we say this, we are partly right; all this is true, but it is not all the truth. There are different sides and 'aspects' of nations and civilizations just as **there are** of individual people, just as the Greeks **felt** that their gods had different aspects—Zeus **the thunderer** might be defeated and fail, but Zeus the

all-merciful might endure through defeat and ruin.

If the Greeks had been nothing but fighters and governors, we might indeed decide that they had failed, that the Romans, and perhaps we ourselves in our empire, had surpassed them, but that side of the Greeks was not really the most important. If at the Day of Judgement all the peoples of the Earth had to come and be judged according to the deeds they had done and the contributions they had made to the good of the world, the Romans might offer their empire as their achievement, and their laws, the order they established in a troubled world, the roads they built, and their well-planned, well-ordered cities.

We English would offer something very like the Romans: an empire with good government and good order; capable and just management of subject races; good rules for health; good roads and railways.

But the Greeks, I think, would offer quite different things. * We failed', they would admit, 'to build our empire. Our laws were not so well established or so strongly enforced as yours. Our governments changed and fell and were not stable. We made no roads. We could not govern subject races. But our treasure was not really in these things. We learned', I think they might say, 'from our failure,, and we have made out of it something that will last much longer than your empires, as our Spartans did out of their failure at Thermopylae. The Roman Empire has gone; the British Empire too will go in time. But we have left to the world something

more lasting than empires. Our treasure was in the kingdom of the spirit, in thoughts and feelings and understanding.'

We have spoken of the Peloponnesian War as the time of Athens' downfall; we have shown how the war party got control of the government and did shameful things; but we also said that there were other people, all through the worst times, who thought quite differently and wanted different things.

For a time, under Pericles, the world seemed a splendid place, where man was triumphant and a master of all; but a world where Athens allowed the sack of Melos was no longer splendid, and the Athenian who cared about good and beautiful things could not feel any longer that success and triumph, in the worldly sense, could satisfy him. He must look further and deeper if he wanted peace; he must find something real and lasting and satisfying behind the horror and shame of life around him; and so it was at this worst time for Athens that the great philosophers began.

Socrates was born in 470 B.C. and was teaching all through the last years of the war. He did not teach in any particular school or university, but he thought about things and then just talked to people. He taught that power and success and worldly empire did not matter at all, nor riches nor grandeur, but that what did matter more than anything was a man's own soul. If your soul was in health, if you had truth in your heart and loved goodness enough, nothing could hurt you, and no one could take this treasure away from you. Other

religious teachers at other times have taught this too, but Socrates was the first of the philosophers to consider these kinds of questions of inner values instead of the more outer values of things we see, and he argued it all out in a reasonable way, convincing people's minds that these things were true and were not merely exaggerated and excited talking.

His teaching came at a time when people were ready for it, it met a need that was there, and a great many came to hear him. He had a group of disciples and pupils who listened and then discussed with him, and wrote down what he said.

Most of what we know about Socrates comes from the writings of Plato, who was his chief disciple. Plato wrote down accounts of a great many talks with Socrates; he put down what the people said who argued with him and what Socrates said in answer to them; these conversations between Socrates and his pupils are called 'the Dialogues of Plato'; they are probably the most famous books on philosophy that there have ever been, and they have probably been read by more people than anything else of their kind.

So that what was in some ways the most important of all Greek books was being made and written just at the time when, in another way, Athens seemed to be most wrong and most unsuccessful.

After the fall of Athens in 404 B.C., when the war party was very savage and defeated, there was a revolution in Athens and then what is called a 'Counter revolution', which means another revolu-

tion back again to where you started. People were very angry with each other, and one party blamed the other for the disasters that had fallen upon them; then they blamed Socrates, and said that he was corrupting young men with his teaching. They said that his views were subversive and treasonable and that he ought to be put to death. There was a great discussion about it; the friends of Socrates, of course, defended him, but he did not seem to care to defend himself; he did not seem to mind what happened to him; he would not promise to stop his teaching, and in the end he was condemned to death. He was allowed to die by drinking poison.

Although he did not mind dying himself, his friends and disciples were furiously angry and indignant with the people who had condemned him, and they admired and treasured his teaching all the more.

The execution of Socrates stands out as one of the most shameful acts of Athens, but it was only a section of the Athenians who were responsible for it. As we have explained already, the worst people in any State are apt to get on top in times of war, and these Athenians who were in power just then could no more stop the teaching of Socrates, and the spiritual achievement he left behind him, than Caiaphas and the Jews who crucified Jesus could stop the spread of Christianity by putting Him to death.

When we think of Athens in 400 B.a, we think of Socrates and Plato and their friends, **we do not think of these** bad politicians.

After the death of Socrates, his pupil Plato carried on his teaching. Plato founded a sort of school or college for the study of Philosophy; it was called the Academy, and it lasted nearly 1000 years as the chief centre for learning in the Hellenic world.

Plato was followed by a pupil of his called Aristotle. He had rather different ideas from Plato; he was more practical, and studied more concrete things. He wrote a great book on Natural History, and he made a great point of very exact reasoning about everything. He was the first of the Greek philosophers to be discovered again in Europe after the Dark Ages. The learned men in the Middle Ages, like Thomas Aquinas and Abelard, founded all their teaching on Aristotle.

King Philip of Macedon, as we have said before, had a great admiration for the Greek City States and their learning, and he got Aristotle to come for a time from Athens and teach his son, Alexander.

This was very important for the world, for it meant that Alexander was a real Greek at heart, and when he spread his empire over Asia, he took with him Hellenism or Greek Culture as well as Greek soldiers.

Even the generals who succeeded Alexander were Greeks, with Greek ideas and ways of life, so that, even when the empire fell to bits after Alexander, and Asia was broken up into disjointed kingdoms, each of these kingdoms was in itself a Greek centre and spread the Greek ideas far farther through the Eastern countries than they had ever spread before.

The farthest east of all these kingdoms was

Bactria, on the very borders of India, and although it did not last so long as the nearer kingdoms did, it lasted long enough to leave marks of its Greek culture behind it to this day. The statues of Buddha which we find in India still, and even farther east, in China and Japan, are just changed and adapted a little from the Greek statues of Apollo that the Indians admired and copied in the kingdom of Bactria.

One of the books in the Buddhist Bible is called the Conversations of Menander, and it is a discussion on religious subjects between a Hindoo sage and the Greek king Menander of Bactria.

In this way, even the people of the East who do not belong to our Greek civilization do, without knowing it, owe something to it too.

After Plato and Aristotle, there were other philosophers in Greece who founded 'schools' of philosophy, as they were called, which meant groups of disciples and pupils who discussed and wrote and taught in their particular way.

The two most important of these were the Stoics and the Epicureans.

The Stoics were founded by a Phoenician from Cyprus, called Zeno, and they were called Stoics from a Greek word 'stoa' which means porch, or colonnade, because they taught in a public colonnade in Athens.

The chief point of the Stoic teaching was belief in an inner life and peace which made you able to withstand all outer misfortune and hardship; it was something like the teaching of Socrates, but was carried further. The Stoics lived extremely simply

and severely and accustomed themselves to do without the usual comforts of life, because they thought that outward comfort and well-being interfered with the inner training of the soul and distracted the attention from more important things. They thought that you should not mind too much about this outer world at all or what happened to it, for only the inner, spiritual world was of any real importance.

Some of their teaching is very like the teaching of St. Paul, and it is interesting to realize that Zeno, the founder of the Stoics, was, like St. Paul, a Hellenized Easterner; the Phoenicians belonged to the same family of nations as the Jews, what are called the Semitic nations, but both Zeno and Paul were educated in the Greek way and lived in the Greek world.

The Epicureans were the followers of Epicurus; they lived and taught in a garden, and they believed that the most important thing in life was friendship, or kindness. They said: 'The world is cruel and hard and unjust, only friendship and goodwill between people make it endurable'. They attached much more importance than the Stoics did to helping each other and making outer conditions of life more pleasant when they could, but they too lived simply and were good people. The word 'Epicure' is used now of a person who is very much interested in his food, and people often speak of the Epicureans as though they were too luxurious and pleasure-loving, but this is quite unfair to the real followers of Epicurus. They differed from the Stoics in the emphasis they put on making this

ordinary human life as pleasant as possible, instead of despising it, but the way in which they tried to make it pleasant was by goodness and kindness, and not by eating and drinking.

These two different ways of looking at life, the Stoic way and the Epicurean way, have been very important. The influence of one or other of them goes through all religious thought ever since their time.

Pericles said in his famous speech that Athens was the school or education of Greece, and we might well say that Greece was the education of the world. It is not only now that we say this; it was recognized by the other peoples of the Greeks' own time.

The education or enlightenment which the Greeks spread westwards through Europe and eastwards through Asia was of three sorts.

We think of our Greek inheritance as mostly a spiritual or intellectual one, but, to the people of the Greeks' own day, the first sign of 'Hellenization' was advance in practical affairs, in the general level of education and common sense, in methods of trade and good coins and reliable money. We find a sign of this in the fact that the first coins to be made in England in the time before the Romans came were rough barbarian copies of the coins of Philip of Macedon.

We must not forget how advanced for their time the Greeks were in these everyday affairs, just because, in these alone, we have gone beyond **them.**

The second sign of 'Hellenization*' was in in-

tellectual and artistic things. In learning and literature and art, the Greeks were recognized by all the people who came in contact with them as being far ahead. We have spoken already of the way the Indian sculptors and painters copied their pictures and statues from the Greek statues they saw; the Romans also who conquered them, and who were most unlike the Indians in every way, admired their pictures and poems and their learning, and felt these much finer and better than their own. The Roman poet Horace wrote a poem in which he says:

Captive Greece took her barbarian conqueror captive,
And brought the arts into rustic Italy.

That means that although barbarian Rome had conquered Greece, captive Greece conquered Rome with her art and learning. Horace was a very cultivated Roman, but he felt his own people barbarians compared with the Greeks they had conquered.

The third kind of 'Hellenization' was in Philosophy and Religion. These are two sides of the same thing, and we cannot really divide them. Here, too, the people of their own time felt the Greeks their teachers and masters, even when they had different religions of their own; we can see this from the Indian book we have spoken about, the discussions between the Greek king and the Indian sage. It is in this third division that our own inheritance from the Greeks is strongest of all, though the more we understand them and take what we ought to from the teaching they have left us, the less we

should separate our ideas of what is good from our ideas of what is beautiful; the two last sorts of Hellenism are almost more two sides of the same thing.

The Jews were the only people of their time who seemed to be quite unaffected by the Greeks. They did not admire them at all nor want to be like them. Some individual Jews living in Greek cities did become Hellenized, and St. Paul was one of these, but the strict, patriotic Jews thought badly of them, and wrote most fiercely against them. We get some idea of how the Jews thought of them when we read their account of King Antiochus Epiphanes, one of the Greek kings in Asia after Alexander. He too tried to Hellenize the country he ruled, which included Palestine; he tried to educate the people in Greek ways, and much of what he did, and tried to do, was good, but to the Jews he seemed wicked and terrible. We read in the book of Daniel, 'There was the abomination of desolation standing where it should not', and wonder what that horrible thing can be. It was in fact a beautiful statue of Zeus which King Antiochus had set up in the temple at Jerusalem.

To the Jews, any compromise or agreement with other ways of life or thinking was sin; to them, *sophrosyns* seemed merely weakness, and they hated the Greeks for their good qualities quite as much as for their bad ones. They had bad qualities, of course, as all people have, and we have seen already how they suffered for them.

To make one whole out of the Greeks and Jews, to combine these two hostile ideas and ways of living into one, might well have seemed an impos-

sible task to anyone looking at them both about this time; they looked at everything so differently, and seemed so unable to understand one another; yet Christianity did exactly this; it made a common ground and meeting-place for these two lines of ideas which seemed to contradict each other, and it drew its strength from both hostile traditions.

We all know that the Christian religion is based partly on the Jews, because the Old Testament is bound up in the Bible, but people do not always realize how very much it takes from Hellenism,

Some Christians do not like to admit this, because they think of the Greeks as pagans who worshipped many gods; but we have seen that that description of the Greeks is a misleading one, and more and more the scholars who study the history of religion are finding out how many of the most important things in Christianity come from Greek sources and are really Greek.

And this last greatest gift the Greeks have left us, their philosophy, came to perfection when they were unfortunate. It was not in their time of glory that Socrates taught, or Plato, or the Stoic philosophers, but when the kingdoms of this world were slipping from them, and they put their treasure into the kingdom of Heaven.

St. Paul says: 'That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die'; and it seems an odd thing to say, and exaggerated, but it was in the death of Athens that the Athenians were greatest.

