DURING the second quarter of the sixth century the Greeks of Ionia had been attacked by the Lydians, who had built up an inland kingdom in western Asia Minor and now wanted the ports along the coast. Had the Greek cities stood together they might have retained their independence. The island cities, however, which felt themselves safer, were lax in helping those on the mainland; Miletus, chief of the mainland towns, made a separate peace; the smaller places went down one by one. By 550 all were in Lydian hands. In the 540's Lydia itself was overwhelmed by Persia, and the Greek cities on the coast passed under Persian control. For thirty years thereafter the Persians were occupied in strengthening their eastern frontier, conquering Egypt, and suppressing revolts. Then, in 512, they marched against the Scythians, a nomadic people who at that time ranged the western and northern shores of the Black Sea. The campaign ended in Persian withdrawal after heavy losses. A dozen years later the Ionian cities revolted. They sent to the other Greek states for help and got twenty ships from Athens and five from Eretria.

Consequently, after putting down the Ionian revolt in the years following 500, the Persians moved against main-
land Greece. In 492 Thrace and Macedonia were subjugated, and more might have been attempted had not the Persian fleet been wrecked off Mount Athos. In 490 a new fleet was sent directly across the Aegean. Eretria was burned and its people carried off captive. Athens was to be next. Hippias, the former tyrant, was with the Persian fleet; his partisans were expected to rise against the Athenian government and help the Persians restore him. The Persians landed on the east coast of Attica at the plain of Marathon. By prompt action the Athenians, with the help of their neighbors from the little city of Plataea, defeated the landing force before any uprising could take place. The Persian fleet then sailed around the Attic peninsula, hoping to reach Athens before the army should return, but the army returned at once and was ready for them. Therefore they did not attempt a landing, but sailed back to Asia Minor. Any thought of a further expedition was broken off by the death of the Great King, as the Persian ruler was called. His successor, Xerxes, had to spend the first years of his reign suppressing revolts. Accordingly the Greeks had ten years’ respite.

These ten years saw a great increase in the importance of Athens. The policies of Solon and Pisistratus had already given her a chief place among the trading cities. Her defeat of the Persians had increased her military prestige and self-confidence. Her self-confidence now got a shock when her chronic war with the rival trading city of Aegina, on an island just across the Saronic Gulf, went badly. Then came the discovery of rich deposits of silver near the tip of the Attic peninsula, and a politician named Themistocles persuaded the city to use its new wealth in building up its navy. Just at this time a new type of warship was coming
into general use. Where the old warships had been rowed by fifty oars, the new ones—triremes—had a hundred and seventy, arranged in three banks. Besides their rowers, they carried twenty-five or thirty officers and hands and could also carry some marines. Since Athens now replaced her old warships by triremes, when the next Persian attack came she was able to contribute not only more ships than all the other Greek states put together but faster and more heavily manned ships, too. She had achieved a pre-eminence on sea comparable to that of Sparta on land.

The Persian attack came in 480. It was a carefully planned campaign to conquer all Greece and was perhaps the largest military operation the world had ever seen. Yet the immense Persian army and navy which bore down on Greece was only one jaw of a gigantic pair of pincers. The other jaw, originating from Carthage, the great African colony of Persia's Phoenician subjects, moved from the southwest against the Greeks of Sicily. The figures given in Greek reports for the Persian and Carthaginian forces are fantastic, but it is not impossible that they may together have involved three hundred thousand men. On the eastern front the Persian preparations were on a scale appropriate to the numbers involved: a pontoon bridge, using boats for pontoons, was built across the Hellespont, a ship canal was dug through the isthmus connecting Mount Athos to the mainland, stores of food and equipment were prepared in Thrace and Macedonia.

These preparations made the Greeks aware of their common danger and persuaded some of them to act together in self-defense. Some, but by no means all. Delphi was pro-Persian (the prudent interpreters of Apollo were more used to tell of miracles than to expect them). Thessaly and its
hinterland went over to the Persian side as soon as the Great King's army approached. The Greeks of Crete refused to participate in the common defense, and so on. But Sparta, Athens, Corinth, Thebes, and some two dozen of the minor city-states did join their forces under Spartan leadership.

A first attempt to stop the Persians was made at the pass of Thermopylae. Here the Spartan King, Leonidas, was posted with a Greek force of at first almost seven thousand, ultimately only fourteen hundred men. These held up the entire Persian army for a week by heroic and eventually suicidal resistance. After Thermopylae the Spartans made no further effort to defend either Central Greece or Attica, but devoted themselves to fortifying the Isthmus of Corinth. Thebes, the largest city of Boeotia, went over to the Persians. In Athens, the majority of the citizens fled, mostly to the island of Salamis, where the Greek fleet had gathered. The Persian army marched almost unopposed through Boeotia and Attica, occupied Athens, overcame a few fanatics who tried to hold the Acropolis, and destroyed the city. The Persian fleet meanwhile rounded the point of Attica, sailed up the Saronic Gulf, and anchored off Athens, blocking the southern entrance to the straits which separate Salamis from the mainland. Themistocles now persuaded the Greek fleet in the straits of Salamis to await the Persian attack there, where the Persians would get least benefit from their superiority in numbers. He also tricked the Persians into blocking the other entrance to the straits, thus forcing the Greeks to stay there anyhow. In the ensuing battle so many Persian ships were destroyed that Xerxes withdrew the remainder to guard his route of return across the Hellespont.
At the same time the Carthaginian invasion of Sicily was routed by Gelon, tyrant of Syracuse, at the battle of Himera, and Greek control of most of the island for another seventy years was secured.

Salamis was fought late in September. The military season was then over for the year, and Xerxes returned to Asia Minor for the winter but left in Greece a large army, which wintered in Thessaly. The Great King may have intended to come back in the spring, but a revolt in Babylonia prevented this and the army left in Greece went unsupported. It was defeated in the summer at Plataea by the united Greek land force under the Spartan regent, Pausanias. Only a remnant got back to Asia Minor.

In the same year as the battle of Plataea (479) the remainder of the Persian fleet in Asia Minor was caught on shore by the Greeks at Mount Mycale, just north of Miletus, and destroyed.

After these defeats the Persians could no longer hold subject the Greek cities on the Aegean coast. Many revolted at once. But others required outside help to throw off their Persian garrisons. And even those which regained their freedom at once could not hope to keep it unless the power of European Greece were alert to protect them against further Persian attacks.

However, most of the little places which had banded together to fight off the Persians had neither mind nor means to become involved in long operations on the other side of the Aegean. Even Sparta, the official leader of the league, was reluctant to send her men so far from home. The helots were always a domestic threat, and foreign service might corrupt the men, undermining their Spartan discipline. When she did send out Pausanias, he was corrupted.
Yet worse, his authoritarian behavior made him insupportable to the allies. He had to be recalled.

Athens, on the other hand, had ties of kinship with the Ionian cities of Asia Minor. As the chief trading city of the Aegean, she wanted to ring the sea with friendly ports. She particularly wanted to end Persian control over access to the Black Sea and its trade. She had the ships necessary for the overseas war. She had a ruling class used to the ways of the world and able to organize the co-operative effort which the circumstances required. Finally, under Themistocles' leadership, she had rebuilt her own fortifications and fortified a rocky promontory, the Piraeus, so as to make a group of defensible harbors. This made her independent of her mainland neighbors and free to follow her own policies overseas.

Accordingly, when Sparta abdicated leadership, Athens assumed it. In 478 or 477 she organized what is known as the Delian league. Each member was to contribute, according to ability, ships, and men or money. There was to be a common treasury, the ancient Ionian shrine of Apollo on Delos, and a common council, meeting there. Each of the allied states was to have a representative and a vote. Athens, by far the largest contributor, was sure of pre-eminence in the council and of the military command.

The scheme was successful beyond expectation. Liberation of the coastal cities of Thrace and Asia Minor went on apace, and the league increased the number of its members. Since military service was burdensome, more and more of the members preferred to substitute money payments. The Athenians undertook the military burden and paid for it with the money contributed by their allies, who thus built up the Athenian navy while themselves losing
the habit of self-defense. Presently the league was able to turn its attention to other matters. Island cities which had sided with the Persians during the invasion could now be punished, and this could be profitable. Pirate strongholds could be cleaned out in the common interest, especially in the interest of the major trading city, which also planted colonies on the islands thus made vacant. Eventually came the day when a member of the league got tired of contributing and decided to withdraw. This was Naxos. Naxos was subjugated by the Athenian forces about 470, and the allies of the Delian league found themselves effectively subject states of an Athenian empire.

At home, however, Athens was becoming more democratic. Before the Persian war the chief executive officers of the state had come to be chosen by lot, but so many incompetents were thus selected that the allotted offices lost their powers and the most influential positions in the state came to be those which remained elective because they could not safely be entrusted to fools. A board of ten generals was annually elected, and commands in particular campaigns were voted to one or another as occasion arose. Besides military affairs the board came to have charge of the grain supply, the state finances, and foreign policy. But even successful generals were not safe from the passion or stupidity of the people. Any unpopular official action was apt to be followed by accusation and trial before a court composed of hundreds or even thousands of members chosen by lot. Besides formal prosecution, there was a device known as "ostracism" by which the man who got the most votes in a general unpopularity contest was banished for ten years. To get a man ostracized, any slander would suffice. Themistocles, who had done so much to
make the city powerful and save it from the Persians, was ostracized and then, in his absence, condemned to death on a charge of conspiracy with the Persians; he narrowly escaped capture and ended his days as a pensioner of the Great King. Next it was the turn of the next most competent general, Cimon. He had conquered a series of outposts for the Athenian empire, subjected a number of Athens' reluctant allies, and defeated a Persian expedition which set out in the 460's to re-establish Persian influence in the Aegean; but he was on good terms with the Spartans. When Sparta was devastated by earthquake in 464 and then threatened by a rising of the Messenian helots, he persuaded the Athenians to send an expeditionary force to help put down the revolt. The Spartans came to suspect that the Athenians of this force were plotting against them; accordingly they asked the force to leave. Athens reacted to the request by ostracizing Cimon and siding with the Messenians. When it was finally settled that the Messenians should leave Sparta, Athens gave them a home at Naupactus, where they strengthened her hold on the Gulf of Corinth and her ability to bottle up, if necessary, Corinth's trade with the west.

Cimon had been the leader of the conservative party. His ostracism was largely procured by two younger men of the popular party for whom it left the stage open, Ephialtes and Pericles. Ephialtes was not likely to be ostracized. He was now murdered and the murder was generally blamed on his conservative opponents. It left Pericles in power.

Pericles remained in power from 461 to 430. His policy was determined by two factors, the democracy and the empire of Athens. These two factors were complementary: the democracy provided the popular support and
dynamism for the empire, the empire provided the money and emotional outlets for the democracy. To maintain the empire it was necessary, first of all, to maintain the navy. This required rowers. The rowers came largely from the lowest class of citizens. They had to be paid well, as rowing was both hard work and skilled work, and they had to be satisfied with the general policy of the state. Therefore the state must be a democracy, and because it was a democracy the lowest class was interested in maintenance of the empire which assured it of employment and of political importance. Further, to maintain the empire it was desirable to have supporters in the subject states ("the allies"). Support was not likely to come in these states from the upper classes, who were often commercial rivals of the Athenians and always taxed to pay the tribute to pay for the navy. Therefore Athens intervened in the domestic affairs of her allies on behalf of the lower classes. This intervention was not merely an expression of preference for the democratic forms of government she imposed. At best it was an attempt to base the empire on lower-class support abroad as it was based at home; at worst it was an application of the principle, divide and rule. Thus Athens assumed among the Greek city-states the role formerly played by the tyrant within the Greek city: she protected the poor against the oligarchs; the poor supported her and enabled her to act without concern for customary obligations. When her enemies spoke of her as a tyrant city, they intended the term to be accurate as well as abusive; Pericles himself is represented as telling the Athenians that they held their rule as a tyranny and could not safely relinquish it.

These facts explain the policy of Pericles. He was not himself a tyrant. He did not set himself above the laws of
his own city; he was regularly elected, year after year, to the board of generals; he met considerable opposition and met it by legal means. But the policies dictated by the position of his city were the policies of the tyrants.

First there were direct grants to the poor: Pericles instituted payments to enable poor citizens to attend the theaters and to serve in the courts—this altered the temper of the courts, by making service more attractive to the poor than to the rich. Subsequent provisions for the transfer of cases from “allied” cities to Athens increased the amount of employment for the Athenians, brought to the city many litigants who had to spend money there, and subjected the wealthy men of other states to the jurisdiction of the democratic Athenian courts.

Next there was seizure of property. Seizure of the property of “allies” who revolted was a well-established policy of the Delian league; under Pericles it was carried on in many instances; he himself took charge of the suppression of Samos. The common fund of the league was an obvious opportunity for seizure: it was transferred from Delos to Athens in 454 and the meetings of the council were discontinued. Besides this, from 461 to 446 Pericles followed a policy of military expansion in mainland Greece. Megara, northern Euboea, and points along the Gulf of Corinth were seized, and Athenian control was temporarily extended over Boeotia. At the same time, however, he attempted expansion to the east. An intermittent war was carried on for the liberation of the Greeks of Cyprus. Dor, on the Palestinian coast, was seized and used as a base for an expedition to Egypt to support a rebellion against the Persians there. This overextended the Athenian power. The
Egyptian expedition ended in disaster, Dor was lost, and Pericles chose to sacrifice the Greeks of Cyprus. The Peace of Callias in 449 left them to Persia, but assured Athens of undisturbed control in the Aegean and thus of a free hand in Greece itself. But the sacrifice was in vain, for it was followed by defeats in Greece and the loss of Boeotia and Megara. A "thirty-years' peace" with Sparta in 446 put an end to this phase of Pericles' policy. He found a substitute in colonization, first in the Thracian Chersonese, in northern Euboea and Naxos in 447, and then in other Aegean islands, in Macedonia, Thrace, southern Italy, the districts around the Black Sea, and so on. Thus he seized land for the city's supporters, especially the poorer Athenian citizens, and the empire was strengthened by military and mercantile outposts.

Protection of artisans and encouragement of trade were characteristics of the same policy. Pericles' military program gave employment to Athenian metalworkers, shipbuilders, and so on. The Egyptian expedition was undertaken in hope of capturing the trade of Egypt. Colonization in southern Italy and treaties with Italian and Sicilian cities were intended to increase Athenian trade in that area at the expense of Corinth. An expedition to the Black Sea extended commercial relations as well as colonization there. (The region was important to Athens as a source of salt fish and grain. Cheap food for the poor of the city was a primary goal of this policy: it helped the lower classes, on whom the regime rested, and it weakened the aristocratic opposition, of which the core was Attic landowners, whose incomes depended on the prices of the products of their lands.) These far-flung trading interests were tied together
by standardization of coinage: most of the subject states were prohibited from continuing to mint their own currencies and required to use Athenian coin instead.

Finally, the program of building for the strengthening and glorification of Athens was also characteristic of tyrannical policy. The first (458), and politically the most important, step in this was the building of "the long walls" to connect the city with the Piraeus and prevent its being cut off from the sea by a land attack. This was the basis of Pericles' military confidence. The last step of the program and that most important to the arts was the building of the architectural complex on the Acropolis and especially of its crowning structure, the Parthenon. This, like his program of colonization, Pericles began in 447, when his military schemes were failing. Partly, the new building gave the citizens something to talk about and distracted their attention from the failure, partly it increased their pride and delight in the city and thus their loyalty to Pericles, partly it made work for the artisans whom the suspension of military activities would leave idle. This last consideration was decisive. The work was paid for from the funds contributed by the members of the Delian league for defense against the Persians. Pericles' opponents objected that "Greece will think it a shameful insult and a conspicuous example of tyranny if those funds, which it was compelled to contribute for the war, are openly used by us to gild the city and paint it up like a strumpet" (the marble sculptures and decoration of the temples were painted) "hung around with precious stones and statues and million-dollar temples." Pericles, however, persuaded the people:
that they owed no accounting for the money to the allies, since they
did the fighting for them and kept off the barbarians,
while the allies contributed no horse nor ship nor hoplite, but
only money. Money is not the property of those who give it,
but of those who receive it, if they provide the services for
which it is given them. Moreover, now that the city has been
sufficiently equipped with the necessities for the war, its funds
may properly be used for these new plans which if carried out
will yield eternal glory and immediate prosperity, since they
require all sorts of labor and create various needs which put
every skill to work, keep every hand busy, and employ almost
the whole city, at once adorning and supporting itself [Plutarch,
Pericles, XII].

The Parthenon made work from 447–432. The rest of
the Acropolis was still far from completion at Pericles’
death in 429. Other temples, too, were built, especially the
shrine of Demeter and Persephone, the goddesses of the
Earth and the Underworld, at Eleusis. There was consider-
able building of markets, harbors, and fortifications, and
also for aesthetic purposes, notably a large music hall at
Athens. Pericles’ patronage of the theater, by instituting
payments to enable the poor to attend, has already been
mentioned. As the tyrants sought to increase their prestige
by maintaining brilliant courts, so Athens was made the
center not only of the naval and financial power but also
of the artistic and intellectual life of the Greek world.
Where formerly there had been many small centers, each
with its own intellectual and artistic originality, now there
was Athens and there were the provinces. The sun was
risen and had eclipsed the stars.

The “thirty years’ peace” with Sparta was unusually suc-
cessful, as peace treaties go: it ran for fifteen years, from 446 to 431. The outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 resulted from a variety of causes. Athens had renounced aggression in mainland Greece, but was still on the aggressive abroad. The objects of her aggression were her chief competitors in trade, Corinth and Megara. She had recently tried to compel one Corinthian colony, Potidæa, to break off connections with the mother city; she was supporting another, Corcyra, in its revolt. She now passed a decree prohibiting the Megarians to use any ports belonging to Athens or its allies. This would practically ban them from the Aegean. In their consequent hostility, Corinth and Megara were joined by Thebes, which wanted to unite Boeotia under its control and was prevented from doing so by the Athenian alliance with Plataea. Corinth now appealed to Sparta. The Spartans were of two minds. On the one hand, they saw their traditional pre-eminence threatened by the continually increasing Athenian empire; on the other, they were reluctant to undertake anything which would draw them out of their shell. They were now persuaded to participate in sending Athens an ultimatum. In Athens, Pericles was not averse to the war. The stories that he precipitated it to cover domestic difficulties are certainly exaggerations, but it may have served such purposes incidentally. Certainly it would give business to his supporters, the artisans and merchants, and would open a wide range of opportunities for pirate enterprise to the democratic navy; it would ruin the big Attic landowners and would demonstrate the relative unimportance of the army, which was a stronghold of upper-class feeling. (Since the soldiers were required to provide their own armor, only those of at least moderate means could serve.) Moreover,
he thought that if Athens yielded to this ultimatum she would soon be presented with another and yet another and finally, when weakened, would have to fight anyhow in self-defense, whereas if she fought at once she would lose little and might gain a great deal. So the war came.

Neither side had any plan for fighting it effectively. The Spartan strategy was merely to march into Attica each summer, do what damage they could, and march back. Pericles seems to have ordered his navy to pick up whatever it could along the coasts, a strategy which hurt Sparta even less than Sparta hurt Athens. As for the population of Attica, Pericles had foreseen that when the Spartans came it could take refuge inside the city’s fortifications, but he seems never to have thought of how the refugees would be taken care of. They were left to camp in vacant lots and temples and at corners of the city walls. The sanitary consequences of such statesmanship must have been breathtaking. Amazingly, the plague did not strike until the second summer. Then it carried off perhaps a third of the population. Pericles died in the following year (429), but the men who succeeded him in power had no more idea than he did of how to conduct an effective war, so the stalemate went on. Finally in 425 more serious developments began: an Athenian commander operating off the west coast of the Peloponnese chanced to seize a headland there. He found it an ideal base from which to organize subversive activities among the helots of Sparta. This so frightened the Spartans that they tried to drive him out, failed to do so, and lost 420 first-class troops in the process. To them this was a major loss, for military comradeship and the general austerity of Spartan life had diminished their birth rate, and every man mattered. The next year a Spartan general had the idea
of taking an army to Chalcidice to liberate Athens' unwilling allies there. The allies welcomed him, and he was presently able to take Amphipolis in eastern Macedonia. Amphipolis was important—it controlled communications along the coast, a trade route to the north, and an area rich in gold and silver and timber and tar for the fleet. Holding it, the Spartans were able to threaten the whole north Aegean coast. Thus the war began to hurt both Athens and Sparta, so an armistice was arranged in 423, and peace was concluded in 421.

This "First" Peloponnesian War thus accomplished nothing. Perhaps its most important event—after the plague at Athens—was the failure of the Athenian general Thucydides to save Amphipolis from his Spartan opponent. This resulted in his exile from Athens, which enabled him to devote the leisure, relative objectivity, and analytical hindsight of an exiled general to the composition of a history of the war so penetrating that it marks the beginning of modern historical thought.

Because the war had not struck at vital areas, it had not changed the social and economic structure which produced it. Athens was still the tyrant city, compelled by the same economic needs to follow the same policy as before. Sparta was still Sparta, with its narrow military aristocracy equally distrustful at home and abroad, but more resentful than ever of Athens' challenge to its pre-eminence. The minor states were even less reconciled: Corinth, for instance, never accepted the peace. Therefore it is not unreasonable to treat the "Second" Peloponnesian War, which officially began in 414, as a continuation of the first.

Again events were precipitated by the imperialism of Athens and particularly by her attempt to take over terri-
tory which had formerly been Corinthian. Syracuse was originally a Corinthian colony. Though long independent, it retained an affection for the mother city which probably accounted for much of Corinth's continued importance in trade with the west. Athens, therefore, found a pretext for an expedition in 415 to conquer Syracuse: 137 ships, over 25,000 sailors, 7,150 land troops—and 30 horses. (The cavalry was made up of the citizens rich enough to keep horses for military purposes; it was anything but a bulwark of democracy, and horses were difficult to transport.) This was by no means the total strength of Athens, but it represented a great effort and was deemed sufficient to conquer one of the largest cities in the Greek world.

Unfortunately for the expedition, its most energetic general, Alcibiades, left behind him a wide circle of exasperated enemies. He was a wealthy, brilliant, and scandalously beautiful young man who had been the ward of Pericles, had fallen in love with Socrates, and had so distinguished himself by his public speaking, his race horses, and his democratic politics that he was suspected by many of plotting to become tyrant, but by more, of lacking proper respect for the gods, the laws, and his elders, including themselves. Just before the Syracusan expedition sailed, a number of the statues of the god Hermes, which displayed their erect phalli in the streets of Athens, were mutilated. Rumor blamed Alcibiades and his friends; he was said also to have given parties at which the guests were entertained by parodies of the sacred mysteries performed at Eleusis. His enemies waited until the expedition, containing most of his supporters, had sailed, and then sent an order for him to return to stand trial—before a court which would be made up largely of men from the older genera-
tion. He preferred flight to death and fled to Sparta. This left the expedition in the hands of less energetic and capable men; it bogged down in besieging Syracuse and eventually found itself besieged instead. In 413, Athens, by severe sacrifice, sent another expedition of 73 ships, about 14,000 sailors, 5,000 heavy infantry, and an unspecified number of light-armed troops. Even these new troops were not sufficient to capture the city. It soon became apparent that the whole expedition would have to withdraw, and had better do so at once. Just then, however, came an eclipse of the moon. Most of the Athenians took this as an omen and urged the generals to delay sailing. The ranking general, acting on the advice of his prophets, refused to move for thrice nine days. During this time the Syracusans blocked the Athenian ships in the harbor. The Athenians were unable to escape, and everything left of both expeditions was lost.

Meanwhile in Greece, on Alcibiades' advice, Sparta had resumed the war in 414. Now it established a fortress in the north of Attica, to serve as a base for year-round raiding and a refuge for runaway slaves. Between raids and runaways the produce of Attic farms and mines was largely lost. When the expedition to Syracuse was destroyed in 413, the Syracusans and their Sicilian allies and fleet came into the war on the Spartan side. In 412 Persia entered the war on the Spartan side. At the same time most of the "allies" of Athens along the Ionian coast revolted. After these disasters the democratic party in Athens was discredited. In 411, under pressure from elements of the army, the constitution was remodeled on oligarchic lines, and the new rulers attempted to reach an agreement with Sparta. But this the people were not ready to accept; the people
had the navy on their side, and the navy had a firm base on Samos, where compulsory democracy had been established by Pericles and was maintained by murdering the remnants of the upper class. From Samos the navy reconquered much of the empire. Alcibiades was recalled as supreme general, democracy was restored in Athens, and Spartan offers of peace were refused. But the new Athenian democracy was immoderate by nature and exasperated by circumstance. It was no firm base for any military program. Alcibiades, after a naval defeat, was deprived of his command, retired to a fortress in the Thracian Chersonese, fled thence to the Persians, and by them was put to death. The generals who succeeded him won some victories but could not retain the support of the assembly. Moreover Athens was nearing exhaustion, while the Spartans now had Persian money; they could always hire new rowers and build new fleets. In 405 the last Athenian fleet was destroyed. In 404 Athens surrendered to the Spartans, and Samos was reduced by siege a few months later.

The Athenian empire thus rose and fell within seventy-five years (478–404). It was the shortest lived of the famous empires of the ancient world. It was also the tiniest. At its greatest extent it comprised little more than a bit of southeastern Greece, most of the islands of the Aegean, and the cities along its northern and eastern coasts, a scattering of places on the southern coast of Asia Minor, around the Black Sea and its approaches, and up the western coast of Greece, and a colony in southern Italy. In military strength it could muster at sea about 300 ships, manned by about 60,000 men, while on land it had slightly over 30,000 troops, of which, however, half were reserves. Neither the land troops nor the men on the ships were all
Athenian citizens; citizens probably accounted for 50,000, at most, of the 90,000. Now military service was compulsory for all citizens physically capable of it, from the ages of twenty to forty-nine inclusive, and the number of citizens over this age was probably not great: ancient medical science was such that old men were rare enough to be respected. Therefore the total citizen body of Athens probably numbered, at the very most, about 60,000. This would imply an equal number of adult women and over twice as many children no longer infants. (Mortality was high even among adolescents, and among infants it was probably enormous.) Then there were slaves: the poor citizen who rowed in the navy probably had no slave, the small farmer or shopkeeper had two or three, the rich sometimes had thousands (hired out for labor). A slave population somewhat larger than the number of citizens is not improbable. Finally there was a large body of resident aliens who enjoyed some legal protection but not the rights of citizens. (They were important in trade, especially in the grain trade, and as contractors and craftsmen in local business; they paid taxes and were liable to military service.) If they numbered 30,000 this number should be quadrupled to allow for their wives and children. In all, then, the population of Attica was less than half a million, of which the most part was concentrated in Athens. And it must be emphasized that the figures above are maximal.

Yet in Athens, small as it was, were concentrated, during the brief span of the Athenian empire, the achievements and the conflicts, the triumph and the tragedy, of Greek civilization.

The economic achievement which made the civilization possible was the development of the trading network of
Greek cities, from Spain to the Caucasus. This immense extension of civic and civilized life, of demands and markets and available materials, had been the work of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries. Athens, in the fifth century, organized much of it, bound it together by a uniform currency and a more intensive trade, and concentrated the variety of the products and the bulk of the profits in one great city. In this city, therefore, the civic and civilized life of Greece reached its acme. Here for the first time were the people and the power which made possible new achievements and gave greater significance to whatever was done.

Take city government, for example. Other cities had been governed democratically. But Athens was the center of the world. That in Athens in its greatness the people elected their own officers, maintained their own courts, taxed themselves, determined their foreign policy, and, in a word, exercised final control over every aspect of their own government—this was the great example of democracy in operation which influenced political thought throughout antiquity and inspired the democratic revolutionists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But this civic achievement had to be paid for: every district had to have its governor, secretary, treasurer, priest, herald (town crier), and so on; courts had to be made up, and hundreds of judge-jurors were required for each; the Assembly had to be attended; the Council of Five Hundred had to be filled; so did the other offices of the state (and it has been estimated that at any given moment there were no less than fourteen hundred persons occupying official posts). Performance of official duties took time. The poor could not afford it, nor the middle class be persuaded to it unless they were paid for their services. So the economic and
imperial expansion of Athens and the maintenance of her
democratic government went hand in hand.
A similar relationship existed between the growth of
the city and the development of civilized life—the life of
leisure and elegance, of refined amusements, privacy, and
reflective thought. All these aspects of civilization had been
anticipated in the Greek cities of the sixth century and
before, in the developments of archaic art and architecture,
of the festivals and games, of lyric poetry, and of Ionian
philosophy. But except for the public buildings and the
festivals, they had been chiefly for the aristocrats. The
economic development of Athens and the exploitation of
her empire now afforded a modicum of wealth and leisure
to a middle class of perhaps twenty thousand of Athens' citizens, their wives, and families. These, concentrated in
the one city, create a new sort of demand, for a more
economical elegance and for the cheaper luxuries (including individualism and reflective thought).
This new demand is everywhere apparent. The artifacts
of everyday life, chairs and beds and tables, acquire a new
elegance of line and an economical simplicity which itself
is elegant. There is evidence of increasing resort by all
classes of citizens to the gymasia built and maintained by
public funds—and a gymnasium was not merely a place
for exercise, but a center of political, erotic, and intellectual
life. There was an increasing concern for women and their
problems; a new softness and delicacy, especially in funerary sculpture and many artifacts, probably reflect feminine taste. Most important of all is the increasing emphasis
on artistic, intellectual, and moral elements in the festivals.
Here again a sharp contrast cannot be made. The games
had not been wholly upper-class assemblies, though the
members of the oligarchic families could best afford to go to them and undoubtedly set their tone. Nor had they remained without intellectual and artistic content: contests in music, which included the singing of original lyric poems, had been introduced at the Pythian games, and celebration of the victors was often an occasion for composition and singing of new lyrics. Most of the odes of Pindar, the greatest of the lyric poets after Sappho, were written for such occasions and derive their power from the peculiarly Greek realization of the union of youth and beauty and triumph as a moment of divinity in the life of a young man who soon (being a man) will die. But when Pindar himself died in 438, he had outlived his world. Since the middle of the sixth century the games had been rivaled by the development of the civic festivals which were more easily accessible to the lower classes. Now, with the fifth century, the January and March festivals of Dionysus, one of the gods most worshiped by the peasants, were developed into a new sort of contest and came to provide the classic occasions and supreme forms for original poetic composition.

The forms were tragedy and comedy. Significantly, they developed in Athens. Pisistratus, who knew what his supporters wanted, introduced the March festival to the city and established a temple for the god and an adjacent dancing floor, where the dramatic performances took place, on the southern slope of the Acropolis. Cleisthenes, concerned to get popular support after the expulsion of the family of Pisistratus, patronized the festivals yet further. How the original cult of the god developed so as to include classic tragedy and comedy is a matter of dispute, but there is no doubt that the classic drama was part of a religious cere-
mony. So were the contests in the games, and it is typical of the Greek love of contests and individualism that the dramatic festivals were also made contests: plays by three or more poets were presented at each and a winner chosen. It is yet more typical of Athenian democracy that the cost of producing the plays—like the cost of fitting out and manning the warships, and other extraordinary state expenses—should have been allocated by popular or governmental appointment to outstandingly wealthy citizens. Thus by special taxation of the rich the whole citizen body was able to enjoy the greatest literature, music, and dramaturgy of the age. Ranging from scathing political satire to penetrating psychological analysis and exquisite lyric poetry, from the most outrageous burlesque to the most profound theological speculation, the Attic drama of the fifth century is the supreme example of this new, civic and civilized life, in which the exclusive achievements of the earlier culture were further developed and by development made accessible to the citizen body as a whole.

It is the achievement of this new life which Pericles (if Thucydides reports him true) chose to celebrate in his speech at the funeral of those dead who fell in the first year of the Peloponnesian War. He said, in substance: These men are to be praised for what they loved and died for—not our political greatness alone, but the constitution from which it has arisen. That constitution is called democratic because it favors not the few, but the many. Yet it affords equal justice to all and advances men according to their capacities, not their social standing. It leaves individuals free to do as they like in their private lives, yet compels their observance not only of the civil and criminal laws, but also of the unwritten laws of decency. Moreover, we have
provided many relaxations: we celebrate games and sacrifices all the year round, and in the elegance of our homes we enjoy a daily delight which drives out grief. Besides this, the greatness of the city brings to us the pleasant things of all other countries. Therefore we do not expel strangers nor fear spies, since we trust not in stratagems, but in our own willingness to work. Similarly in education we do not resort to laborious drilling from childhood on, but we get satisfactory results. We combine love of beauty with economy, and love of wisdom with manliness. We blame not poverty, but laziness; and we expect a citizen not only to manage his own affairs, but also to be an adequate judge of political questions, for we think discussion not a hindrance to action, but a prerequisite for it. In a word, our city as a whole is the school of Greece, and, to speak of the individual Athenian, I think that among us the average man is able to address himself adequately to more different problems, more easily, and, above all, with more savoir faire than anywhere else in the world. That these claims are not mere words is shown by the power which our city has attained. Such is the Athens for which these men died. She is what they made her. You, their survivors, must behold her power at work day by day and likewise become her lovers.

The confidence of this speech is based on Pericles' political experience. He had observed his people, he knew what they wanted and what would seem to them to justify their losses in the war. Glory and Athens? Of course. But also the new private life, the individual liberty, and the new things to do with it, things which had never before been available to the middle-class man. These made Athens what it was; these were its true glory. He was aware of what
could be said against them: as a politician he knew how ignorance and personal interest could vent themselves in the Assembly. He must have known better than anyone else what Athens paid for amateur administration. He was a friend of writers and philosophers, and his mistress, Aspasia, was a brilliant courtesan from Miletus. Aspasia and a number of the intellectuals of his circle were prosecuted for impiety, and he must have known what the conservatives were saying about the demoralization of the city by the neglect and criticism of old ways and the introduction of new customs and ideas. But he looked at the facts and began his speech by stating that individualism did not threaten either the enforcement of civil and criminal law or the maintenance of common decency. Against it he saw superstition and timidity; for it he saw the beauty, joy, and power, which sprang from the new way of life, and he based his confidence on those.

In this love of beauty, this courage to grasp at joy and power and risk the consequences, but also in his clear observation of facts and his common sense, he was typical of his city and his age.

In the graphic and plastic arts naturalism, based on observation, slowly but steadily increased. The purpose of the arts, however, was still the common-sense one of creating, decorating, and representing beautiful things. To the common-sense mind it is obvious that ugly and distressing objects are not to be represented in art. If the decoration of a temple requires the representation of a battle, for example, wounds and suffering may be indicated in subordinate parts of the composition, but as a whole art is to represent objects at their most beautiful, as they are, but also as they should be. The master of this style was Pericles'
friend Phidias, whose genius raised him above the rank of
craftsman, to which most Greek artists were relegated by
their contemporaries. Phidias was in charge of the sculpture
of the Parthenon and after its completion in 432 went to
Olympia, where he made a famous gold and ivory statue
of Zeus. As a familiar of Pericles’ circle he must have been
in touch with contemporary philosophy, and what he
thought his deities represented is a matter for speculation.
But the beauty of his work is undoubted. Of the Zeus it
was said that if a man who had suffered every sorrow were
to stand before it he would forget all the griefs and troubles
of human life. At the other end of the social scale the
decorators of pottery show the same characteristics as
Phidias. Common sense reminded them that the grotesque
would sell, and the range of their subjects is considerably
larger than that of Phidian sculpture. But for the most part
they drew to beautify and they drew the beautiful. At the
same time, their work shows increasing naturalism, facili-
tated by the change from black- to red-figure technique,
which meant that the details of the figures, instead of being
incised on silhouettes, could now be painted. As in sculpt-
ure, the gain in naturalism was paid for by some loss of
force and simplicity.

Similar development characterizes the history of the
literature. The essential difference between the drama and
the choral poetry from which it probably developed is that
the drama attempts a more naturalistic presentation of the
myths which the choral poetry merely sang and danced.
Within the history of the drama itself there is also a clear
progression toward naturalism. Of the three tragedians
from whose work some plays have survived, Aeschylus,
who wrote from about 490 to 456, is concerned chiefly
with the theological bases of conflicts of justice and law; his characters, even when they are human beings, are primarily the representatives of the conflicting supernatural powers and speak with superhuman force and grandeur. In Sophocles, active from 468 to 406, similar conflicts are studied, but from the side of man; the interest lies in their impact on human character. In Euripides, from 455 to 406, character study becomes an end in itself, and an interest in psychopathology appears, to anticipate the studies of old age and deformity in later hellenistic art. After Euripides comes Aristophanes, 427–385, the one fifth-century comedian from whom we have complete plays. His work combines naturalism, a delight in the grotesque and a different sort of idealization—satirical exaggerations of unequaled verve. These phenomena in poetry were paralleled by the more important development of prose as a vehicle of literature. In the histories of Herodotus, who died about 429, we have the first preserved work by a Greek writer who disregards the conventional requirements of verse and sets out to tell in his own language a plain story of what reportedly happened.

This development of naturalism in art and literature is only one aspect of a general development of a new way of thought, which vies with the new way of life described above as Athens’ most important contribution to the history of the world. This new way of thought had been anticipated in the Ionian philosophy of the sixth century, but Athens carried it further and transformed it from the peculiarity of a few speculative thinkers to a characteristic shaping every aspect of the city’s intellectual and much of its practical life.

Ionian philosophy had begun with the attempt to explain
the origin of the world by analogies from observable material processes—condensation, rarefaction, and the like. From this it had gone on to rational criticism of its theories and hence to a new awareness that thought is systematic, that ideas imply hypotheses which must be tested and have consequences which must be faced. The naturalistic and systematic way of thought was now extended by common sense to more practical questions than the creation of the world. In medicine, Hippocrates is remembered as having demanded that the body be studied as a whole and its pathological conditions described by reference to all relevant circumstances. In historical writing Thucydides followed up the rambling narrative of Herodotus with a closely knit work expressing his concept of history as a structure of interlocking effects—becoming—causes, which he attempted to analyze. (This notion reflects his experience on the Athenian board of generals and is itself reflected not only in later historical writing, but also in later history, which it influenced by shaping statesmen’s understanding of the events with which they had to deal.) A similarly analytical attitude toward human affairs appears in the work of the planner of cities, Hippodamus of Miletus, who remodeled the Piraeus in the 440’s and also designed Pericles’ Italian colony. He is remembered for his introduction of the gridiron plan for cities, to replace the rabbit warren of winding streets. Hippodamus’ work reflected, beside analysis, the experience gained in the centuries of Greek colonization, which had made town planning a recurrent problem. The same experience is reflected in fifth-century architecture, not only in many small refinements—irregularities of line to thwart the effects of perspective, and so on—but also in planning dramatic complexes of pub-
lic buildings, notably that which crowned the Acropolis, where the Parthenon was made the apex of an area of smaller structures, entered through a monumental gateway.

The same skill in planning human affairs and manipulating men's reactions was applied to the problems of private life, which were more pressing because of the new Athenian way of living. In this new society what should a man attempt and how could he succeed? With the mid-century, professional teachers of "successful living" appeared—men known as "sophists" because they claimed to make one wise (*sophos*). The chief market for their skill was Athens, but they also traveled from city to city, lecturing with great success. Their teaching covered a wide variety of subjects, but especially concerned the art of public speaking. In Athenian democracy political success depended largely on a man's skill as a speaker. And beside politics there was the law: Athenians were litigious, and any man might find himself compelled to argue for his fortune, if not his life, before a court of several hundred of his fellow citizens. It was necessary to speak for oneself, though a writer might be hired to prepare the speech. By their studies of rhetoric, argument (whence logic), and grammar, the sophists laid the basis of Greek higher education, from which was to come the mediaeval university program. By their immediate teaching, however, they—intentionally or unintentionally—obscured the traditional patterns of Greek morality and raised up a generation of skeptics prepared to argue for any action which seemed to their own interest.

In this way the sophists made conspicuous two developments which sprang from causes more general than their
teaching. As Athens extended its trading connections and its people became more familiar with the varieties of human behavior, the rightness of its old ways inevitably came to be questioned. Similarly, as the economic and political structure developed, the temptations of power politics and private wealth broke down the old pattern of family and civic discipline. Supervening on this situation, in the year after Pericles' famous speech, the plague of 430 brought the city to the verge of moral chaos. Thucydides, who lived through it, tells how respect for both divine and human law was destroyed by the sudden changes of fortune which made rich men corpses and poor men rich, by the sight of good and bad men dying alike, and by the expectation of death, which destroyed the fear of punishment and the hope of profit, "since men thought their money and their bodies alike to be things of a day." This, though Thucydides could not foresee it, was to be the goal of much Greek philosophy.

At present, however, it was the starting point. For the moral breakdown was both cause and consequence of the rational build-up (of which the argumentative side of sophistry was an example). Once the new habit of coherent, argumentative thought had been turned to moral problems, these problems emerged with a clarity which compelled their discussion and called forth their consequences.

The discussion is obvious: Aristophanes is constantly concerned with such problems; they are the central theme of Thucydides and Herodotus. In philosophy, the Ionian school went out of fashion at Athens; after the plague—and perhaps because of it—the scene was dominated by
Socrates, who turned from cosmology to moral questions. But above all, these questions are the heart of Athenian tragedy.

The basis of the tragedies, as of the works of Aristophanes, Herodotus and Thucydides, is traditional Greek morality, the code which had emerged from the dark ages. Like many codes of primitive societies, this put great emphasis on the maintenance of the established order, the proper subordination of the individual to the human and cosmic society. On the entrance to the temple of Delphi, whose god was the prophet of this old order, were inscribed the precepts, “Nothing too much,” and “Know yourself,” which meant, “Know your place and stay in it.” This was obviously a protection of privilege, but it was also a bill of rights. When a strong man rode roughshod over the weak or a city pressed an advantage too far and destroyed another without mercy or provocation, the victim suffered not only cruelty but also humiliation, the offender was guilty not only of cruelty but also of arrogance, of forgetting his own human nature, his own liability to suffer similar misfortunes. Common humanity was thought to require observance of common decency toward inferiors, if not for the inferiors’ sake, then for one’s own; there was thought to be some supernatural power which resented arrogance and would surely punish it. Therefore to avoid arrogance was the teaching of common sense, and it is this teaching which fifth-century tragedy and comedy and history reiterate in ever new apologies for the old faith.

But these apologies were not universally convincing. Arrogance sometimes goes unpunished, and there is no clear evidence for its punishment by any supernatural power. Observation established these facts and common sense, espe-
cially as represented by the sophists, drew the practical conclusions. Accordingly, Greek society was left without adequate sanction for its moral code and the breakdown became apparent in relations between cities, in city politics, and in the relation of the individual to the city.

Relations between cities were based on the fact that the city was the final object of political loyalty. This was a datum of the traditional morality: no good citizen would sacrifice his city for any other political entity. If the cities would observe common (that is to say, ideal) decency in their relations with each other, all might be well. But when Athens had the opportunity of developing an empire by subjection of her allies, her citizens were not deterred either by the charge of arrogance or the fear of punishment. When the city did fall, Thucydides made its crime and punishment the theme of his acute historical sermon; Herodotus had used the arrogance and defeat of Persia in the same way. But their work did not deter other powers from similar injustices. Greek politics remained a chaos of warring cities in a warfare of which the humane restraints progressively diminished.

Within the city the same loss of restraint shaped the conflict between the classes. This conflict had been sufficiently violent in the time of the tyrants. Now the development of observation and the systematic habit of thought made clear its details and worked out its consequences. Several sophists maintained that the laws of the city represented merely the interests of the rulers, and an unknown writer has left a detailed account of the legal ways by which the common people of Athens protected themselves against their natural enemies, the upper class. Understanding of the economic bases and legal methods of the conflict
made it more severe. This, too, was the effect of its continuance, as Thucydides remarked. Each side was apt to be embittered by the hostile actions of the other and to retaliate yet more savagely. Matters could go so far that moderates would be distrusted, despised, and killed off by both sides, and reconciliation could become almost impossible, since neither side would trust the other. In such circumstances even communication almost ceased as words lost their common meanings and became technical terms for party demands or pretenses. The only cure was extermination of one side or the other, or mutual exhaustion. Fortunately, some cities escaped these extremes. In Athens, for instance, the development of trade provided opportunities for investment abroad, saved the small farmers from being bought out, and so preserved a middle group between rich and poor, which prevented either party from going too far. Yet even Athens, after her defeat, was to have a reign of terror under an oligarchy, and many cities were less fortunate than Athens. None wholly escaped the plague of class conflict; some had less, others more severe, cases; many suffered repeated attacks. For centuries it remained endemic in Greece and increased in general frequency and severity.

Thus the discovery that the traditional sanction of the moral order was false was followed by the gradual breakdown of city life. But the uniform pattern of city life had provided the standards of individual moral behavior. Those standards had already been weakened by the influence of alien ways and of critical thought, by the increase of wealth and of opportunities for privacy and individualism. The frequency of exiles in Greek society and the increasing role of resident aliens in trade were contributing causes to the same effect. Isolated individuals, whether isolated in
a foreign city or in their own, appear in the literature as
dramatic examples of adherence to a moral law which over-
rules the discredited, partisan statutes of the city. Sophocles’
*Antigone* is the classic literary example: Antigone buried
her brother in defiance of a city ordinance prohibiting the
action on pain of death; she was apprehended and put to
death; and the gods manifested their displeasure by punish-
ing the ruler of the city.

In the *Antigone* the moral law is represented as the law
of Zeus. But while men were losing belief in the general
divine power which maintained the moral order, belief
in the particular Olympian gods could not survive. The
particular gods had been composite beings, anyhow—essen-
tially powers acting in nature, superficially persons de-
scribed by Homer and Hesiod. Systematic thought about
them now rejected the poetic descriptions. This under-
mined the customary rituals—one prays and brings gifts
to a person, not to a cosmic power—but it did not produce
an acceptable theology. The damage to the rituals was not
immediately apparent: they were perpetuated by law, cus-
tom, and superstition, so as to be somewhat independent
of their supposed significance. But the failure to produce
an acceptable theology was at once and acutely felt. Al-
ready in Aeschylus’ *Prometheus Bound* a myth of conflict
between the gods was made the dramatic representation of
the conflict between rule and compassion. Prometheus, an
immortal being, pitied men and stole fire from heaven for
them. Thus he thwarted Zeus’s plan to let them perish, and
Zeus punished him by crucifying him on a peak in the
Caucasus. But he knew a secret which Zeus must learn if
his rule was to endure. Zeus demanded it; Prometheus re-
fused to tell; Zeus resorted to further tortures. In sum:
the requirements of rule are tyrannical, the impulses of compassion, anarchic. We may see the resultant tragedy in the history of Aeschylus' time, for example, in Athens' subjection of the Delian league, but the poet saw it as a conflict in nature itself, from which both the physical world and human history emerge. If such conflicts rage in nature, there can be no confident appeal from the law of the state to "the law of Zeus." This was certainly not the conclusion Aeschylus would have drawn; he wrote a second play to explain the reconciliation of his conflicting principles. But it was the first play which expressed the thought and commanded the attention of the next generation. The second play was lost.

Euripides devoted a series of plays to conflicts between the human sense of justice and the legends of the gods. Greatest of these plays is The Bacchae, which deals with the coming of Dionysus to Thebes. Dionysus' power made the women of the city leave their homes to range the hills as bacchae (manic worshipers of the god). When the ruler of the city attempted to maintain order, the god deprived him of his reason, made him ridiculous, and led him out to the hills, where he was caught and torn to pieces by a troop of the manic women headed by his mother. The terror of the play comes from the poet's sympathy with both sides. The god is undeniably a god, a source of supernatural power and joy, but his power destroys the good order of the city, makes folly of the common sense of prudent men, and blinds its victims to the deepest attachments of ordinary life. The fact that it is irresistible makes it all the more unjust. Thus the appeal from the law of the city to the law of the god is reduced to a mere appeal from
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the will of one ruler to that of another; it loses any pretense to justice.

But if divine and civil law alike represent no more than the wills of rulers, where can justice be found? The question was raised in deadly earnest by the most important example in history of an individual’s defiance of his society—the trial of Socrates in 399.

Socrates was a stone carver; his concern for philosophy was an example of the extension of cultural interests in Athens to the middle class. In his early years he studied the cosmological theories of the Ionians. He made a name for himself; the oracle at Delphi is said to have declared him the wisest of men. Perhaps by this, perhaps by the success of the sophists, he was turned to the problem of wisdom and dropped cosmology. To investigate the nature of wisdom he made a practice of cross-questioning, in public, men thought to be wise. This got him a host of enemies and a circle of devoted followers, especially young men. His followers imitated his methods, to the intense irritation of their interrogated elders. The teaching of a method of argument, the destructive questioning of accepted moral and theological beliefs, the concern with wisdom and the reputation of his earlier cosmological studies combined to connect him in public opinion with the sophists. He was anxious to avoid the connection and appealed especially to the social, rather than philosophical, distinction, that he never taught for pay. But the evidence was not clear. The sophists taught the rich who could pay their fees, and many of their arguments favored their patrons. Socrates’ following included rich young men, and a number of these went on to attack democracy. Socrates himself had probably ques-
tioned the presuppositions of democratic government, as of the other forms of Athenian behavior. To what extent he went beyond questioning to positive teaching is uncertain. Since half a dozen of his followers later taught half a dozen different kinds of philosophy, it seems likely that his teaching was chiefly limited to example, not only of the method of questioning, but also of the philosophic life, the life contemptuous of possessions and bodily comforts "as things of a day" and devoted entirely to the investigation of intellectual questions. Popular suspicion probably attributed to him specific doctrines. He was finally brought to trial on the charge of corrupting the youth and not believing in the gods which the city believed in but in other new supernatural powers. He was found guilty.

Then, if we can believe Plato's story of the trial, came the essential question. Since the offense had no fixed penalty, the prosecutor and the condemned had each to propose penalties and the court to choose between them. The prosecutor proposed death. Socrates proposed that he be given free meals at public expense for the rest of his life (a common civic honor). His friends persuaded him to change his proposal to a fine, but this did not save him and should not obscure the significance of his original proposal. The individual had flatly refused to accept the authority of the city. The city, through its official, incorrupt tribunal, by democratic procedure, had found his actions criminal and deserving punishment. He admitted the actions, but refused to accept the judgment, and Plato reports that he declared he would continue the actions. The authority in question of right and wrong, therefore, was not the civil court, but his own conscience. That he subsequently refused to escape from jail and therefore voluntarily sub-
mitted to the death penalty is immaterial; the question was not of compliance with the punishment, but of acceptance of the court's finding as correct. Socrates had tried Athens for impiety and had condemned it.
CHAPTER IV

Disintegration

THE fall of Athens in 404 ended the possibility of any Greek city’s creating an empire which would unite the Mediterranean basin. Sparta was now the greatest power in Greece. She had claimed to be fighting Athens in order to liberate the Greek cities; she now liberated them by installing oligarchic governments—under the protection of Spartan overseers and garrisons. The Spartans made up for their lack of money at home by venality and extortion abroad, while the oligarchs revenged themselves on their opponents and filled the cities with bloodshed. In Athens there was a reign of terror under the “thirty tyrants,” headed by one Critias, a former follower of Socrates (his role at this time did much to secure his teacher’s condemnation five years later). Since Sparta did not have the strength to maintain all these governments against the local oppositions they aroused, revolutions took place, and her control outside the Peloponnese began to disintegrate. Then, in 401 she lost the support of Persia.

Persian support had originally been given her on the agreement that when Athens should be defeated the Greek cities of Asia Minor would be returned to Persian control.