commercial activity in Greece itself and Asia Minor. One new market after another was opened for trade and industry. The wealth of Greece increased by leaps and bounds. But this growing wealth brought with it changes in political and social life. Classes grew up, and with them class hatred and class contests. The aristocracy of birth found their superiority contested by the aristocracy of the purse; and both were threatened by the numbers of the labouring population. The lavish expenditure of the minority, the luxury with which they surrounded themselves, their exploitation of the masses, and the increasing number of slaves, were not passively endured: they begot active jealousy and hatred, which broke out in the shape of a cruel, and often inhuman, struggle between classes. Thus at Miletus the people were at first victorious and murdered the wives and children of the aristocrats; then the aristocrats prevailed and burned their opponents alive, lighting up the open spaces of the city with live torches. Read the verses of Theognis, and you will understand the intense hatred and mutual contempt which the opponents in this unending struggle felt for one another.
SPARTA: HER SOCIAL, ECONOMIC,
AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

From the eighth to the sixth century B.C. the political and social development of Greece kept pace with her economic growth. As the chief feature in this development we must reckon the gradual formation and establishment of that peculiar Greek institution, the city-state. This process was not everywhere simultaneous or identical. Some parts of Greece retained for centuries the clan system of government and all the peculiarities of the Homeric Age; among these were Arcadia in the Peloponnese, the Aetolians in the north-west of central Greece, their neighbours, the Achaeanians, and the inhabitants of Epirus. Others developed urban institutions, proceeding from stage to stage in the course of this development. The essential peculiarity of the latter system is this—that political life is concentrated in one place. This place is the city: it is the religious, political, and economic centre of the district united round it and reckoned as territory belonging to the city. All the inhabitants of this territory are citizens and jointly organize the life, political, economic, social, and religious, of the whole community. Foreigners, serfs, and slaves are the only persons excluded from the ranks of the citizens. In these city-states political power passes by stages from the hands of the clan king to the body of citizens, first to a group of leading families closely associated with the king in his duties, next to all landowners, and finally to the citizens generally; the
first of these stages is called ‘aristocracy’, and the last ‘democracy’.

The whole body of citizens draws up rules for the behaviour of each citizen individually and of the associated body. These compulsory rules receive the name of laws. They represent the conscience of the community, and express the will of the citizens in each city. As in the East, law is the means by which notions of right and justice are conveyed to the populace; but there is a difference. In the East, law is a part of the divine order, unalterable and binding on every man. But in Greece, though the law enjoys divine protection, it is not a divine revelation nor an unalterable rule of behaviour laid down once for all. In Greece laws are made by men. If a law offends the conscience of the majority, it can and must be changed; but while it is in force, all are obliged to obey it, because there is something divine in it and in the very idea of law. To break its injunctions entails punishment not only from men, the guardians of law, but also from gods. This rule of law in the city—of law created by the whole body of citizens—is one of the most characteristic features in the public life of Greece.

In any given territory the city has no rivals of a similar character. There may be other places where the population is concentrated; but these have no independent political life, and their inhabitants are citizens only of the central community. In private life the old clan divisions are kept up: each citizen is a member of a brotherhood (phratria), family, and tribe (phyle); the last is a large subdivision of a clan. There is also a geographical division into districts (demes), each of which has some town or village as a centre. Within the limits of one clan there are often several city-states forming an alliance; one example is Boeotia. Such alliances are often due to certain cults common to a number of city-states, and then the alliances are called ‘amphictyonies’.

Such is the general outline, identical in all city-states. But within the limits of this outline each city-state develops in its
own way, so that endless varieties of the same system present themselves. We know most about the constitution of two city-states, which gradually step to the front of political life, and in whose history, as in a mirror, the whole history of Greece is reflected. I refer to Sparta in the Peloponnese, and Athens in central Greece. Next after these are ranked other states: Argos and Olympia in the east and west of Peloponnese; Messene beside Sparta; Sicyon on the northern shore of Peloponnese, not far from the Isthmus; Corinth on the Isthmus; Boeotia, including a number of cities, of which Thebes was the strongest and richest; Phocis, also including many cities which formed a religious alliance round the great shrine of Delphi; and Megara, close to Corinth and the nearest neighbour of Athens. A number of large cities, of which something was said in the preceding chapter, grew up in the islands nearest Greece, especially Euboea and Aegina. The chief cities of Euboea were Chalcis and Eretria.

Among these city-states a peculiar position is occupied by Sparta. In general, her constitution is not markedly different from the type just described. She is a community of citizens, such as we find elsewhere throughout Greece. But in this constitution there are a number of peculiar features, some of which, in a slightly different form, recur in Crete with its scores of cities and in the fertile plains of Thessaly; and these peculiar features gave Sparta her individuality and forced even Greek historians and thinkers to regard her system as exceptional.

Sparta forms the natural centre of Laconia, the fertile valley of the Eurotas. Of her early history we know little. In the Graeco-Aegean age Laconia was among the most powerful kingdoms of the Peloponnese. At the time of the Trojan war it was ruled by 'fair-haired' Menelaus and 'fair' Helen his wife, who, according to Homer, was the cause of the war. Homer represents Menelaus as one of the richest and most enlightened of Graeco-Aegean kings; and this is natural, because the Eurotas valley grows excellent crops, and the Laconian Gulf, into which the
Eurotas flows, has several convenient harbours which offer the shortest passage from Crete to Greece.

According to tradition, Laconia was conquered by Dorians at the end of the Dorian invasion and became the chief stronghold of the Dorian stock in the Peloponnesian. In the eighth century B.C., and again in the seventh, Sparta, having become the capital of Dorian Lacedaemon, carried on stubborn warfare against her neighbour Messene, to acquire the fertile lands owned by this richest district of the whole peninsula. About the second of these wars we get information in the verses of Tyrtaeus, a poet born at Athens, who played a prominent part in the victory obtained by Sparta over a federation of Peloponnesian states, which had helped Messene to assert her freedom. Excavations carried out by Englishmen at Sparta have shown that she was at this time a rich country and in the van of Greek civilization. Her culture is of that semi-oriental type, together with a considerable number of Aegean survivals, which is noticeable in all the progressive districts of Greece in that age.

Whether the peculiar features of the Spartan system had taken shape as early as this time we do not know. By Spartan tradition they were assigned to a single reformer, Lycurgus, probably a mythical personality. Still it is very likely that tradition is right in considering the later system, as it is known to us from the sixth century to the fourth, as the result of one reform or of several carried out successively. We may suppose that these reforms were started amid the dangers and difficulties of the Messenian wars, when the inhabitants were forced to put forth all their strength in order to save the kingdom.

The chief peculiarity of the system is this. A group living in Sparta and called Spartiates, dominated a population many times as numerous. Of this subordinate population one part were called Helots. The Helots lived on separate farms in the domain of the city and in some parts of conquered Messenia; their position was that of state slaves, and the families of Spartiates made use of their labour. Another part were called periöeci or provin-
cials. They lived in Laconia and Messenia, in the cities and the
domains belonging to the cities; they enjoyed personal freedom
and a certain measure of self-government; but in military and
political affairs they were entirely subordinate to the dominating
group. We do not know how this system came into existence. It
is very likely that there were serfs in Laconia during the rule of
the Graeco-Aegeans, and that the Dorians took over the insti-
tution. Some of the Messenians were reduced to slavery after the
Spartan conquest already mentioned. It is probable, also, that
the status of the Perioeci was due to the conquest, at some date,
of independent cities, which were then united to Sparta as allies
but inferiors.

The reform, already mentioned, of the Spartan constitution
did not create these two inferior classes. Its object was rather to
change the organization of the ruling class, and to define pre-
cisely the relations between it and the two others. It was, from
first to last, emphatically a military reform, aiming at a military
organization for the ruling class, who were probably identical
with the group of Dorian conquerors. Within this group the
reforms were democratic and socialist; it is the first attempt in
history to introduce a thoroughgoing system of state socialism.
The system retained some relics of the time when Sparta also
was ruled by a group of aristocratic families. Thus the kings—
two kings, one from each of the noble families of Europontidae
and Agiadae—were still at the head of the government. There
was also a body called gerusia or Council of Elders, consisting of
thirty members including the two kings; these were drawn from
a definite group of noble families and formed the chief instru-
ment of government. But both these institutions were survivals.
The real power belonged to the apella or popular assembly, con-
sisting of all adult Spartiates who possessed full rights of citizen-
ship and served as cavalry and infantry in the army. They elected
the Council; they also elected the Ephors (overseers), who were
the real rulers of the country and guardians of the constitution.
It is true that the Assembly voted only on business submitted to

76
them by the Ephors and previously discussed by the Council—individual citizens had no power to initiate legislation; but nevertheless no important decision and no law was valid unless it was confirmed by the popular assembly.

The peculiarity of Sparta was not the constitution: it was the creation of an absolute unique social organization, intended to increase the military strength of the country. All social and economic relations were based on absolute subordination of the individual to the state, and on the conversion of all the dominating
class into a standing army, ready at any moment to take the field. Every adult Spartiate was, first of all, a soldier. Though he had a house and family of his own, he did not live there; and his days were not spent in providing for them or in productive labour, but entirely devoted to constant military training. Every adult Spartiate enlisted in one of the military divisions of the citizen army, and spent all his time in special clubs (phiditia or syssitia), where he was compelled to take part in the common meals. As all his time was taken up by his club life and training, the state relieved him of material cares by supporting him and his family. This was effected by giving to each man a considerable allotment of land together with one or more families of Helots. The Helots were bound to provide their owner and his family with a fixed annual quantity of foodstuffs, and to act as his servants in peace and on campaign. Part of the Helots' tribute went to pay the Spartiate's subscription to his club, and part to maintain his family.

From early childhood the Spartiate was trained to live for the State. A boy born in such a family, if he was pronounced healthy by a special board of elders, came at once under public supervision. Deformed or sickly infants, boys and girls, were exposed by the government, when they either died or were picked up by some charitable Helot. To the age of seven the children were cared for by their mothers and special government nurses. At seven the boys were removed from their families and entered a military group commanded by a young Spartiate; here they learned marching, gymnastics, music, and reading. They ate plain food cooked by themselves, and their bedding was of reeds gathered by themselves on the banks of the Eurotas. Gymnastic and military competitions were constantly held for their benefit. In order to develop independence, ingenuity, and dexterity, they were encouraged to steal and especially to steal food. But the unsuccessful thief was mercilessly beaten, not for stealing but for being found out. The girls went through much the same course of physical exercise as the boys, in order that the future mothers
of Spartiates might be healthy. After marriage they led a comparatively idle life in the houses of their husbands.

Morally and socially the position of the Helots was deplorable. They were in absolute slavery to the State. They were kept under constant supervision; and from time to time the most vigorous among them were murdered. The most wary and intelligent of the young Spartiates were sent as secret agents of the government, turning up where they were least expected and dispatching undesirable Helots without trial. The economic position of the Helots was not so bad: their tribute of produce to their masters was strictly defined and not burdensome; and they had full liberty to improve their land and accumulate savings. But the Perioeci were much better off. The Spartiates were forbidden to engage in trade and industry, and not encouraged to sell their landed property, even when it was not divided into allotments; and therefore the Perioeci monopolized all the business of the country. They worked the rich iron-mines of Laconia; they manufactured weapons for the army, implements for agriculture, and articles for domestic use. Trade also was in their hands exclusively. The Spartiates, however, disapproved of foreign trade, and tried to make home products satisfy their needs. They feared that foreign goods would bring with them new demands and new ideas. For the same reason they retained iron coinage as the only recognized medium of exchange, though of course it was not current outside Sparta. The Spartiates kept a watchful eye on foreign visitors and resorted freely to the deportation of undesirable persons from other countries. This spirit tended to isolate Sparta from the rest of the world; she became self-centred—almost exclusively an inland power with a strong army but without ships either for war or commerce.

Such was the organization, political, social, and economic, which made Sparta a powerful factor in the life of Hellas. She alone possessed a standing army, large enough, considering the conditions of that age, strictly disciplined, and excellently trained. The other city-states, living under different conditions,
had at their disposal a mere militia of citizens who were mustered only at the beginning of military operations. This military superiority made a strong impression upon contemporary observers, and they were therefore inclined to idealize the Spartan system. And it did enable Sparta to develop an extensive activity for conquest in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. After the subjection of Messenia this policy was first directed against the neighbouring states of Elis, Arcadia, and Argolis. Arcadia, after long warfare, concluded an alliance with Sparta, recognizing her headship in their joint political and military proceedings. The attempts of Argos to make herself the leading power in central Peloponnese brought her into collision with Sparta, and also armed Elis against her, together with Corinth and Sicyon, the cities on and near the Isthmus. In the sixth century Sparta was able to disarm Argos and deprive her of Cynuria, a district bordering on Lacedaemon, and to make Elis, Sicyon, and Corinth members of a Lacedaemonian military league directed by herself. This was the first considerable league of the kind in the history of the Greek nation; and it made Sparta the controlling power in Greek politics, especially in times of difficulty and danger.