

Athens: Its Rise and Fall, Book II.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton

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BOOK II.

FROM THE LEGISLATION OF SOLON TO THE BATTLE OF MARATHON, B. C. 594-490.

CHAPTER I.

The Conspiracy of Cylon.--Loss of Salamis.--First Appearance of Solon.--Success against the Megarians in the Struggle for Salamis.--Cirrhaean War.--Epimenides.--Political State of Athens.--Character of Solon.--His Legislation.--General View of the Athenian Constitution.

I. The first symptom in Athens of the political crisis (B. C. 621) which, as in other of the Grecian states, marked the transition of power from the oligarchic to the popular party, may be detected in the laws of Draco. Undue severity in the legislature is the ordinary proof of a general discontent: its success is rarely lasting enough to confirm a government--its failure, when confessed, invariably strengthens a people. Scarcely had these laws been enacted (B. C. 620) when a formidable conspiracy broke out against the reigning oligarchy [195]. It was during the archonship of Megacles (a scion of the great Alcmaeonid family, which boasted its descent from Nestor) that the aristocracy was menaced by the ambition of an aristocrat.

Born of an ancient and powerful house, and possessed of considerable wealth, Cylon, the Athenian, conceived the design of seizing the citadel, and rendering himself master of the state. He had wedded the daughter of Theagenes, tyrant of Megara, and had raised himself into popular reputation several years before, by a victory in the Olympic games (B. C. 640). The Delphic oracle was supposed to have inspired him with the design; but it is at least equally probable that the oracle was consulted after the design had been conceived. The divine voice declared that Cylon should occupy the citadel on the greatest festival of Jupiter. By the event it does not appear, however, that he selected the proper occasion. Taking advantage of an Olympic year, when many of the citizens were gone to the games, and assisted with troops by his father-in-law, he seized the citadel. Whatever might have been his hopes of popular support--and there is reason to believe that he in some measure calculated upon it--the time was evidently unripe for the convulsion, and the attempt was unskillfully planned. The Athenians, under Megacles and the other archons, took the alarm, and in a general body blockaded the citadel. But they grew weary of the length of the siege; many of them fell away, and the contest was abandoned to the archons, with full power to act according to their judgment. So supine in defence of the liberties of the state are a people who have not yet obtained liberty for themselves!

II. The conspirators were reduced by the failure of food and water. Cylon and his brother privately escaped. Of his adherents, some perished by famine, others betook themselves to the altars in the citadel, claiming, as suppliants, the right of sanctuary. The guards

of the magistrates, seeing the suppliants about to expire from exhaustion, led them from the altar and put them to death. But some of the number were not so scrupulously slaughtered--massacred around the altars of the furies. The horror excited by a sacrilege so atrocious, may easily be conceived by those remembering the humane and reverent superstition of the Greeks:--the indifference of the people to the contest was changed at once into detestation of the victors. A conspiracy, hitherto impotent, rose at once into power by the circumstances of its defeat. Megacles--his whole house--all who had assisted in the impiety, were stigmatized with the epithet of "execrable." The faction, or friends of Cylon, became popular from the odium of their enemies--the city was distracted by civil commotion--by superstitious apprehensions of the divine anger--and, as the excesses of one party are the aliment of the other, so the abhorrence of sacrilege effaced the remembrance of a treason.

III. The petty state of Megara, which, since the earlier ages, had, from the dependant of Athens, grown up to the dignity of her rival, taking advantage of the internal dissensions in the latter city, succeeded in wresting from the Athenian government the Isle of Salamis. It was not, however, without bitter and repeated struggles that Athens at last submitted to the surrender of the isle. But, after signal losses and defeats, as nothing is ever more odious to the multitude than unsuccessful war, so the popular feeling was such as to induce the government to enact a decree, by which it was forbidden, upon pain of death, to propose reasserting the Athenian claims. But a law, evidently the offspring of a momentary passion of disgust or despair, and which could not but have been wrung with reluctance from a government, whose conduct it tacitly arraigned, and whose military pride it must have mortified, was not likely to bind, for any length of time, a gallant aristocracy and a susceptible people. Many of the younger portion of the community, pining at the dishonour of their country, and eager for enterprise, were secretly inclined to countenance any stratagem that might induce the reversal of the decree.

At this time there went a report through the city, that a man of distinguished birth, indirectly descended from the last of the Athenian kings, had incurred the consecrating misfortune of insanity. Suddenly this person appeared in the market-place, wearing the peculiar badge that distinguished the sick [196]. His friends were, doubtless, well prepared for his appearance--a crowd, some predisposed to favour, others attracted by curiosity, were collected round him--and, ascending to the stone from which the heralds made their proclamations, he began to recite aloud a poem upon the loss of Salamis, boldly reproving the cowardice of the people, and inciting them again to war. His supposed insanity protected him from the law--his rank, reputation, and the circumstance of his being himself a native of Salamis, conspired to give his exhortations a powerful effect, and the friends he had secured to back his attempt loudly proclaimed their applauding sympathy with the spirit of the address. The name of the pretended madman was Solon, son of Execestides, the descendant of Codrus.

Plutarch (followed by Mr. Milford, Mr. Thirlwall, and other modern historians) informs us that the celebrated Pisistratus then proceeded to exhort the assembly, and to advocate the renewal of the war--an account that is liable to this slight objection, that Pisistratus at that time was not born! [197]

IV. The stratagem and the eloquence of Solon produced its natural effect upon his spirited and excitable audience, and the public enthusiasm permitted the oligarchical government to propose and effect the repeal of the law [198]. An expedition was decreed and planned, and Solon was invested with its command. It was but a brief struggle to recover the little island of Salamis: with one galley of thirty oars and a number of fishing-craft, Solon made for Salamis, took a vessel sent to reconnoitre by the Megarians, manned it with his own soldiers, who were ordered to return to the city with such caution as might prevent the Megarians discovering the exchange, on board, of foes for friends; and then with the rest of his force he engaged the enemy by land, while those in the ship captured the city. In conformity with this version of the campaign (which I have selected in preference to another recorded by Plutarch), an Athenian ship once a year passed silently to Salamis--the inhabitants rushed clamouring down to meet it--an armed man leaped ashore, and ran shouting to the Promontory of Sciradium, near which was long existent a temple erected and dedicated to Mars by Solon.

But the brave and resolute Megarians were not men to be disheartened by a single reverse; they persisted in the contest--losses were sustained on either side, and at length both states agreed to refer their several claims on the sovereignty of the island to the decision of Spartan arbiters. And this appeal from arms to arbitration is a proof how much throughout Greece had extended that spirit of civilization which is but an extension of the sense of justice. Both parties sought to ground their claims upon ancient and traditional rights. Solon is said to have assisted the demand of his countrymen by a quotation, asserted to have been spuriously interpolated from Homer's catalogue of the ships, which appeared to imply the ancient connexion of Salamis and Athens (199); and whether or not this was actually done, the very tradition that it was done, nearly half a century before the first usurpation of Pisistratus, is a proof of the great authority of Homer in that age, and how largely the services rendered by Pisistratus, many years afterward, to the Homeric poems, have been exaggerated and misconstrued. The mode of burial in Salamis, agreeable to the custom of the Athenians and contrary to that of the Megarians, and reference to certain Delphic oracles, in which the island was called "Ionian," were also adduced in support of the Athenian claims. The arbitration of the umpires in favour of Athens only suspended hostilities; and the Megarians did not cease to watch (and shortly afterward they found) a fitting occasion to regain a settlement so tempting to their ambition.

V. The credit acquired by Solon in this expedition was shortly afterward greatly increased in the estimation of Greece. In the Bay of Corinth was situated a town called Cirrha, inhabited by a fierce and lawless race, who, after devastating the sacred territories of Delphi, sacrilegiously besieged the city itself, in the desire to possess themselves of the treasures which the piety of Greece had accumulated in the temple of Apollo. Solon appeared at the Amphictyonic council, represented the sacrilege of the Cirrhaeans, and persuaded the Greeks to arm in defence of the altars of their tutelary god. Clisthenes, the tyrant of Sicyon, was sent as commander-in-chief against the Cirrhaeans (B. C. 595); and (according to Plutarch) the records of Delphi inform us that Alcmaeon was the leader of the Athenians. The war was not very successful at the onset; the oracle of Apollo was consulted, and the answer makes one of the most amusing

anecdotes of priestcraft. The besiegers were informed by the god that the place would not be reduced until the waves of the Cirrhaean Sea washed the territories of Delphi. The reply perplexed the army; but the superior sagacity of Solon was not slow in discovering that the holy intention of the oracle was to appropriate the land of the Cirrhaeans to the profit of the temple. He therefore advised the besiegers to attack and to conquer Cirrha, and to dedicate its whole territory to the service of the god. The advice was adopted--Cirrha was taken (B. C. 586); it became thenceforth the arsenal of Delphi, and the insulted deity had the satisfaction of seeing the sacred lands washed by the waves of the Cirrhaean Sea. An oracle of this nature was perhaps more effectual than the sword of Clisthenes in preventing future assaults on the divine city! The Pythian games commenced, or were revived, in celebration of this victory of the Pythian god.

VI. Meanwhile at Athens--the tranquillity of the state was still disturbed by the mortal feud between the party of Cylon and the adherents of the Alcmaeonidae--time only served to exasperate the desire of vengeance in the one, and increase the indisposition to justice in the other. Fortunately, however, the affairs of the state were in that crisis which is ever favourable to the authority of an individual. There are periods in all constitutions when, amid the excesses of factions, every one submits willingly to an arbiter. With the genius that might have made him the destroyer of the liberties of his country, Solon had the virtue to constitute himself their saviour. He persuaded the families stigmatized with the crime of sacrilege, and the epithet of "execrable," to submit to the forms of trial; they were impeached, judged, and condemned to exile; the bodies of those whom death had already summoned to a sterner tribunal were disinterred, and removed beyond the borders of Attica. Nevertheless, the superstitions of the people were unappeased. Strange appearances were beheld in the air, and the augurs declared that the entrails of the victims denoted that the gods yet demanded a fuller expiation of the national crime.

At this time there lived in Crete one of those remarkable men common to the early ages of the world, who sought to unite with the honours of the sage the mysterious reputation of the magician. Epimenides, numbered by some among the seven wise men, was revered throughout Greece as one whom a heavenlier genius animated and inspired. Devoted to poetry, this crafty impostor carried its prerogatives of fiction into actual life; and when he declared--in one of his verses, quoted by St. Paul in his Epistle to Titus--that "the Cretans were great liars," we have no reason to exempt the venerable accuser from his own unpatriotic reproach. Among the various legends which attach to his memory is a tradition that has many a likeness both in northern and eastern fable:--he is said to have slept forty-seven [200] years in a cave, and on his waking from that moderate repose, to have been not unreasonably surprised to discover the features of the country perfectly changed. Returning to Cnossus, of which he was a citizen, strange faces everywhere present themselves. At his father's door he is asked his business, and at length, with considerable difficulty, he succeeds in making himself known to his younger brother, whom he had left a boy, and now recognised in an old decrepit man. "This story," says a philosophical biographer, very gravely, "made a considerable sensation"--an assertion not to be doubted; but those who were of a more skeptical disposition, imagined that Epimenides had spent the years of his reputed sleep in travelling over foreign countries, and thus acquiring from men those intellectual acquisitions which he more piously referred to the special inspiration of the gods.

Epimenides did not scruple to preserve the mysterious reputation he obtained from this tale by fables equally audacious. He endeavoured to persuade the people that he was Aeacus, and that he frequently visited the earth: he was supposed to be fed by the nymphs--was never seen to eat in public--he assumed the attributes of prophecy--and dying in extreme old age: was honoured by the Cretans as a god.

In addition to his other spiritual prerogatives, this reviler of "liars" boasted the power of exorcism; was the first to introduce into Greece the custom of purifying public places and private abodes, and was deemed peculiarly successful in banishing those ominous phantoms which were so injurious to the tranquillity of the inhabitants of Athens. Such a man was exactly the person born to relieve the fears of the Athenians, and accomplish the things dictated by the panting entrails of the sacred victims. Accordingly (just prior to the Cirrhaean war, B. C. 596), a ship was fitted out, in which an Athenian named Nicias was sent to Crete, enjoined to bring back the purifying philosopher, with all that respectful state which his celebrity demanded. Epimenides complied with the prayer of the Athenians he arrived at Athens, and completed the necessary expiation in a manner somewhat simple for so notable an exorcist. He ordered several sheep, some black and some white, to be turned loose in the Areopagus, directed them to be followed, and wherever they lay down, a sacrifice was ordained in honour of some one of the gods. "Hence," says the historian of the philosophers, "you may still see throughout Athens anonymous altars (i. e. altars uninscribed to a particular god), the memorials of that propitiation."

The order was obeyed--the sacrifice performed--and the phantoms were seen no more. Although an impostor, Epimenides was a man of sagacity and genius. He restrained the excess of funeral lamentation, which often led to unseasonable interruptions of business, and conduced to fallacious impressions of morality; and in return he accustomed the Athenians to those regular habits of prayer and divine worship, which ever tend to regulate and systematize the character of a people. He formed the closest intimacy with Solon, and many of the subsequent laws of the Athenian are said by Plutarch to have been suggested by the wisdom of the Cnossian sage. When the time arrived for the departure of Epimenides, the Athenians would have presented him with a talent in reward of his services, but the philosopher refused the offer; he besought the Athenians to a firm alliance with his countrymen; accepted of no other remuneration than a branch of the sacred olive which adorned the citadel, and was supposed the primeval gift of Minerva, and returned to his native city,--proving that a man in those days might be an impostor without seeking any other reward than the gratuitous honour of the profession.

VII. With the departure of Epimenides, his spells appear to have ceased; new disputes and new factions arose; and, having no other crimes to expiate, the Athenians fell with one accord upon those of the government. Three parties--the Mountaineers, the Lowlanders, and the Coastmen--each advocating a different form of constitution, distracted the state by a common discontent with the constitution that existed, the three parties, which, if we glance to the experience of modern times, we might almost believe that no free state can ever be without--viz., the respective advocates of the oligarchic, the mixed, and the democratic government. The habits of life ever produce among classes the political principles by which they are severally regulated. The inhabitants of the mountainous district, free, rude,

and hardy, were attached to a democracy; the possessors of the plains were the powerful families who inclined to an oligarchy, although, as in all aristocracies, many of them united, but with more moderate views, in the measures of the democratic party; and they who, living by the coast, were engaged in those commercial pursuits which at once produce an inclination to liberty, yet a fear of its excess, a jealousy of the insolence of the nobles, yet an apprehension of the licentiousness of the mob, arrayed themselves in favour of that mixed form of government--half oligarchic and half popular--which is usually the most acceptable to the middle classes of an enterprising people. But there was a still more fearful division than these, the three legitimate parties, now existing in Athens: a division, not of principle, but of feeling--that menacing division which, like the cracks in the soil, portending earthquake, as it gradually widens, is the symptom of convulsions that level and destroy,--the division, in one word, of the rich and the poor--the Havenots and the Haves. Under an oligarchy, that most griping and covetous of all forms of government, the inequality of fortunes had become intolerably grievous; so greatly were the poor in debt to the rich, that [201] they were obliged to pay the latter a sixth of the produce of the land, or else to engage their personal labour to their creditors, who might seize their persons in default of payment. Some were thus reduced to slavery, others sold to foreigners. Parents disposed of their children to clear their debts, and many, to avoid servitude, in stealth deserted the land. But a large body of the distressed, men more sturdy and united, resolved to resist the iron pressure of the law: they formed the design of abolishing debts--dividing the land--remodelling the commonwealth: they looked around for a leader, and fixed their hopes on Solon. In the impatience of the poor, in the terror of the rich, liberty had lost its charms, and it was no uncommon nor partial hope that a monarchy might be founded on the ruins of an oligarchy already menaced with dissolution.

VIII. Solon acted during these disturbances with more than his usual sagacity, and therefore, perhaps, with less than his usual energy. He held himself backward and aloof, allowing either party to interpret, as it best pleased, ambiguous and oracular phrases, obnoxious to none, for he had the advantage of being rich without the odium of extortion, and popular without the degradation of poverty. "Phanias the Lesbian" (so states the biographer of Solon) "asserts, that to save the state he intrigued with both parties, promising to the poor a division of the lands, to the rich a confirmation of their claims;" an assertion highly agreeable to the finesse and subtlety of his character. Appearing loath to take upon himself the administration of affairs, it was pressed upon him the more eagerly; and at length he was elected to the triple office of archon, arbitrator, and lawgiver; the destinies of Athens were unhesitatingly placed within his hands; all men hoped from him all things; opposing parties concurred in urging him to assume the supreme authority of king; oracles were quoted in his favour, and his friends asserted, that to want the ambition of a monarch was to fail in the proper courage of a man. Thus supported, thus encouraged, Solon proceeded to his august and immortal task of legislation.

IX. Let us here pause to examine, by such light as is bequeathed us, the character of Solon. Agreeably to the theory of his favourite maxim, which made moderation the essence of wisdom, he seems to have generally favoured, in politics, the middle party, and, in his own actions, to have been singular for that energy which is the

equilibrium of indifference and of rashness. Elevated into supreme and unquestioned power--urged on all sides to pass from the office of the legislator to the dignity of the prince--his ambition never passed the line which his virtue dictated to his genius. "Tyranny," said Solon, "is a fair field, but it has no outlet." A subtle, as well as a noble saying; it implies that he who has once made himself the master of the state has no option as to the means by which he must continue his power. Possessed of that fearful authority, his first object is to rule, and it becomes a secondary object to rule well. "Tyranny has, indeed, no outlet!" The few, whom in modern times we have seen endowed with a similar spirit of self-control, have attracted our admiration by their honesty rather than their intellect; and the skeptic in human virtue has ascribed the purity of Washington as much to the mediocrity of his genius as to the sincerity of his patriotism--the coarseness of vulgar ambition can sympathize but little with those who refuse a throne. But in Solon there is no disparity between the mental and the moral, nor can we account for the moderation of his views by affecting doubt of the extent of his powers. His natural genius was versatile and luxuriant. As an orator, he was the first, according to Cicero, who originated the logical and brilliant rhetoric which afterward distinguished the Athenians. As a poet, we have the assurance of Plato that, could he have devoted himself solely to the art, even Homer would not have excelled him. And though these panegyrics of later writers are to be received with considerable qualification--though we may feel assured that Solon could never have been either a Demosthenes or a Homer, yet we have sufficient evidence in his history to prove him to have been eloquent--sufficient in the few remains of his verses to attest poetical talent of no ordinary standard. As a soldier, he seems to have been a dexterous master of the tactics of that primitive day in which military science consisted chiefly in the stratagems of a ready wit and a bold invention. As a negotiator, the success with which, out of elements so jarring and distracted, he created an harmonious system of society and law, is an unanswerable evidence not more of the soundness of his theories than of his practical knowledge of mankind. The sayings imputed to him which can be most reasonably considered authentic evince much delicacy of observation. Whatever his ideal of good government, he knew well that great secret of statesmanship, never to carry speculative doctrines too far beyond the reach of the age to which they are to be applied. Asked if he had given the Athenians the best of laws, his answer was, "The best laws they are capable of receiving." His legislation, therefore, was no vague collection of inapplicable principles. While it has been the origin of all subsequent law,--while, adopted by the Romans, it makes at this day the universal spirit which animates the codes and constitutions of Europe--it was moulded to the habits, the manners, and the condition of the people whom it was intended to enlighten, to harmonize, and to guide. He was no gloomy ascetic, such as a false philosophy produces, affecting the barren sublimity of an indolent seclusion; open of access to all, free and frank of demeanour, he found wisdom as much in the market-place as the cell. Heaped no coxcombical contempt of pleasure, no fanatical disdain of wealth; hospitable, and even sumptuous, in his habits of life, he seemed desirous of proving that truly to be wise is honestly to enjoy. The fragments of his verses which have come down to us are chiefly egotistical: they refer to his own private sentiments, or public views, and inform us with a noble pride, "that, if reproached with his lack of ambition, he finds a kingdom in the consciousness of his unsullied name." With all these qualities, he apparently united much of that craft and spirit of

artifice which, according to all history, sacred as well as profane, it was not deemed sinful in patriarch or philosopher to indulge. Where he could not win his object by reason, he could stoop to attain it by the affectation of madness. And this quality of craft was necessary perhaps, in that age, to accomplish the full utilities of his career. However he might feign or dissimulate, the end before him was invariably excellent and patriotic; and the purity of his private morals harmonized with that of his political ambition. What Socrates was to the philosophy of reflection, Solon was to the philosophy of action.

X. The first law that Solon enacted in his new capacity was bold and decisive. No revolution can ever satisfy a people if it does not lessen their burdens. Poverty disposes men to innovation only because innovation promises relief. Solon therefore applied himself resolutely, and at once, to the great source of dissension between the rich and the poor--namely, the enormous accumulation of debt which had been incurred by the latter, with slavery, the penalty of default. He induced the creditors to accept the compromise of their debts: whether absolutely cancelling the amount, or merely reducing the interest and debasing the coin, is a matter of some dispute; the greater number of authorities incline to the former supposition, and Plutarch quotes the words of Solon himself in proof of the bolder hypothesis, although they by no means warrant such an interpretation. And to remove forever the renewal of the greatest grievance in connexion with the past distresses, he enacted a law that no man hereafter could sell himself in slavery for the discharge of a debt. Even such as were already enslaved were emancipated, and those sold by their creditors into foreign countries were ransomed, and restored to their native land. But, though (from the necessity of the times) Solon went to this desperate extent of remedy, comparable in our age only to the formal sanction of a national bankruptcy, he rejected with firmness the wild desire of a division of lands. There may be abuses in the contraction of debts which require far sterner alternatives than the inequalities of property. He contented himself in respect to the latter with a law which set a limit to the purchase of land--a theory of legislation not sufficiently to be praised, if it were possible to enforce it [202]. At first, these measures fell short of the popular expectation, excited by the example of Sparta into the hope of an equality of fortunes: but the reaction soon came. A public sacrifice was offered in honour of the discharge of debt, and the authority of the lawgiver was corroborated and enlarged. Solon was not one of those politicians who vibrate alternately between the popular and the aristocratic principles, imagining that the concession of to-day ought necessarily to father the denial of to-morrow. He knew mankind too deeply not to be aware that there is no statesman whom the populace suspect like the one who commences authority with a bold reform, only to continue it with hesitating expedients. His very next measure was more vigorous and more unexceptionable than the first. The evil of the laws of Draco was not that they were severe, but that they were inefficient. In legislation, characters of blood are always traced upon tablets of sand. With one stroke Solon annihilated the whole of these laws, with the exception of that (an ancient and acknowledged ordinance) which related to homicide; he affixed, in exchange, to various crimes--to theft, to rape, to slander, to adultery--punishments proportioned to the offence. It is remarkable that in the spirit of his laws he appealed greatly to the sense of honour and the fear of shame, and made it one of his severest penalties to be styled *atimos* or unhonoured--a theory that, while it suited the existent, went far to

ennoble the future, character of the Athenians. In the same spirit the children of those who perished in war were educated at the public charge--arriving at maturity, they were presented with a suit of armour, settled in their respective callings, and honoured with principal seats in all public assemblies. That is a wise principle of a state which makes us grateful to its pensioners, and bids us regard in those supported at the public charge the reverent memorials of the public service [203]. Solon had the magnanimity to preclude, by his own hand, a dangerous temptation to his own ambition, and assigned death to the man who aspired to the sole dominion of the commonwealth. He put a check to the jobbing interests and importunate canvass of individuals, by allowing no one to propose a law in favour of a single person, unless he had obtained the votes of six thousand citizens; and he secured the quiet of a city exposed to the license of powerful factions, by forbidding men to appear armed in the streets, unless in cases of imminent exigence.

XI. The most memorable of Solon's sayings illustrates the theory of the social fabric he erected. When asked how injustice should be banished from a commonwealth, he answered, "by making all men interested in the injustice done to each;" an answer embodying the whole soul of liberty. His innovations in the mere forms of the ancient constitution do not appear to have been considerable; he rather added than destroyed. Thus he maintained or revived the senate of the aristocracy; but to check its authority he created a people. The four ancient tribes [204], long subdivided into minor sections, were retained. Foreigners, who had transported for a permanence their property and families to Athens, and abandoned all connexion with their own countries, were admitted to swell the numbers of the free population. This made the constituent body. At the age of eighteen, each citizen was liable to military duties within the limits of Attica; at the age of twenty he attained his majority, and became entitled to a vote in the popular assembly, and to all the other rights of citizenship. Every free Athenian of the age of twenty was thus admitted to a vote in the legislature. But the possession of a very considerable estate was necessary to the attainment of the higher offices. Thus, while the people exercised universal suffrage in voting, the choice of candidates was still confined to an oligarchy. Four distinct ranks were acknowledged; not according, as hitherto, to hereditary descent, but the possession of property. They whose income yielded five hundred measures in any commodity, dry or liquid, were placed in the first rank, under the title of Pentacosiomedimnians. The second class, termed Hippeis, knights or horsemen, was composed of those whose estates yielded three hundred measures. Each man belonging to it was obliged to keep a horse for the public service, and to enlist himself, if called upon, in the cavalry of the military forces (the members of either of these higher classes were exempt, however, from serving on board ship, or in the infantry, unless intrusted with some command.) The third class was composed of those possessing two hundred [205] measures, and called Zeugitae; and the fourth and most numerous class comprehended, under the name of Thetes, the bulk of the non-enslaved working population, whose property fell short of the qualification required for the Zeugitae. Glancing over these divisions, we are struck by their similarity to the ranks among our own northern and feudal ancestry, corresponding to the nobles, the knights, the burgesses, and the labouring classes, which have so long made, and still constitute, the demarcations of society in modern Europe. The members of the first class were alone eligible to the highest offices as archons, those of the three first classes to the

political assembly of the four hundred (which I shall presently describe), and to some minor magistracies; the members of the fourth class were excluded from all office, unless, as they voted in the popular assembly, they may be said to have had a share in the legislature, and to exercise, in extraordinary causes, judicial authority. At the same time no hereditary barrier excluded them from the hopes so dear to human aspirations. They had only to acquire the necessary fortune in order to enjoy the privileges of their superiors. And, accordingly, we find, by an inscription on the Acropolis, recorded in Pollux, that Anthemion, of the lowest class, was suddenly raised to the rank of knight. [206]

XII. We perceive, from these divisions of rank, that the main principle of Solon's constitution was founded, not upon birth, but wealth. He instituted what was called a timocracy, viz., an aristocracy of property; based upon democratic institutions of popular jurisdiction, election, and appeal. Conformably to the principle which pervades all states, that make property the qualification for office, to property the general taxation was apportioned. And this, upon a graduated scale, severe to the first class, and completely exonerating the lowest. The ranks of the citizens thus established, the constitution acknowledged three great councils or branches of legislature. The first was that of the venerable Areopagus. We have already seen that this institution had long existed among the Athenians; but of late it had fallen into some obscurity or neglect, and was not even referred to in the laws of Draco. Solon continued the name of the assembly, but remodelled its constitution. Anciently it had probably embraced all the Eupatrids. Solon defined the claims of the aspirants to that official dignity, and ordained that no one should be admitted to the areopagus who had not filled the situation of archon--an ordeal which implied not only the necessity of the highest rank, but, as I shall presently note, of sober character and unblemished integrity.

The remotest traditions clothed the very name of this assembly with majesty and awe. Holding their council on the sacred hill consecrated to Mars, fable asserted that the god of battle had himself been arraigned before its tribunal. Solon exerted his imagination to sustain the grandeur of its associations. Every distinction was lavished upon senators, who, in the spirit of his laws, could only pass from the temple of virtue to that of honour. Before their jurisdiction all species of crime might be arraigned--they had equal power to reward and to punish. From the guilt of murder to the negative offence of idleness [207], their control extended--the consecration of altars to new deities, the penalties affixed to impiety, were at their decision, and in their charge. Theirs was the illimitable authority to scrutinize the lives of men--they attended public meetings and solemn sacrifices, to preserve order by the majesty of their presence. The custody of the laws and the management of the public funds, the superintendence of the education of youth, were committed to their care. Despite their power, they interfered but little in the management of political affairs, save in cases of imminent danger. Their duties, grave, tranquil, and solemn, held them aloof from the stir of temporary agitation. They were the last great refuge of the state, to which, on common occasions, it was almost profanity to appeal. Their very demeanour was modelled to harmonize with the reputation of their virtues and the dignity of their office. It was forbidden to laugh in their assembly--no archon who had been seen in a public tavern could be admitted to their order [208], and

for an areopagite to compose a comedy was a matter of special prohibition [209]. They sat in the open air, in common with all courts having cognizance of murder. If the business before them was great and various, they were wont to divide themselves into committees, to each of which the several causes were assigned by lot, so that no man knowing the cause he was to adjudge could be assailed with the imputation of dishonest or partial prepossession. After duly hearing both parties, they gave their judgment with proverbial gravity and silence. The institution of the ballot (a subsequent custom) afforded secrecy to their award--a proceeding necessary amid the jealousy and power of factions, to preserve their judgment unbiased by personal fear, and the abolition of which, we shall see hereafter, was among the causes that crushed for a while the liberties of Athens. A brazen urn received the suffrages of condemnation--one of wood those of acquittal. Such was the character and constitution of the AREOPAGUS. [210]

XIII. The second legislative council ordained or revived by Solon, consisted of a senate, composed, first of four hundred, and many years afterward of five hundred members. To this council all, save the lowest and most numerous class, were eligible, provided they had passed or attained the age of thirty. It was rather a chance assembly than a representative one. The manner of its election appears not more elaborate than clumsy. To every ward there was a president, called phylarchus. This magistrate, on a certain day in the year, gave in the names of all the persons within his district entitled to the honour of serving in the council, and desirous of enjoying it. These names were inscribed on brazen tablets, and cast into a certain vessel. In another vessel was placed an equal number of beans; supposing the number of candidates to be returned by each tribe to be (as it at first was) a hundred, there were one hundred white beans put into the vessel--the rest were black. Then the names of the candidates and the beans were drawn out one by one; and each candidate who had the good fortune to have his name drawn out together with a white bean, became a member of the senate. Thus the constitution of each succeeding senate might differ from the last--might, so far from representing the people, contradict their wishes--was utterly a matter of hazard and chance; and when Mr. Mitford informs us that the assembly of the people was the great foundation of evil in the Athenian constitution, it appears that to the capricious and unsatisfactory election of this council we may safely impute many of the inconsistencies and changes which that historian attributes entirely to the more popular assembly [211]. To this council were intrusted powers less extensive in theory than those of the Areopagus, but far more actively exerted. Its members inspected the fleet (when a fleet was afterward established)--they appointed jailers of prisons --they examined the accounts of magistrates at the termination of their office; these were minor duties; to them was allotted also an authority in other departments of a much higher and more complicated nature. To them was given the dark and fearful extent of power which enabled them to examine and to punish persons accused of offences unspecified by any peculiar law [212]--an ordinance than which, had less attention been paid to popular control, the wildest ambition of despotism would have required no broader base for its designs. A power to punish crimes unspecified by law is a power above law, and ignorance or corruption may easily distort innocence itself into crime. But the main duty of the Four Hundred was to prepare the laws to be submitted to the assembly of the people--the great popular tribunal which we are about presently to consider. Nor could any law,

according to Solon, be introduced into that assembly until it had undergone the deliberation, and received the sanction, of this preliminary council. With them, therefore, was THE ORIGIN OF ALL LEGISLATION. In proportion to these discretionary powers was the examination the members of the council underwent. Previous to the admission of any candidate, his life, his character, and his actions were submitted to a vigorous scrutiny [213]. The senators then took a solemn oath that they would endeavour to promote the public good, and the highest punishment they were allowed to inflict was a penalty of five hundred drachma. If that punishment were deemed by them insufficient, the criminal was referred to the regular courts of law. At the expiration of their trust, which expired with each year, the senators gave an account of their conduct, and the senate itself punished any offence of its members; so severe were its inflictions, that a man expelled from the senate was eligible as a judge--a proof that expulsion was a punishment awarded to no heinous offence. [214]

The members of each tribe presided in turn over the rest [215] under the name of prytanes. It was the duty of the prytanes to assemble the senate, which was usually every day, and to keep order in the great assembly of the people. These were again subdivided into the proedri, who presided weekly over the rest, while one of this number, appointed by lot, was the chief president (or Epistates) of the whole council; to him were intrusted the keys of the citadel and the treasury, and a wholesome jealousy of this twofold trust limited its exercise to a single day. Each member gave notice in writing of any motion he intended to make--the prytanes had the prior right to propound the question, and afterward it became matter of open discussion--they decided by ballot whether to reject or adopt it; if accepted, it was then submitted to the assembly of the people, who ratified or refused the law which they might not originate.

Such was the constitution of the Athenian council, one resembling in many points to the common features of all modern legislative assemblies.

XIV. At the great assembly of the people, to which we now arrive, all freemen of the age of discretion, save only those branded by law with the opprobrium of atimos (unhonoured) [216], were admissible. At the time of Solon, this assembly was by no means of the importance to which it afterward arose. Its meetings were comparatively rare, and no doubt it seldom rejected the propositions of the Four Hundred. But whenever different legislative assemblies exist, and popular control is once constitutionally acknowledged, it is in the nature of things that the more democratic assembly should absorb the main business of the more aristocratic. A people are often enslaved by the accident of a despot, but almost ever gain upon the checks which the constitution is intended habitually to oppose. In the later time, the assembly met four times in five weeks (at least, during the period in which the tribes were ten in number), that is, during the presidency of each prytanea. The first time of their meeting they heard matters of general import, approved or rejected magistrates, listened to accusations of grave political offences [217], as well as the particulars of any confiscation of goods. The second time was appropriated to affairs relative as well to individuals as the community; and it was lawful for every man either to present a petition or share in a debate. The third time of meeting was devoted to the state audience of ambassadors. The fourth, to matters of religious worship or priestly ceremonial. These four periodical

meetings, under the name of Curia, made the common assembly, requiring no special summons, and betokening no extraordinary emergency. But besides these regular meetings, upon occasions of unusual danger, or in cases requiring immediate discussion, the assembly of the people might also be convened by formal proclamation; and in this case it was termed "Sugkletos," which we may render by the word convocation. The prytanes, previous to the meeting of the assembly, always placarded in some public place a programme of the matters on which the people were to consult. The persons presiding over the meeting were proedri, chosen by lot from the nine tribes, excluded at the time being from the office of prytanes; out of their number a chief president (or epistates) was elected also by lot. Every effort was made to compel a numerous attendance, and each man attending received a small coin for his trouble [218], a practice fruitful in jests to the comedians. The prytanes might forbid a man of notoriously bad character to speak. The chief president gave the signal for their decision. In ordinary cases they held up their hands, voting openly; but at a later period, in cases where intimidation was possible, such as in the offences of men of power and authority, they voted in secret. They met usually in the vast arena of their market-place. [219]

XV. Recapitulating the heads of that complex constitution I have thus detailed, the reader will perceive that the legislative power rested in three assemblies--the Areopagus, the Council, and the Assembly of the People--that the first, notwithstanding its solemn dignity and vast authority, seldom interfered in the active, popular, and daily politics of the state--that the second originated laws, which the third was the great Court of Appeal to sanction or reject. The great improvement of modern times has been to consolidate the two latter courts in one, and to unite in a representative senate the sagacity of a deliberative council with the interests of a popular assembly;--the more closely we blend these objects, the more perfectly, perhaps, we attain, by the means of wisdom, the ends of liberty.

XVI. But although in a senate composed by the determinations of chance, and an assembly which from its numbers must ever have been exposed to the agitation of eloquence and the caprices of passion, there was inevitably a crude and imperfect principle,--although two courts containing in themselves the soul and element of contradiction necessarily wanted that concentrated oneness of purpose propitious to the regular and majestic calmness of legislation, we cannot but allow the main theory of the system to have been precisely that most favourable to the prodigal exuberance of energy, of intellect, and of genius. Summoned to consultation upon all matters, from the greatest to the least, the most venerable to the most trite--to-day deciding on the number of their war-ships, to-morrow on that of a tragic chorus; now examining with jealous forethought the new harriers to oligarchical ambition;--now appointing, with nice distinction, to various service the various combinations of music [220];--now welcoming in their forum-senate the sober ambassadors of Lacedaemon or the jewelled heralds of Persia, now voting their sanction to new temples or the reverent reforms of worship; compelled to a lively and unceasing interest in all that arouses the mind, or elevates the passions, or refines the taste;--supreme arbiters of the art of the sculptor, as the science of the lawgiver,--judges and rewarders of the limner and the poet, as of the successful negotiator or the prosperous soldier; we see at once the all-accomplished, all-versatile genius of the nation, and we behold in the same glance the effect and the cause:--every thing being referred to the people, the people learned

of every thing to judge. Their genius was artificially forced, and in each of its capacities. They had no need of formal education. Their whole life was one school. The very faults of their assembly, in its proneness to be seduced by extraordinary eloquence, aroused the emulation of the orator, and kept constantly awake the imagination of the audience. An Athenian was, by the necessity of birth, what Milton dreamed that man could only become by the labours of completest education: in peace a legislator, in war a soldier,--in all times, on all occasions, acute to judge and resolute to act. All that can inspire the thought or delight the leisure were for the people. Theirs were the portico and the school--theirs the theatre, the gardens, and the baths; they were not, as in Sparta, the tools of the state--they were the state! Lycurgus made machines and Solon men. In Sparta the machine was to be wound up by the tyranny of a fixed principle; it could not dine as it pleased--it could not walk as it pleased--it was not permitted to seek its she machine save by stealth and in the dark; its children were not its own--even itself had no property in self. Sparta incorporated, under the name of freedom, the worst complexities, the most grievous and the most frivolous vexations, of slavery. And therefore was it that Lacedaemon flourished and decayed, bequeathing to fame men only noted for hardy valour, fanatical patriotism, and profound but dishonourable craft--attracting, indeed, the wonder of the world, but advancing no claim to its gratitude, and contributing no single addition to its intellectual stores. But in Athens the true blessing of freedom was rightly placed--in the opinions and the soul. Thought was the common heritage which every man might cultivate at his will. This unshackled liberty had its convulsions and its excesses, but producing unceasing emulation and unbounded competition, an incentive to every effort, a tribunal to every claim, it broke into philosophy with the one--into poetry with the other--into the energy and splendour of unexampled intelligence with all. Looking round us at this hour, more than four-and-twenty centuries after the establishment of the constitution we have just surveyed,--in the labours of the student--in the dreams of the poet--in the aspirations of the artist--in the philosophy of the legislator--we yet behold the imperishable blessings we derive from the liberties of Athens and the institutions of Solon. The life of Athens became extinct, but her soul transfused itself, immortal and immortalizing, through the world.

XVII. The penal code of Solon was founded on principles wholly opposite to those of Draco. The scale of punishment was moderate, though sufficiently severe. One distinction will suffice to give us an adequate notion of its gradations. Theft by day was not a capital offence, but if perpetrated by night the felon might lawfully be slain by the owner. The tendency to lean to the side of mercy in all cases may be perceived from this--that if the suffrages of the judges were evenly divided, it was the custom in all the courts of Athens to acquit the accused. The punishment of death was rare; that of atimia supplied its place. Of the different degrees of atimia it is not my purpose to speak at present. By one degree, however, the offender was merely suspended from some privilege of freedom enjoyed by the citizens generally, or condemned to a pecuniary fine; the second degree allowed the confiscation of goods; the third for ever deprived the criminal and his posterity of the rights of a citizen: this last was the award only of aggravated offences. Perpetual exile was a sentence never passed but upon state criminals. The infliction of fines, which became productive of great abuse in later times, was moderately apportioned to offences in the time of Solon, partly from

the high price of money, but partly, also, from the wise moderation of the lawgiver. The last grave penalty of death was of various kinds, as the cross, the gibbet, the precipice, the bowl--afflictions seldom in reserve for the freemen.

As the principle of shame was a main instrument of the penal code of the Athenians, so they endeavoured to attain the same object by the sublimer motive of honour. Upon the even balance of rewards that stimulate, and penalties that deter, Solon and his earlier successors conceived the virtue of the commonwealth to rest. A crown presented by the senate or the people--a public banquet in the hall of state--the erection of a statue in the thoroughfares (long a most rare distinction)--the privilege of precedence in the theatre or assembly--were honours constantly before the eyes of the young and the hopes of the ambitious. The sentiment of honour thus became a guiding principle of the legislation, and a large component of the character of the Athenians.

XVIII. Judicial proceedings, whether as instituted by Solon or as corrupted by his successors, were exposed to some grave and vital evils hereafter to be noticed. At present I content myself with observing, that Solon carried into the judicial the principles, of his legislative courts. It was his theory, that all the citizens should be trained to take an interest in state. Every year a body of six thousand citizens was chosen by lot; no qualification save that of being thirty years of age was demanded in this election. The body thus chosen, called Heliaea, was subdivided into smaller courts, before which all offences, but especially political ones, might be tried. Ordinary cases were probably left by Solon to the ordinary magistrates; but it was not long before the popular jurors drew to themselves the final trial and judgment of all causes. This judicial power was even greater than the legislative; for if an act had passed through all the legislative forms, and was, within a year of the date, found inconsistent with the constitution or public interests, the popular courts could repeal the act and punish its author. In Athens there were no professional lawyers; the law being supposed the common interest of citizens, every encouragement was given to the prosecutor --every facility to the obtaining of justice.

Solon appears to have recognised the sound principle, that the strength of law is in the public disposition to cherish and revere it,--and that nothing is more calculated to make permanent the general spirit of a constitution than to render its details flexile and open to reform. Accordingly, he subjected his laws to the vigilance of regular and constant revision. Once a year, proposals for altering any existent law might be made by any citizen--were debated--and, if approved, referred to a legislative committee, drawn by lot from the jurors. The committee then sat in judgment on the law; five advocates were appointed to plead for the old law; if unsuccessful, the new law came at once into operation. In addition to this precaution, six of the nine archons (called Thesmothetae), whose office rendered them experienced in the defects of the law, were authorized to review the whole code, and to refer to the legislative committee the consideration of any errors or inconsistencies that might require amendment. [221]

XIX. With respect to the education of youth, the wise Athenian did not proceed upon the principles which in Sparta attempted to transfer to the state the dearest privileges of a parent. From the age of

sixteen to eighteen (and earlier in the case of orphans) the law, indeed, seems to have considered that the state had a right to prepare its citizens for its service; and the youth was obliged to attend public gymnastic schools, in which, to much physical, some intellectual, discipline was added, under masters publicly nominated. But from the very circumstance of compulsory education at that age, and the absence of it in childhood, we may suppose that there had already grown up in Athens a moral obligation and a general custom, to prepare the youth of the state for the national schools.

Besides the free citizens, there were two subordinate classes--the aliens and the slaves. By the first are meant those composed of settlers, who had not relinquished connexion with their native countries. These, as universally in Greece, were widely distinguished from the citizens; they paid a small annual sum for the protection of the state, and each became a kind of client to some individual citizen, who appeared for him in the courts of justice. They were also forbidden to purchase land; but for the rest, Solon, himself a merchant, appears to have given to such aliens encouragements in trade and manufacture not usual in that age; and most of their disabilities were probably rather moral or imaginary than real and daily causes of grievance. The great and paramount distinction was between the freeman and the slave. No slave could be admitted as a witness, except by torture; as for him there was no voice in the state, so for him there was no tenderness in the law. But though the slave might not avenge himself on the master, the system of slavery avenged itself on the state. The advantages to the intellect of the free citizens resulting from the existence of a class maintained to relieve them from the drudgeries of life, were dearly purchased by the constant insecurity of their political repose. The capital of the rich could never be directed to the most productive of all channels--the labour of free competition. The noble did not employ citizens--he purchased slaves. Thus the commonwealth derived the least possible advantage from his wealth; it did not flow through the heart of the republic, employing the idle and feeding the poor. As a necessary consequence, the inequalities of fortune were sternly visible and deeply felt. The rich man had no connexion with the poor man--the poor man hated him for a wealth of which he did not (as in states where slavery does not exist) share the blessings--purchasing by labour the advantages of fortune. Hence the distinction of classes defied the harmonizing effects of popular legislation. The rich were exposed to unjust and constant exactions; and society was ever liable to be disorganized by attacks upon property. There was an eternal struggle between the jealousies of the populace and the fears of the wealthy; and many of the disorders which modern historians inconsiderately ascribe to the institutions of freedom were in reality the growth of the existence of slavery.

CHAPTER II.

The Departure of Solon from Athens.--The Rise of Pisistratus.--Return of Solon.--His Conduct and Death.--The Second and Third Tyranny of Pisistratus.--Capture of Sigeum.--Colony in the Chersonesus founded by the first Miltiades.--Death of Pisistratus.

I. Although the great constitutional reforms of Solon were no doubt carried into effect during his archonship, yet several of his legislative and judicial enactments were probably the work of years. When we consider the many interests to conciliate, the many prejudices to overcome, which in all popular states cripple and delay the progress of change in its several details, we find little difficulty in supposing, with one of the most luminous of modern scholars [222], that Solon had ample occupation for twenty years after the date of his archonship. During this period little occurred in the foreign affairs of Athens save the prosperous termination of the Cirrhaean war, as before recorded. At home the new constitution gradually took root, although often menaced and sometimes shaken by the storms of party and the general desire for further innovation.

The eternal consequence of popular change is, that while it irritates the party that loses power, it cannot content the party that gains. It is obvious that each concession to the people but renders them better able to demand concessions more important. The theories of some--the demands of others--harassed the lawgiver, and threatened the safety of the laws. Solon, at length, was induced to believe that his ordinances required the sanction and repose of time, and that absence--that moral death--would not only free himself from importunity, but his infant institutions from the frivolous disposition of change. In his earlier years he had repaired, by commercial pursuits, estates that had been impoverished by the munificence of his father; and, still cultivating the same resources, he made pretence of his vocation to solicit permission for ail absence of ten years. He is said to have obtained a solemn promise from the people to alter none of his institutions during that period [223]; and thus he departed from the city (probably B. C. 575), of whose future glories he had laid the solid foundation. Attracted by his philosophical habits to that solemn land, beneath whose mysteries the credulous Greeks revered the secrets of existent wisdom, the still adventurous Athenian repaired to the cities of the Nile, and fed the passion of speculative inquiry from the learning of the Egyptian priests. Departing thence to Cyprus, he assisted, as his own verses assure us, in the planning of a new city, founded by one of the kings of that beautiful island, and afterward invited to the court of Croesus (associated with his father Alyattes, then living), he imparted to the Lydian, amid the splendours of state and the adulation of slaves, that well-known lesson on the uncertainty of human grandeur, which, according to Herodotus, Croesus so seasonably remembered at the funeral pile. [224]

II. However prudent had appeared to Solon his absence from Athens, it is to be lamented that he did not rather brave the hazards from which his genius might have saved the state, than incur those which the very removal of a master-spirit was certain to occasion. We may bind men not to change laws, but we cannot bind the spirit and the opinion, from which laws alone derive cogency or value. We may guard against the innovations of a multitude, which a wise statesman sees afar off, and may direct to great ends; but we cannot guard against that dangerous accident--not to be foreseen, not to be directed--the ambition of a man of genius! During the absence of Solon there rose into eminence one of those remarkable persons who give to vicious designs all the attraction of individual virtues. Bold, generous, affable, eloquent, endowed with every gift of nature and fortune--kinsman to Solon, but of greater wealth and more dazzling qualities--the young Pisistratus, son of Hippocrates, early connected himself with the democratic or highland party. The Megarians, who had never

relinquished their designs on Salamis, had taken an opportunity, apparently before the travels, and, according to Plutarch, even before the legislation of Solon, to repossess themselves of the island. When the Athenians were enabled to extend their energies beyond their own great domestic revolution, Pisistratus obtained the command of an expedition against these dangerous neighbours, which was attended with the most signal success. A stratagem referred to Solon by Plutarch, who has with so contagious an inaccuracy blended into one the two several and distinct expeditions of Pisistratus and Solon, ought rather to be placed to the doubtful glory of the son of Hippocrates [225]. A number of young men sailed with Pisistratus to Colias, and taking the dress of women, whom they there seized while sacrificing to Ceres, a spy was despatched to Salamis, to inform the Megarian guard that many of the principal Athenian matrons were at Colias, and might be easily captured. The Megarians were decoyed, despatched a body of men to the opposite shore, and beholding a group in women's attire dancing by the strand, landed confusedly to seize the prize. The pretended females drew forth their concealed weapons, and the Megarians, surprised and dismayed, were cut off to a man. The victors lost no time in setting sail for Salamis, and easily regained the isle. Pisistratus carried the war into Megara itself, and captured the port of Nisaea. These exploits were the foundation of his after greatness; and yet young, at the return of Solon, he was already at the head of the democratic party. But neither his rank, his genius, nor his popular influence sufficed to give to his faction a decided eminence over those of his rivals. The wealthy nobles of the lowlands were led by Lycurgus--the moderate party of the coastmen by Megacles, the head of the Alcmaeonidae. And it was in the midst, of the strife and agitation produced by these great sections of the people that Solon returned to Athens.

III. The venerable legislator was received with all the grateful respect he deserved; but age had dimmed the brilliancy of his powers. His voice could no longer penetrate the mighty crowds of the market-place. New idols had sprung up--new passions were loosed--new interests formed, and amid the roar and stir of the eternal movement, it was in vain for the high-hearted old man to recall those rushing on the future to the boundaries of the past. If unsuccessful in public, he was not discouraged from applying in private to the leaders of the several parties. Of all those rival nobles, none deferred to his advice with so marked a respect as the smooth and plausible Pisistratus. Perhaps, indeed, that remarkable man contemplated the same objects as Solon himself,--although the one desired to effect by the authority of the chief, the order and the energy which the other would have trusted to the development of the people. But, masking his more interested designs, Pisistratus outbid all competition in his seeming zeal for the public welfare. The softness of his manners--his profuse liberality--his generosity even to his foes--the splendid qualities which induced Cicero to compare him to Julius Cesar [226], charmed the imagination of the multitude, and concealed the selfishness of his views. He was not a hypocrite, indeed, as to his virtues--a dissembler only in his ambition. Even Solon, in endeavouring to inspire him with a true patriotism, acknowledged his talents and his excellences. "But for ambition," said he, "Athens possesses no citizen worthier than Pisistratus." The time became ripe for the aspiring projects of the chief of the democracy.

IV. The customary crowd was swarming in the market-place, when suddenly in the midst of the assembly appeared the chariot of

Pisistratus. The mules were bleeding--Pisistratus himself was wounded. In this condition the demagogue harangued the people. He declared that he had just escaped from the enemies of himself and the popular party, who (under the auspices of the Alcmaeonidae) had attacked him in a country excursion. He reminded the crowd of his services in war--his valour against the Megarians--his conquest of Nisaea. He implored their protection. Indignant and inflamed, the favouring audience shouted their sympathy with his wrongs. "Son of Hippocrates," said Solon, advancing to the spot, and with bitter wit, "you are but a bad imitator of Ulysses. He wounded himself to delude his enemies--you to deceive your countrymen." [227] The sagacity of the reproach was unheeded by the crowd. A special assembly of the people was convened, and a partisan of the demagogue moved that a body-guard of fifty men, armed but with clubs, should be assigned to his protection. Despite the infirmities of his age, and the decrease of his popular authority, Solon had the energy to oppose the motion, and predict its results. The credulous love of the people swept away all precaution--the guard was granted. Its number did not long continue stationary; Pisistratus artfully increased the amount, till it swelled to the force required by his designs. He then seized the citadel--the antagonist faction of Megacles fled--and Pisistratus was master of Athens. Amid the confusion and tumult of the city, Solon retained his native courage. He appeared in public--harangued the citizens--upbraided their blindness--invoked their courage. In his speeches he bade them remember that if it be the more easy task to prevent tyranny, it is the more glorious achievement to destroy it. In his verses [228] he poured forth the indignant sentiment which a thousand later bards have borrowed and enlarged; "Blame not Heaven for your tyrants, blame yourselves." The fears of some, the indifference of others, rendered his exhortations fruitless! The brave old man sorrowfully retreated to his house, hung up his weapons without his door, and consoled himself with the melancholy boast that "he had done all to save his country, and its laws." This was his last public effort against the usurper. He disdained flight; and, asked by his friends to what he trusted for safety from the wrath of the victor, replied, "To old age,"--a sad reflection, that so great a man should find in infirmity that shelter which he claimed from glory.

V. The remaining days and the latter conduct of Solon are involved in obscurity. According to Plutarch, he continued at Athens, Pisistratus showing him the utmost respect, and listening to the counsel which Solon condescended to bestow upon him: according to Diogenes Laertius, he departed again from his native city [229], indignant at its submission, and hopeless of its freedom, refusing all overtures from Pisistratus, and alleging that, having established a free government, he would not appear to sanction the success of a tyrant. Either account is sufficiently probable. The wisdom of Solon might consent to mitigate what he could not cure, or his patriotism might urge him to avoid witnessing the changes he had no power to prevent. The dispute is of little importance. At his advanced age he could not have long survived the usurpation of Pisistratus, nor can we find any authority for the date of his death so entitled to credit as that of Phanias, who assigns it to the year following the usurpation of Pisistratus. The bright race was already run. According to the grave authority of Aristotle, the ashes of Solon were scattered over the Isle of Salamis, which had been the scene of his earlier triumphs; and Athens, retaining his immortal, boasted not his perishable remains.

VI. Pisistratus directed with admirable moderation the courses of the

revolution he had produced. Many causes of success were combined in his favour. His enemies had been the supposed enemies of the people, and the multitude doubtless beheld the flight of the Alcmaeonidae (still odious in their eyes by the massacre of Cylon) as the defeat of a foe, while the triumph of the popular chief was recognised as the victory of the people. In all revolutions the man who has sided with the people is permitted by the people the greatest extent of license. It is easy to perceive, by the general desire which the Athenians had expressed for the elevation of Solon to the supreme authority that the notion of regal authority was not yet hateful to them, and that they were scarcely prepared for the liberties with which they were intrusted. But although they submitted thus patiently to the ascendancy of Pisistratus, it is evident that a less benevolent or less artful tyrant would not have been equally successful. Raised above the law, that subtle genius governed only by the law; nay, he affected to consider its authority greater than his own. He assumed no title--no attribute of sovereignty. He was accused of murder, and he humbly appeared before the tribunal of the Areopagus--a proof not more of the moderation of the usurper than of the influence of public opinion. He enforced the laws of Solon, and compelled the unruly tempers of his faction to subscribe to their wholesome rigour. The one revolution did not, therefore, supplant, it confirmed, the other. "By these means," says Herodotus, "Pisistratus mastered Athens, and yet his situation was far from secure." [230]

VII. Although the heads of the more moderate party, under Megacles, had been expelled from Athens, yet the faction, equally powerful and equally hostile, headed by Lycurgus, and embraced by the bulk of the nobles, still remained. For a time, extending perhaps to five or six years, Pisistratus retained his power; but at length, Lycurgus, uniting with the exiled Alcmaeonidae, succeeded in expelling him from the city. But the union that had led to his expulsion ceased with that event. The contests between the lowlanders and the coastmen were only more inflamed by the defeat of the third party, which had operated as a balance of power, and the broils of their several leaders were fed by personal ambition as by hereditary animosities. Megacles, therefore, unable to maintain equal ground with Lycurgus, turned his thoughts towards the enemy he had subdued, and sent proposals to Pisistratus, offering to unite their forces, and to support him in his pretensions to the tyranny, upon condition that the exiled chief should marry his daughter Coesyra. Pisistratus readily acceded to the terms, and it was resolved by a theatrical pageant to reconcile his return to the people. In one of the boroughs of the city there was a woman named Phya, of singular beauty and lofty stature. Clad in complete armour, and drawn in a chariot, this woman was conducted with splendour and triumph towards the city. By her side rode Pisistratus--heralds preceded their march, and proclaimed her approach, crying aloud to the Athenians "to admit Pisistratus, the favourite of Minerva, for that the goddess herself had come to earth on his behalf."

The sagacity of the Athenians was already so acute, and the artifice appeared to Herodotus so gross, that the simple Halicarnassean could scarcely credit the authenticity of this tale. But it is possible that the people viewed the procession as an ingenious allegory, to the adaptation of which they were already disposed; and that, like the populace of a later and yet more civilized people, they hailed the goddess while they recognised the prostitute [231]. Be that as it may, the son of Hippocrates recovered his authority, and fulfilled his

treaty with Megacles by a marriage with his daughter. Between the commencement of his first tyranny and the date of his second return, there was probably an interval of twelve years. His sons were already adults. Partly from a desire not to increase his family, partly from some superstitious disinclination to the blood of the Alcmaeonidae, which the massacre of Cylon still stigmatized with contamination, Pisistratus conducted himself towards the fair Coesyra with a chastity either unwelcome to her affection, or afflicting to her pride. The unwedded wife communicated the mortifying secret to her mother, from whose lips it soon travelled to the father. He did not view the purity of Pisistratus with charitable eyes. He thought it an affront to his own person that that of his daughter should be so tranquilly regarded. He entered into a league with his former opponents against the usurper, and so great was the danger, that Pisistratus (despite his habitual courage) betook himself hastily to flight:--a strange instance of the caprice of human events, that a man could with a greater impunity subdue the freedom of his country, than affront the vanity of his wife! [232]

VIII. Pisistratus, his sons and partisans, retired to Eretria in Euboea: there they deliberated as to their future proceedings--should they submit to their exile, or attempt to retrieve, their power? The councils of his son Hippias prevailed with Pisistratus; it was resolved once more to attempt the sovereignty of Athens. The neighbouring tribes assisted the exiles with forage and shelter. Many cities accorded the celebrated noble large sums of money, and the Thebans outdid the rest in pernicious liberality. A troop of Argive adventurers came from the Peloponnesus to tender to the baffled usurper the assistance of their swords, and Lygdamis, an individual of Naxos, himself ambitious of the government of his native state, increased his resources both by money and military force. At length, though after a long and tedious period of no less than eleven years, Pisistratus resolved to hazard the issue of open war. At the head of a foreign force he advanced to Marathon, and pitched his tents upon its immortal plain. Troops of the factious or discontented thronged from Athens to his camp, while the bulk of the citizens, unaffected by such desertions, viewed his preparations with indifference. At length, when they heard that Pisistratus had broken up his encampment, and was on his march to the city, the Athenians awoke from their apathy, and collected their forces to oppose him. He continued to advance his troops, halted at the temple of Minerva, whose earthly representative had once so benignly assisted him, and pitched his tents opposite the fane. He took advantage of that time in which the Athenians, during the heats of the day, were at their entertainments, or indulging the noontide repose, still so grateful to the inhabitants of a warmer climate, to commence his attack. He soon scattered the foe, and ordered his sons to overtake them in their flight, to bid them return peacefully to their employments, and fear nothing from his vengeance. His clemency assisted the effect of his valour, and once more the son of Hippocrates became the master of the Athenian commonwealth.

IX. Pisistratus lost no time in strengthening himself by formidable alliances. He retained many auxiliary troops, and provided large pecuniary resources [233]. He spared the persons of his opponents, but sent their children as hostages to Naxos, which he first reduced and consigned to the tyranny of his auxiliary, Lygdamis. Many of his inveterate enemies had perished on the field--many fled from the fear of his revenge. He was undisturbed in the renewal of his sway, and

having no motive for violence, pursued the natural bent of a mild and generous disposition, ruling as one who wishes men to forget the means by which his power has been attained. Pisistratus had that passion for letters which distinguished most of the more brilliant Athenians. Although the poems of Homer were widely known and deeply venerated long before his time, yet he appears, by a more accurate collection and arrangement of them, and probably by bringing them into a more general and active circulation in Athens, to have largely added to the wonderful impetus to poetical emulation, which those immortal writings were calculated to give.

When we consider how much, even in our own times, and with all the advantages of the press, the diffused fame and intellectual influence of Shakspeare and Milton have owed to the praise and criticism of individuals, we may readily understand the kind of service rendered by Pisistratus to Homer. The very example of so eminent a man would have drawn upon the poet a less vague and more inquiring species of admiration; the increased circulation of copies--the more frequent public recitals--were advantages timed at that happy season when the people who enjoyed them had grown up from wondering childhood to imitative and studious youth. And certain it is, that from this period we must date the marked and pervading influence of Homer upon Athenian poetry; for the renown of a poet often precedes by many generations the visible influence of his peculiar genius. It is chiefly within the last seventy years that we may date the wonderful effect that Shakspeare was destined to produce upon the universal intellect of Europe. The literary obligations of Athens to Pisistratus were not limited to his exertions on behalf of Homer: he is said to have been the first in Greece who founded a public library, rendering its treasures accessible to all. And these two benefits united, justly entitle the fortunate usurper to the praise of first calling into active existence that intellectual and literary spirit which became diffused among the Athenian people, and originated the models and masterpieces of the world. It was in harmony with this part of his character that Pisistratus refitted the taste and socialized the habits of the citizens, by the erection of buildings dedicated to the public worship, or the public uses, and laid out the stately gardens of the Lyceum--(in after-times the favourite haunt of philosophy), by the banks of the river dedicated to song. Pisistratus did thus more than continue the laws of Solon--he inculcated the intellectual habits which the laws were designed to create. And as in the circle of human events the faults of one man often confirm what was begun by the virtues of another, so perhaps the usurpation of Pisistratus was necessary to establish the institutions of Solon. It is clear that the great lawgiver was not appreciated at the close of his life; as his personal authority had ceased to have influence, so possibly might have soon ceased the authority of his code. The citizens required repose to examine, to feel, to estimate the blessings of his laws--that repose they possessed under Pisistratus. Amid the tumult of fierce and equipoised factions it might be fortunate that a single individual was raised above the rest, who, having the wisdom to appreciate the institutions of Solon, had the authority to enforce them. Silently they grew up under his usurped but benignant sway, pervading, penetrating, exalting the people, and fitting them by degrees to the liberty those institutions were intended to confer. If the disorders of the republic led to the ascendancy of Pisistratus, so the ascendancy of Pisistratus paved the way for the renewal of the republic. As Cromwell was the representative of the very sentiments he appeared to subvert--as

Napoleon in his own person incorporated the principles of the revolution of France, so the tyranny of Pisistratus concentrated and embodied the elements of that democracy he rather wielded than overthrew.

X. At home, time and tranquillity cemented the new laws; poetry set before the emulation of the Athenians its noblest monument in the epics of Homer; and tragedy put forth its first unmellowed fruits in the rude recitations of Thespis (B. C. 535). [234] Pisistratus sought also to counterbalance the growing passion for commerce by peculiar attention to agriculture, in which it is not unlikely that he was considerably influenced by early prepossessions, for his party had been the mountaineers attached to rural pursuits, and his adversaries the coastmen engaged in traffic. As a politician of great sagacity, he might also have been aware, that a people accustomed to agricultural employments are ever less inclined to democratic institutions than one addicted to commerce and manufactures; and if he were the author of a law, which at all events he more rigidly enforced, requiring every citizen to give an account of his mode of livelihood, and affixing punishments to idleness, he could not have taken wiser precautions against such seditions as are begot by poverty upon indolence, or under a juster plea have established the superintendence of a concealed police. We learn from Aristotle that his policy consisted much in subjecting and humbling the *pediaei*, or wealthy nobles of the lowlands. But his very affection to agriculture must have tended to strengthen an aristocracy, and his humility to the Areopagus was a proof of his desire to conciliate the least democratic of the Athenian courts. He probably, therefore, acted only against such individual chiefs as had incurred his resentment, or as menaced his power; nor can we perceive in his measures the systematic and deliberate policy, common with other Greek tyrants, to break up an aristocracy and create a middle class.

XI. Abroad, the ambition of Pisistratus, though not extensive, was successful. There was a town on the Hellespont called Sigeum, which had long been a subject of contest between the Athenians and the Mitylenaeans. Some years before the legislation of Solon, the Athenian general, Phryno, had been slain in single combat by Pittacus, one of the seven wise men, who had come into the field armed like the Roman *retarius*, with a net, a trident, and a dagger. This feud was terminated by the arbitration of Periander, tyrant of Corinth, who awarded Sigeum to the Athenians, which was then in their possession, by a wise and plausible decree, that each party should keep what it had got. This war was chiefly remarkable for an incident that introduces us somewhat unfavourably to the most animated of the lyric poets. Alcaeus, an eminent citizen of Mitylene, and, according to ancient scandal, the unsuccessful lover of Sappho, conceived a passion for military fame: in his first engagement he seems to have discovered that his proper vocation was rather to sing of battles than to share them. He fled from the field, leaving his arms behind him, which the Athenians obtained, and suspended at Sigeum in the temple of Minerva. Although this single action, which Alcaeus himself recorded, cannot be fairly held a sufficient proof of the poet's cowardice, yet his character and patriotism are more equivocal than his genius. Of the last we have ample testimony, though few remains save in the frigid grace of the imitations of Horace. The subsequent weakness and civil dissensions of Athens were not favourable to the maintenance of this distant conquest--the Mitylenaeans regained Sigeum. Against this town Pisistratus now directed his arms--wrested it from the Mitylenaeans--

and, instead of annexing it to the republic of Athens, assigned its government to the tyranny of his natural son, Hegesistratus,--a stormy dominion, which the valour of the bastard defended against repeated assaults. [235]

XII. But one incident, the full importance of which the reader must wait a while to perceive, I shall in this place relate. Among the most powerful of the Athenians was a noble named Miltiades, son of Cypselus. By original descent he was from the neighbouring island of Aegina, and of the heroic race of Aeacus; but he dated the establishment of his house in Athens from no less distant a founder than the son of Ajax. Miltiades had added new lustre to his name by a victory at the Olympic games. It was probably during the first tyranny of Pisistratus [236] that an adventure, attended with vast results to Greece, befell this noble. His family were among the enemies of Pisistratus, and were regarded by that sagacious usurper with a jealous apprehension which almost appears prophetic. Miltiades was, therefore, uneasy under the government of Pisistratus, and discontented with his position in Athens. One day, as he sat before his door (such is the expression of the enchanting Herodotus, unconscious of the patriarchal picture he suggests [237]), Miltiades observed certain strangers pass by, whose garments and spears denoted them to be foreigners. The sight touched the chief, and he offered the strangers the use of his house, and the rites of hospitality. They accepted his invitation, were charmed by his courtesy, and revealed to him the secret of their travel. In that narrow territory which, skirting the Hellespont, was called the Chersonesus, or Peninsula, dwelt the Dolonians, a Thracian tribe. Engaged in an obstinate war with the neighbouring Absinthians, the Dolonians had sent to the oracle of Delphi to learn the result of the contest. The Pythian recommended the messengers to persuade the first man who, on their quitting the temple, should offer them the rites of hospitality, to found a colony in their native land. Passing homeward through Phocis and Boeotia, and receiving no such invitation by the way, the messengers turned aside to Athens; Miltiades was the first who offered them the hospitality they sought; they entreated him now to comply with the oracle, and assist their countrymen; the discontented noble was allured by the splendour of the prospect--he repaired in person to Delphi--consulted the Pythian--received a propitious answer--and collecting all such of the Athenians as his authority could enlist, or their own ambition could decoy, he repaired to the Chersonesus (probably B. C. 559). There he fortified a great part of the isthmus, as a barrier to the attacks of the Absinthians: but shortly afterward, in a feud with the people of Lampsacus, he was taken prisoner by the enemy. Miltiades, however, had already secured the esteem and protection of Croesus; and the Lydian monarch remonstrated with the Lampsacenes in so formidable a tone of menace, that the Athenian obtained his release, and regained his new principality. In the meanwhile, his brother Cimon (who was chiefly remarkable for his success at the Olympic games), sharing the political sentiments of his house, had been driven into exile by Pisistratus. By a transfer to the brilliant tyrant of a victory in the Olympic chariot-race, he, however, propitiated Pisistratus, and returned to Athens.

VIII. Full of years, and in the serene enjoyment of power, Pisistratus died (B. C. 527). His character may already be gathered from his actions: crafty in the pursuit of power, but magnanimous in its possession, we have only, with some qualification, to repeat the eulogium on him ascribed to his greater kinsman, Solon--"That he was

the best of tyrants, and without a vice save that of ambition."

CHAPTER III.

The Administration of Hippias.--The Conspiracy of Harmodius and Aristogiton.--The Death of Hipparchus.--Cruelties of Hippias.--The young Miltiades sent to the Chersonesus.--The Spartans Combine with the Alcmaeonidae against Hippias.--The fall of the Tyranny.--The Innovations of Clisthenes.--His Expulsion and Restoration.--Embassy to the Satrap of Sardis.--Retrospective View of the Lydian, Medean, and Persian Monarchies.--Result of the Athenian Embassy to Sardis.--Conduct of Cleomenes.--Victory of the Athenians against the Boeotians and Chalcidians.--Hippias arrives at Sparta.--The Speech of Sosicles the Corinthian.--Hippias retires to Sardis.

I. Upon the death of Pisistratus, his three sons, Hipparchus, Hippias, and Thessalus, succeeded to the government. Nor, though Hippias was the eldest, does he seem to have exercised a more prominent authority than the rest--since, in the time of Thucydides, and long afterward, it was the popular error to consider Hipparchus the first-born. Hippias was already of mature age; and, as we have seen, it was he who had counselled his father not to despair, after his expulsion from Athens. He was a man of courage and ability worthy of his race. He governed with the same careful respect for the laws which had distinguished and strengthened the authority of his predecessor. He even rendered himself yet more popular than Pisistratus by reducing one half the impost of a tithe on the produce of the land, which that usurper had imposed. Notwithstanding this relief, he was enabled, by a prudent economy, to flatter the national vanity by new embellishments to the city. In the labours of his government he was principally aided by his second brother, Hipparchus, a man of a yet more accomplished and intellectual order of mind. But although Hippias did not alter the laws, he chose his own creatures to administer them. Besides, whatever share in the government was intrusted to his brothers, Hipparchus and Thessalus, his son and several of his family were enrolled among the archons of the city. And they who by office were intended for the guardians of liberty were the necessary servants of the tyrant.

II. If we might place unhesitating faith in the authenticity of the dialogue attributed to Plato under the title of "Hipparchus," we should have, indeed, high authority in favour of the virtues and the wisdom of that prince. And by whomsoever the dialogue was written, it refers to facts, in the passage relative to the son of Pisistratus, in a manner sufficiently positive to induce us to regard that portion of it with some deference. According to the author, we learn that Hipparchus, passionately attached to letters, brought Anacreon to Athens, and lived familiarly with Simonides. He seems to have been inspired with the ambition of a moralist, and distributed Hermae, or stone busts of Mercury, about the city and the public roads, which, while answering a similar purpose to our mile-stones, arrested the eye of the passenger with pithy and laconic apothegms in verse; such as, "Do not deceive your friend," and "Persevere in affection to justice;"--proofs rather of the simplicity than the wisdom of the prince. It is not by writing the decalogue upon mile-stones that the

robber would be terrified, or the adulterer converted.

It seems that the apothegmatical Hipparchus did not associate with Anacreon more from sympathy with his genius than inclination to the subjects to which it was devoted. He was addicted to pleasure; nor did he confine its pursuits to the more legitimate objects of sensual affection. Harmodius, a young citizen of no exalted rank, but much personal beauty, incurred the affront of his addresses [238]. Harmodius, in resentment, confided the overtures of the moralist to his friend and preceptor, Aristogiton. While the two were brooding over the outrage, Hipparchus, in revenge for the disdain of Harmodius, put a public insult upon the sister of that citizen, a young maiden. She received a summons to attend some public procession, as bearer of one of the sacred vessels: on presenting herself she was abruptly rejected, with the rude assertion that she never could have been honoured with an invitation of which she was unworthy. This affront rankled deeply in the heart of Harmodius, but still more in that of the friendly Aristogiton, and they now finally resolved upon revenge. At the solemn festival of Panathenaea, (in honour of Minerva), it was the custom for many of the citizens to carry arms in the procession: for this occasion they reserved the blow. They intrusted their designs to few, believing that if once the attempt was begun the people would catch the contagion, and rush spontaneously to the assertion of their freedom. The festival arrived. Bent against the elder tyrant, perhaps from nobler motives than those which urged them against Hipparchus [239], each armed with a dagger concealed in the sacred myrtle bough which was borne by those who joined the procession, the conspirators advanced to the spot in the suburbs where Hippias was directing the order of the ceremonial. To their dismay, they perceived him conversing familiarly with one of their own partisans, and immediately suspected that to be the treason of their friend which in reality was the frankness of the affable prince. Struck with fear, they renounced their attempt upon Hippias, suddenly retreated to the city, and, meeting with Hipparchus, rushed upon him, wounded, and slew him. Aristogiton turned to fly--he escaped the guards, but was afterward seized, and "not mildly treated" [240] by the tyrant. Such is the phrase of Thucydides, which, if we may take the interpretation of Justin and the later writers, means that, contrary to the law, he was put to the torture [241]. Harmodius was slain upon the spot. The news of his brother's death was brought to Hippias. With an admirable sagacity and presence of mind, he repaired, not to the place of the assassination, but towards the procession itself, rightly judging that the conspiracy had only broken out in part. As yet the news of the death of Hipparchus had not reached the more distant conspirators in the procession, and Hippias betrayed not in the calmness of his countenance any signs of his sorrow or his fears. He approached the procession, and with a composed voice commanded them to deposit their arms, and file off towards a place which he indicated. They obeyed the order, imagining he had something to communicate to them. Then turning to his guards, Hippias bade them seize the weapons thus deposited, and he himself selected from the procession all whom he had reason to suspect, or on whose persons a dagger was found, for it was only with the open weapons of spear and shield that the procession was lawfully to be made. Thus rose and thus terminated that conspiracy which gave to the noblest verse and the most enduring veneration the names of Harmodius and Aristogiton. [242]

III. The acutest sharpener of tyranny is an unsuccessful attempt to

destroy it--to arouse the suspicion of power is almost to compel it to cruelty. Hitherto we have seen that Hippias had graced his authority with beneficent moderation; the death of his brother filled him with secret alarm; and the favour of the populace at the attempted escape of Aristogiton--the ease with which, from a personal affront to an obscure individual, a formidable conspiracy had sprung up into life, convinced him that the arts of personal popularity are only to be relied on when the constitution of the government itself is popular.

It is also said that, when submitted to the torture, Aristogiton, with all the craft of revenge, asserted the firmest friends of Hippias to have been his accomplices. Thus harassed by distrust, Hippias resolved to guard by terror a power which clemency had failed to render secure. He put several of the citizens to death. According to the popular traditions of romance, one of the most obnoxious acts of his severity was exercised upon a woman worthy to be the mistress of Aristogiton. Leaena, a girl of humble birth, beloved by that adventurous citizen, was sentenced to the torture, and, that the pain might not wring from her any confession of the secrets of the conspiracy, she bit out her tongue. The Athenians, on afterward recovering their liberties, dedicated to the heroine a brazen lioness, not inappropriately placed in the vicinity of a celebrated statue of Venus [243]. No longer depending on the love of the citizens, Hippias now looked abroad for the support of his power; he formed an alliance with Hippoclus, the prince of Lampsacus, by marrying his daughter with the son of that tyrant, who possessed considerable influence at the Persian court, to which he already directed his eyes--whether as a support in the authority of the present, or an asylum against the reverses of the future. [244]

It was apparently about a year before the death of Hipparchus, that Stesagoras, the nephew and successor of that Miltiades who departed from Athens to found a colony in the Thracian Chersonesus, perished by an assassin's blow. Hippias, evidently deeming he had the right, as sovereign of the parent country, to appoint the governor of the colony, sent to the Chersonesus in that capacity the brother of the deceased, a namesake of the first founder, whose father, Cimon, from jealousy of his power or repute, had been murdered by the sons of Pisistratus [245]. The new Miltiades was a man of consummate talents, but one who scrupled little as to the means by which to accomplish his objects. Arriving at his government, he affected a deep sorrow for the loss of his brother; the principal nobles of the various cities of the Chersonesus came in one public procession to condole with him; the crafty chief seized and loaded them with irons, and, having thus insnared the possible rivals of his power, or enemies of his designs, he secured the undisputed possession of the whole Chersonesus, and maintained his civil authority by a constant military force. A marriage with Hegesipyle, a daughter of one of the Thracian princes, at once enhanced the dignity and confirmed the sway of the young and aspiring chief. Some years afterward, we shall see in this Miltiades the most eminent warrior of his age--at present we leave him to an unquiet and perilous power, and return to Hippias.

IV. A storm gathered rapidly on against the security and ambition of the tyrant. The highborn and haughty family of the Alcmaeonids had been expelled from Athens at the victorious return of Pisistratus--their estates in Attica confiscated--their houses razed--their very sepulchres destroyed. After fruitless attempts against the oppressors, they had retired to Lipsydrium, a fortress on the heights

of Parnes, where they continued to cherish the hope of return and the desire of revenge. Despite the confiscation of their Attic estates, their wealth and resources, elsewhere secured, were enormous. The temple of Delphi having been destroyed by fire, they agreed with the Amphictyons to rebuild it, and performed the holy task with a magnificent splendour far exceeding the conditions of the contract. But in that religious land, wealth, thus lavished, was no unprofitable investment. The priests of Delphi were not insensible of the liberality of the exiles, and Clisthenes, the most eminent and able of the Alcmaeonidae, was more than suspected of suborning the Pythian. Sparta, the supporter of oligarchies, was the foe of tyrants, and every Spartan who sought the oracle was solemnly involved to aid the glorious enterprise of delivering the Eupatrids of Athens from the yoke of the Pisistratidae.

The Spartans were at length moved by instances so repeatedly urged. Policy could not but soften that jealous state to such appeals to her superstition. Under the genius of the Pisistratidae, Athens had rapidly advanced in power, and the restoration of the Alcmaeonidae might have seemed to the Spartan sagacity but another term for the establishment of that former oligarchy which had repressed the intellect and exhausted the resources of an active and aspiring people. Sparta aroused herself, then, at length, and "though in violation," says Herodotus, "of some ancient ties of hospitality," despatched a force by sea against the Prince of Athens. That alert and able ruler lost no time in seeking assistance from his allies, the Thessalians; and one of their powerful princes led a thousand horsemen against the Spartans, who had debarked at Phalerum. Joined by these allies, Hippias engaged and routed the enemy, and the Spartan leader himself fell upon the field of battle. His tomb was long visible in Cynosarges, near the gates of Athens--a place rendered afterward more illustrious by giving name to the Cynic philosophers. [246]

Undismayed by their defeat, the Spartans now despatched a more considerable force against the tyrant, under command of their king Cleomenes. This army proceeded by land--entered Attica--encountered, defeated, the Thessalian horse [247],--and marched towards the gates of Athens, joined, as they proceeded, by all those Athenians who hoped, in the downfall of Hippias, the resurrection of their liberties. The Spartan troops hastened to besiege the Athenian prince in the citadel, to which he retired with his forces. But Hippias had provided his refuge with all the necessaries which might maintain him in a stubborn and prolonged resistance. The Spartans were unprepared for the siege--the blockade of a few days sufficed to dishearten them, and they already meditated a retreat. A sudden incident opening to us in the midst of violence one of those beautiful glimpses of human affection which so often adorn and sanctify the darker pages of history, unexpectedly secured the Spartan triumph. Hippias and his friends, fearing the safety of their children in the citadel, resolved to dismiss them privately to some place of greater security. Unhappily, their care was frustrated, and the children fell into the hands of the enemy. All the means of success within their reach (the foe wearied--the garrison faithful), the parents yet resigned themselves at once to the voluntary sacrifice of conquest and ambition.

Upon the sole condition of recovering their children, Hippias and his partisans consented to surrender the citadel, and quit the territories of Attica within five days. Thus, in the fourth year from the death

of Hipparchus (B. C. 510), and about fifty years after the first establishment of the tyranny under its brilliant founder, the dominion of Athens passed away from the house of Pisistratus.

V. The party of Hippias, defeated, not by the swords of the enemy, but by the soft impulses of nature, took their way across the stream of the immemorial Scamander, and sought refuge at Sigeum, still under the government of Hegesistratus, the natural brother of the exiled prince.

The instant the pressure of one supreme power was removed, the two parties embodying the aristocratic and popular principles rose into active life. The state was to be a republic, but of what denomination? The nobles naturally aspired to the predominance--at their head was the Eupatrid Isagoras; the strife of party always tends to produce popular results, even from elements apparently the most hostile. Clisthenes, the head of the Alcmaeonidae, was by birth even yet more illustrious than Isagoras; for, among the nobles, the Alcmaeonid family stood pre-eminent. But, unable to attain the sole power of the government, Clisthenes and his party were unwilling to yield to the more numerous faction of an equal. The exile and sufferings of the Alcmaeonids had, no doubt, secured to them much of the popular compassion; their gallant struggles against, their ultimate victory over the usurper, obtained the popular enthusiasm; thus it is probable, that an almost insensible sympathy had sprung up between this high-born faction and the people at large; and when, unable to cope with the party of the nobles, Clisthenes attached himself to the movement of the commons, the enemy of the tyrant appeared in his natural position--at the head of the democracy. Clisthenes was, however, rather the statesman of a party than the legislator for a people--it was his object permanently to break up the power of the great proprietors, not as enemies of the commonwealth, but as rivals to his faction. The surest way to diminish the influence of property in elections is so to alter the constituencies as to remove the electors from the immediate control of individual proprietors. Under the old Ionic and hereditary divisions of four tribes, many ancient associations and ties between the poorer and the nobler classes were necessarily formed. By one bold innovation, the whole importance of which was not immediately apparent, Clisthenes abolished these venerable divisions, and, by a new geographical survey, created ten tribes instead of the former four. These were again subdivided into districts, or demes; the number seems to have varied, but at the earliest period they were not less than one hundred--at a later period they exceeded one hundred and seventy. To these demes were transferred all the political rights and privileges of the divisions they supplanted. Each had a local magistrate and local assemblies. Like corporations, these petty courts of legislature ripened the moral spirit of democracy while fitting men for the exercise of the larger rights they demanded. A consequence of the alteration of the number of the tribes was an increase in the number that composed the senate, which now rose from four to five hundred members.

Clisthenes did not limit himself to this change in the constituent bodies--he increased the total number of the constituents; new citizens were made--aliens were admitted--and it is supposed by some, though upon rather vague authorities, that several slaves were enfranchised. It was not enough, however, to augment the number of the people, it was equally necessary to prevent the ascension of a

single man. Encouraged by the example in other states of Greece, forewarned by the tyranny of Pisistratus, Clisthenes introduced the institution of the Ostracism [248]. Probably about the same period, the mode of election to public office generally was altered from the public vote to the secret lot [249]. It is evident that these changes, whether salutary or pernicious, were not wanton or uncalled for. The previous constitution had not sufficed to protect the republic from a tyranny: something deficient in the machinery of Solon's legislation had for half a century frustrated its practical intentions. A change was, therefore, necessary to the existence of the free state; and the care with which that change was directed towards the diminution of the aristocratic influence, is in itself a proof that such influence had been the shelter of the defeated tyranny. The Athenians themselves always considered the innovations of Clisthenes but as the natural development of the popular institutions of Solon; and that decisive and energetic noble seems indeed to have been one of those rude but serviceable instruments by which a more practical and perfect action is often wrought out from the incompleated theories of greater statesmen.

VI. Meanwhile, Isagoras, thus defeated by his rival, had the mean ambition to appeal to the Spartan sword. Ancient scandal attributes to Cleomenes, king of Sparta, an improper connexion with the wife of Isagoras, and every one knows that the fondest friend of the cuckold is invariably the adulterer;--the national policy of founding aristocracies was doubtless, however, a graver motive with the Spartan king than his desire to assist Isagoras. Cleomenes by a public herald proclaimed the expulsion of Clisthenes, upon a frivolous pretence that the Alcmaeonidae were still polluted by the hereditary sacrilege of Cylon. Clisthenes privately retired from the city, and the Spartan king, at the head of an inconsiderable troop, re-entered Athens--expelled, at the instance of Isagoras, seven hundred Athenian families, as inculpated in the pretended pollution of Clisthenes--dissolved the senate--and committed all the offices of the state to an oligarchy of three hundred (a number and a council founded upon the Dorian habits), each of whom was the creature of Isagoras. But the noble assembly he had thus violently dissolved refused obedience to his commands; they appealed to the people, whom the valour of liberty simultaneously aroused, and the citadel, of which Isagoras and the Spartans instantly possessed themselves, was besieged by the whole power of Athens. The conspirators held out only two days; on the third, they accepted the conditions of the besiegers, and departed peaceably from the city. Some of the Athenians, who had shared the treason without participating in the flight, were justly executed. Clisthenes, with the families expelled by Cleomenes, was recalled, and the republic of Athens was thus happily re-established.

VII. But the iron vengeance of that nation of soldiers, thus far successfully braved, was not to be foreboded without alarm by the Athenians. They felt that Cleomenes had only abandoned his designs to return to them more prepared for contest; and Athens was not yet in a condition to brave the determined and never-sparing energies of Sparta. The Athenians looked around the states of Greece--many in alliance with Lacedaemon--some governed by tyrants--others distracted with their own civil dissensions; there were none from whom the new commonwealth could hope for a sufficient assistance against the revenge of Cleomenes. In this dilemma, they resorted to the only aid which suggested itself, and sought, across the boundaries of Greece, the alliance of the barbarians. They adventured a formal embassy to

Artaphernes, satrap of Sardis, to engage the succour of Darius, king of Persia.

Accompanying the Athenians in this mission, full of interest, for it was the first public transaction between that republic and the throne of Persia, I pause to take a rapid survey of the origin of that mighty empire, whose destinies became thenceforth involved in the history of Grecian misfortunes and Grecian fame. That survey commences with the foundation of the Lydian monarchy.

VIII. Amid the Grecian colonies of Asia whose rise we have commemorated, around and above a hill commanding spacious and fertile plains watered by the streams of the Cayster and Maeander; an ancient Pelasgic tribe called the Maeonians had established their abode. According to Herodotus, these settlers early obtained the name of Lydians, from Lydus, the son of Atys. The Dorian revolution did not spare these delightful seats, and an Heraclid dynasty is said to have reigned five hundred years over the Maeonians; these in their turn were supplanted by a race known to us as the Mermnadae, the founder of whom, Gyges, murdered and dethroned the last of the Heraclidae; and with a new dynasty seems to have commenced a new and less Asiatic policy. Gyges, supported by the oracle of Delphi, was the first barbarian, except one of the many Phrygian kings claiming the name of Midas, who made votive offerings to that Grecian shrine. From his time this motley tribe, the link between Hellas and the East, came into frequent collision with the Grecian colonies. Gyges himself made war with Miletus and Smyrna, and even captured Colophon. With Miletus, indeed, the hostility of the Lydians became hereditary, and was renewed with various success by the descendants of Gyges, until, in the time of his great-grandson Alyattes, a war of twelve years with that splendid colony was terminated by a solemn peace and a strict alliance. Meanwhile, the petty but warlike monarchy founded by Gyges had preserved the Asiatic Greeks from dangers yet more formidable than its own ambition. From a remote period, savage and ferocious tribes, among which are pre-eminent the Treres and Cimmerians, had often ravaged the inland plains--now for plunder, now for settlement. Magnesia had been entirely destroyed by the Treres--even Sardis, the capital of the Mermnadae, had been taken, save the citadel, by the Cimmerians. It was reserved for Alyattes to terminate these formidable irruptions, and Asia was finally delivered by his arms from a people in whom modern erudition has too fondly traced the ancestors of the Cymry, or ancient Britons [250]. To this enterprising and able king succeeded a yet more illustrious monarch, who ought to have found in his genius the fame he has derived from his misfortunes. At the age of thirty-five Croesus ascended the Lydian throne. Before associated in the government with his father, he had rendered himself distinguished in military service; and, wise, accomplished, but grasping and ambitious, this remarkable monarch now completed the designs of his predecessors. Commencing with Ephesus, he succeeded in rendering tributary every Grecian colony on the western coast of Asia; and, leaving to each state its previous institutions, he kept by moderation what he obtained by force.

Croesus was about to construct a fleet for the purpose of adding to his dominions the isles of the Aegaeon, but is said to have been dissuaded from his purpose by a profound witticism of one of the seven wise men of Greece. "The islanders," said the sage, "are about to storm you in your capital of Sardis, with ten thousand cavalry."--"Nothing could gratify me more," said the king, "than to see the

islanders invading the Lydian continent with horsemen."--"Right," replied the wise man, "and it will give the islanders equal satisfaction to find the Lydians attacking them by a fleet. To revenge their disasters on the land, the Greeks desire nothing better than to meet you on the ocean." The answer enlightened the king, and, instead of fitting out his fleet, he entered into amicable alliance with the Ionians of the isles [251]. But his ambition was only thwarted in one direction to strike its roots in another; and he turned his invading arms against his neighbours on the continent, until he had progressively subdued nearly all the nations, save the Lycians and Cilicians, westward to the Halys. And thus rapidly and majestically rose from the scanty tribe and limited territory of the old Maeonians the monarchy of Asia Minor.

IX. The renown of Croesus established, his capital of Sardis became the resort of the wise and the adventurous, whether of Asia or of Greece. In many respects the Lydians so closely resembled the Greeks as to suggest the affinity which historical evidence scarcely suffices to permit us absolutely to affirm. The manners and the customs of either people did not greatly differ, save that with the Lydians, as still throughout the East, but little consideration was attached to women;--they were alike in their cultivation of the arts, and their respect for the oracles of religion--and Delphi, in especial, was inordinately enriched by the prodigal superstition of the Lydian kings.

The tradition which ascribes to the Lydians the invention of coined money is a proof of their commercial habits. The neighbouring Tmolus teemed with gold, which the waters of the Pactolus bore into the very streets of the city. Their industry was exercised in the manufacture of articles of luxury rather than those of necessity. Their purple garments--their skill in the workmanship of metals--their marts for slaves and eunuchs--their export trade of unwrought gold--are sufficient evidence both of the extent and the character of their civilization. Yet the nature of the oriental government did not fail to operate injuriously on the more homely and useful directions of their energy. They appear never to have worked the gold-mines, whose particles were borne to them by the careless bounty of the Pactolus. Their early traditional colonies were wafted on Grecian vessels. The gorgeous presents with which they enriched the Hellenic temples seem to have been fabricated by Grecian art, and even the advantages of commerce they seem rather to have suffered than to have sought. But what a people so suddenly risen into splendour, governed by a wise prince, and stimulated perhaps to eventual liberty by the example of the European Greeks, ought to have become, it is impossible to conjecture; perhaps the Hellenes of the East.

At this period, however, of such power--and such promise, the fall of the Lydian empire was decreed. Far from the fertile fields and gorgeous capital of Lydia, amid sterile mountains, inhabited by a simple and hardy race, rose the portentous star of the Persian Cyrus.

X. A victim to that luxury which confirms a free but destroys a despotic state, the vast foundations of the Assyrian empire were crumbling into decay, when a new monarchy, destined to become its successor, sprung up among one of its subject nations. Divided into various tribes, each dependant upon the Assyrian sceptre, was a warlike, wandering, and primitive race, known to us under the name of Medes. Deioces, a chief of one of the tribes, succeeded in uniting

these scattered sections into a single people, built a city, and founded an independent throne. His son, Phraortes, reduced the Persians to his yoke--overran Asia--advanced to Nineveh--and ultimately perished in battle with a considerable portion of his army. Succeeded by his son Cyaxares, that monarch consummated the ambitious designs of his predecessors. He organized the miscellaneous hordes that compose an oriental army into efficient and formidable discipline, vanquished the Assyrians, and besieged Nineveh, when a mighty irruption of the Scythian hordes called his attention homeward. A defeat, which at one blow robbed this great king of the dominion of Asia, was ultimately recovered by a treacherous massacre of the Scythian leaders (B. C. 606). The Medes regained their power and prosecuted their conquests--Nineveh fell--and through the whole Assyrian realm, Babylon alone remained unsubjugated by the Mede. To this new-built and wide-spread empire succeeded Astyages, son of the fortunate Cyaxares. But it is the usual character of a conquering tribe to adopt the habits and be corrupted by the vices of the subdued nations among which the invaders settle; and the peaceful reign of Astyages sufficed to enervate that vigilant and warlike spirit in the victor race, by which alone the vast empires of the East can be preserved from their natural tendency to decay. The Persians, subdued by the grandsire of Astyages, seized the occasion to revolt. Among them rose up a native hero, the Gengis-khan of the ancient world. Through the fables which obscure his history we may be allowed to conjecture, that Cyrus, or Khosroo, was perhaps connected by blood with Astyages, and, more probably, that he was intrusted with command among the Persians by that weak and slothful monarch. Be that as it may, he succeeded in uniting under his banners a martial and uncorrupted population, overthrew the Median monarchy, and transferred to a dynasty, already worn out with premature old age, the vigorous and aspiring youth of a mountain race. Such was the formidable foe that now menaced the rising glories of the Lydian king.

XI. Croesus was allied by blood with the dethroned Astyages, and individual resentment at the overthrow of his relation co-operated with his anxious fears of the ambition of the victor. A less sagacious prince might easily have foreseen that the Persians would scarcely be secure in their new possessions, ere the wealth and domains of Lydia would tempt the restless cupidity of their chief. After much deliberation as to the course to be pursued, Croesus resorted for advice to the most celebrated oracles of Greece, and even to that of the Libyan Ammon. The answer he received from Delphi flattered, more fatally than the rest, the inclinations of the king. He was informed "that if he prosecuted a war with Persia a mighty empire would be overthrown, and he was advised to seek the alliance of the most powerful states of Greece." Overjoyed with a response to which his hopes gave but one interpretation, the king prodigalized fresh presents on the Delphians, and received from them in return, for his people and himself, the honour of priority above all other nations in consulting the oracle, a distinguished seat in the temple, and the right of the citizenship of Delphi. Once more the fated monarch sought the oracle, and demanded if his power should ever fail. Thus replied the Pythian: "When a mule shall sit enthroned over the Medes, fly, soft Lydian, across the pebbly waters of the Hermus." The ingenuity of Croesus could discover in this reply no reason for alarm, confident that a mule could never be the sovereign of the Medes. Thus animated, and led on, the son of Alyattes prepared to oppose, while it was yet time, the progress of the Persian arms. He collected all the force he could summon from his provinces--crossed the Halys--entered

Cappadocia--devastated the surrounding country--destroyed several towns--and finally met on the plains of Pteria the Persian army. The victory was undecided; but Croesus, not satisfied with the force he led, which was inferior to that of Cyrus, returned to Sardis, despatched envoys for succour into Egypt and to Babylon, and disbanded, for the present, the disciplined mercenaries whom he had conducted into Cappadocia. But Cyrus was aware of the movements of the enemy, and by forced and rapid marches arrived at Sardis, and encamped before its walls. His army dismissed--his allies scarcely reached by his ambassadors--Croesus yet showed himself equal to the peril of his fortune. His Lydians were among the most valiant of the Asiatic nations--dexterous in their national weapon, the spear, and renowned for the skill and prowess of their cavalry.

XII. In a wide plain, in the very neighbourhood of the royal Sardis, and watered "by the pebbly stream of the Hermus," the cavalry of Lydia met, and were routed by the force of Cyrus. The city was besieged and taken, and the wisest and wealthiest of the Eastern kings sunk thenceforth into a petty vassal, consigned as guest or prisoner to a Median city near Ecbatana [252]. The prophecy was fulfilled, and a mighty empire overthrown. [253]

The Grecian colonies of Asia, during the Lydian war, had resisted the overtures of Cyrus, and continued faithful to Croesus; they had now cause to dread the vengeance of the conqueror. The Ionians and Aeolians sent to demand the assistance of Lacedaemon, pledged equally with themselves to the Lydian cause. But the Spartans, yet more cautious than courageous, saw but little profit in so unequal an alliance. They peremptorily refused the offer of the colonists, but, after their departure, warily sent a vessel of fifty oars to watch the proceedings of Cyrus, and finally deputed Latrines, a Spartan of distinction, to inform the monarch of the Persian, Median, and Lydian empires, that any injury to the Grecian cities would be resented by the Spartans. Cyrus asked with polite astonishment of the Greeks about him, "Who these Spartans were?" and having ascertained as much as he could comprehend concerning their military force and their social habits, replied, "That men who had a large space in the middle of their city for the purpose of cheating one another, could not be to him an object of terror:" so little respect had the hardy warrior for the decent frauds of oratory and of trade. Meanwhile, he obligingly added, "that if he continued in health, their concern for the Ionian troubles might possibly be merged in the greatness of their own." Soon afterward Cyrus swept onwards in the prosecution of his vast designs, overrunning Assyria, and rushing through the channels of Euphrates into the palaces of Babylon, and the halls of the scriptural Belshazzar. His son, Cambyses, added the mystic Egypt to the vast conquests of Cyrus--and a stranger to the blood of the great victor, by means of superstitious accident or political intrigue, ascended the throne of Asia, known to European history under the name of Darius. The generals of Cyrus had reduced to the Persian yoke the Ionian colonies; the Isle of Samos (the first of the isles subjected) was afterward conquered by a satrap of Sardis, and Darius, who, impelled by the ambition of his predecessors, had led with no similar success a vast armament against the wandering Scythians, added, on his return, Lesbos, Chios, and other isles in the Aegaeon, to the new monarchy of the world. As, in the often analogous history of Italian republics, we find in every incursion of the German emperor that some crafty noble of a free state joined the banner of a Frederick or a Henry in the hope of receiving from the imperial favour the tyranny of his own

city--so there had not been wanting in the Grecian colonies men of boldness and ambition, who flocked to the Persian standard, and, in gratitude for their services against the Scythian, were rewarded with the supreme government of their native cities. Thus was raised Coes, a private citizen, to the tyranny of Mitylene--and thus Histiaeus, already possessing, was confirmed by Darius in, that of Miletus. Meanwhile Megabazus, a general of the Persian monarch, at the head of an army of eighty thousand men, subdued Thrace, and made Macedonia tributary to the Persian throne. Having now established, as he deemed securely, the affairs of the empire in Asia Minor, Darius placed his brother Artaphernes in the powerful satrapy of Sardis, and returned to his capital of Susa.

XIII. To this satrap, brother of that mighty monarch, came the ambassadors of Athens. Let us cast our eyes along the map of the ancient world--and survey the vast circumference of the Persian realm, stretching almost over the civilized globe. To the east no boundary was visible before the Indus. To the north the empire extended to the Caspian and the Euxine seas, with that steep Caucasian range, never passed even by the most daring of the early Asiatic conquerors. Eastward of the Caspian, the rivers of Oxus and Iaxartes divided the subjects of the great king from the ravages of the Tartar; the Arabian peninsula interposed its burning sands, a barrier to the south--while the western territories of the empire, including Syria, Phoenicia, the fertile satrapies of Asia Minor, were washed by the Mediterranean seas. Suddenly turning from this immense empire, let us next endeavour to discover those dominions from which the Athenian ambassadors were deputed: far down in a remote corner of the earth we perceive at last the scarce visible nook of Attica, with its capital of Athens--a domain that in its extremest length measured sixty geographical miles! We may now judge of the condescending wonder with which the brother of Darius listened to the ambassadors of a people, by whose glory alone his name is transmitted to posterity. Yet was there nothing unnatural or unduly arrogant in his reply. "Send Darius," said the satrap, affably, "earth and water (the accustomed symbols of homage), and he will accept your alliance." The ambassadors deliberated, and, impressed by the might of Persia, and the sense of their own unfriended condition, they accepted the proposals.

If, fresh from our survey of the immeasurable disparity of power between the two states, we cannot but allow the answer of the satrap was such as might be expected, it is not without a thrill of sympathy and admiration we learn, that no sooner had the ambassadors returned to Athens, than they received from the handful of its citizens a severe reprimand for their submission. Indignant at the proposal of the satrap, that brave people recurred no more to the thought of the alliance. In haughty patience, unassisted and alone, they awaited the burst of the tempest which they foresaw.

XIV. Meanwhile, Cleomenes, chafed at the failure of his attempt on the Athenian liberties, and conceiving, in the true spirit of injustice, that he had been rather the aggrieved than the aggressor, levied forces in different parts of the Peloponnesus, but without divulging the object he had in view [254]. That object was twofold--vengeance upon Athens, and the restoration of Isagoras. At length he threw off the mask, and at the head of a considerable force seized upon the holy city of Eleusis. Simultaneously, and in concert with the Spartan, the Boeotians forcibly took possession of Oenoe and Hysix--two towns on the extremity of Attica while from Chalcis (the

principal city of the Isle of Euboea which fronted the Attic coast) a formidable band ravaged the Athenian territories. Threatened by this threefold invasion, the measures of the Athenians were prompt and vigorous. They left for the present unavenged the incursions of the Boeotians and Chalcidians, and marched with all the force they could collect against Cleomenes at Eleusis. The two armies were prepared for battle, when a sudden revolution in the Spartan camp delivered the Athenians from the most powerful of their foes. The Corinthians, insnared by Cleomenes into measures, of the object of which they had first been ignorant, abruptly retired from the field. Immediately afterward a dissension broke out between Cleomenes and Demaratus, the other king of Sparta, who had hitherto supported his colleague in all his designs, and Demaratus hastily quitted Eleusis, and returned to Lacedaemon. At this disunion between the kings of Sparta, accompanied, as it was, by the secession of the Corinthians, the other confederates broke up the camp, returned home, and left Cleomenes with so scanty a force that he was compelled to forego his resentment and his vengeance, and retreat from the sacred city. The Athenians now turned their arms against the Chalcidians, who had retired to Euboea; but, encountering the Boeotians, who were on their march to assist their island ally, they engaged and defeated them with a considerable slaughter. Flushed by their victory, the Athenians rested not upon their arms--on the same day they crossed that narrow strait which divided them from Euboea, and obtained a second and equally signal victory over the Chalcidians. There they confirmed their conquest by the establishment of four thousand colonists [255] in the fertile meadows of Euboea, which had been dedicated by the islanders to the pasturage of their horses. The Athenians returned in triumph to their city. At the price of two minae each, their numerous prisoners were ransomed, and the captive chains suspended from the walls of the citadel. A tenth part of the general ransom was consecrated, and applied to the purchase of a brazen chariot, placed in the entrance of the citadel, with an inscription which dedicated it to the tutelary goddess of Athens.

"Not from the example of the Athenians only," proceeds the father of history, "but from universal experience, do we learn that an equal form of government is the best. While in subjection to tyrants the Athenians excelled in war none of their neighbours--delivered from the oppressor, they excelled them all; an evident proof that, controlled by one man they exerted themselves feebly, because exertion was for a master; regaining liberty, each man was made zealous, because his zeal was for himself, and his individual interest was the common weal." [256] Venerable praise and accurate distinction! [257]

XV. The Boeotians, resentful of their defeat, sent to the Pythian oracle to demand the best means of obtaining revenge. The Pythian recommended an alliance with their nearest neighbours. The Boeotians, who, although the inspiring Helicon hallowed their domain, were esteemed but a dull and obtuse race, interpreted this response in favour of the people of the rocky island of Aegina--certainly not their nearest neighbours, if the question were to be settled by geographers. The wealthy inhabitants of that illustrious isle, which, rising above that part of the Aegean called Sinus Saronicus, we may yet behold in a clear sky from the heights of Phyle,--had long entertained a hatred against the Athenians. They willingly embraced the proffered alliance of the Boeotians, and the two states ravaged in concert the coast of Attica. While the Athenians were preparing to avenge the aggression, they received a warning from the Delphic

oracle, enjoining them to refrain from all hostilities with the people of Aegina for thirty years, at the termination of which period they were to erect a fane to Aeacus (the son of Jupiter, from whom, according to tradition, the island had received its name), and then they might commence war with success. The Athenians, on hearing the response, forestalled the time specified by the oracle by erecting at once a temple to Aeacus in their forum. After-circumstances did not allow them to delay to the end of thirty years the prosecution of the war. Meanwhile the unsleeping wrath of their old enemy, Cleomenes, demanded their full attention. In the character of that fierce and restless Spartan, we recognise from the commencement of his career the taint of that insanity to which he subsequently fell a victim [258]. In his earlier life, in a war with the Argives, he had burnt five thousand fugitives by setting fire to the grove whither they had fled--an act of flagrant impiety, no less than of ferocious cruelty, according to the tender superstition of the Greeks. During his occupation of Eleusis, he wantonly violated the mysterious sanctuary of Orgas--the place above all others most consecrated to the Eleusinian gods. His actions and enterprises were invariably inconsistent and vague. He enters Athens to restore her liberties--joins with Isagoras to destroy them; engages in an attempt to revolutionize that energetic state without any adequate preparation--seizes the citadel to-day to quit it disgracefully to-morrow; invades Eleusis with an army he cannot keep together, and, in the ludicrous cunning common to the insane, disguises from his allies the very enemy against whom they are to fight, in order, as common sense might have expected, to be deserted by them in the instant of battle. And now, prosecuting still further the contradictory tenour of his conduct, he who had driven Hippias from Athens persuades the Spartan assembly to restore the very tyrant the Spartan arms had expelled. In order to stimulate the fears of his countrymen, Cleomenes [259] asserted, that he had discovered in the Athenian citadel certain oracular predictions, till then unknown, foreboding to the Spartans many dark and strange calamities from the hands of the Athenians [260]. The astute people whom the king addressed were more moved by political interests than religious warnings. They observed, that when oppressed by tyranny, the Athenians had been weak and servile, but, if admitted to the advantages of liberty, would soon grow to a power equal to their own [261]: and in the restoration of a tyrant, their sagacity foreboded the depression of a rival.

XVI. Hippias, who had hitherto resided with his half-brother at Sigeum, was invited to Lacedaemon. He arrived--the Spartans assembled the ambassadors of their various tribes--and in full council thus spoke the policy of Sparta.

"Friends and allies, we acknowledge that we have erred; misled by deceiving oracles, we have banished from Athens men united to us by ancient hospitality. We restored a republican government to an ungrateful people, who, forgetful that to us they owed their liberty, expelled from among them our subjects and our king. Every day they exhibit a fiercer spirit--proofs of which have been already experienced by the Boeotians, the Chalcidians, and may speedily extend to others, unless they take in time wise and salutary precautions. We have erred--we are prepared to atone for our fault, and to aid you in the chastisement of the Athenians. With this intention we have summoned Hippias and yourselves, that by common counsel and united arms we may restore to the son of Pisistratus the dominion and the dignity of which we have deprived him."

The sentiments of the Spartans received but little favour in the assembly. After a dead and chilling silence, up rose Sosicles, the ambassador for Corinth, whose noble reply reveals to us the true cause of the secession of the Corinthians at Eleusis.

"We may expect," said he, with indignant eloquence, "to see the earth take the place of heaven, since you, oh Spartans, meditate the subversion of equal laws and the restoration of tyrannical governments--a design than which nothing can be more unjust, nothing more wicked. If you think it well that states should be governed by tyrants, Spartans, before you establish tyranny for others, establish it among yourselves! You act unworthily with your allies. You, who so carefully guard against the intrusion of tyranny in Sparta--had you known it as we have done, you would be better sensible of the calamities it entails: listen to some of its effects." (Here the ambassador related at length the cruelties of Periander, the tyrant of Corinth.) "Such," said he, in conclusion, "such is a tyrannical government--such its effects. Great was our marvel when we learned that it was you, oh Spartans, who had sent for Hippias,--at your sentiments we marvel more. Oh! by the gods, the celestial guardians of Greece, we adjure you not to build up tyrannies in our cities. If you persevere in your purpose--if, against all justice, you attempt the restoration of Hippias, know, at least, that the Corinthians will never sanction your designs."

It was in vain that Hippias, despite his own ability, despite the approval of the Spartans, endeavoured to counteract the impression of this stern harangue,--in vain he relied on the declarations of the oracles,--in vain appealed to the jealousy of the Corinthians, and assured them of the ambition of Athens. The confederates with one accord sympathized with the sentiments of Sosicles, and adjured the Spartans to sanction no innovations prejudicial to the liberties of a single city of Greece.

XVII. The failure of propositions so openly made is a fresh proof of the rash and unthinking character of Cleomenes--eager as usual for all designs, and prepared for none. The Spartans abandoned their design, and Hippias, discomfited but not dispirited, quitted the Lacedaemonian capital. Some of the chiefs of Thessaly, as well as the prince of Macedon, offered him an honourable retreat in their dominions. But it was not an asylum, it was an ally, that the unyielding ambition of Hippias desired to secure. He regained Sigeum, and thence, departing to Sardis, sought the assistance of the satrap, Artaphernes. He who in prosperity was the tyrant, became, in adversity, the traitor of his country; and the son of Pisistratus exerted every effort of his hereditary talent of persuasion to induce the satrap not so much to restore the usurper as to reduce the Athenian republic to the Persian yoke [262]. The arrival and the intrigues of this formidable guest at the court of Sardis soon reached the ears of the vigilant Athenians; they sent to Artaphernes, exhorting him not to place confidence in those whose offences had banished them from Athens. "If you wish for peace," returned the satrap, "recall Hippias." Rather than accede to this condition, that brave people, in their petty share of the extremity of Greece, chose to be deemed the enemies of the vast monarchy of Persia. [263]

CHAPTER IV.

Histiaeus, Tyrant of Miletus, removed to Persia.--The Government of that City deputed to Aristagoras, who invades Naxos with the aid of the Persians.--Ill Success of that Expedition.--Aristagoras resolves upon Revolting from the Persians.--Repairs to Sparta and to Athens.--The Athenians and Eretrians induced to assist the Ionians.--Burning of Sardis.--The Ionian War.--The Fate of Aristagoras.--Naval Battle of Lade.--Fall of Miletus.--Reduction of Ionia.--Miltiades.--His Character.--Mardonius replaces Artaphernes in the Lydian Satrapy.--Hostilities between Aegina and Athens.--Conduct of Cleomenes.--Demaratus deposed.--Death of Cleomenes.--New Persian Expedition.

I. We have seen that Darius rewarded with a tributary command the services of Grecian nobles during his Scythian expedition. The most remarkable of these deputy tyrants was Histiaeus, the tyrant of Miletus. Possessed of that dignity prior to his connexion with Darius, he had received from the generosity of the monarch a tract of land near the river Strymon, in Thrace, sufficing for the erection of a city called Myrcinus. To his cousin, Aristagoras, he committed the government of Miletus--repaired to his new possession, and employed himself actively in the foundations of a colony which promised to be one of the most powerful that Miletus had yet established. The site of the infant city was selected with admirable judgment upon a navigable river, in the vicinity of mines, and holding the key of commercial communication between the long chain of Thracian tribes on the one side, and the trading enterprise of Grecian cities on the other. Histiaeus was describing the walls with which the ancient cities were surrounded, when Megabazus, commander of the forces intended to consummate the conquest of Thrace, had the sagacity to warn the Persian king, then at Sardis, of the probable effects of the regal donation. "Have you, sire, done wisely," said he, "in permitting this able and active Greek to erect a new city in Thrace? Know you not that that favoured land, abounding in mines of silver, possesses, also, every advantage for the construction and equipment of ships; wild Greeks and roving barbarians are mingled there, ripe for enterprise--ready to execute the commands of any resolute and aspiring leader! Fear the possibility of a civil war--prevent the chances of the ambition of Histiaeus,--have recourse to artifice rather than to force, get him in your power, and prevent his return to Greece."

Darius followed the advice of his general, sent for Histiaeus, loaded him with compliments, and, pretending that he could not live without his counsels, carried him off from his Thracian settlement to the Persian capital of Susa. His kinsman, Aristagoras, continued to preside over the government of Miletus, then the most haughty and flourishing of the Ionian states; but Naxos, beneath it in power, surpassed it in wealth; the fertile soil of that fair isle--its numerous population--its convenient site--its abundant resources, attracted the cupidity of Aristagoras; he took advantage of a civil commotion, in which many of the nobles were banished by the people--received the exiles--and, under the pretence of restoring them, meditated the design of annexing the largest of the Cyclades to the tyranny of Miletus.

He persuaded the traitorous nobles to suffer him to treat with Artaphernes--successfully represented to that satrap the advantages of

annexing the gem of the Cyclades to the Persian diadem--and Darius, listening to the advice of his delegate, sent two hundred vessels to the invasion of Naxos (B. C. 501), under the command of his kinsman, Megabates. A quarrel ensued, however, between the Persian general and the governor of Miletus. Megabates, not powerful enough to crush the tyrant, secretly informed the Naxians of the meditated attack; and, thus prepared for the assault, they so well maintained themselves in their city, that, after a siege of four months, the pecuniary resources, not only of Megabates, but of Aristagoras, were exhausted, and the invaders were compelled to retreat from the island.

Aristagoras now saw that he had fallen into the pit he had dugged for others: his treasury was drained--he had incurred heavy debts with the Persian government, which condemned him to reimburse the whole expense of the enterprise--he feared the resentment of Megabates and the disappointment of Artaphernes--and he foresaw that his ill success might be a reasonable plea for removing him from the government of Miletus. While he himself was meditating the desperate expedient of a revolt, a secret messenger from Histiaeus suddenly arrived at Miletus. That wily Greek, disgusted with his magnificent captivity, had had recourse to a singular expedient: selecting the most faithful of his slaves, he shaved his scull, wrote certain characters on the surface, and, when the hair was again grown, dismissed this living letter to Aristagoras [264]. The characters commanded the deputy to commence a revolt; for Histiaeus imagined that the quiet of Miletus was the sentence of his exile.

II. This seasonable advice, so accordant with his own views, charmed Aristagoras: he summoned the Milesians, and, to engage their zealous assistance, he divested himself of the tyranny, and established a republic. It was a mighty epoch that, for the stir of thought!--everywhere had awakened a desire for free government and equal laws; and Aristagoras, desirous of conciliating the rest of Ionia, assisted her various states in the establishment of republican institutions. Coes, the tyrant of Mitylene, perished by the hands of the people; in the rest of Ionia, the tyrants were punished but by exile. Thus a spark kindled the universal train already prepared in thought, and the selfish ambition of Aristagoras forwarded the march of a revolution in favour of liberty that embraced all the cities of Ionia. But Aristagoras, evidently a man of a profound, though tortuous policy, was desirous of engaging not only the colonies of Greece, but the mother country also, in the great and perilous attempt to resist the Persian. High above all the states of the elder Greece soared the military fame of Sparta; and that people the scheming Milesian resolved first to persuade to his daring project.

Trusting to no ambassador, but to his own powers of eloquence, he arrived in person at Sparta. With a brazen chart of the world, as then known, in his hand, he sought to inspire the ambition of Cleomenes by pointing out the wide domains--the exhaustless treasures of the Persian realm. He depreciated the valour of its people, ridiculed their weapons, and urged him to the vast design of establishing, by Spartan valour, the magnificent conquest of Asia. The Spartans, always cold to the liberty of other states, were no less indifferent to the glory of barren victories; and when Aristagoras too honestly replied, in answer to a question of the king, that from the Ionian sea to Susa, the Persian capital, was a journey of three months, Cleomenes abruptly exclaimed, "Milesian, depart from Sparta before sunset;--a march of three months from the sea!--the Spartans will never listen to so frantic a proposal!" Aristagoras, not

defeated, sought a subsequent interview, in which he attempted to bribe the king, who, more accustomed to bribe others than be bribed, broke up the conference, and never afterward would renew it.

III. The patient and plotting Milesian departed thence to Athens (B. C. 500): he arrived there just at the moment when the Athenian ambassadors had returned from Sardis, charged with the haughty reply of Artaphernes to the mission concerning Hippias. The citizens were aroused, excited, inflamed; equally indignant at the insolence, and fearful of the power, of the satrap. It was a favourable occasion for Aristagoras!

To the imagination of the reader this passage in history presents a striking picture. We may behold the great assembly of that lively, high-souled, sensitive, and inflammable people. There is the Agora; there the half-built temple to Aeacus;--above, the citadel, where yet hang the chains of the captive enemy;--still linger in the ears of the populace, already vain of their prowess, and haughty in their freedom, the menace of the Persian--the words that threatened them with the restoration of the exiled tyrant; and at this moment, and in this concourse, we see the subtle Milesian, wise in the experience of mankind, popular with all free states, from having restored freedom to the colonies of Ionia--every advantage of foreign circumstance and intrinsic ability in his favour,--about to address the breathless and excited multitude. He rose: he painted, as he had done to Cleomenes, in lively colours, the wealth of Asia, the effeminate habits of its people--he described its armies fighting without spear or shield--he invoked the valour of a nation already successful in war against hardy and heroic foes--he appealed to old hereditary ties; the people of Miletus had been an Athenian colony--should not the parent protect the child in the greatest of all blessings--the right to liberty? Now he entreats--now he promises,--the sympathy of the free, the enthusiasm of the brave, are alike aroused. He succeeds: the people accede to his views. "It is easier," says the homely Herodotus, "to gain (or delude) a multitude than an individual; and the eloquence which had failed with Cleomenes enlisted thirty thousand Athenians." [265]

IV. The Athenians agreed to send to the succour of their own colonists, the Ionians, twenty vessels of war. Melanthius, a man of amiable character and popular influence, was appointed the chief. This was the true commencement of the great Persian war.

V. Thus successful, Aristagoras departed from Athens. Arriving at Miletus, he endeavoured yet more to assist his design, by attempting to arouse a certain colony in Phrygia, formed of Thracian captives [266] taken by Megabazus, the Persian general. A great proportion of these colonists seized the occasion to return to their native land--baffled the pursuit of the Persian horse--reached the shore--and were transported in Ionian vessels to their ancient home on the banks of the Strymon. Meanwhile, the Athenian vessels arrived at Miletus, joined by five ships, manned by Eretrians of Euboea, mindful of former assistance from the Milesians in a war with their fellow-islanders, the Chalcidians, nor conscious, perhaps, of the might of the enemy they provoked.

Aristagoras remained at Miletus, and delegated to his brother the command of the Milesian forces. The Greeks then sailed to Ephesus, debarked at Coressus. in its vicinity, and, under the conduct of Ephesian guides, marched along the winding valley of the Cayster--

whose rapid course, under a barbarous name, the traveller yet traces, though the swans of the Grecian poets haunt its waves no more--passed over the auriferous Mount of Tmolus, verdant with the vine, and fragrant with the saffron--and arrived at the gates of the voluptuous Sardis. They found Artaphernes unprepared for this sudden invasion--they seized the city (B. C. 499).--the satrap and his troops retreated to the citadel.

The houses of Sardis were chiefly built of reeds, and the same slight and inflammable material thatched the roofs even of the few mansions built of brick. A house was set on fire by a soldier--the flames spread throughout the city. In the midst of the conflagration despair gave valour to the besieged--the wrath of man was less fearful than that of the element; the Lydians, and the Persians who were in the garrison, rushed into the market-place, through which flowed the river of Pactolus. There they resolved to encounter the enemy. The invaders were seized with a sudden panic, possibly as much occasioned by the rage of the conflagration as the desperation of the foe; and, retiring to Mount Tmolus, took advantage of the night to retrace their march along the valley of the Cayster.

VI. But the Ionians were not fated to return in safety: from the borders of the river Halys a troop of Persians followed their retreat, and overtaking them when the Ephesian territory was already gained, defeated the Ionians with a great slaughter, amid which fell the leader of the Eretrians.

The Athenians were naturally disappointed with the result of this expedition. Returning home, they refused all the overtures of Aristagoras to renew their incursions into Asia. The gallant Ionians continued, however, the hostilities they had commenced against Darius. They sailed to the Hellespont, and reduced Byzantium, with the neighbouring cities. Their forces were joined by the Cyprians, aroused against the Persian yoke by Onesilus, a bold usurper, who had dethroned his brother, the prince of Salamis, in Cyprus; and the conflagration of Sardis dazzling the Carians, hitherto lukewarm, united to the Ionian cause the bulk of that hardy population. The revolt now assumed a menacing and formidable aspect. Informed of these events, Darius summoned Histiaeus: "The man," said he, "whom you appointed to the government of Miletus has rebelled against me. Assisted by the Ionians, whom I shall unquestionably chastise, he has burnt Sardis. Had he your approbation? Without it would he have dared such treason? Beware how you offend a second time against my authority." Histiaeus artfully vindicated himself from the suspicions of the king. He attributed the revolt of the Ionians to his own absence, declared that if sent into Ionia he would soon restore its inhabitants to their wonted submission, and even promised to render the Island of Sardinia tributary to Persia.

VII. Deluded by these professions, Darius dismissed the tyrant of Miletus, requiring only his return on the fulfilment of his promises. Meanwhile, the generals of Darius pressed vigorously on the insurgents. Against Onesilus, then engaged in reducing Amathus (the single city in Cyprus opposed to him), Artybius, a Persian officer, conducted a formidable fleet. The Ionians hastened to the succour of their Cyprian ally--a battle ensued both by land and sea: in the latter the Ionians defeated, after a severe contest, the Phoenician auxiliaries of Persia--in the former, a treacherous desertion of some of the Cyprian troops gave a victory to the Persian. The brave

Onesilus, who had set his fate upon the issue of the field, was among the slain. The Persians proceeded to blockade, and ultimately to regain, the Cyprian cities: of these, Soli, which withstood a siege of five months, proffered the most obdurate resistance; with the surrender of that gallant city, Cyprus once more, after a year of liberty, was subjected to the dominion of the great king.

This success was increased by the reduction of several towns on the Hellespont, and two signal defeats over the Carians (B. C. 498), in the last of which, the Milesians, who had joined their ally, suffered a prodigious loss. The Carians, however, were not subdued, and in a subsequent engagement they effected a great slaughter among the Persians, the glory of which was enhanced by the death of Daurises, general of the barbarians, and son-in-law to Darius. But this action was not sufficiently decisive to arrest the progress of the Persian arms. Artaphernes, satrap of Sardis, and Otanes, the third general in command, led their forces into Ionia and Aeolia:--the Ionian Clazomenae, the Aeolian Cuma, were speedily reduced.

VIII. The capture of these places, with the general fortunes of the war, disheartened even the patient and adventurous Aristagoras. He could not but believe that all attempts against the crushing power of Darius were in vain. He assembled the adherents yet faithful to his arms, and painted to them the necessity of providing a new settlement. Miletus was no longer secure, and the vengeance of Darius was gathering rapidly around them. After some consultation they agreed to repair to that town and territory in Thrace which had been given by Darius to Histiaeus [267]. Miletus was intrusted to the charge of a popular citizen named Pythagoras, and these hardy and restless adventurers embarked for Thrace. Aristagoras was fortunate enough to reach in safety the settlement which had seemed so formidable a possession to the Persian general; but his usual scheming and bold ambition, not contented with that domain, led him to the attack of a town in its vicinity. The inhabitants agreed to resign it into his hands, and, probably lulled into security by this concession, he was suddenly, with his whole force, cut off by an incursion of the Thracian foe. So perished (B. C. 497) the author of many subsequent and mighty events, and who, the more we regard his craft, his courage, his perseverance, and activity, the vastness of his ends, and the perseverance with which he pursued them, must be regarded by the historian as one of the most stirring and remarkable spirits of that enterprising age.

IX. The people of Miletus had not, upon light grounds or with feeble minds, embarked in the perilous attempt to recover their liberties. Deep was the sentiment that inspired--solemn and stern the energy which supported them. The Persian generals now collected in one body their native and auxiliary force. The Cyprians, lately subdued (B. C. 496), were compelled to serve. Egypt and Cilicia swelled the armament, and the skill of the Phoenicians rendered yet more formidable a fleet of six hundred vessels. With this power the barbarians advanced upon Miletus. Most, if not all, of the Ionian states prepared themselves for the struggle--delegates met at the Panionium--it was agreed to shun the Persians upon land--to leave to the Milesians the defence of their city--to equip the utmost naval force they could command--and, assembling in one fleet off the small isle of Lade, opposite to Miletus, to hazard the battle upon the seas. Three hundred and fifty triremes were provided, and met at the appointed place. The discipline of the navy was not equal to the

valour of the enterprise; Dionysius, commander of the Phocaeans, attempted, perhaps too rigorously, to enforce it;--jealousy and disgust broke out among the troops--and the Samian leaders, whether displeased with their allies, or tempted by the Persians, who, through the medium of the exiled tyrants of Greece, serving with them, maintained correspondence with the Ionians, secretly agreed to desert in the midst of the ensuing battle. This compact made, the Phoenicians commenced the attack, and the Ionians, unsuspecting of treachery, met them with a contracted line. In the beginning of the engagement, the Samians, excepting only eleven ships (whose captains were afterward rewarded by a public column in their native market-place), fulfilled their pledge, and sailed away to Samos. The Lesbians, stationed next them, followed their example, and confusion and flight became contagious. The Chians alone redeemed the character of the allies, aided, indeed, by Dionysius the Phocaeen, who, after taking three of the enemy's ships, refused to retreat till the day was gone, and then, sailing to Phoenicia, sunk several trading vessels, enriched himself with their spoil, and eventually reaching Sicily, became renowned as a pirate, formidable to the Carthaginian and Tyrsenian families of the old Phoenician foe, but holding his Grecian countrymen sacred from his depredations.

The Persian armament now bent all its vengeance on Miletus; they besieged it both by land and by sea--every species of military machine then known was directed against its walls, and, in the sixth year after the revolt of Aristagoras, Miletus fell (B. C. 494)--Miletus, the capital of Ionia--the mother of a hundred colonies! Pittacus, Thales, Arctinus, were among the great names she gave to science and to song. Worthy of her renown, she fell amid the ruins of that freedom which she showed how nobly she could have continued to adorn by proving how sternly she could defend. The greater part of the citizens were slain--those who remained, with the women and the children, were borne into slavery by the victors. Their valour and renown touched the heart of Darius, and he established the captives in a city by that part of the Erythraean Sea which receives the waters of the Barbarian Tigris. Their ancient territories were portioned out between the Persians and the Carians of Pedasa.

X. The Athenians received the news of this fatal siege with the deepest sorrow, and Herodotus records an anecdote illustrative of the character of that impassioned people, and interesting to the history of their early letters. Phrynichus, a disciple of Thespis, represented on the stage the capture of Miletus, and the whole audience burst into tears. The art of the poet was considered criminal in thus forcibly reminding the Athenians of a calamity which was deemed their own: he was fined a thousand drachmae, and the repetition of the piece forbidden--a punishment that was but a glorious homage to the genius of the poet and the sensibility of the people.

After innumerable adventures, in which he exhibited considerable but perverted abilities, Histiaeus fell into the hands of Artaphernes, and died upon the cross. Darius rebuked the zeal of the satrap, and lamented the death of a man, whose situation, perhaps, excused his artifices.

And now the cloud swept onward--one after one the Ionian cities were reduced--the islands of Chios, Lesbos, Tenedos, depopulated; and all Ionia subjugated and enslaved. The Persian fleet proceeded to subdue

all the towns and territories to the left of the Hellespont. At this time their success in the Chersonesus drove from that troubled isthmus a chief, whose acute and dauntless faculties made him subsequently the scourge of Persia and the deliverer of Greece.

XI. We have seen Miltiades, nephew to the first of that name, arrive at the Chersonesus--by a stroke of dexterous perfidy, seize the persons of the neighbouring chieftains--attain the sovereignty of that peninsula, and marry the daughter of a Thracian prince. In his character was united, with much of the intellect, all the duplicity of the Greek. During the war between Darius and the Scythians, while affecting to follow the Persian army, he had held traitorous intercourse with the foe. And proposed to the Grecian chiefs to destroy the bridge of boats across the Danube confided to their charge; so that, what with the force of the Scythians and the pressure of famine, the army of Darius would have perished among the Scythian wastes, and a mighty enemy have been lost to Greece--a scheme that, but for wickedness, would have been wise. With all his wiles, and all his dishonesty, Miltiades had the art, not only of rendering authority firm, but popular. Driven from his state by the Scythian Nomades, he was voluntarily recalled by the very subjects over whom he had established an armed sovereignty--a rare occurrence in that era of republics. Surrounded by fierce and restless foes, and exercised in constant, if petty warfare, Miltiades had acquired as much the experience of camps as the subtleties of Grecian diplomacy; yet, like many of the wise of small states, he seems to have been more crafty than rash--the first for flight wherever flight was the better policy --but the first for battle if battle were the more prudent. He had in him none of the inconsiderate enthusiasm of the hero--none of the blind but noble subservience to honour. Valour seems to have been for his profound intellect but the summation of chances, and when we afterward find him the most daring soldier, it is only because he was the acutest calculator.

On seeing the Phoenician fleet, raider Persia, arrive off the Isle of Tenedos, which is opposite the Chersonesus, Miltiades resolved not to wait the issue of a battle: as before he had fled the Scythian, so now, without a struggle, he succumbed to the Phoenician sword. He loaded five vessels with his property--with four he eluded the hostile fleet--the fifth, commanded by his eldest son, was pursued and taken [268]. In triumphant safety the chief of the Chersonesus arrived at Athens. He arrived at that free state to lose the dignity of a Thracian prince, and suddenly to be reminded that he was an Athenian citizen. He was immediately prosecuted for the crime of tyranny. His influence or his art, admiration of his genius, or compassion of his reverses, however, procured him an acquittal. We may well suppose that, high-born and wealthy, he lost no occasion of cementing his popularity in his native state.

XII. Meanwhile, the Persians suspended for that year all further hostilities against the Ionians. Artaphernes endeavoured to conciliate the subdued colonies by useful laws, impartial taxes, and benign recommendations to order and to peace. The next year, however, that satrap was recalled (B. C. 492), and Mardonius, a very young noble, the son-in-law of Darius, was appointed, at the head of a considerable naval and military force, to the administration of the affairs in that part of the Persian empire. Entering Ionia, he executed a novel, a daring, but no unstatesman-like stroke of policy. He removed all the Ionian tyrants, and everywhere restored republican

forms of government; deeming, unquestionably, that he is the securest master of distant provinces who establishes among them the institutions which they best love. Then proceeding to the Hellespont, Mardonius collected his mighty fleets and powerful army, and passed through Europe towards the avowed objects of the Persian vengeance--the cities of Eretria and Athens.

From the time that the Athenians had assisted the forces of Miletus and long in the destruction of Sardis, their offence had rankled in the bosom of Darius. Like most monarchs, he viewed as more heinous offenders the foreign abettors of rebellion, than the rebels themselves. Religion, no doubt, conspired to augment his indignation. In the conflagration of Sardis the temple of the great Persian deity had perished, and the inexpiated sacrilege made a duty of revenge. So keenly, indeed, did Darius resent the share that the remote Athenians had taken in the destruction of his Lydian capital, that, on receiving the intelligence, he is said to have called for his bow, and, shooting an arrow in the air, to have prayed for vengeance against the offenders; and three times every day, as he sat at table, his attendants were commanded to repeat to him, "Sir, remember the Athenians."

XIII. But the design of Mardonius was not only directed against the Athenians and the state of Eretria, it extended also to the rest of Greece: preparations so vast were not meant to be wasted upon foes apparently insignificant, but rather to consolidate the Persian conquests on the Asiatic coasts, and to impress on the neighbouring continent of Europe adequate conceptions of the power of the great king. By sea, Mardonius subdued the islanders of Thasus, wealthy in its gold-mines; by land he added to the Persian dependances in Thrace and Macedonia. But losses, both by storm and battle, drove him back to Asia, and delayed for a season the deliberate and organized invasion of Greece.

In the following year (B. C. 491), while the tributary cities Mardonius had subdued were employed in constructing vessels of war and transports for cavalry, ambassadors were despatched by Darius to the various states of Greece, demanding the homage of earth and water--a preliminary calculated to ascertain who would resist, who submit to, his power--and certain to afford a pretext, in the one case for empire, in the other for invasion. Many of the cities of the continent, and all the islands visited by the ambassadors, had the timidity to comply with the terms proposed. Sparta and Athens, hitherto at variance, united at once in a haughty and indignant refusal. To so great a height was the popular rage in either state aroused by the very demand, that the Spartans threw the ambassadors into their wells, and the Athenians, into their pit of punishment, bidding them thence get their earth and water; a singular coincidence of excess in the two states--to be justified by no pretence--to be extenuated only by the reflection, that liberty ever becomes a species of noble madness when menaced by foreign danger. [269]

XIV. With the rest of the islanders, the people of Aegina, less resolute than their near neighbours and ancient foes, the Athenians, acceded to the proposal of tribute. This, more than the pusillanimity of the other states, alarmed and inflamed the Athenians; they suspected that the aeginetans had formed some hostile alliance against them with the Persians, and hastened to accuse them to Sparta of betraying the liberties of Greece. Nor was there slight ground for

the suspicions of the Athenians against Aegina. The people of that island had hereditary and bitter feuds with the Athenians, dating almost from their independence of their parent state of Epidaurus; mercantile jealousies were added to ancestral enmity, and the wares of Athens were forbidden all application to sacred uses in Aegina. We have seen the recent occasion on which Attica was invaded by these hostile neighbours, then allied with Thebes: and at that period the naval force of gins was such as to exceed the unconscious and untried resources of the Athenians. The latter had thus cause at once to hate and to dread a rival placed by nature in so immediate a vicinity to themselves, that the submission of Aegina to the Persian seemed in itself sufficient for the destruction of Athens.

XV. The Athenian ambassadors met with the most favourable reception at Sparta. The sense of their common danger, and sympathy in their mutual courage, united at once these rival states; even the rash and hitherto unrelenting Cleomenes eagerly sought a reconciliation with his former foe. That prince went in person to Aegina, determined to ascertain the authors of the suspected treachery;--with that characteristic violence which he never provided the means to support, and which so invariably stamps this unable and headstrong Spartan, as one who would have been a fool, if he had not been a madman--Cleomenes endeavoured to seize the persons of the accused. He was stoutly resisted, and disgracefully baffled, in this impotent rashness; and his fellow-king, Demaratus, whom we remember to have suddenly deserted Cleomenes at Eleusis, secretly connived with the Aeginetans in their opposition to his colleague, and furnished them with an excuse, by insinuating that Cleomenes had been corrupted by the Athenians. But Demaratus was little aware of the dark and deadly passions which Cleomenes combined with his constitutional insanity. Revenge made a great component of his character, and the Grecian history records few instances of a nature more vehemently vindictive.

There had been various rumours at Sparta respecting the legitimacy of Demaratus. Cleomenes entered into a secret intrigue with a kinsman of his colleague, named Leotychides, who cherished an equal hatred against Demaratus [270]; the conditions between them were, that Cleomenes should assist in raising Leotychides to the throne of Demaratus, and Leotychides should assist Cleomenes in his vengeance against Aegina. No sooner was this conspiracy agreed upon than Leotychides propagated everywhere the report that the birth of Demaratus was spurious. The Spartans attached the greatest value to legitimacy,--they sent to consult the Pythian--and Cleomenes, through the aid of Colon, a powerful citizen of Delphi, bribed the oracle to assert the illegitimacy of his foe. Demaratus was deposed. Sinking at once into the rank of a private citizen, he was elected to some inferior office. His enemy, Leotychides, now upon his throne, sent him, by way of insult, a message to demand which he preferred--his past or his present dignity. Demaratus was stung, and answered, that the question might fix the date of much weal or much wo to Sparta; saying this, he veiled his head--sought his home--sacrificed to Jupiter--and solemnly adjured his mother to enlighten him as to his legitimacy. The parental answer was far from unequivocal, and the matron appeared desirous of imputing the distinction of his birth to the shade of an ancient Spartan hero, Astrobachus, rather than to the earthly embrace of her husband. Demaratus heard, and formed his decision: he escaped from Sparta, baffled his pursuers, and fled into Asia, where he was honourably received and largely endowed by the beneficent Darius.

XVI. Leotychides, elected to the regal dignity, accompanied Cleomenes to Aegina: the people of that isle yielded to the authority they could not effectually resist; and ten of their most affluent citizens were surrendered as hostages to Athens. But, in the meanwhile, the collusion of Cleomenes with the oracle was discovered--the priestess was solemnly deposed--and Cleomenes dreaded the just indignation of his countrymen. He fled to Thessaly, and thence passing among the Arcadians, he endeavoured to bind that people by the darkest oaths to take arms against his native city--so far could hatred stimulate a man consistent only in his ruling passion of revenge. But the mighty power of Persia now lowering over Lacedaemon, the Spartan citizens resolved to sacrifice even justice to discretion: it was not a time to distract their forces by new foes, and they invited Cleomenes back to Sparta, with the offer of his former station. He returned, but his violent career, happily for all, was now closed; his constitutional madness, no longer confined to doubtful extravagance, burst forth into incontrollable excess. He was put under confinement, and obtaining a sword from a Helot, who feared to disobey his commands, he deliberately destroyed himself--not by one wound, but slowly gashing the flesh from his limbs until he gradually ascended to the nobler and more mortal parts. This ferocious suicide excited universal horror, and it was generally deemed the divine penalty of his numerous and sacrilegious crimes: the only dispute among the Greeks was, to which of his black offences the wrath of Heaven was the most justly due. [271]

XVII. No sooner did the news of his suicide reach the Aeginetans than those proud and wealthy islanders sought, by an embassy to Sparta, to regain their hostages yet detained at Athens. With the death of Cleomenes, the anger of Sparta against Aegina suddenly ceased--or, rather, we must suppose that a new party, in fellowship with the Aeginetan oligarchy, came into power. The Spartans blamed Leotychides for his co-operation with Cleomenes; they even offered to give him up to the Aeginetans--and it was finally agreed that he should accompany the ambassadors of Aegina to Athens, and insist on the surrender of the hostages. But the Athenians had now arrived at that spirit of independence, when nor the deadly blows of Persia, nor the iron sword of Sparta, nor the treacherous hostilities of their nearest neighbour, could quell their courage or subdue their pride. They disregarded the presence and the orations of Leotychides, and peremptorily refused to surrender their hostages. Hostilities between Aegina and Athens were immediately renewed. The Aeginetans captured (B. C. 494) the sacred vessel then stationed at Sunium, in which several of the most eminent Athenians were embarked for the festival of Apollo; nor could the sanctity of the voyage preserve the captives from the ignominy of irons. The Athenians resolved upon revenge, and a civil dissension in Aegina placed it in their power. An Aeginetan traitor, named Nicodromus, offered them his assistance, and, aided by the popular party opposed to the oligarchical government, he seized the citadel. With twenty ships from Corinth, and fifty of their own, the Athenians invaded Aegina; but, having been delayed in making the adequate preparations, they arrived a day later than had been stipulated. Nicodromus fled; the oligarchy restored, took signal and barbarous vengeance upon such of their insurgent countrymen as fell into their hands. Meanwhile, the Athenian fleet obtained a victory at sea, and the war still continued.

XVIII. While, seemingly unconscious of greater dangers, Athens thus

practised her rising energies against the little island of Aegina, thrice every day the servants of the Persian king continued to exclaim, "Sir, remember the Athenians!" [272] The traitor, Hippias, constantly about the person of the courteous monarch, never failed to stimulate still further his vengeance by appealing to his ambition. At length, Darius resolved no longer to delay the accomplishment of his designs. He recalled Mardonius, whose energy, indeed, had not been proportioned to his powers, and appointed two other generals--Datis, a native of the warlike Media, and Artaphernes, his own nephew, son to the former satrap of that name. These were expressly ordered to march at once against Eretria and Athens. And Hippias, now broken in frame, advanced in age [273], and after an exile of twenty years, accompanied the Persian army--sanguine of success, and grasping, at the verge of life the shadow of his former sceptre.

CHAPTER V.

The Persian Generals enter Europe.--Invasion of Naxos, Carystus, Eretria.--The Athenians Demand the Aid of Sparta.--The Result of their Mission and the Adventure of their Messenger.--The Persians advance to Marathon.--The Plain Described.--Division of Opinion in the Athenian Camp.--The Advice of Miltiades prevails.--The Dream of Hippias.--The Battle of Marathon.

I. On the Cilician coast the Persian armament encamped--thence, in a fleet of six hundred triremes, it sailed to Samos (B. C. 490)--passed through the midst of the clustering Cyclades, and along that part of the Aegaeon Sea called "the Icarian," from the legendary fate of the son of Daedalus--invaded Naxos--burnt her town and temples, and sparing the sacred Delos, in which the Median Datis revered the traditional birthplace of two deities analogous to those most honoured in the Persian creed [274]--awed into subjection the various isles, until it arrived at Euboea, divided but by a strait from Attica, and containing the city of the Eretrians. The fleet first assailed Carystus, whose generous citizens refused both to aid against their neighbours, and to give hostages for their conduct. Closely besieged, and their lands wasted, they were compelled, however, to surrender to the Persians. Thence the victorious armament passed to Eretria. The Athenians had sent to the relief of that city the four thousand colonists whom they had established in the island--but fear, jealousy, division, were within the walls. Ruin seemed certain, and a chief of the Eretrians urged the colonists to quit a city which they were unable to save. They complied with the advice, and reached Attica in safety. Eretria, however, withstood a siege of six days; on the seventh the city was betrayed to the barbarians by two of that fatal oligarchical party, who in every Grecian city seem to have considered no enemy so detestable as the majority of their own citizens; the place was pillaged--the temples burnt--the inhabitants enslaved. Here the Persians rested for a few days ere they embarked for Attica.

II. Unsupported and alone, the Athenians were not dismayed. A swift-footed messenger was despatched to Sparta, to implore its prompt assistance. On the day after his departure from Athens, he reached his destination, went straight to the assembled magistrates, and thus

addressed them:

"Men of Lacedaemon, the Athenians supplicate your aid; suffer not the most ancient of the Grecian cities to be enslaved by the barbarian. Already Eretria is subjected to their yoke, and all Greece is diminished by the loss of that illustrious city."

The resource the Athenians had so much right to expect failed them. The Spartans, indeed, resolved to assist Athens, but not until assistance would have come too late. They declared that their religion forbade them to commence a march till the moon was at her full, and this was only the ninth day of the month [275]. With this unsatisfying reply, the messenger returned to Athens. But, employed in this arduous enterprise--his imagination inflamed by the greatness of the danger--and its workings yet more kindled by the loneliness of his adventure and the mountain stillness of the places through which he passed, the Athenian messenger related, on his return, a vision less probably the creation of his invention than of his excited fancy. Passing over the Mount Parthenius, amid whose wild recesses gloomed the antique grove dedicated to Telephus, the son of Hercules [276], the Athenian heard a voice call to him aloud, and started to behold that mystic god to whom, above the rest of earth, were dedicated the hills and woods of Arcady--the Pelasgic Pan. The god bade him "ask at Athens why the Athenians forgot his worship--he who loved them well--and might yet assist them at their need."

Such was the tale of the messenger. The lively credulities of the people believed its truth, and in calmer times dedicated a temple to the deity, venerated him with annual sacrifices, and the race of torches.

III. While the Athenians listened to the dreams of this poetical superstition, the mighty thousands of the Mede and Persian landed on the Attic coast, and, conducted by Hippias among their leaders, marched to the plain of Marathon, which t

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