There is no doubt that in Hellas of the sixth century B.C. the leading part in economic and civilized life belonged, not to Greece proper, but to the Greek colonies in Asia Minor and, in some degree, to those in Italy and Sicily. The Greek cities of Aegina, Chalcis, Eretria, Corinth, Sicyon, Sparta, and Athens were far poorer and less civilized than Miletus, Ephesus, Samos, and Lesbos in the east, or than Sybaris, Croton, Gela, Acragas, and Syracuse in the west. The colonies had richer and more fertile territories, more extensive markets, and easier communication with the East. On the other hand, the position of these outposts of Hellenism was, from the political point of view, very precarious. In Asia Minor and also in Italy the cities were exposed to attack from their neighbours by land. The Sicilian Greeks were constantly menaced by the great maritime power of Carthage, backed by a powerful federation of Etruscan cities, to say nothing of their nearest neighbours—the tribes who inhabited the interior of the country. But even so they were safer than the Greeks in Asia Minor. For Etruria, though rich and civilized, was cut off from the colonies by the mountains of central Italy; their other neighbours were still in a primitive stage of development; and Carthage was only beginning to realize her strength and the necessity of a fight to a finish with the Greeks.

In Asia Minor the situation was different. The coast was occupied by Greeks. But even here a considerable part of the population which continued to live on the soil seized by the Greeks
was neither Greek nor uncivilized. Before the Greeks came and conquered them, these tribes had enjoyed their own civilization and political institutions; and they kept this fact steadily in mind. They felt themselves closer to their Asiatic kinsmen than to their new masters. The record of central Asia Minor was distinguished, and traditions of the Hittite Empire survived in the new kingdoms of Phrygia, Lydia, and Lycia. Of these kingdoms Lydia lay nearest to the Greeks. During the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. she had survived the invading Cimmerians and Scythians, had rapidly grown strong and rich, and had become a powerful empire with distinct political and economic aims. As mediator between the East and the new world of Greece, and belonging to both of them by her position, nationality, and culture, Lydia was always pressing towards the sea. But the coasts were occupied by Phoenicians and Greeks. To oust the former was impossible: first Assyria, and then Persia, stood in the way. It was far easier and more natural for Lydia to expand towards the west, in the region of the Greeks.

The Greeks in Asia, just like the Greeks at home and in the West, all shared the same blood, religion, and culture, but were divided into a number of independent states, each with its own policy and traditions, which ran counter to the policy and traditions of its neighbours. Hatred and jealousy of these neighbours moved them more than hostility towards powerful but distant Eastern empires, about which they knew and cared little. Moreover, social and political strife was constantly going on inside each state, and led the contending parties to seek for support, irrespective of the source from which it came. And, finally, the strategic position of these cities was excessively weak. The territory of each was, in most cases, a river-valley, divided by a mountain ridge from the territory of its next neighbour along the coast. Thus communication was difficult by land; by sea it was not difficult but, owing to the much indented line of the coast, took much time. Meanwhile, the territory was freely exposed to the attack of any army from the interior of the country.
Of all these facts the Lydian Empire took full advantage and soon became preponderant in the political life of these cities. While giving much to the Greeks in the way of a civilization and commerce, Lydia took from Greece all that Greece could give, and the difference between the Lydians and Anatolian Greeks became fainter and fainter. By degrees Lydia was admitted to the band of Greek states as one of themselves, just as Macedonia was admitted at a later date. Lydian ambassadors, bearing rich gifts to Delphi and other Greek shrines, were as welcome guests as the ambassadors of Greek powers. It is not surprising that the Anatolian cities were speedily absorbed by Lydia in the seventh, and still more in the sixth century, and that such resistance as there was did not take the form of a combined national effort against an Eastern foe. The resistance was unmethodical and entirely ineffective. All the Lydian kings—Ardys, Sadyattes, Alyattes, and Croesus—worked deliberately at the task of subduing the Greek cities, and their activity prevented the Greeks from observing the growing power of the Medes and Persians. Hence the catastrophe of 546 B.C., when Cyrus defeated the armies of Croesus and took Sardis, was a complete surprise to the Greeks, who were now confronted by the Persians, a quite unknown enemy. Their sympathies were all on the side of Lydia, and Sparta even prepared to send part of her army to help Croesus.

Persia had little difficulty in conquering the Anatolian Greeks. Greece was far away and comparatively weak, while they themselves were crippled by disunion and the mild but corrosive policy of Lydia. All the coast soon became a part of the great Persian monarchy. But the new masters made little change in the internal life of the cities. Each of them retained its autonomy, kept up regular communications with the rest of the Greek world, and continued to be important as a centre of trade and industry. They were only bound in future to pay part of their revenue to their conquerors, and to provide soldiers and ships for the unending wars waged by Persia against Babylon and
Egypt. To all this the Anatolian Greeks were accustomed. They resented only the frequent interference of Persia in their party squabbles, and the support which they gave to tyrants. Tyranny became in time the prevailing form of government in the cities.

The absorption of these Anatolian Greeks was an important political factor in the history of the Persian Empire. These new subjects brought with them ideas and habits entirely unlike the ideas and habits which characterized all the rest of the kingdom. On the other hand, it was a political absurdity to rule Asia Minor and not to rule the coast also. But the ruler of the coast was bound to come in contact with the islands and with the complicated politics of all the Balkan peninsula and the Black Sea coast—a coast which was densely populated by colonists, mostly Anatolian Greeks. Thus, by the conquest of Asia Minor, Persia was drawn into European politics and forced to define, in one way or another, her policy in relation to Europe. The simplest solution of the problem, at least from the point of view traditional with Eastern conquerors, was this—that Persia should conquer and absorb Greece, thus including not merely a part but the whole nation in her Empire.

Conditions seemed to favour the execution of this project. Public affairs in Greece proper differed little from public affairs in Anatolian Greece. Both countries were divided into small states constantly at war with one another; in both there was the same jealousy between cities, the same internal divisions of each city into social and political parties, and the same readiness to make use of any allies in order to gain the immediate realization of political and party objects. Such political conditions made it seem an easy matter to conquer Greece. What Persia could throw into the scales in this contest seemed enormous and decisive—a great army, well organized and well disciplined—an excellent fleet, manned by Phoenicians and Anatolian Greeks, the most skilful sailors of the age; and the inexhaustible material resources of a wealthy kingdom. Distant campaigns must, no doubt, be undertaken; but did not the Persian armies march to
the recesses of Central Asia and the boundaries of India? and had they not recently conquered mighty Egypt herself?

In extending their power the Persian monarchs never acted at random. They were excellent strategists: each campaign was rigorously thought out and carefully prepared. To them it was clear that the absorption of the Greeks in Europe was impracticable, unless the Persian frontier was advanced so as to meet the frontiers of the Greek states by land and sea. This meant that, before annexing Greece to their dominions, they must conquer the Greek islands and, above all, the north of the Balkan peninsula, the seat of the Thracian tribes, who were well known to the Persians in Asia Minor. There was this complication, however, that there Persia was confronted by the aspirations of another Iranian power—the Scythian Empire, which had by this time established itself firmly on the north of the Black Sea, and had also come into contact with the Greeks. This Scythian pressure towards the west and south Persia was bound to check before she turned elsewhere. At the time she did not contemplate the conquest of the Scythian kingdom in south Russia. That might be a problem in the remote future; but the pressing business was to drive the Scythians back from the Danube and prevent them from extending their sway to the Balkan peninsula. Darius undertook the task in a great campaign against Scythia about 512 B.C. He probably went no farther than the steppes between the Danube and the Dniester, and it seems that he succeeded on the whole; for the conversion of Thrace into a Persian province went on quickly and steadily after this date, with no hindrance from without.

Darius was prevented from carrying out his plans further by the revolt of the Ionian Greeks. The causes of this revolt we can only surmise; but it was certainly not connected with any Panhellenic movement intended to check the further advance of Darius; it did not even extend to the whole of Asia Minor. The southern and northern Anatolian Greeks took part in it, and a timid attempt to help them was made by Athens and by Eretria.
in Euboea, but no other power in Greece proper joined in. In fact it was hardly more than a revolt of Miletus and a few other Ionian cities. We must suppose that it was due to local causes and was undertaken because the Greeks overrated their own power and underrated that of Persia. Though they were well aware of Persia's weak points, it is obvious that they were blind to her real strength. The struggle was stubborn and prolonged (from 499 to 494 B.C.) but ended in the destruction of Ionia. Miletus was burnt to the ground and took long to recover from the heavy blows inflicted upon her.

This revolt played an important part in the history of relations between Persia and Greece: it confirmed the belief of Persia that it was imperative to proceed at once with the conquest of the Balkan peninsula. It is therefore not surprising that the first business of Darius, after crushing the revolt, was to send a force to the shores of the Hellespont and to northern Greece, in order to strengthen the authority of Persia, which had been weakened in these districts by the revolt. This was the immediate object of the campaign of 492 B.C.; but the large number of land and sea forces employed shows that, if all went well, a continuation of the campaign was contemplated, and an advance of the fleet and army into central Greece. But a large part of the fleet was wrecked off Mount Athos, and without the support of all their ships it was difficult to supply a large army through a long and troublesome campaign. Thus the Persians were forced to confine themselves to their main purpose, which was to strengthen Persian authority by the annexation of Thrace and Macedonia.

The campaign of 492 B.C. was only a first attempt. It was followed in 490 by a second, whose object, publicly announced by the Persian king, was to punish Athens and Eretria for their part in the Ionian revolt. This object was formally communicated to the Greek states by ambassadors who demanded of them 'earth and water' as a symbol of submission; what they really required was their neutrality in the coming contest. The proximity of the Persian dominions induced many of the Greek
states not to reject these demands. But the real object of Persia was, undoubtedly, different. Making use of her naval superiority, she hoped by her second campaign to accomplish the task which Mardonius had begun, and not only to create a common frontier with Greece by land but also to connect Persia with Greece by a sea route, starting from the cities of Ionia and proceeding through the islands to the natural goal in Europe, that is, Attica and its harbours and the harbours of Euboea. Attica once seized, Persia had no other rival to fear at sea and might count on the conquest of Greece as certain. Considering the internal discord of Greece, it was easy to pit one state against another, and before long to knock out Sparta, the hope of Greece by land, with one decisive blow.

To seize Attica seemed a very simple matter. There was no quarter from which Athens could look for help. Close beside her was Aegina, a dangerous foe and rival; Sparta was far away, slow to act, and hardly conscious of her danger; Boeotia was openly hostile. There was no strong fleet at Athens; and the army of Attica had not much experience and no glorious traditions behind it. The new-born democracy found itself vigorously opposed by the aristocracy, which still retained some strength. Hippias, the last tyrant, was still living and hoped to return in the train of the Persian army. For these reasons Darius believed that Athens could be disposed of by a force landed from his ships.

His calculations proved partly true and partly false. Athens did, indeed, stand alone. But Aegina's intention of assisting the Persians was thwarted by Sparta. At Athens the friends of Persia were ready to act; but they would take no risks: the democratic army of Athens must be beaten first. Sparta did not refuse to support Athens, but her support was long in coming. The danger that threatened Athens and all Greece was enormous; and Athens recognized this, but Greece did not. When the Persian troops were landed on the plain of Marathon, Athens had either to surrender or to accept a decisive battle without any great
Plate XV  THE PERSIAN KINGS

1. Part of the sculptural decoration of the Great Hall with a hundred columns in the palace of King Darius (522-485 B.C.) at Persepolis. The king is shown fighting a horned lion, a personification of the brute forces of nature. End of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century B.C.

2. One of the bodyguard of King Darius. A long row of such figures adorned the walls of the staircase which led to the terrace on which his palace of Sus was built. Enamelled bricks. End of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century B.C. Paris, Louvre.
3. Head of King Darius from the rock bas-reliefs of Behistun. Note the diadem, the skilful trimming of the beard and of the hair. The head is not a real portrait; it represents not the personal features of Darius but an idealized head of the Great King of Kings of the Persian Empire. End of the 6th century B.C.

4. King Darius fighting his enemies and trampling over their slain bodies. Between the king and his enemies is the holy symbol of Ahuramazda (the winged Sun-disk and the medallion with the bust of the god). Cast of a cylinder-signet. End of the 6th or beginning of the 5th century B.C. British Museum.
hope of victory. The chances on her side were not many, but there were some. The small compact army of Athenian and Plataean citizens—an army of infantry equipped with heavy weapons and covered with iron mail—inspired by their deadly peril, and fighting on their native soil and under familiar conditions, proved more than a match for their enemy. The Persians were much more numerous; they were picked troops and well provided; but they were light-armed and fought under strange conditions and had just completed a long voyage. It was a great piece of fortune for the Athenians that they were led by Miltiades, a skilful commander, who was familiar with the Persian army, having served with it during the Scythian campaign as the tyrant of some Greek settlements and local tribes in Thrace. His remarkable talents for war and his knowledge of the enemy played a great and almost decisive part in the brilliant and famous victory of Marathon.

The two armies which fought at Marathon were neither of them large, but the battle is of capital importance in the world's history. In the chain of Persian policy one link, and an essential link, was broken. Yet the battle might have remained merely a splendid exploit in the history of Athens, had it not been followed by a succession of crises in Persia which gave Greece a respite and a breathing-space for the next ten years. Darius, though he made serious preparations for it, was never able to fit out another expedition against Greece. After the failure at Marathon great caution was necessary. But he was old; the bureaucratic machinery of Persia worked slowly; in 486 B.C. Egypt revolted, and in 485 Darius died. Xerxes, his successor, needed time to take his bearings and strengthen his position at home. This delay was highly advantageous to Greece: it increased her resources and raised her spirit. The fame of Athens stood high in Greece. When her treasury was filled by thorough exploitation of the silver mines of Laurium, and when Themistocles came to the front and, with equal boldness and wisdom, insisted on the necessity that Athens should build a great fleet in order
to resist future invasions, there was not a power in Greece that would have wished to hinder this addition to her military strength. Sparta and Aegina felt that opposition on their part was impossible. Still more important, the attitude of Greece towards the Persian peril changed during these ten years: all Greeks now realized that they might be enslaved by Persia, and realized also that the conflict was inevitable. Not that all Greece was preparing for the conflict throughout the ten years. Individual states did something in this way—but the important thing was this—that a public opinion, a feeling of common nationality, was formed to meet the struggle. But again, this does not imply that some of the states were not ready to yield and even to fight for Persia; but this had come to be looked upon as treason to the nation, and not as a legitimate course of policy.

Thus the next campaign, begun by Xerxes in 480 B.C., was carried on under different conditions. The preparations made by him were extraordinarily careful, and the plan of campaign excellent. The supply department was ably organized. The plan of 492 B.C. was adopted again: the army was to march along the coast, escorted by a vast fleet; the business of the fleet was to secure the provisioning of the forces and to guard it from being attacked in the rear. Great anxiety prevailed in Greece. Originally it was intended to bar the invader from Greek soil, by meeting him where the vale of Tempe gives admission to Thessaly. But this plan could not be executed, because it was easy to go round the pass. It was therefore necessary to abandon Thessaly to the invader. A second plan, pressed by the Athenians and all central Greece, involved co-operation of the fleet and army at Thermopylae, the key to central Greece: the army was to defend Thermopylae, and the fleet was to resist any attack by sea upon the rear of the army. But Sparta put forward a rival plan of her own: she insisted that the Isthmus should be defended and all central Greece abandoned without a blow. The plan of defending Thermopylae was practicable, if the army on the spot was large and the fleet did its duty. But, though the fleet did not fail,
Sparta and some of the allies sent forces which were insufficient for the defence, and the Persians were able to march round the comparatively small body of defenders. The Greek fleet thereupon sailed away to the coast of Attica. Some of the defenders of Thermopylae retreated; others, including Leonidas, the Spartan commander, were slain in unequal fight. The Persians had entered Greece.

Attica was their first victim. Boeotia, like most of central Greece, submitted to the invaders and rendered them zealous service. There were fresh disputes about the plan of campaign. To defend Athens was impossible, and the population of the city and of Attica was removed to Salamis and Aegina. Attica was soon overrun, and Athens was sacked and burnt. That it was now the turn of the fleet to act was beyond question; but where was the battle to be fought: off Attica or off the Peloponnesian? The Spartans insisted that the Isthmus should be fortified and the Peloponnesian coast protected from invasion—a hopeless plan, considering the superiority of the Persian fleet. The Athenians demanded that the Greek ships should be concentrated between Salamis and the coast of Attica, where there was a chance of success because the gulf was too narrow for the Persian fleet to deploy in. Themistocles had great difficulty in securing that the battle should be fought at Salamis. Xerxes also wished this: he hoped to crush the united Greeks and to catch all their fleet in a trap by closing both ends of the gulf.

Battle was given and accepted; and the Greeks were completely victorious. It became necessary for the Persians to change their whole plan of campaign. Their fleet was not, indeed, utterly destroyed at Salamis; but it was so much crippled that the superiority at sea passed over definitely to the other side. And while the Greeks were masters of the sea, it was impossible to maintain a large invading army. They had fears also for their communications with their own country. Therefore Xerxes, with a considerable part of his army, started on the difficult march
homewards. Part of the army was left in Thessaly with the object of renewing the strife in the following year, 479 B.C.

The situation in Greece, even after the victory of Salamis, was still precarious. To have beside her, perhaps for ever, a Persian province in northern Greece, with a strong army, was a terrible menace. But to this result the policy of Sparta tended. She continued to insist that central Greece must be abandoned and the Isthmus fortified. Meanwhile, the Persians refitted their fleet and sent it to defend the coast of Asia Minor; and they reinforced the army of Mardonius, a skilful general, who passed the winter in Thessaly. The spring brought them back to Greece.

The plan of Mardonius was to cause a definite rupture between Sparta and Athens and then to conclude a separate peace with the latter. Once he had the Athenian fleet on his side, he could disregard the fortification of the Isthmus, and the conquest of the Peloponnesian was assured. The Athenians were in a difficult position. They had to face a second invasion and a second devastation of their country; for Sparta obstinately refused to send her own forces and those of her allies to central Greece. Nevertheless, the Athenians found strength in themselves to return a decided refusal to the proposals brought by Alexander, King of Macedonia, the envoy of Mardonius. Attica was again occupied, her population was again removed to Salamis, and the destruction of Athens was this time completed.

When Sparta realized that the patience of Athens was nearly exhausted, and that, if Sparta continued to insist on defending the Peloponnesian, a separate peace between Mardonius and Athens and the utter collapse of the Spartan plan of campaign were inevitable, then, and not till then, she decided to give up this plan and dispatch her army to Boeotia. A strong Spartan army took the field at once, and was joined by the militia of other Greek states; the whole number amounted to 100,000 infantry, heavy-armed and light-armed. Mardonius at once evacuated Attica. The two armies met not far from Plataea. At first
the Persians had the upper hand. Mardonius had excellent cavalry as well as a strong force of infantry. Hence Pausanias, the Spartan king, who commanded the allied Greek army, was hampered in his movements and obliged to keep to the hilly ground between Boeotia and Attica. The difficulty of the Greek position increased with the duration of the campaign. The Persians had the fertile lands of Boeotia and Thessaly for a base, whereas the Greeks had to draw all their supplies from as far off as the Peloponnese. Again, the Persians were united under one command; but the Greek generals were apt to quarrel even on the field of battle. The Greeks were saved by an error on the part of Mardonius. When Pausanias shifted the front of his army towards the hills, for protection against the Persian cavalry, Mardonius took this manoeuvre for a retreat, and gave battle under circumstances which made his cavalry useless. As at Marathon the Persian infantry were beaten by the hoplites; but this time the hoplites were Spartans.

At the same time, in order that the Persian fleet might be kept aloof from the struggle in Greece, the Greek ships sailed eastwards to the island of Samos, where a Persian army and fleet were stationed at Mycale. The Greeks disembarked and offered battle. Betrayed by the Ionian Greeks, who predominated in that division of the Persian army, the Persians were cut to pieces.

As the result of Plataea and Mycale, the Persians were forced to abstain from any further interference in Greek affairs and to abandon the conquest of Greece.

While these events were taking place in Greece an equally stern struggle was going on in the West between the Sicilian Greeks and Carthage. I have spoken already of this important Phoenician colony on the north coast of Africa, of her commercial relations and growing prosperity. By degrees Carthage reduced to subjection the other Phoenician colonies on that coast and also a number of tribes in the interior. In the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. she was a strong imperial power, governed by a small group of her noblest and richest citizens, and possessing a
powerful army and fleet, manned partly by citizens and partly by mercenaries. Her trade was directed chiefly to the north and north-west. I have said already that she had to face the competition of Greek cities in Sicily, Italy, and Gaul, and that this led to constant bloody collisions. At the beginning of the fifth century, simultaneously with the third Persian invasion of Greece, and possibly in collusion with Persia, she equipped a powerful fleet and collected a large army, and hurled them upon Sicily, hoping to seize the whole island and expel the Greeks at one blow. Fortunately for the Greeks, Sicily was in such a position that she was prepared to meet the foe. Gelon, tyrant of the city of Gela, an able and ambitious statesman, had created a powerful empire in Sicily; and Syracuse, the richest and strongest city in the island, had come under his sway shortly before the Carthaginian invasion. Making use of the resources thus obtained and of the general apprehension, he collected a great army and met the invaders near Himera. The skill of the general and the favourable conditions—the Carthaginian cavalry had been wrecked while crossing from Africa—gave victory to the Greeks. It was long before Carthage was in a position to renew her attack.

Greece had defended her freedom. Persia and Carthage, it is true, were still great powers, but Persia advanced no farther: she had to think of defence instead. Greece had escaped the fate of Asia Minor: she never became, even for a time, the province of an Eastern monarchy.
IX

THE ATHENIAN EMPIRE

After Plataea and Mycale the struggle with the Persians in Greece proper was at an end. Persia recognized that, as things were, she was unable to conquer Greece and cut it up into Persian satrapies. But this does not mean that war between the two nations was ended: it still dragged on, inevitably; and the only question was, what form the struggle would take, and which side would play the active or the passive part. It was possible for Persia to abandon all hope of immediate conquest, and yet to maintain her common frontier with Greece and her possessions in the Balkan peninsula, Asia Minor, and the islands.

The period of fifty years which divides the battle of Plataea from the beginning of the Peloponnesian war is a period about which little is known. Herodotus ends his history with the taking of Sestos in 478 B.C.; Thucydides made it his business to describe and explain the great struggle between Sparta and Athens for primacy in Greece; and the later historians—Ephorus, Theopompus, and others—who recorded not episodes merely but the whole of Greek history, have come down to us, if they have come down at all, in mere fragments. Those fifty years were not marked out by any central incident of arresting interest, and therefore found no historian fit to rank with Herodotus or Thucydides.

It was impossible that Persia should give up the struggle. But she had suffered such shrewd blows in Greece that the ponder-