VI

ATHENS AND ATTICA FROM 800 TO 600 B.C.

Side by side with Sparta there grew up by degrees in Greece between 800 and 600 B.C. another considerable political power, which was destined to take the lead for several centuries in the politics and civilization of all Greeks. This was the city-state of Athens, the economic and political centre of Attica. We have seen how Sparta deliberately chose to confine her activity to operations by land and recognized no industry but agriculture. Athens, on the contrary, at all times made full use of her favourable geographical position and the resources of her territory.

The peninsula of Attica runs out eastward to the sea. Her harbours are connected with the East by a chain of large and small islands, which stretch to the coast of Ionia and Caria in Asia Minor. She is divided from central Greece and, in particular, from Boeotia by mountains which are fairly high but easily crossed. The island of Aegina in the Saronic Gulf forms a bridge between the Dorian world of the Peloponnese and the Ionian world of Attica and the islands. The Isthmus of Corinth cuts off Attica from the west, so that she had no direct and natural access to the Gulf of Corinth. The natural wealth of the country, though not great, was sufficient to support a considerable population. The valleys of the Cephissus and Ilissus, if tilled with care, produced fair harvests; the valley of Eleusis was more fertile. The soil was everywhere excellent for growing olive-trees. The mountains grew fairly good timber, which made
ship-building possible. With regard to metals, there were mines of silver and lead, but no iron and no copper. Good clay provided fine material for the potter. The quarries of the adjacent mountains, especially Pentelicus, afforded excellent sorts of stone, marble, and lime, so that building on a large scale could be carried on.

It was more important to Attica that here the conditions were favourable for uniting a considerable territory round one political centre. She forms a single geographical unit, whose most convenient exit to the sea is formed by the two harbours of Athens, Phalerum and the Piraeus. Thus it was possible in Attica, as in Sparta, to form a single kingdom with a rather large territory. A divided Attica would have remained what she was in the Graeco-Aegean age—one among many centres of civilization and political progress; united, she became the single powerful political centre of the richly gifted Ionian stock, possessing sufficient population and sufficient natural wealth to make her the mistress of all Ionians, just as Sparta endeavoured to become the mistress of all Dorians. We must remember that the rest of Ionia was broken up into small political units in the islands, and that its development and expansion in Asia Minor were cramped first by Lydia and then by Persia. Political rivalry with Attica was impossible for any of the other city-states in central Greece; Boeotia was divided into a number of cities and had no satisfactory outlet to the sea; Corinth was a purely commercial power, her territory was always negligible, and she had also powerful rivals at her very doors—Megara on the Isthmus, and Sicyon on the north cost of the Peloponnese.

In Attica the process of unification was unlike the corresponding process of Sparta. One reason for this may be that there was no class of serfs as a basis of economic life in Attica of the Mycenaean age, and that the new order was established, not as a result of conquest, but by evolution and agreement. At all events, instead of foreign invasion and the reforms, military and social, of Lycurgus, we find a transaction of uncertain date, con-
nected with the name of a mythical king, Theseus, and called by the Greeks synoecismos or sympoliteia. It is quite possible, in Attica as in Sparta, that the mythical name conceals the real name of some great statesman belonging to the eighth century B.C. But the transaction itself was this—that the separate communities of Attica, each of which had possessed its own individuality and its own centre for politics and finance, now agreed to form a single kingdom, with Athens for the single centre of political, economic, and religious life. It is not known whether this measure was preceded by a gradual rise of Athens which proved her superiority in war and peace to the other communities of Attica. But it is highly probable that this concentration, which was resorted to later in several parts of the Greek world, was due to several causes—the gradual destruction of the kingly power and the formation of a strong aristocracy in each of the separate communities, and the certainty that these aristocrats must join forces if they were to cope with domestic and foreign dangers. At any rate, tradition is unanimous that the change in Attica was gradual and peaceful, and free from the revolutionary convulsions familiar to the Ionian world of that age.

We know little about the constitution of Attica after this concentration was carried through. But it is probable that the class of large landowners, who at that time were also traders and pirates, took the lead in political and economic life. The rulers of the community, chosen from among the members of the ruling aristocracy, were three in number: first, the king who was also the chief priest; secondly, the polemarch who commanded the armed forces of the kingdom; and, thirdly, the archon, the representative of civil authority. With these were later associated six junior archons, called thesmotheetae, as judges and guardians of the law. The nine chosen rulers of the state, or magistrates, to use the Roman term, did not form a single corporate body. The king, who had once been the head of the administration, gradually began to lose all political importance, retaining only his religious functions. Power was concentrated almost entirely in
Fig. 11. The palace of Thetis, the mother of Achilles, as represented on the so-called François vase (Attic black-figured). The palace shows the typical forms of a 'megaron', 6th cent. B.C. Archaeological Museum, Florence. After Furtwängler-Reichhold.

the hands of the polemarch and archon. At the same time the tenure of all those archons or magistrates, which had been permanent, became limited. Eventually it became the custom at Athens for all the representatives of authority to hold office for one year.

The magistrates were elected, laws were passed, and perhaps decisions on war and peace were taken, by the ecclesia or popular assembly, which probably consisted of all citizens with full rights, that is, all those who formed part of the citizen army and fought in defence of the country. Together with the magistrates there acted a council of elders, the chief body of the state for political, religious, and judicial business; it was called the Areopagus after the hill on which its meetings were generally held,
and was filled by representatives of the noblest families and, probably, by ex-magistrates.

Together with these gradual changes in the system of government there grew up a new division of the population into three social and economic groups. The first of these contained the large landowners, the second the traders and artisans who lived in the city, and the third the smallholders. At the same time the political rights and military duties of each citizen began to be reckoned not by his birth but by his property and income. The aristocracy became a timocracy. The necessity of creating a larger and stronger army was probably the cause of this innovation. The land-owning aristocracy, who had originally borne the whole burden of defending the country, was inclined to shift a part of this burden to the shoulders of other well-to-do citizens, and to concede to them in return a part of their own political rights. This new division for military and civil purposes was founded on the comparative wealth of various classes in the state—wealth connected with the possession of land. The highest class consisted of persons called pentakosioi, those landowners who drew from their lands an annual income of not less than 500 medimni (700 bushels) of corn; the second class contained those whose income from land was not less than 300 medimni. These two classes served in the army as cavalry: when summoned, they had to appear on horseback and wearing the full equipment of the hoplite or heavy-armed foot-soldier, and as their horses were not used in battle but merely for mobility and to pursue a beaten enemy, they were, properly, mounted infantry. The third class consisted of those whose income was not less than 200 medimni; they were called zeugitae, and served in heavy armour but had no horses. Political rights were confined to these classes. Below them came the thetes, who lived by the labour of their hands and possessed no definite and regular income; some of them served as rowers in the fleet and as light-armed skirmishers.

The financial revolution described in Chapter IV affected
Attica as well. There also, owners of vineyards and olive-groves made their appearance, the class of traders and artisans grew larger, and the population of the city increased steadily. In this new capitalistic society the position of the smallholder became more and more irksome. Money is needed for improvements, for additions to stock, and for the transition from corn to vines and olives; and when his sons set up for themselves, money is needed to stock their holdings. At the same time money is scarce and dear, while the law regarding debt is extremely harsh, and its application rests with the upper classes, the very people who own capital and lend money. Thus the smallholder is ruined and deprived not only of his property but of his freedom also by the law of debtor and creditor. Many escape this fate by becoming tenants of land which once belonged to them but has now been seized by moneylenders. The discontent of the lower classes grows steadily and takes an acute form. They seek and find men
to lead them and organize them for the struggle against the
dominant classes. Their war-cries are a fresh division of the land
and the abolition of debt. In order to carry out this programme,
an armed rising takes place, directed by the leader, who at-
ttempts, with the support of the masses, to concentrate in his
own hands military and civil power. Disturbance of this kind
was especially rife throughout most of the Greek world in the
seventh and sixth centuries B.C. In many places the acuteness of
class-warfare called forth 'tyrants' or 'judges' (called asemyntetae
by the Greeks), whose business it was to smooth down extremes
in either direction, to create a new and more democratic system,
to devise and establish in writing the basis of a constitution and
of civil and criminal law. They met with stout opposition from
the aristocracy, especially the old aristocracy of birth and landed
possessions; but they often found supporters, not only among the
lower classes who possessed no political rights, but also among
the middle class and the new aristocracy of commerce and industry. It is not without cause that this period in Greek history has
been called the age of revolution and tyranny.

The history of Attica, during the course of these develop-
ments in the Hellenic world, is marked by one distinctive fea-
ture. For there the transition from one stage of civil government
to another was accomplished more quickly and more peacefully,
with none of those atrocious convulsions which make the life of
many contemporary communities resemble an almost uninterrup-
ted conflagration. In the course of a single century Attica
made a clean sweep of her ancient institutions connected with
the clans and families, and, for the first time, created a demo-
cratic state on the basis of a carefully considered legal system—a
system no less logical, but more flexible, than the military system
of Sparta. It is a remarkable fact that the constitutional changes
of this period are everywhere associated with men of genius and
brilliant personality—the first professional politicians, whose
mythical prototype in Attica is the royal reformer, Theseus.

The dawn of political development in Attica reveals another
semi-mythical figure in the lawgiver Draco, to whom legend attributed the oldest written code of law. These laws are of interest, because they testify to the severity of the early criminal legislation which prevailed in an aristocratic Greek community; but it is hardly possible to believe, on the authority of late witnesses, that Draco was really the author of the first written constitution of Athens. Still we may well believe that party conflicts between the classes grew more and more acute in Attica, and that repeated attempts were made to set up a tyranny. There were many models to copy from: either at this time or earlier tyrants were ruling in Asia Minor, Italy, and the islands, and also nearer home—in Megara, the rival which contested with Athens the possession of the prosperous island of Salamis, and in the commercial cities of Corinth on the Isthmus and Sicyon on the north coast of Peloponnesus.

The great social and political reformer, Solon, is the first really historical name in Athenian history. Men of action, of this type, are common in Greece in the late seventh and early sixth centuries B.C. They are prominent and able representatives of noble families, men who have assimilated the results of Ionian culture, thinkers and rationalists, who believe in the omnipotence of government and statesmen to change social and economic relations, and who realize the effect of eloquence and literary propaganda. They are convinced that the causes of the never-ending class-conflict are clear to them, and consciously endeavour to reform out of existence that which they reckon as the root of the evil. With this object in view, many of them were forced to resort to armed force, and to make themselves tyrants, while others attempted to gain the same end by the peaceful method of legislation. Solon belonged to the latter class. Concerning his achievements even ancient writers knew little more than we do. Some writings by him, half-literary and half-political, have been preserved—short poems, which depict vividly the condition of Attica and speak of their author’s reforms. Tradition associated with his name some essential features of democracy at Athens.
A number of laws written and placarded on wooden tablets were attributed to him with perfect justice; but a number of anecdotes, of doubtful historical authenticity, were piled by degrees upon the foundation of this fact. This composite tradition explains the different views taken even by ancient historians concerning the nature and extent of his reforms.

Nevertheless there is no difference of opinion on the main and essential points. Solon was elected archon in 594 B.C. The course of historical development had made the archon at this period the virtual master of political affairs. As archon Solon at once brought forward a series of reforms, upon which the future progress of Athens was built up. His main achievement was to mitigate the severity of the law which then decided the relation between debtor and creditor in Attica. Allotments of land which had been mortgaged to the rich were restored to the owners, and the debts cancelled. Freedom was restored to those who had lost it for nonpayment of debt. It was made illegal to advance money on the security of the landowner's person. Serfdom and slavery due to debt were abolished for all time coming. The amount of land that any individual might own was definitely fixed. The export of corn from Attica was forbidden; olive oil alone might be exported. The purpose of this last measure is obvious: it was to make speculative cultivation of arable land unprofitable and to simplify the transference of such land to smallholders. It is true that these reforms pleased neither of the contending parties: the poor hoped that all the land would be divided afresh and all debts cancelled, while the aristocracy lost heavily and had to seek new outlets for the investment of their capital. But, all the same, Solon had done a great work. The class of small landholders had been strengthened, and measures taken to maintain their strength. On the other hand, the capitalists' wealth was turned into a more profitable channel: the growth of olive-trees for the export of oil was stimulated, and trade and industry in general were encouraged. The beginning of Athenian coinage, toward the end of the seventh century, is related to this eco-
nomic development. Athens also brought chaos into order by introducing a uniform system of weights and measures throughout Attica.

On the basis of these social and financial reforms Solon built his constitution. The chief innovation here was the admission of the lowest class, or thetes, to a place in the popular assembly. A new and important institution was the Heliaea, a law-court, in which any citizen could be a judge, membership being determined by lot-drawing in which every class of citizens, from the pentakosioi to the thetes, could take part. Thus three most important functions of government—the election of magistrates, legislation, and the supreme control of conduct—were handed over to the whole body of citizens, irrespective of the class to which each belonged. On the other hand, the privileges of the highest classes were maintained: the magistrates, whose number and duties were unchanged, were still elected from the two highest classes exclusively. The Areopagus, or council of elders, retained its importance, but a new institution was added to it. This was the council of four hundred, with one hundred members chosen from each of the four tribes; it prepared the business which was afterwards discussed and disposed of by the popular assembly.

Though the reforms of Solon did not end the strife of classes, they paved the way to a victory for the popular party. The years that immediately followed his archonship were full of this strife. But it should be noted that Athens nevertheless was strong enough to begin a spirited foreign policy. She engaged in a struggle with Megara for the possession of Salamis; and there is no doubt that she also wished to claim a share in the commerce between the different parts of Greece. This foreign war, in which all the citizens, including the thetes, took part for the first time, had two important consequences. It was the first time that Attica interfered in the affairs of other Greek states, and imitated Sparta in trying to rule her neighbours and extend her territory at their expense. A collision with Sparta, who had been
consolidating her leadership in the Peloponnese, was now inevitable; and the question was raised—who was to be the controlling power on the Isthmus, the bridge between central Greece and the Peloponnese? and who should take the lead in trade with the west? Secondly, this first considerable campaign revealed the importance of including every citizen in the army and of entrusting entire command to one capable general. Successful in the struggle against Megara, the Athenians owed the conquest of Salamis and Nisaea, the port of Megara, to the skilful leadership of Pisistratus, one of their own body.

Pisistratus was undoubtedly a prominent figure in Athenian history, not less important, and perhaps even more important than Solon himself. Solon was a lawyer and reconciler; Pisistratus was a military commander, the leader of a definite party, and a tyrant. After his success against Megara he came forward as the champion of the smallholders, and in 561–560 B.C. by their aid seized power at Athens. The aristocracy then united with the class of merchants and traders and twice forced him to go into exile for a time. But after some years' banishment he returned to Athens. He was cordially received by a considerable body of the citizens, who were weary of party strife. This time he remained at Athens as the supreme ruler of the state until his death in 528 B.C., when he bequeathed his power to his sons, Hippias and Hipparchus. They ruled for eighteen years.

The rule of Pisistratus may be considered as a turning-point, in many respects, in Athenian history. His tyranny did not destroy a single one of the democratic foundations which Solon had laid. His power was a mere superstructure on the top of Solon's constitution. The power of the aristocratic families was weakened, partly because most of them were banished and their land distributed among poor citizens, partly because the aristocratic bodies, the magistracy and the Areopagus, lost influence entirely and began to die away, thus clearing the ground for new democratic institutions in the future. When the tyranny fell and it was necessary to reconstruct public life, that life was not
founded on a discredited and enfeebled aristocracy, but on a democracy strong and conscious of its strength.

The foreign policy also of Pisistratus had an important effect upon the future development of Athens. A powerful fleet and considerable improvements in the army assured to Athens a voice that must be heard in Greek politics. From this time onwards the strongest Greek powers of the day—Boeotia, Thessaly, and, above all, Sparta—had to reckon with Athens. Pisistratus, however, did not carry on a policy of conquest in southern and central Greece, satisfied with the safety from attack assured to him by his strong army and fleet. The sole object of his foreign policy was to make Athens powerful on the north-east coast of the Balkan peninsula, and on the shores of Macedonia, the Hel-
lespont, and the Bosphorus. Thanks to him, the Athenians established themselves in Chalcidice, the Macedonian outlet to the sea, and also at Sigeum on the threshold of the Hellespont. This was a first step towards the extension of their influence over the Thracian Chersonese, by which the fertile valleys of Thrace, closely connected at that time with the great Scythian kingdom on the north of the Euxine, communicated with the sea. It is interesting to note that Scythian mercenaries were first seen in the Athenian army during the reign of Pisistratus.

When Pisistratus died, he left Athens a considerable power, playing a conspicuous part in Greek politics, international and colonial. His sons continued his work; but their position was more difficult, as in all similar cases. For the power of every tyrant was in a high degree personal, and the transition to a hereditary monarchy was not easy. A conspiracy, due to the chance of a personal insult, carried off not only Hipparchus but also the conspirators, Harmodius and Aristogiton, and drove Hippias to adopt repressive measures and tighten the reins. Thus he lost the support of the majority, and it became possible for the exiles living at Delphi, with help from Sparta and in alliance with the discontented democrats at Athens, to undertake the enterprise of destroying the tyranny and restoring freedom. Thanks to the exertions of the Alcmeonid family, the attempt succeeded: Hippias withdrew from Athens; and it became a question what shape this freedom, gained by an alliance between aristocrats and democrats, should assume.

Just as before the reforms of Solon, again a series of civil commotions preceded a radical reform carried out by Cleisthenes, one of the Alcmeonidae. Cleisthenes supported an advance towards democracy. The aristocrats opposed his policy tooth and nail and called in assistance from Sparta; but this interference merely added to his strength and popularity. After a short occupation the Spartans were expelled from the capital, and Cleisthenes could begin his reforms and carry them through without interference from without or opposition from within.
The work of Cleisthenes differs from that of Solon and Pisistratus in this respect: he did not attempt to tinker at the existing system, but carried out a complete scheme which he had thought out in detail. His governing idea was to create a well-proportioned and completely co-ordinate state, based on the political equality of all the citizens, and on the participation of all in the working of the government machine. Existing institutions were neither destroyed nor abolished, but their life left them and entered into the new political bodies created by Cleisthenes.

The radical innovation due to the statesmanship of Cleisthenes was that he systematically introduced into the constitution the representative principle. At the same time the political centre of gravity was shifted to the representative bodies, and especially to the Boule or Council of Five Hundred, which became the main lever of the government machine. For this purpose Cleisthenes began by changing the whole system by which the citizens were classified, and created electoral districts of entirely new composition. The former division into tribes and phratries, though it continued to exist, lost all political importance. In place of these, the demes, or parishes grouped round the villages and small towns of Attica, became the chief electoral unit and the centre for the population in each place. All persons domiciled within the deme were registered as belonging to it, and the franchise was conferred upon every person so registered.

The capital itself was divided into demes. It was no longer obligatory to belong to a gens or one of the old tribes. The demes were divided, according to their locality, into three groups: the city of Athens, the coast, and the plain of Attica with the hills. In each of these groups one of the main divisions of the population naturally outnumbered the rest: the commercial and trading element predominated in the city; sailors, dockyard hands, and fishermen on the coast; and landholders, large and small, in the interior of the country. Each of the above-mentioned groups was divided into ten trittyes with several demes in each; and three trittyes, one from each group, formed a tribe, so that ten
new tribes were created out of thirty trittyes. In this way each of
the three social classes was represented in each tribe.
These tribes became the foundation of all political and mili-
tary activity. Each of them furnished a military unit, com-
manded by an officer called strategus. The magistrates, the
members of the judicial assembly, and the Council of Five
Hundred were chosen from each of the ten tribes. Within the
tribe each deme had a local activity of its own, with an elective
administration, a demarch, a local council, and a budget. The
authorities attended to the local business, the local cults, and
the local order. They were obliged to supply to the state lists of
electors and tax-payers. The tribes also had representative bodies,
with functions similarly limited. But the competence of the
demes was strictly limited to local business of secondary impor-
tance. All important matters, even of local interest, were dis-
cussed and decided at Athens by the central assemblies. Attica
was so small that no considerable municipal activity could find
room beside the activity of Athens.

The demes and tribes were thus organized on purpose to se-
cure an exact representation of the citizens in the Council of
Five Hundred, the governing body of the whole country. This
first endeavour to govern by means of a House of Representa-
tives is highly instructive. Each deme, in proportion to the num-
ber of citizens on its roll, chose candidates for the council, and
from these candidates the members of council were elected by
lot, fifty in all being taken from each tribe. The existing House
reviewed the moral qualifications of new members and rejected
the unworthy. The council was not merely a deliberative body
associated with the executive power, which was still retained by
the board of the nine archons: it was a governing body, dealing
with finance, war, and foreign policy. The magistrates, except in
the case of some religious and judicial functions, were merely
the executants of its decrees. Closely associated with the council
were the colaceutae and strategi, two boards now added to the
magistracy; the former had to do with finance; the latter com-
manded ten companies of militia. The Council of Five Hundred was naturally too numerous a body to deal with ordinary business. Therefore such business was undertaken normally by a quorum, called a prytany, of fifty members, who held office for a tenth of the year under a chairman who sat for one day. Part of the prytany remained on duty day and night, eating and sleeping in the Tholos, a round building provided for the purpose.

Legislative powers did not belong to the council: laws were discussed and passed at meetings of the ecclesia, the popular assembly. Judicial authority remained with the heliaea, the court of popular representatives, elected by the tribes on the same principle and by the same method as the council. The magistrates—the nine archons, 

\[\text{colocresiae}\] and \text{strategi}—were elected as before from the first two classes only, i.e. from the well-to-do citizens. This limitation of democratic ideas was dictated by necessity; for the state did not pay the citizens for the discharge of their public duties, nor even reimburse them for their incidental expenses. The army also definitely assumed the character of a national militia. Each tribe provided a regiment of infantry and a squadron of cavalry commanded by elective officers, called \text{taxisarchi} and \text{hipparchi}. The polemarch remained as a survival. Each of the ten \text{strategi} commanded the army in turn. The question of the navy, left untouched by Cleisthenes, was solved at a later date.

The reforms of Cleisthenes completed the creation of a strong and solidly organized Athenian state. While aiming at the same object as Sparta, Athens had attained it by different means. Her government was not based, as at Sparta, on the predominance of a single class over a subordinate population: she relied on attracting the whole body of citizens to the business of government; and she excluded none except the slaves and the foreigners resident at Athens, called \text{metoeci}. When the new system was created, these two groups formed a comparatively insignificant minority of the population, and it was not till much later that the question of their position became acute. This Athenian
principle of government deserves to be called democracy, because the real master and ruler of the country was the people.

The constitution of Cleisthenes began working in 502 B.C. It did not, indeed, end the strife of parties or the uneven distribution of wealth. Both these evils remained, and there were conflicts, sharp and sometimes prolonged. But their acuteness was mitigated and almost abolished by the attitude of mind due to these reforms. Every citizen learned to regard the government not as an external and alien thing, but as something identical with the body of citizens, and each justly looked upon himself as a working part of the government machine. No Greek took such pride as the Athenian in his city and country; and nowhere in Greece was the consciousness of citizenship or the feeling of true patriotism so strongly developed.
CIVILIZATION OF GREECE IN THE SEVENTH
AND SIXTH CENTURIES B.C.

The seventh and sixth centuries B.C. were a great creative epoch in the history of human civilization. Those laws of thought, political organization, and art, which mark out European civilization generally and distinguish it in many important respects from the civilizations of the East, began to take shape at this time. The chief peculiarities of Greek culture, both then and later, were its individual, personal character and its boldness—the unbounded hardihood, one might say, with which it stopped at nothing, and its entire independence of religion, though the latter maintained a separate existence beside it.

But together with this bent towards individualism, we observe another trait which is easily reconcilable with it. Throughout Greek history we find among all Greeks an increasing consciousness that they belong to one nation and form one body; and this unity was indicated, not only by a common religion and a common language, but also by a common civilization, more or less identical among them all. This national feeling was powerfully promoted by colonization and the trade which kept pace with colonization. The tie that bound a colony to the Greek world was never broken: the colony always felt herself the true daughter of her mother city and resembled her almost exactly in all respects. On the other hand, the deep gulf that separated the Greek view of life from that of their new neighbours was realized with exceptional clearness by the colonists.