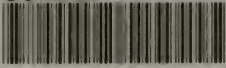
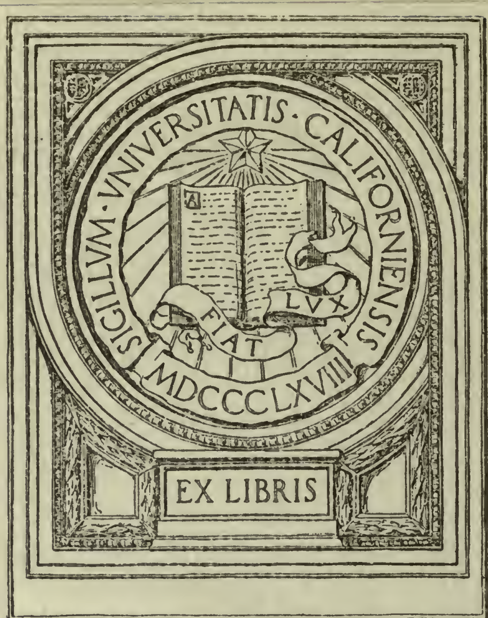

UC-NRLF
$B 13 819
YC 00332



751g
H287

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/birdsofaristopha00harmrich

THE BIRDS OF ARISTOPHANES

UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME

BY EDWARD GEORGE HARMAN

THE 'PROMETHEUS BOUND' OF AESCHYLUS

REPRESENTED IN ENGLISH AND EXPLAINED

10s. 6d. net

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

POEMS. Crown 8vo, 6s. net

LONDON: EDWARD ARNOLD

THE BIRDS
OF ARISTOPHANES

CONSIDERED IN RELATION TO ATHENIAN POLITICS

BY

EDWARD GEORGE HARMAN

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
1920

[*All rights reserved*]

PREFACE

In the preface to my translation of the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, which is appearing concurrently with this volume, I explained the purpose of the present volume, which is to establish by a historical inquiry the truth of the theory as to the meaning of that play which suggested itself to me in the course of translating it, and to show that it supplies the key to the meaning of the *Birds* of Aristophanes. It is commonly supposed that the *Prometheus Bound* is concerned with a metaphysical problem, and that the *Birds* is a work of fancy meaning nothing in particular. But the genius of the Greeks did not work in that way. In spiritual development they were still primitive, and where, among the moderns, imagination goes out to other worlds, with them it sought its material in the actual world in which they lived, and especially in that province of it which most affected their daily lives, namely, the affairs of their city, which for them was coterminous with the state. Hence to seek a political meaning in these two great works of imagination, far from being 'far-fetched,' as some may be inclined to suppose, is the most natural course to take, and the one most likely to lead to a right result. The reader will, no doubt, find, as I did myself, that this involves the dropping of some traditional ideas, but let him candidly examine the evidence which I have endeavoured to place before him, and I think he will find that, so far from producing disillusionment, the result will provide him with a greatly enhanced interest in the work of these two writers. It is my humble opinion that literary criticism has been

437120

too much concerned with literature and not enough with history; whereas the one cannot be properly understood except in the light of the other. It is for this reason that I have supplied a historical sketch, from which the circumstances which led to the production of these two plays at a given point of time may be realised and weighed in their bearings on them. A great work of art does not take its origin out of nothing.

The theory as to the meaning of the *Prometheus Bound* which is developed in the companion volume is, briefly, that the play, like all the other surviving works of Aeschylus, is political in character and concerned with the author's own fortunes and his relations with the new democracy, to which, like most of the leading men of Athens, he had become obnoxious; that under the 'Zeus' of the play the tyrant Demos is depicted, newly established in power, foolish, capricious, passionate and irresistible; that under the character of Prometheus the author has portrayed himself, probably with some reference to Aristides, the leader in the state for whom he had the greatest admiration; and that to this allegory we owe the *Birds*, in which what I have called the 'Zeus' analogy again appears, and is, in my opinion, the key to its meaning.

Among the works consulted I am more particularly indebted to the *History of Greece* by Professor J. B. Bury, although I have frequently found myself in disagreement with expressions of opinion in it; to the English translation of the German work of Adolf Holm (*History of Greece*, vol. ii.); to the *History of Greece* by Grote; to *The Tragic Drama of the Greeks* by A. E. Haigh; to the notes by Dr. Sandys on the Aristotelian *Constitution of Athens*; and to various other writers and editors. The extracts from Thucydides are taken from Jowett's translation; those from Plutarch from the translations by Dryden, revised by

Clough, or by Stewart and Long, but I have varied them considerably in places with the object of a more literal rendering. The quotations from Aristophanes follow mainly the 'Bohn' translation, a literal prose rendering of that author being, in my opinion, of more value than verse. For the extracts from the 'Athenian Constitution' I have followed the rendering, with one or two slight verbal alterations, of Sir F. G. Kenyon. I have made use of English in preference to the Greek for these quotations, because I am in hope that this book will prove of some interest to the general reader.

The references to the plays of Aristophanes are to the text of Bergk.

E. G. H.

London, 1915.[1]

[1] The publication of this book has been delayed on account of the war.

CONTENTS

PAGE

PREFACE v

CHAPTER I

THE 'BIRDS' AND THE SICILIAN EXPEDITION. HISTORICAL SURVEY: SOLON, PISISTRATUS, HIPPIAS, CLEISTHENES, THE IONIC REVOLT, PHRYNICUS, AESCHYLUS, MARATHON 1

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL SURVEY (*continued*): MARATHON AND SALAMIS, THEMISTOCLES, ARISTIDES, AESCHYLUS . . . 24

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL SURVEY (*continued*): CIMON, PERICLES . . 48

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL SURVEY (*continued*): CLEON, NICIAS, ALCIBIADES. 'THE POLITY OF THE ATHENIANS' . . 70

CHAPTER V

THE 'BIRDS' OF ARISTOPHANES AND ITS MEANING. THE 'ZEUS' ANALOGY. 87

CHAPTER VI

OTHER PLAYS OF ARISTOPHANES: 'ACHARNIANS,' 'KNIGHTS,' 'WASPS,' 'PEACE' 105

CHAPTER VII

THE THEORY APPLIED TO THE HISTORY . . . 124

INDEX 133

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

THE BIRDS OF ARISTOPHANES

CHAPTER I

The *Birds* and the Sicilian Expedition. Historical Survey: Solon, Pisistratus, Hippias, Cleisthenes, the Ionic Revolt, Phrynicus, Aeschylus, Marathon.

THE period of history with which this book is most directly concerned is from the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War to the Sicilian expedition. Pericles, who, when the war broke out, had been the ruler of Athens for some thirty years, the last fourteen without opposition, died in 429 B.C., two and a half years after the commencement of hostilities, and the year after the outbreak of the plague. Thucydides tells us that during this period, 'Athens, though still in name a democracy, was in fact ruled by her greatest citizen. But his successors were more on an equality with one another, and each one struggling to be first himself, they were ready to sacrifice the whole conduct of affairs to the whims of the people. Such weakness led to many errors, of which the greatest was the Sicilian expedition; not that the Athenians miscalculated their enemy's power, but they themselves, instead of consulting for the interests of the expedition which they had sent out, were occupied in intriguing against one another for the leadership of the democracy, and not only hampered the operations of the army, but became embroiled, for the first time, at home.' [1]

The Sicilian expedition was sent out in the summer of 415 B.C. In the autumn, Alcibiades, who was accused before he started of sacrilege in connection with the affair of the mutilation of the Hermae, was recalled, with certain others, to stand his trial, and, escaping at Thurii on the way home,

[1] Thuc. ii. 65, tr. Jowett (and so throughout).

he was condemned, with his companions, to death on their non-appearance. Hearing of it, Alcibiades is reported to have said, 'I will make them feel that I am alive.'[1] Now an exile, he made his way over to Sparta, and put his services at the disposal of the enemy.

The political excitement at Athens during this period had been great, and there were many arrests and executions. Thucydides says that the Athenian people, recalling the traditions of the tyrants, 'were suspicious and savage against the supposed profaners of the mysteries; the whole affair seemed to them to indicate some conspiracy aiming at oligarchy or tyranny. Inflamed by these suspicions they had already imprisoned many men of high character. There was no sign of returning quiet, but day by day the movement became more furious and the number of arrests increased. At last one of the prisoners, who was believed to be deeply implicated, was induced by a fellow-prisoner to make a confession—whether true or false I cannot say; opinions are divided, and no one knew at the time, or to this day knows, who the offenders were. . . . The Athenians were delighted at finding out what they supposed to be the truth; they had been in despair at the thought that the conspirators against the democracy would never be known, and they immediately liberated the informer and all whom he had not denounced. The accused they brought to trial, and executed such of them as could be found. Those who had fled they condemned to death, and promised a reward to any one who would kill them. No one could say whether the sufferers were justly punished; but the beneficial effect on the city at the time was undeniable.'[2]

It has been customary in modern histories to represent this excitement as due to religious apprehension, but the above, and other statements of Thucydides to the like effect, show clearly that it was due to fear of a secret conspiracy to overturn the democracy. The paragraph also indicates that the theory (apparently now generally accepted) that the purpose of the *Birds* of Aristophanes was to allay

[1] Plutarch, *Alc.*

[2] Thuc. vi. 60.

and divert the excited feelings of the multitude has little foundation in fact, that process having been already effected by the proceedings described.

The *Birds* was performed in March of the following year (414 B.C.) at the festival of the Great Dionysia, to which foreigners as well as the citizens were admitted. There is a tradition that it refers in some way to the Sicilian expedition,[1] but, beyond that, nothing is known about it except that it won the second prize. The title of the successful play was *The Comastae* (' Revellers '), presumably in allusion to the charges against Alcibiades and his friends. Is it at all likely, after what the Athenians had gone through since the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, and in view of recent events, that Aristophanes could have supposed that his fellow-citizens would be diverted from these preoccupations by an extravaganza, which, however imaginative and well written, is, by itself, and apart from any political purpose, of a rather childish character ? Moreover, such a view of the play is probably an anachronism, because it is of great length and most carefully written ; it was probably, therefore, begun, or at any rate the idea for it conceived, before the expedition sailed.

Another view of the play is that the poet intended it as a good-humoured satire on the sanguine and ambitious projects of the Athenians. But, again, is it probable that he would have chosen such a time to make fun of these tendencies ? When the play was performed the anxiety about the Sicilian expedition must have been already appreciable. In spite of preparations on an altogether exceptional scale, it had accomplished nothing, and the generals had already sent home for cavalry and more money.[2] Nicias had warned the Assembly that the Syracusans had a numerous cavalry, and to them more than anything else was due the discomfiture, so far, of the Athenian forces.[3] The ' wealth ' of the Egestaeans also, which had formed one of the inducements to take up their

[1] Scholiast. [2] Thuc. vi. 74, 93.
[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 20, 63, 70, 71.

cause, had turned out to be a fraud; Alcibiades had already done them damage by his intrigues in Sicily; the Corinthians had decided to send help to Syracuse; and, worst of all, Alcibiades was at Sparta, and had advised the Lacedaemonians to fortify Decelea and send out a general to Syracuse.[1] Though there is no evidence that the Athenians were unduly depressed by these events, it is reasonable to conclude that the sanguine expectations with which the expedition set out must have been somewhat dashed. Even, therefore, if we suppose that Aristophanes originally conceived the idea of the *Birds* in a spirit of raillery, it seems unlikely, in the altered circumstances, that he would have brought it forward at that time.

All the plays of Aristophanes are founded on contemporary life, and of the five surviving ones anterior to the *Birds* four are political without any disguise, and the other, which deals with the influence of the new teaching at Athens, is 'political' in the ancient sense of the word, but would now be called 'social.' It is reasonable therefore to expect that the *Birds* should be of a similar character, and the method employed suggests that allegory has taken the place of direct statement for reasons connected with the circumstances of the time, or with the nature of the author's intention. The times were full of danger, and it appears that at some time shortly before a decree had been passed by the Assembly curtailing the freedom of political attack by the comic stage. This, in itself, would account, to some extent, for the change of character in the work. But, as I shall hope to show, there is another, and more cogent, reason connected with the author's intention.

First, however, it is necessary to say something as to the political development of Athens, for, without a general knowledge of that, the reader will not be in a position to form an opinion as to the interpretation which I shall seek to give this play. The historical survey which I propose to make will, at the same time, illustrate and support my theory as to the meaning of the *Prometheus Bound* of

[1] For these facts, in order, see Thuc. vi., chapters 46, 63, 74, 88, 89-93.

Aeschylus, with which the *Birds* is, in my opinion, closely connected.[1]

In the period after the death of Pericles the constitution of Athens had reached that point in democratic development which is defined by Aristotle as 'extreme' (τελευταῖα). In form, and to some extent in substance, it took its rise from the legislation of Solon at the beginning of the sixth century, but to describe Solon as the 'founder' of this democracy, as is sometimes done, is to attribute to him intentions which the surviving fragments of his writings, and the account of him in Herodotus and Plutarch, show quite clearly that he never entertained. It would be more correct to say that his endeavour was to establish aristocratic government on a juster and more stable basis.

The lately discovered treatise of Aristotle[2] on the Constitution of Athens described a constitution of Draco in the previous century, with a franchise on a military basis, but some scholars, probably with good reason, regard this as fabulous.[3] We may therefore accept the view, which seems

[1] See remarks in the Preface and companion volume.

[2] Or some one of his school and time.

[3] The question is fully dealt with by Dr. Sandys in his notes on 'Αθην. Πολ. The view that it is an 'interpolation' seems to me to be too arbitrary, owing to the consequential excisions from the text which it entails. It appears to me also that it ignores the word *καί* in the summary in ch. 41, 'in which *also*,' etc. It seems possible that the writer made uncritical use of a political pamphlet drawn up in connection with the revolution of 410 B.C., or the reconstruction after the fall of Athens in 404 B.C., in support of that particular form of constitution, which was in favour among the moderate men, and which is reported upon as the best both by Thucydides and Xenophon. The times of Draco were so remote and so primitive that it seems improbable that anything can have been known about such details two, or three, hundred years after. Moreover they point to a system which seems irreconcilable with the account of the social conditions prevailing at the time of Solon's archonship, which is believed to have been only some thirty years after the laws were written down by Draco. It is conceivable (though this is only speculation) that this constitution, which resembles that of the 'Five Thousand' (a war constitution), was fathered on Draco as a device for obtaining for it more ancient authority than for the more oligarchical constitution of the 'Four Hundred,' which appears to have been modelled on what was supposed to

to have been generally entertained among the Athenians, that Solon was the father of the constitution, the word being used not in the sense of a 'democracy' as that word is now commonly understood, but of a 'polity,' in which an attempt was made, for the first time, to give the general body of citizens a share in the government. This was done by the creation of a Council of four hundred members elected from the four tribes, to which was transferred political business hitherto entirely in the hands of the 'Areopagus,' a body composed of members of the landed aristocracy, known as 'Eupatrids,' who, since the abolition of the ancient kingship, had constituted the government of the country. There was also an 'Assembly' of citizens, presumably from very ancient times, but it was probably only summoned on special occasions and in connection with war. In any case it evidently had no powers of initiation, any business which may have been referred to it being prepared by the administrative Council, and its assent was in the nature of a vote on a 'referendum.'

The disturbed state of Attica which led to the appointment of Solon by consent as a mediator seems to have been due to several causes. The soil of a large proportion of the country was very poor, and the difficulty of living was a constant source of trouble, and was a governing factor in Athenian politics. When a man fell into poverty in the ancient world, the only resource for himself and his family, in the absence of any outlet, was to accept the lot of slavery.

be Solon's constitution, and is referred to, in the political catch-word of the day, as τὴν πάτριαν πολιτείαν, 'the constitution of our forefathers.' Professor Bury takes the view that by this expression the oligarchy intended the constitution of Draco, but both Dr. Sandys and Sir F. G. Kenyon take the phrase, which occurs in Ἀθην. Πολ., to refer to Solon's constitution, and it seems the obvious meaning of the text. For example, in ch. 29 it is stated that an amendment was proposed to the motion for abolishing the democracy (411 B.C.) and setting up a Council of 400, 'to investigate the ancient laws (τοὺς πατρίους νόμους) drawn up by Cleisthenes when he created the democracy . . . the suggestion being that the constitution of Cleisthenes was not really democratical, but closely akin to that of Solon'; and, again, ch. 31 relates the setting up of the Council of 'Four Hundred' (composed of men of over thirty, without pay), 'as in the ancient constitution' (κατὰ τὰ πάτρια).

To this condition large numbers of the free inhabitants of Attica had been reduced, working as slaves for the landed proprietors where formerly they had paid rent or borrowed money on mortgage to carry on. There were also incessant feuds among the great families, and between different localities, and unenfranchised new wealth was pressing its claims for recognition. Solon provided temporary relief for the peasantry by a measure remitting their debts, and as a check on oppression admitted the poorer class of citizens (peasants and small craftsmen) to the Assembly. He also distributed (or perhaps redistributed) the citizen population into four classes according to their means, and made the first class, irrespective of birth, eligible for the archonship, which had before been confined to the members of the Areopagus. Out of this class the nine archons were appointed by lot, from a fixed number of candidates elected by the tribes, and on the termination of office, which was annual, they became life members of the Areopagus. The Areopagus retained the higher judicial functions and the guardianship of the laws, together with a general censorial power over the magistrates and the lives of the citizens.

With a view to giving the populace an instrument of protection against oppression,[1] and probably also as a check on peculation, to which Athenians were incorrigibly prone,[2] Solon also instituted a system whereby members of the popular Assembly, sitting as judges (known as 'heliasts' or 'dicasts'), could bring offending public officials to account, probably on appeals or reference made to them from the Council. Hitherto it appears that the officers of the State had been only responsible to the Areopagus, of which they themselves, if filling the greater offices, were members. This 'accountability' to the citizens, in some form, was regarded thereafter as of the essence of constitutional government, and marking the

[1] Solon is referred to in Ἀθην. Πολ. and in Plutarch as the first *προστάτης*, viz. champion, or protector, of the people. The term came to mean in the next century the 'leader' in the Assembly.

[2] Cf. Plut. *Arist.*, and Xen. *Anab.* iv. 6. 16.

difference between a 'tyranny,' or narrow oligarchy, and a free state. An interesting early reference to this occurs in the *Persae* of Aeschylus (472 B.C.), where the mother of Xerxes, in apprehension of his defeat, is made to say that 'he cannot be called to account by the State,[1] and if he escapes alive, he is, in any event, the ruler of this land.'

But the peculiar system devised by Solon, whereby the members of the popular Assembly sat as 'dicasts,' in which a modern writer (Professor Bury) sees a 'secret of democracy,' led to great abuses, and, in my belief, contributed more than anything else to the fall of Athens, because it made justice political.[2] In the early days, however, these developments were not foreseen. They were brought about by the conversion of Athens, after the Persian invasion, from an isolated city-state into one in possession of a tributary empire, and by the system of payment introduced later by Pericles. That enabled the poorer citizens to eke out a livelihood by sitting in the courts, which thus became dominated by lower-class opinion and interests.[3] The point of these remarks will appear more clearly when we come to consider some of the plays of Aristophanes.

After the efforts of Solon things seem to have fallen back into the old state of faction and disorder, and a remedy came in the way frequent in Greece in the earlier period, through a 'tyranny.' The two principal parties were known as the 'Plain' and the 'Shore,' the first representing the landed aristocracy of the richer district and their adherents (the country party), the second the mercantile

[1] *οὐχ ὑπεύθυνος πόλει* (215).

[2] It is referred to by Aristotle as 'the measure by which it is agreed that the democracy got its main power.'

[3] Cf. 'Αθην. Πολ. 27 : 'Pericles was also the first to institute pay for service in the law courts, as a bid for popular favour to counterbalance the wealth of Cimon. . . . Some persons accuse him of thereby causing a deterioration in the character of the juries, since it was always the inferior people who were anxious to submit themselves for selection as jurors rather than men of better position.' It must be remembered that they were judges as well as jurors, and without professional training, and there was no appeal from their decision. They were empanelled from citizens of over thirty.

and coast-residing interest. There was a third party, known as the 'Hill,' representing the cultivators of the poor hill-districts. Taking advantage of the quarrels between the first two, Pisistratus placed himself at the head of this poorer class, and made himself master of the State. The treatise of Aristotle thus describes the position :

'The parties at this time were three in number. First there was the party of the Shore, whose leader was Megacles, the son of Alcmeon, which was considered to aim at a moderate form of government ; then there were the men of the Plain, who desired an oligarchy and were led by Lycurgus ; and thirdly there were the men of the Highlands, at the head of whom was Pisistratus, who was looked on as an extreme democrat.' [1]

These parties determined the form of political life at Athens, and their influence is seen throughout. I shall draw attention to an allusion to them, hitherto I believe unrecognised, in the *Birds*.

The simplicity of the people in those days appears from the fact that Pisistratus obtained the bodyguard, by which he secured the Acropolis in the first instance, by wounding himself, alleging that he had been attacked by his enemies ; and after his expulsion on the first occasion by a combination of the two leading parties, he got back again with the help of Megacles (who had in the meantime broken with Lycurgus) by driving into Athens in company with a handsome peasant woman dressed up as Athena, whom the people are said to have received as the goddess. During a period of thirty-three years he was tyrant, with two intervals, for nineteen years, and was succeeded by his sons Hippias and Hipparchus. The whole period of the tyranny covered about fifty years, from 560 B.C. to 510 B.C.

Pisistratus was a great ruler. 'His administration,' says Aristotle, 'was more like a constitutional government than the rule of a tyrant.' His policy was to keep the people in the country, and he dealt with the problem of poverty by grants of land and loans on easy terms. He was enabled

[1] Ἀθην. Πολ. 13.

to do this without burdening the State with heavy taxation by revenues which he drew from properties in Thrace, where also he obtained mercenary troops. ‘Hence the tyranny of Pisistratus was often spoken of as the age of Cronus,’ that is, as a golden age.[1] This phrase is to be noted in connection with what follows.

Abroad his power was respected, and he maintained friendly relations with Sparta. The vast Doric Temple for the Olympian Zeus, which he began but left uncompleted, was perhaps connected with this policy and Pan-Hellenic aspirations.[2] He added dignity to the public worship, improved the city, founded the Great Dionysia which became the occasion for the annual competitions in tragedy, instituted Homeric recitations, and generally, by encouraging the visits of foreign poets and artists, gave an impulse to the gentler arts of life, which had hitherto been little cultivated. His sons, especially Hipparchus, carried further this latter movement, though perhaps not altogether with the approval of the Attic world of the day, for he is described in Aristotle's treatise as *παιδιώδης καὶ ἐρωτικὸς καὶ φιλόμουσος*.[3] In any case, to the court of Hippias resorted Anacreon and Simonides, from the islands, and other poets, and we read of Lasus of Hermione at this court, a master of dithyrambic poetry, who instructed Pindar, then a youth, who came to him for training from Thebes. Whether Aeschylus learned from the same master we do not know, but it is quite possible that he did, as the first fifteen years of his life were passed under Hippias. Such developments, at any rate in the early stages, depend on cessation from civil strife. With the expulsion of Hippias it was renewed, and the poets took their flight to other

[1] Ἀθην. Πολ. 16.

[2] It may also have been connected with an effort to introduce a more spiritual and monotheistic form of religion. The movement in this direction, which had been begun by philosophic teachers of Ionia and Grecian Italy, seems first to have reached Athens at this period. The local worship of Pallas Athene had not been treated with great respect by Pisistratus in the incident above mentioned.

[3] ‘Youthful in disposition, amorous, and fond of letters.’

courts.[1] The inhabitants of Attica, hitherto primitive and insignificant, emerged from this period of absolutism, somewhat as the English did from that of the Tudors, strengthened as regards population and resources, intellectual as well as material, to cope with their new destiny as an imperial power. They had been fortunate in finding in the Pisistratids rulers who did not commit the atrocities of which we read in the case of some of the other tyrants. None the less the system was repugnant to the idea of citizenship among the Greeks.

Art was not the native bent of the Attic mind. They produced great artists, as they produced great men in many departments of human activity, but their genius was combative and practical. They were famous for readiness of wit and gift of speech; enterprising and versatile rather than persistent; full of curiosity and subtle in mind, as is indicated by the contention in argument which is such a marked feature in the Athenian tragedy. They were above all full of emulation and ambitious for reputation, and, on the weak side of this quality, they were vain and bitterly envious. The remark which Herodotus puts into the mouth of the brother of Xerxes in a speech of advice to the king as to 'the common temper of the Grecian people' was specially true of them: 'they envy good fortune and hate power greater than their own.'[2] Hence the intensity of their political activities and of the struggle for pre-eminence. For such activities practical sagacity and the power of management by persuasion were essential, and we find in a passage in Plutarch interesting evidence of their efforts in this direction as far back as Solon:

'Themistocles is said to have been an admirer of Mnesiphilus of Phrearri, who was neither rhetorician nor natural philosopher,

[1] Thessaly and Sicily in particular.

[2] Herod. vii. 236. Compare Aesch. *Agam.*, speech of the king; also Pericles, opening of the funeral speech, Thuc. ii. 35. Envy of human ambition and prosperity is the dominating quality which the Greeks from the earliest times attributed to deity: φθονερὸν ἐὸν τὸ θεῖον, Solon to Croesus (Herod. i. 32, and cf. vii. 10), and many other examples.

but a professor of that which was then called wisdom, consisting in a sort of political shrewdness and practical sagacity ; and had begun and continued, almost like a sect of philosophy, from Solon ; but those who came afterwards, and mixed it with forensic artifices, and transformed it from practical utility into a mere art of speaking and an exercise of words, were called sophists. Themistocles resorted to Mnesiphilus when he had already embarked in politics.'[1]

The latter part of the passage alludes, of course, to the foreign professors who visited Athens under Pericles and afterwards, but the native tradition continued, as we can see from the remarkable portrait drawn by Thucydides of Antiphon, who, though he intrigued against the democracy at a time when they were oppressing the class to which he belonged, and lost his life thereby,[2] must have been a great man. There seems to be a tradition that Thucydides was his pupil. In any case he must have known him intimately, as the description indicates :

'The mover of this proposal (to set up "the Four Hundred"), and to outward appearance the most active partisan of the revolution, was Peisander, but the real author and maturer of the whole scheme, who had been longest interested in it, was Antiphon, a man inferior in virtue to none of his contemporaries, and possessed of remarkable powers of thought and gifts of speech. He did not like to come forward in the assembly, or in any other public arena. To the multitude, who were suspicious of his great abilities, he was an object of dislike ; but there was no man who could do more for any who consulted him, whether their business lay in the courts of justice or in the assembly. And when the government of the Four Hundred was overthrown and became exposed to the vengeance of the people, and he being accused of taking part in the plot had to speak in his own case, his defence was undoubtedly the best ever made by any man tried on a capital charge down to my time.'[3]

[1] Plut. *Them.* Mnesiphilus is said to have pointed out to Themistocles the impolicy of withdrawing the fleet from Salamis, which had been agreed upon by the Greek commanders before the battle.

[2] In connection with the revolution of 411 B.C.

[3] Thuc. viii. 68.

The 'tyranny' of the Pisistratids was ended by the intervention of Sparta. Thucydides explains this at length in two passages, probably having grown tired, like Aristophanes and others of their class, of hearing the popular tale about Harmodius and Aristogeiton. But their rising against Hippias and Hipparchus, though occasioned by a private quarrel, was probably also due to growing insolence, and to the stories which the Athenians had heard of the cruelties of other tyrants, in which case the popular view that they were the liberators of Athens was not altogether without justification; for after the assassination of his brother Hippias is said to have become embittered and harsh in his treatment of the citizens, and this gave the opportunity for the intrigue with Sparta by the exiled Alcmaeonid family and their adherents to get rid of him. It was effected by means characteristic of Athenians in dealing with their more unsophisticated neighbours. They restored the shrine of Delphi at great expense, and thus prevailed on the priests to harass the Spartans with an oracle, whenever they sent to inquire of the god, that 'first Athens must be freed.' In this way the Spartans were induced to eject Hippias, and the Alcmaeonid party were restored.

The old struggle between the Plain and the Shore was now renewed, the rival leaders being Isagoras and the Alcmaeonid Cleisthenes, the one as leader of the old Attic party, the other of the wealthy middle class, who favoured the timocratical constitution of Solon. Herodotus (who is our authority) says that 'these two men strove together for the mastery, and Cleisthenes, finding himself the weaker, called to his aid the common people, whom he had before disdained.'[1] Whatever his motives may have been, he proved himself a statesman of capacity, and the constitution which he founded became the groundwork of all subsequent modifications. It did not differ in principle from that of Solon, but it was on a more extended franchise, including foreign residents. The working body was the

[1] Herod. v. 66, 69.

Council, which was a legislative, executive, and, to some extent, judicial body, but its legislative proposals required a vote of the Assembly (ψήφισμα) before they became law. The Assembly was summoned at regular intervals (about ten times a year) for ordinary business, and it was also convoked on extraordinary occasions, more especially in connection with war and foreign policy. The archonship was still confined to the higher class as before. In the post-Periclean days, when the archonship had been thrown open practically to all classes, when the Areopagus had been deprived of its political and censorial powers, and the Assembly was encroaching, by a system of 'decrees,' more and more on the authority of the Council, the constitution as settled by Cleisthenes was regarded by comparison as an aristocratic constitution.[1] The measure, however, by which Cleisthenes was best known, and perhaps by which he most secured his power, was the breaking up of the old four tribes or clans. For these he substituted ten tribes on a non-geographical basis. The Council was increased in consequence from four hundred to five hundred members, elected by the tribes from the first three Solonian classes, the age for service being over thirty with a test of citizenship and character (δοκιμασία). They held office for one year. Ostracism[2] was also then instituted as a precaution against individuals converting their power into a 'tyranny.' In practice, as this institution was used by the people after the Persian wars, almost every public man of distinction fell a victim to it.[3]

There was probably also another reason for the view expressed in later days that the constitution of Cleisthenes was not really democratical, namely, that so long as the Areopagus retained its power of revision, the sovereign power could not be said to lie with the Assembly. No

[1] Ἀθην. Πολ. 29, and Plutarch, *Cimon*.

[2] Exile for ten years without loss of civil rights or confiscation of property.

[3] Thus: Megacles (486); Xanthippus, father of Pericles (484); Aristides (482); Themistocles (472); Cimon (461); Thucydides, the conservative leader under Pericles (442).

doubt the Assembly decided the question of war and measures connected with it, and heard the speeches of ambassadors, but this was a practical necessity, because the citizen army could refuse to march or go on shipboard. But a legislative decree of the Assembly did not become a 'law' (*νόμος*) [1] until the Areopagus had allowed it as not unconstitutional. Such a power, in conjunction with the undefined censorial power, would obviously be a great one in certain circumstances, and this would to some extent explain the statement in the Aristotelian treatise on the Constitution, that 'after the Persian wars the Council of the Areopagus once more developed strength and assumed the control of the State,' and that 'this supremacy lasted for about seventeen years, although gradually declining.' This would involve no revolution, provided the people did not object. The sovereign power therefore may be said to have lain ultimately with the Areopagus, subject to the pressure of the Assembly and the Council. It was not until the time of Pericles, when the guardianship of the laws was transferred from the Areopagus to a legal board (*νομοθέται*), and the general censorial power of that Council was also taken away, that the Assembly can be said to have had full sovereign authority. This was effected in 462 B.C. and during some years after. The only power in the earlier period which the people possessed absolutely seems to me to have been the power of ostracism, and it was of course a great one, in that it enabled them at intervals of five years to get rid of a political leader to whom they objected.

The events connected with the ejection of the Pisistratids by the Spartans and the founding of the new constitution left a deep mark on Attic life. It was not a question of the contention of parties under an established constitution, but whether there should be a constitution at all. We know nothing of these events beyond what Herodotus tells us,

[1] There was not much current legislation in ancient states. The laws were regarded as 'fixed' and having a certain sanctity. In Athens the revisions generally took place in connection with a political crisis, *e.g.* the reforms of Draco, Solon, Cleisthenes, Ephialtes, etc.

but that is enough to indicate that the period from the fall of Hippias in 510 B.C. to the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. was the most critical in the history of Athens as a rising power. Sparta had not interfered in order to set up a democracy, and the Spartan king Cleomenes now responded to the appeal of Isagoras, who had been driven out. Cleisthenes withdrew, and Cleomenes 'sent into banishment seven hundred families pointed out to him by Isagoras. Succeeding here, he next endeavoured to dissolve the Council, and to put the government into the hands of three hundred partisans of Isagoras.' [1] The Council and their supporters, however, succeeded in driving Cleomenes and his force into the citadel. Cleomenes got away with Isagoras; others were imprisoned and died in prison, and Cleisthenes and the exiled families were restored. Fear of war with Sparta then induced the Athenian government to send envoys to Sardis to make an alliance with Persia, and Artaphernes told them that they could have it if they would send 'earth and water,' in token of submission to Darius. So great was the fear of Sparta that the ambassadors consented, but on return to Athens they 'fell into deep disgrace for their compliance.' [2]

To avenge his defeat at Athens, and put down the new democratic constitution, Cleomenes then collected an army in the Peloponnese and invaded Attica. The Thebans and the forces of the great maritime town of Chalcis in Euboea made an attack, concurrently, from the north. On the way, however, Cleomenes revealed to the allies his scheme for setting up Isagoras as 'tyrant' at Athens, and the Corinthians, remembering what they had suffered themselves under their 'tyrants,' objected and withdrew. The other Spartan king supported them, and the expedition was broken up and returned home. Saved from this peril the Athenians turned on the northern enemy and routed them separately in two battles on the same day. The city of Chalcis was taken, and settled with poor citizens from Athens, and a great number of prisoners were held to ransom

[1] Herod. vi. 72. [2] *Ibid.*, 73.

in chains at Athens. It was evidently one of the most brilliant of the warlike efforts of Athens, and Herodotus draws the conclusion from it 'that it is plain enough, not from this instance only, but from many elsewhere, that freedom is an excellent thing.' [1]

Fearing the growing strength of the republic the Spartans made one more effort in the same direction. They sent for Hippias, who had withdrawn with his family and friends to the Asiatic side, and at an assembly tried to persuade the Corinthians to join them in restoring him as 'tyrant' at Athens. But they again revolted at the proposal, and Hippias, returning to Asia, 'did all that lay in his power to bring Athens into subjection to himself and Darius.' [2] The Athenians thereupon sent envoys to Sardis to exhort the Persians 'not to lend an ear to the Athenian exiles,' but Artaphernes replied 'that if they wished to remain safe they must receive back Hippias.' The Athenians, says Herodotus, 'accordingly made up their minds not to consent, and to be at open enmity with the Persians.'

This brings us to the Ionic revolt, through which, and the intrigues of Hippias and the exiles, Athens came into conflict with the Persian power. Miletus, a great and ancient city on the Asiatic coast, described by Herodotus as 'the glory of Ionia,' was the centre of disturbance. Aristagoras, the virtual sovereign of it at that time, decided to revolt from the suzerainty of Darius and his viceroy Artaphernes,[3] and he went to Sparta and put the case of the Asiatic Greeks before them. Failing to persuade them to take up their cause he went on to Athens, and represented to the Assembly there that the Persians were indifferent soldiers, that Miletus had a claim on their assistance being a colony of Attica, and (in the words of Herodotus) 'in the earnestness of his entreaties he cared little what he promised, until, at last, he persuaded and won them over.' 'Won by these persuasions they voted that twenty ships should be sent

[1] Herod. vi. 78.
[2] *Ibid.*, 96.
[3] Artaphernes, governor of Lydia and half-brother of Darius.

to the aid of the Ionians. These ships were the beginning of mischief both to the Greeks and to the barbarians.' [1]

What follows gives rise to some interesting speculations. The Athenian force, in conjunction with a force from Eretria in the neighbouring island of Euboea, sailed to Miletus, and an allied expedition went up country to Sardis, the seat of government of Artaphernes. They took the town, and were prevented from sacking it by a fire, which destroyed the whole town, including 'the temple of the native goddess Cybele, which was the reason afterwards alleged by the Persians for setting on fire the temples of the Greeks.' [2] Professor Bury writes of this as if it was an accident, as of course it may have been; but Herodotus says the houses were of reed, 'and one of them was no sooner set fire to by a soldier than the flames ran speedily from house to house,' etc. Therefore it looks as if the act was deliberate, and it was naturally so regarded by Artaphernes (who held out in the citadel) and Darius.[3] The same writer also discredits the famous story about Darius, who, on hearing of the burning of Sardis, inquired 'who the Athenians were?' and, calling for his bow, 'shot an arrow into the sky, saying, "Grant me, Zeus, to revenge myself on the Athenians"'; and he ordered a servant 'to repeat three times every day when dinner was spread, "Master, remember the Athenians."' [4] I see, however, little reason for doubting the story. It is entirely characteristic of an oriental monarch, and the symbolical act would be reported throughout his dominions, and strike terror, as he would suppose, into the hearts of the upstart people. It has a parallel in other stories, such as that told by Herodotus about Croesus, who sent a message to some tribes, who were refractory, that

[1] Herod. v. 97. [2] *Ibid.*, 102.

[3] The denunciation of the sacrilegious acts of the Persians by Aeschylus is no evidence that the Greeks did not, on occasions, commit similar acts, because the practice of the poet is always to use such material as examples for warning. The theme, for instance, of the *Persae* is far less the glorification of Athens than the precariousness of human greatness, as exemplified in Darius, with a view to enforcing the wisdom of moderation and self-control.

[4] Herod. v. 105.

if they did not do as he told them, 'he would destroy them like a fir.' Pondering on what a 'fir' might mean, they reflected that a fir, when cut down, did not sprout again. In days when there were no newspapers, and few people could read, figurative acts and speeches must have been part of the art of government in large territories. Moreover, the first part of the story is confirmed by the contemporary evidence of Aeschylus, who puts into the mouth of Atossa a similar question.[1]

The forces of Miletus and their allies then withdrew towards the coast, but were overtaken at Ephesus by a Lydian army, reinforced by Persians from the interior. 'A fight ensued in which the Greeks had very greatly the worse. Vast numbers were slain by the Persians . . . such as made their escape from the battle dispersed among the several cities.' The narrative proceeds: 'So ended the encounter. Afterwards the Athenians quite forsook the Ionians, and, though Aristagoras besought them much by his ambassadors, refused to give them any further help. Still the Ionians, notwithstanding this desertion, continued unceasingly their preparations to carry on war against the Persian king, which their late conduct to him rendered unavoidable.'[2] Later we read that Miletus was captured (494 B.C.), and those of the population who were not killed were enslaved by the Persians, some also being taken down to Susa, where, according to Herodotus, they were well treated by Darius and given lands to cultivate.[3] He adds that the Athenians 'were beyond measure afflicted at the fall of Miletus,' and that when the tragic poet Phrynicus 'brought upon the stage his "Capture of Miletus," the whole theatre burst into tears, and the people sentenced him to pay a fine of a thousand drachmas for recalling to them *their own misfortunes* (*οἰκήια κακά*)'; also that a law was passed that no one was ever to exhibit the play again.[4] The words in

[1] ποῦ τὰς Ἀθήνας φασὶν ἱδρῦσθαι χθονός; (*Persae*, 233.)

[2] Herod. v. 102, 103.

[3] *Ibid.*, vi. 18-20.

[4] *Ibid.*, 21. The fine and prohibition were probably at the instance of the generals, or people highest in authority, as a precaution against unduly alarming or depressing the people. Similar measures were taken against

italics have been regarded as something of a puzzle, and they are generally taken as referring to the strong sympathy which the Athenians felt for a people of their own stock, who were supposed originally to have been a colony from Attica. But this hardly accounts for the heavy fine. It seems to me more probable that the Athenians were painfully reminded of their desertion of them after the defeat sustained at Ephesus, and of the losses among their own people on that occasion. It was the first foreign adventure on a considerable scale which they had undertaken, and, from the account, we are justified in inferring that few had returned home. They would recall their losses, and be filled with apprehension for their own fate ; and they had good reason, for within a few years the city of the Eretrians in the adjacent island of Euboea, who had joined them in the ill-fated expedition to Sardis, had been wiped out, and the inhabitants reduced to slavery.[1]

In the zeal of a certain school of writers for the claims of democracy, a constant tendency is noticeable to modify or suppress anything which may seem to detract from the virtue and glory of Athens under the new constitution. It is difficult to see what instruction or advantage are derived from this. Herodotus wrote with an eye on the favour of the Athenians, and this, in itself, would account for the reserve of this narrative. It seems probable that they had received a staggering blow, and that just as Solon used his verses to encourage them to attack Salamis, and Tertaeus by his war songs put heart into the Spartans in their long struggle with the Messenians, so Phrynicus used the drama to rouse the Athenians to resist the Persian danger. It is the first recorded instance of the 'political' drama,[2] and the heavy fine which was imposed shows the risks of it.

playwrights in Elizabethan times (though autocratically), as, for example, in the play *Sir Thomas More*, where the actors were ordered by the Master of the Revels to 'leaue out ye insurrection wholy and the cause thereoff . . . att your own perrilles.'

[1] By the Persians, before they landed at Marathon, 490 B.C.

[2] Phrynicus is said to have been the first to make plays from the mythology and history of his own country.

The story throws light on the method of Aeschylus, by whom this form of drama was carried on, till it reached its culmination in his latest work. If we believe, as we surely must, that an imaginative writer uses his experience and the impressions derived from it for his work, we may be certain that these events largely determined the character of the plays of Aeschylus. It was not the battle of Marathon, or that of Salamis ten years later, which alone, or in a paramount degree, inspired his poetry, for at the time of the first he was already thirty-five years old. Far more it reflects the story of the preceding years, and of the vicissitudes through which Athens had passed from the time of his boyhood. It is this, hardly less than his genius, which gives to his plays their peculiar life and reality, and, in bearing in mind these events, we are enabled to feel why it is that his verse is charged with an intensity of moral feeling and political effort hardly to be found to a like extent in the work of any other poet.

Athens was spared the fate which overtook the neighbouring city. Crossing from Euboea the Persians, under Datis and Artaphernes, landed at Marathon, bringing with them Hippias, whom Darius intended to re-establish in his own interest as 'tyrant.' They were repelled by the hoplites of Attica under Miltiades, assisted by a small force from Plataea, and Athens was freed from the peril of invasion for ten years.[1]

Herodotus tells a story of the flashing of a bright shield from a hill above to the retiring Persian fleet. His remarks on the incident are very interesting :

'But it fills me with wonderment, and I can in no wise believe the report, that the Alcmaeonidae had an understanding with the Persians, and held them up a shield as a signal, wishing Athens to be brought under the yoke of the barbarians and Hippias. . . .

'But perhaps they were offended with the people of Athens ; and therefore betrayed their country. Nay but on the contrary, there were none of the Athenians who were held in such

[1] Also by the death of Darius, which occurred four years later.

general esteem, or who were so laden with honours. So that it is not even reasonable to suppose that a shield was held up by them on this account. A shield was shown, no doubt; that cannot be gainsaid; but who it was that showed it I cannot any further determine.' (vi. 121, 124.)

In reading this it must be remembered that Pericles was an Alcmaeonid, on his mother's side; and it is therefore not improbable that Herodotus, being unable to deny the truth of a well-attested incident, was glad to take the opportunity to discredit the explanation, or at least was anxious—with his usual tact—not to give offence to the ruler at Athens on whose favour he depended during his visit there. Cleisthenes is no longer heard of in history at this time, and there is a tradition that he was, at some period, ostracised. It is possible, therefore, that by this time the Alcmaeonid party had again been ousted. In the struggle for political power the Greeks, as their history shows, were capable of almost anything. The consequences of political defeat were so crushing—frequently exile, confiscation of property, and loss of city—that we can understand how it was that feelings of patriotism were often subordinated to the desire for reinstatement and revenge. The Alcmaeonids were more than ordinarily ambitious,[1] and it may be that they had by that time lost ground, and that a reaction had set in in favour of the old Attic party. It would be in accordance with general experience that under the pressure of danger there should be a conservative reaction. The reappearance at Athens of Miltiades, who had for some time been living as 'tyrant' in the Thracian Chersonese, and his election as a general, also suggest this. Though, therefore, there is no certain knowledge, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the Alcmaeonid party were at that time in communication with Hippias, in the hope of making use of him against their political opponents. In that case the victory of Marathon must

[1] Compare the case of Alcibiades, another member of this famous family, on the mother's side. See also the remarks of Herodotus above as to the bid made for popular support by Cleisthenes.

have had a strengthening effect on the constitution. The denunciation of treachery which Aeschylus puts into the mouth of the chorus of women in their last speech in the *Prometheus Bound*, which has been regarded (quite reasonably, in my opinion) as a political allusion, is more likely to be reminiscent of this than of any other subsequent event.

CHAPTER II

Historical Survey (*continued*): Marathon and Salamis, Themistocles, Aristides, Aeschylus.

THE battle of Marathon, which was fought in 490 B.C., is a landmark in Athenian history. It was the culminating point of the archaic age, when Attica was, in practice, still ruled by its aristocracy, and the defence of the State depended on the army, under hereditary territorial leaders. In later times, when an urban democracy had grown up, which depended not only for its safety, but largely for subsistence, on the fleet, Marathon, not Salamis, was the achievement which was dwelt upon and idealised by those who had suffered politically by the change. Aristophanes, for instance, describes the old men who form the chorus of the *Acharnians* as 'old Marathon men, tough as maple,' and pleads for the old broken-down warrior, who is bullied by young men in the law courts, as a 'Marathon man.' In the *Knights* the sausage-seller, in the competition with Cleon for the favour of 'Demos,' offers him a soft cushion, 'that you may not gall that which fought at Salamis'; but when he has reformed 'Demos' by 'boiling him down,' he announces him as 'conspicuous in the olden garb, wearing the cicada,' such as 'when he used to mess with Aristides and Miltiades in olden time,' and he is hailed by the chorus as 'King of the Grecians . . . faring in a manner worthy of the cities and of the trophy at Marathon.' So also in the *Clouds*, when the 'Unjust Cause' derides the principles of the 'Just Cause' as 'antediluvian and full of grasshoppers,' [1] the latter replies, 'Yet these are the principles by which my system of education nurtured the men who fought at Marathon.' [2]

[1] Explained on the next page.

[2] Cf. also *Frogs*, 1296, 'What of this 'phlattothrat?' is it from Marathon?'—of the lyrics of Aeschylus.

A similar feeling is to be noticed in the mind of Thucydides. In the famous review of antiquity with which his History opens, he says, 'The Athenians were the first who laid aside arms [in daily intercourse] and adopted an easier and more luxurious way of life. Quite recently the old-fashioned refinement of dress still lingered among the elder men of the richer class, who wore under-garments of linen, and bound back their hair in a knot with golden clasps, in the form of grasshoppers. . . . On the other hand, the simple dress which is now common was first worn at Sparta ; and there, more than anywhere else, the life of the rich was assimilated to that of the people.' As this was written in the latter part of the century, after 432 B.C. and perhaps in 431 B.C., it indicates that manners at the time of the battle of Marathon were still archaic and aristocratic. Thucydides shows in many places that the backbone of the new democracy was the fleet, and he refers to the inhabitants of the Piraeus, by whom it was largely manned, as 'the maritime crowd' (*ναυτικὸς ὄχλος*). In contrast, he draws a picture of the Spartan line advancing to the battle at Mantinea in the old-time array, in which all his sympathy goes out to the disciplined order of that form of warfare, with regretful contempt for the inferiority in it which had come over the Athenians. Not that they were ever a match for the 'Dorian spear,' but in old days, before they 'became seamen,' through the second Persian invasion,[1] and the war with Aegina which preceded it, they would have given a better account of themselves as hoplites. They were dragged into that campaign by Alcibiades in connection with proceedings following a shameful trick perpetrated by him on the Spartan ambassadors before the Assembly, and the Athenians perhaps had little heart in the business ; but, even so, the account of Thucydides, in which he takes no pains to conceal his admiration for the Spartan discipline, in contrast with the more spasmodic and less effective energies of the other side, is significant. This came to be the normal upper-class point of view. Athens was by

[1] Thuc. i. 18, and cf. vii. 21.

situation an inland city, and its polity had subsisted through countless generations on a military basis. The Athenians were not by tradition or inclination a sea power any more than were the Lacedaemonians; 'they had been made sailors from necessity by the Persian invasion':[1] and the change, when accompanied by the acquisition of a tributary empire, entirely altered the balance of political power. The territorial leader had to give place to the 'pilot,' a sharp fellow from the Piraeus. The change, of course, was not perceived at first, but as the Athenians began to depend more and more on the fleet, the prestige of the army, together with its confidence and discipline, began to decline. The heavy defeat by the Boeotians which they sustained at Delium in 424 B.C., was regarded apparently as the turning point.[2] It was followed by the rout of the hoplites under Cleon at Amphipolis in the same year, and the Sicilian disaster in 413 B.C. must have had a still more demoralising effect. These consequences were dreaded by the elder generation at the beginning of the century, as we can see from the opposition offered by Aristides to the naval policy of Themistocles, and in the *Septem* of Aeschylus, where the poet puts out his whole strength to glorify and stimulate hoplitic valour.[3] Closely connected with this feeling was the admiration of Lacedaemonian institutions—the 'Laconizing' tendency—of the upper class, of which Cimon and his friends were accused, and which by degrees became a catchword of party suspicion. Later it was adopted into the political theory of the philosophers, as can be seen in the writings of Xenophon, and in such a passage as the following from Plato:

ATHENIAN STRANGER [speaking of the 'cruel tribute' to Minos, when the Athenians had no ships of war to repel the enemy]. 'Better for them to have lost many times over the seven youths, than that heavy armed and stationary troops should

[1] Thuc. vii. 21.
[2] See Xen. *Mem.*, iii. 5.
[3] Cf. Aristoph. *Frogs*, 1021, where Aeschylus is made to say he gave them a drama 'stuffed with war' (Ἄρεως μεστόν).

have been turned into sailors, and accustomed to leap quickly on shore, and again to hurry back to their ships ; or should have fancied that there was no disgrace in not awaiting the attack of an enemy and dying boldly ; and that there were good reasons, and plenty of them, for a man throwing away his arms, and betaking himself to flight ; which is affirmed upon occasion not to be dishonourable. This is the language of naval warfare, and is anything but worthy of extraordinary praise. . . .

'. . . Moreover naval powers, which owe their safety to ships, do not honour that sort of warlike excellence which is most deserving of honour. For he who owes his safety to the pilot and the captain and the oarsman, and all sorts of rather good-for-nothing persons, cannot rightly give honour to whom honour is due. But how can a state be in a right condition which cannot duly award honour ?'

CLEINIAS. 'It is hardly possible, I admit ; and yet, Stranger, we Cretans are in the habit of saying that the battle of Salamis was the salvation of Hellas.'

ATHENIAN. 'Why, yes ; and that is the opinion which prevails widely among Hellenes and barbarians. But Megillus and I say, rather, that the battle of Marathon was the beginning, and the battle of Plataea the completion of the great deliverance, and that these battles made the Hellenes better ; whereas the sea-fights of Salamis and Artemisium, for I may as well put them both together, made them no better, if I may say this without offence about the battles which helped to save us. And in estimating the goodness of a state, we regard both the situation of a country and the order of the laws, considering that the mere preservation and continuance of life is not the most honourable thing for men, as the vulgar think, but the continuance of the best life, while we live.' [1]

No doubt there is some prejudice, as well as idealism, in this view ; but it has this practical justification, that the battle of Salamis was so far from being decisive, that if Mardonius had won at Plataea in the following year, nothing could have saved Athens. The Thebans had already submitted, the Argives were ready to go over owing to hatred of Sparta (for which they had good cause), and the Spartans and their Peloponnesian allies would have

[1] Plato, *Laws*, iv. 706, 707 (tr. Jowett).

at once retreated beyond the isthmus, which they had fortified. The Athenians would have been left to their fate, and must have either perished in battle, their wives and children being sold as slaves, or have sailed *en masse*, so far as that was possible, to Italy. They had refused the terms which Mardonius offered them before he marched on Athens, and even if he had offered them again, they could not have accepted them, as the condition would have been to march with the Persians against their late friends and allies. For them, therefore, everything depended on the battle of Plataea, and, for reasons connected with the manoeuvres, and long hesitation on both sides to engage, the battle was decided by the Spartan and Tegean hoplites without the support of the Athenians. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Spartans in later years took somewhat coolly the claims made by the Athenians to have been the liberators of Hellas. They certainly followed up the victories of 480-479 with great energy and success, but this was entirely to their own advantage. Of course it may be said that if it had not been for the victory at Salamis, the Peloponnese as well as Attica would have been subdued by Persia, but this was evidently not the view of Sparta, as can be seen from Herodotus. The Spartans had arrived too late for the battle of Marathon, but had seen and praised the results of Athenian valour, and what the Athenians, who were Ionians, had done in the way of repelling a landing, we may be sure that the Dorian Spartans felt absolute confidence they could do, and much more besides.[1] Moreover, the performance of Leonidas and the three hundred Spartan hoplites at Thermopylae justified them in the opinion that, with their allies, they were a match on land for any force which Persia could bring against them. Hence, as we see by the account of Herodotus,[2] the forward position which the defence of Attica entailed was only accepted by them with reluctance ; and though their final decision may have been taken mainly

[1] Cf. Thuc. vii. 5 (speech of Gylippus).

[2] Herod. ix. 6-9.

on strategic grounds, it seems probable that they were also influenced to some extent by Hellenic feeling. In any case they were mainly instrumental on that occasion in saving the Athenians, which in after years the latter were not very anxious to remember. In the *Persae* of Aeschylus, however, the 'Dorian Spear' is mentioned as the instrument of the victory.[1]

To those who, like Professor Bury, profess to see nothing but chance and human intelligence in the order of human affairs, the appearance on the stage at certain moments of time of the 'man of destiny' must be very difficult to account for. Such a man was Themistocles the Athenian. It is no use to say that he was the product of 'democracy'; there was no such thing at Athens, as that word is generally understood, in his early life. There was a constitution, but the mass of the people were not actively engaged in politics. For one thing they were very ignorant, for another they had not yet learned their strength, and evidently did not begin to do so until some years after the second Persian invasion. It was then that Aristides, who was something of an opportunist, brought them in from the country in large numbers to serve the needs of the growing tributary empire in paid positions. But at the time of which we are speaking, the mass of the citizens were bound, through necessity, to the soil, or engaged at sea and in manual avocations. Themistocles simply appeared, and without the support of family connections, in isolation from the general body of citizens, whom he persuaded or cajoled, in the face of powerful prejudice, deeply rooted not only in the history but in the religious ideas of the race, he converted Athens into a sea state. And when he had done it his power waned—the people 'grew weary' of him, and he was ostracised.

[1] 'So great shall be the mass of clotted gore in the Plataean's land beneath the Dorian spear' (speech of the ghost of Darius). The Spartans on this occasion put 5000 Spartan hoplites into the field, each attended by seven Helots; also 5000 Periaeci, 'all picked men,' each with an attendant —a total force of 50,000. The whole united Greek force in the field was about 110,000. Herod. ix. 28-30.

That Athens should have emerged from the normal isolation of a Greek inland state, and become the centre of a maritime empire, is in itself no great matter, for its life as an imperial power lasted only some seventy-four years. Nor were its political struggles of any immediate value to the world, because they were not essentially different from those of many other Greek states of which we know less, and, unlike those of Rome, they left little direct impress on succeeding ages. Regarded indeed from a material standpoint the history of Athens in the fifth century is a record of abortive effort. It seems reasonable therefore to believe that the end and object of this peculiar combination in human life, for which there is no parallel in recorded history, was a spiritual one, and that this shortlived empire, with all its restless activities, was a necessary medium for the production and effective propagation of certain ideas.

The instrument of this sudden and surprising evolution was, beyond all other men, Themistocles. Through him the way was prepared and the opportunity given to the Attic character to find itself in effort and that variety of life which can only be produced by material resources; and a common centre for intellectual ideas was established for a long and fruitful period. The far-reaching designs of Themistocles were brought about chiefly by two measures, the construction of a fleet and the fortification of the Piraeus. We read that he persuaded the populace in Assembly to forgo a distribution of money which they expected from a windfall to the public treasury from the silver mines of Laurion, and to entrust it to him as a loan to the hundred richest men in Athens, one talent each, for a purpose to be subsequently approved, or the money to be restored to the State. 'On these terms he received the money, and with it he had a hundred triremes built, each of the hundred individuals building one; and it was with these ships they fought the battle of Salamis against the barbarians.' [1] Similarly, he persuaded the citizens to fortify

[1] Ἀθην. Πολ. 22.

the Piraeus, the last thing they would have done of themselves, for reasons already indicated, to which may be added the apprehensions of religious feeling, and the lack of foresight depending on imagination, a quality at all times possessed by comparatively few, and the nearer to nature the less in evidence. That this was no ordinary feat, the words of Thucydides sufficiently indicate : 'He first dared to say that they must make the sea their domain, and he lost no time in laying the foundations of their empire' ; and we read further : 'The Piraeus appeared to him to be of more real consequence than the upper city. He was fond of telling the Athenians that if ever they were hard pressed on land, they should go down to the Piraeus and fight the world at sea.'[1] Such ideas were entirely foreign to Athenian tradition, yet Themistocles prevailed in the face of opposition from the regular leaders, including Aristides, who, according to Plutarch, 'held the second place [after Miltiades] both for reputation and power' at Marathon. It is supposed, and with reason, that the ostracism of Aristides in 582 B.C. was connected with this struggle.

Two passages from Plutarch, which throw further light on the significance of this revolution, and the political feelings which it excited, may be quoted. The first is from the account of the visit of the Cretan Epimenides to Athens in the time of Solon, who is said to have advised him as to his legislation, and who evidently disguised statesmanship under the sanctity of the seer :

'It is reported that looking upon Munychia, and considering a long while, he said to those that stood by, "How blind is man in future things ! for did the Athenians foresee what mischief this would do their city, they would even eat it with their own teeth to be rid of it."'

The second passage is from the Life of Themistocles :

'After this he took order for the construction of Piraeus, perceiving the excellence of its harbours, and being desirous to

[1] Thuc. i. 93 ; an account of the fortification of the Piraeus after the final defeat of the Persians, of which Themistocles 'had made a beginning in his year of office as archon,' at an earlier date.

adapt the whole city to the sea. In this he pursued, in a manner, a policy the opposite to that of the ancient kings of Attica; for they are said to have endeavoured to keep their subjects away from the sea, and to accustom them to till the ground instead of going on board ships, quoting a legend that Athene and Poseidon had a contest for the possession of the land, and that she defeated him by displaying to the dicasts the sacred olive. Themistocles, on the other hand, did not so much "plaster Piraeus on to Athens," as Aristophanes the comic poet says, as fasten the city dependent to Piraeus, and the land to the sea. By this means he increased the power and confidence of the people against the nobility; the authority coming into the hands of sailors and boatswains and pilots. Thus it was one of the orders of the thirty tyrants, that the Bema, or tribune, in the Assembly should be turned round towards the land; implying their opinion that the empire by sea had been the origin of the democracy, and that an oligarchy had less to apprehend from men who cultivated the land.'

Our knowledge of the period which follows the final defeat of the Persian host at Plataea (and concurrently on the Asiatic side of the Aegean at Mycale) in 479, down to the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431, known, in round figures, as the 'Fifty years,' is very meagre, as the history of Herodotus ends with the beginning of this period, and that of Thucydides begins at the end of it. As it was the period of the growth and climax of the Athenian empire, the absence of contemporary historical records leaves us in much doubt on many points of interest. Thucydides gives a brief summary of the principal events in explanation of 'how the Athenian empire grew up,' which is our leading authority, and, for the rest, we are dependent mainly on the *Lives* of Plutarch, and, since 1891, on the recovered Aristotelian treatise of the next century. We have also the seven surviving plays of Aeschylus, which, being contemporary, are in some particulars, as I shall hope to show, of much greater historical value than has hitherto been recognised. Thucydides apologises for his brief digression on the ground that the only writer who had treated of the period ('Hellanicus') was 'very brief and inaccurate in his

chronology.'[1] But he himself could hardly have been briefer, interesting as his remarks are as far as they go.

Next to Themistocles, and in opposition to him, the leading personality at Athens during the years between the first and the second Persian invasions, and the ten years, or thereabouts, following the final victories, was Aristides. It is the fashion now to describe him as a 'democrat,'[2] on evidence in the lately discovered Aristotelian treatise. But the description is entirely misleading, and ignores the evidence of Plutarch, who says :

Aristides, 'being the friend and supporter of that Cleisthenes, who settled the government after the expulsion of the tyrants, and emulating and admiring Lycurgus the Lacedaemonian above all politicians, adhered to the aristocratical principles of government ; and had Themistocles, son of Neocles, his adversary on the side of the populace.'[3]

The defence against the Persian invasion (which comprised the two sea fights of Artemisium and Salamis, and the three land battles of Thermopylae, Plataea, and Mycale[4]) had been conducted under the headship of Sparta. Her half-hearted support, however, in the measures for clearing the Aegean and Hellespont which followed, and the insolent and intemperate conduct of Pausanias, one of the two Spartan kings, who still commanded the allied fleets, resulted in the allegiance of the allies being transferred to the Athenian commanders, Xanthippus (father of Pericles) and Aristides. This movement was the beginning of the Athenian maritime ascendency, and it was consolidated with great diplomatic skill by Aristides by the confederacy of Delos, under which a number of island and seaboard states agreed to join Athens in a league against the Persian power in the Aegean, and to accept his assessment of the respective quotas to be contributed by each in ships or money. In

[1] Thuc. i. 97.
[2] Adolf Holm, Bury.
[3] Plut. *Arist.* Plutarch regarded the constitution of Cleisthenes as 'aristocratic.' See *Life of Cimon*, who is described as 'anxious to restore the old aristocracy of the time of Cleisthenes.'
[4] Mycale, nominally an engagement of fleets, was fought on land.

these proceedings Aristides associated with himself Cimon the son of Miltiades, then a young man of noble appearance, and much beloved by the common people, who proved himself a commander of exceptional genius, and who, more than any one else, built up the Athenian empire in war.

The combination of these two men evidently also proved effective against the supremacy of Themistocles, whose brilliant qualities, united with a corrupt and unscrupulous character, were becoming a danger to the State. He belonged, in fact, to the order of exceptional men for whom the bounds of a Greek city-state were too narrow. In Athens such men invariably appealed to the populace against the upper and middle classes, and moved in the direction of a tyranny. Thus Pisistratus, who is referred to as a 'democrat'; Themistocles, who is described by Plutarch, in connection with the combination against him of Cimon and Aristides, as 'advancing the authority of the people beyond its just limits'; Pericles, who established his power, as against Cimon, in the first instance by the lavish use of public money; Alcibiades, who 'cared no more for oligarchy than he did for democracy,'[1] and who, on his return to Athens after his victories, 'won so upon the lower and meaner sort of people, that they passionately desired to have him tyrant over them';[2] and perhaps to this list we might add, speculatively, Cleisthenes, though the end of his career is lost to us. In Sparta, where the constitution was more stable, and guarded by a rigid discipline, the only opening for such men was in foreign adventure, where their nature, unaccustomed to freedom, not seldom broke away in insolence and oppression. Such a man was Pausanias; yet evidently a great man in gifts of nature, for Thucydides ranges him with Themistocles in his account of their respective tragedies: 'Such was the end of Pausanias the Lacedaemonian, and Themistocles the Athenian, the two most famous Hellenes of their day.'[3]

Aristides is a not too common example among the public men of Athens of a man who was truly disinterested in his

[1] Thuc. viii. 48. [2] Plut. *Alc.* 34. [3] Thuc. i. 138.

service to the State as a whole; and such was his sense of justice and integrity that his contemporaries seem to have rather chafed under it as a reflection on themselves. He was evidently also a great warrior, and furnished in his personality the material for a representative idealisation of the archaic age, then in process of passing away. Of the same order, and a product of the same forces and culture, was Aeschylus, who, there is every reason to think, was his friend, certainly his devoted admirer.

The character of Aristides forbids us to infer that the conflict between him and Themistocles was merely the result of the usual clash of personal or party rivalry. The two men represented forces which were permanent, and brought into active operation by the problems of empire, and the struggle between them may be said to have determined the lines of political conflict at Athens throughout the century. The aim of Themistocles was to throw off the Spartan hegemony, which depended on the character and military training of her citizens, and to render Athens supreme in Greece. This, he foresaw, could be done by sea-power, and turning Athens, by artificial means, as nearly as possible into an island. He did not live to see the completion of his scheme, and it was not until 457-456 B.C. that it was carried out, when at the instigation of Pericles, who took up the policy of Themistocles which had been in abeyance under the rule of Cimon, the Long Walls, which joined Athens to the Piraeus, were built. Themistocles also perceived that this policy, which coincided with his own vast ambitions, could only be effected in reliance on the mass of the people, and it lent itself, in the hands of unscrupulous men, to the lower rather than the higher appeal. The people were ignorant, superstitious, and inexperienced, but they loved glory and power, and soon realised that a tributary empire provided a means of subsistence without labour for themselves. It also greatly increased their political strength as against the wealthier classes. It is easy to understand therefore that, in such a scheme, appeals to ancient Pan-Hellenic sentiment, and for

good relations with Sparta, and justice to the allies, fell, among the great majority, on indifferent ears.

Aristides, on the other hand, who represented the old order on the constitutional side, evidently looked with the utmost apprehension on the new departure. He probably saw in it a prospect, which was realised later, of fratricidal war among the Greeks, of growing insolence among the people, to the destruction of the social order, and of the substitution, as regards the allied states, of a rule of unscrupulous dictation for dealings in harmony with traditional Greek feeling as to the sovereign rights of the city-state. His policy, therefore, which was followed by Cimon, and became that of the conservative, or 'constitutional' party throughout, was to direct their warlike efforts against non-Greeks, and, in the Greek world, to cultivate good relations (so far as that was possible in the altered circumstances) with Sparta, and a reasonable forbearance towards the allies, with whom in many cases the wealthier classes were closely connected by family and business relations. He was wise enough, however, to see that, after the Persian wars, the time had gone by when the restraints of the old order could still be imposed on the mass of the citizens by the will of an aristocracy, and that, unless wise concessions were made, Themistocles, or others who might succeed him, would carry all before them, perhaps through the violence of revolution (*στάσις*), and one of those sanguinary pages which darken the annals of the Greek city-states be opened in Athens. He also must have seen, after the part played by the fleet against the Persians, that the time for opposing the naval policy of Themistocles was past, and he no doubt became convinced by his own experience in organising the Confederacy of Delos that the future of Athens, for better or worse, was bound up in that policy. Such a policy required large numbers of trained men for the ships, and to guard the outposts of a growing dominion. Accordingly, we find him passing into law a great 'democratic' measure, which not only provided for this, but at the same time offered an outlet for that considerable body of the population which

in Attica was always under the pressure of poverty, and even on the brink of starvation, and was in consequence a source of trouble in the State.[1] Plutarch describes this, but before coming to his evidence I quote from the Aristotelian treatise, which was evidently his main source. The passage describes, in general terms, the political situation at Athens from the battle of Salamis in 480 to the overthrow of the Council of the Areopagus, as a political body, in, or about, 462 B.C.:

23. 'Up to this point had the city progressed by this time in gradual growth, the democracy growing with it; but after the Persian wars the Council of the Areopagus once more developed strength and assumed the control of the state. It did not acquire this supremacy by virtue of any formal decree, but because it had been the cause of the battle of Salamis being fought. When the generals were utterly at a loss how to meet the crisis and made proclamation that every one must see to his own safety, the Areopagus provided a donation of money, distributing eight drachmas to each member of the ships' crew, and so prevailed on them to go on board. On these grounds it obtained a great advance in public estimation; and during this period Athens was well administered. At this time they devoted themselves to the prosecution of the war and were in high repute among the Greeks, and the command of the sea was conferred upon them, in spite of the opposition of the Lacedaemonians. The leaders of the people[2] during this period were Aristides and Themistocles' [the latter conducting business connected with war, while the former] 'had a reputation of being a clever statesman and the most upright man of his time. Accordingly the one was usually employed as general, the other as a political adviser.' [Politically they were opponents.]

24. 'After this, seeing the state growing in wealth and confidence, and much wealth accumulated, he [Aristides] advised the people to lay hold of the leadership of the League, and to quit the country districts and settle in the city. He pointed out to

[1] Compare the proceedings of Solon and Pisistratus referred to above.

[2] προστάτης, originally used to describe a citizen chosen by common consent of the people (the 'demos') to protect, or champion their cause—as Solon was. Later, as the democracy became the ruling power, the term was used to describe the chief political leader on either side, that of the people and of the wealthier class respectively.

them that all would be able to gain a living there, some by service in the army, others in the garrisons, others by taking part in public affairs ; and in this way they would secure the leadership. This advice was taken ; and when the people had assumed the supreme control they proceeded to treat their allies in a more imperious fashion. . . .

'They also secured an ample maintenance for the mass of the population in the way which Aristides pointed out to them. Out of the proceeds of the tributes and the taxes and the contributions of the allies more than twenty thousand persons were maintained.' [The passage proceeds to specify the services, *e.g.* knights, bowmen, guards, hoplites, crews for the ships, both fighting and collecting the tribute, magistrates, members of the Council and jurymen ('dicasts'), the last item, and perhaps some others, being evidently put in by anticipation, as payment of the dicasts was not made until after the close of the period to which these extracts relate—by Pericles (see below, p. 55).]

25. 'In this way the people earned their livelihood. The supremacy of the Areopagus lasted, however, for about seventeen years after the Persian wars, although gradually declining. But after the strength of the masses increased, Ephialtes, a man with a reputation for incorruptibility and possessing a high public character, who had become the leader of the people, made an attack upon that Council. First of all he caused the destruction of many of its members by bringing actions against them with reference to their administration. Then, in the archonship of Conon [462 B.C.], he stripped the Council of all the acquired prorogative from which it derived its guardianship of the Constitution, and assigned some of them to the Council of Five Hundred, and others to the Assembly and the Law Courts.'

We may glance now at the evidence of Plutarch, though, in doing so, we must bear in mind that, in writing the 'Lives of famous persons,' the object which he had primarily in view was to provide examples for emulation.[1] In his sketch of Aristides, in whom he sees an ideal type of antiquity, he evidently found the lines for his portrait somewhat disturbed by certain aberrations, as he would regard them, in the career of his model from the ideal standard, as, for instance, in his compromise with the growing democratic

[1] Cf. *Life of Pericles*, introductory remarks.

movement, and he seeks to palliate them by describing Aristides—no doubt correctly—as a man apart: 'He walked, so to say, alone on his own path in politics'; and further: 'In his own private affairs, and those of his fellow citizens, he was rigorously just, but in public matters he acted often in accordance with his country's policy, which demanded sometimes not a little injustice.' He says that 'Aristides perceived that the Athenians, after their return into the city [after Plataea], were eager for democracy; and deeming the people to deserve consideration on account of their valiant behaviour, as also that it was a matter of difficulty, they being well armed, powerful, and full of spirit with their victories, to oppose them by force, he brought forward a decree that every one might share in the government, and the archons be chosen out of the whole body of the Athenians.' [The third class were not, in fact, admitted to the archonship until the time of Pericles, *c.* 458 B.C.] Plutarch also tells us that peculation was rife at Athens, that Aristides brought unpopularity on himself in his endeavours to control it, and was at last impeached and condemned for 'robbing the public' himself at the instance of Themistocles and his associates, whose malpractices he had exposed; but that the sentence was revoked owing to the indignant intervention of 'the best and chiefest men of the city.' Lastly, it may reasonably be inferred that, like other eminent men at Athens, he fell on evil days, either through the caprice and jealousy of the people, or as the result of party intrigue. Nepos [1] accepts the story, and gives it as a proof of his 'integrity,' that 'he died in such poverty that he scarcely left money to defray the charges of his funeral.' Plutarch, however, gives the following account:

'Some say Aristides died in Pontus, on a voyage there on state business, some that he died of old age at Athens, honoured and admired by the citizens. Craterus of Macedon gives the following account of his end. After the banishment of Themistocles,

[1] *Lives*: 'Aristides.'

he says that the common people, growing insolent, produced a numerous brood of informers, who were constantly accusing the better and most influential men in the state, with a view to subjecting them to the envy of the multitude, whom their prosperity and power had filled with self-conceit. One of these, Diophantus of Amphitrope, obtained a verdict against Aristides on a charge of taking bribes, namely, that when he was settling the assessments for the tribute, he received money from the Ionians [to tax them more lightly], and as he was unable to pay the fine of fifty minae which was imposed on him, he left Athens and died somewhere in Ionia. But Craterus offers no documentary evidence of this, . . . though he generally does so in such matters. And almost all others who have spoken of the ill-treatment of their generals by the people mention the banishment of Themistocles, the bonds of Miltiades, the fine of Pericles, the suicide of Paches in court before the dicasts when judgment was given against him, and many other similar examples which they collect and discuss ; but although they speak of the ostracism of Aristides, they nowhere mention the trial and sentence.' (26.)

Plutarch thus seeks to discredit the account of Craterus, evidently because it seemed to reflect on the character of his hero ; still it is not only circumstantial, but in accordance with other experience. Moreover a public man at Athens seldom survived loss of popularity, and admiration of past services was not a quality of which the history of the Athenians affords much evidence. It is the first part of the account therefore, not the story of Craterus, which seems to me to be the more improbable.[1]

This view is strongly supported by the allusions by Aeschylus to Aristides under the description of the warrior prophet in the *Seven against Thebes*. I am aware that some critics refuse to accept the lines as referring to him, but they advance no arguments against the strong internal evidence to the contrary. Even if Plutarch had not mentioned the tradition that the lines were taken by the audience at the time to refer to Aristides, they could not fail, even at this date, to suggest the identification. Read

[1] It would not necessarily follow that Aristides was guilty of peculation, as such prosecutions were a regular means of bringing down a public man.

with what we gather from other sources the passage shows that Aristides was at that time in political trouble. The play is said to have been acted in 467 B.C. and, according to Nepos, Aristides died 'about four years after Themistocles was banished from Athens,' which might be in 467 B.C., or possibly a year or two after.[1]

The political purpose which Aeschylus seems to have had in view in composing this drama was partly to correct, by a noble picture of hoplitic warfare, the tendency which was already beginning to show itself to neglect military training and discipline under the influences of the new naval policy, partly to warn his contemporaries, by example, against insolence, more particularly in their dealings with the new allies; that being the prevailing vice among the Greeks, and among none of them more than the Athenians. Their tendency was to become unbearable in prosperity,[2] the more so as the ancient restraints of authority became relaxed under democratic developments. Athens, which was unfortified from the time of Pisistratus to the Persian invasion, had been twice abandoned to the enemy, but the walls had now been rebuilt, and the poet, in picturing the terrible fate from which they had narrowly escaped, appeals to the patriotism of the citizens to keep up their military training and discipline. In the wonderful description, placed in the mouth of the chorus of women, of the sack of an ancient city and the enslavement of the women and children, there is evidently also an appeal against such practices perpetrated by Greeks on Greeks, more especially when united in a confederacy hallowed by common religious rites.

A few passages may be cited in illustration of these remarks. First the patriotic appeal by Eteocles:

> ὑμᾶς δὲ χρὴ νῦν, καὶ τὸν ἐλλείποντ' ἔτι
> ἥβης ἀκμαίας, καὶ τὸν ἔξηβον χρόνῳ

[1] 'After 467,' Adolf Holm, *History of Greece*, English translation, 1899, ii. 122.

[2] Cf. Aesch. *Prom. Vinct.* 1000, Hermes to Prometheus, *εἴης φορητὸς οὐκ ἄν, εἰ πράσσοις καλῶς.*

βλαστημὸν ἀλδαίνοντα σώματος πολύν,
ὥραν τ' ἔχονθ' ἕκαστον, ὥστε συμπρεπές,
πόλει τ' ἀρήγειν καὶ θεῶν ἐγχωρίων
βωμοῖσι, τιμὰς μὴ 'ξαλειφθῆναί ποτε,
τέκνοις τε, Γῇ τε μητρί, φιλτάτῃ τροφῷ,
ἡ γὰρ νέους ἕρποντας εὐμενεῖ πέδῳ,
ἅπαντα πανδοκοῦσα παιδείας ὅτλον,
ἐθρέψατ' οἰκιστῆρας ἀσπιδηφόρους
πιστούς, ὅπως γένοισθε πρὸς χρέος τόδε.[1] (10-20.)

Then the following, also spoken by Eteocles :

ὦ Ζεῦ τε καὶ Γῆ καὶ πολισσοῦχοι θεοί,
'Αρά τ' 'Ερινὺς πατρὸς ἡ μεγασθενής,
μή μοι πόλιν γε πρυμνόθεν πανώλεθρον
ἐκθαμνίσητε δηάλωτον, 'Ελλάδος
φθόγγον χέουσαν, καὶ δόμους ἐφεστίους·
ἐλευθέραν δὲ γῆν τε καὶ Κάδμου πόλιν
ζυγοῖσι δουλείοισι μήποτε σχεθεῖν.
γένεσθε δ' ἀλκή· ξυνὰ δ' ἐλπίζω λέγειν·
πόλις γὰρ εὖ πράσσουσα δαίμονας τίει.[2] (69-77.)

And the description by the chorus of the sack of a city, of which the following are the opening lines :

οἰκτρὸν γὰρ πόλιν ὧδ' ὠγυγίαν Αΐδᾳ προϊάψαι δορὸς
ἄγραν
δουλίαν, ψαφαρᾷ σποδῷ
ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς 'Αχαιοῦ θεόθεν
περθομέναν ἀτίμως·

[1] 'You now it behoves—both him that yet falls short of manhood's prime, and him that is past it but yet retains vigour of body, and each one of the age of military service, as is only right—to succour his city and altars of the ancestral gods, so that their worship be not ever put an end to, and his children, and the earth his mother kindliest nurse. For she, when they were yet young things crawling on her kindly plain, took upon herself all the trouble of their nurture, and reared them as her inhabitants, a shield-bearing and trusty people, that ye might prove yourselves such at the present need.'

[2] 'O Zeus, and Earth, and gods who guard our city, and thou Curse, the mighty Erinys of my father, extirpate not root and branch, I pray, in utter ruin of capture by an enemy, our city which utters the speech of Hellas, with our hearths and homes ! May none ever restrain a free land and Cadmus' city in the yoke of slavery ; but be our protection. And herein I am confident that I voice the common interest ; for a city which prospers pays worship to her gods.'

τὰς δὲ κεχειρωμένας ἄγεσθαι
ἐή, νέας τε καὶ παλαιὰς
ἱππηδὸν πλοκάμων,
περιρρηγνυμένων φαρέων.
βοᾷ δὲ καὶ κενουμένα πόλις,
λαΐδος ὀλλυμένας
μιξοθρόου· βαρείας
τοι τύχας προταρβῶ.[1] (311-322.)

That Aeschylus made use of the character of the seer Amphiaraus for a political allusion to Aristides, seems to me quite clear from the language used. The furious warrior Tydeus is spoken of as taunting him with 'lack of spirit' (378), and in the lament over his coming fate he is referred to by Eteocles with special emphasis under the title of 'just,' by which Aristides was known. The speech indicates that Aristides was then in political difficulties and that his fall was imminent. Thus :

'Alas for the luck which in mortal affairs associates the just man with the impious! In every undertaking nothing is worse than evil company. . . . Indeed a righteous man, embarked on a ship as associate of reckless sailors and some villainy, has ere now perished with the heaven-detested crew. Or again, a just man associated with stranger-hating[2] citizens, who forget the gods, falling himself into the same snare with them, has ere now been laid low by the scourge of heaven which visits all alike. Even so the seer, I mean the son of Oecles, a man modest and just and brave and righteous,[3] a prophet of renown, through his association with impious men of unbridled tongues, who are going a long march in despite of reason, shall, by the will of Zeus, be dragged down with them to reach that far-off city.'

[1] ''Tis a piteous thing to send to destruction a city of ancient fame, a prey of the spear, reduced to slavery, shamefully ruined in crumbling dust by the hand of an Achaean through the will of the gods; and that these women should be dragged away as captives, young and old—ah me!—by the hair, like horses by their manes, with tearing of their robes about them. The city groans aloud being made desolate, as the captives of mingled speech are carried away. I anticipate with dread a grievous fate.' (Trans. based on that by C. E. S. Headlam, M.A., 'Bell's Classical Translations.')

[2] 'Churlish'—C. E. S. Headlam, whose translation is here followed.

[3] *σώφρων, δίκαιος, ἀγαθός, εὐσεβὴς ἀνήρ* (606).

Plutarch's story about the lines in the previous speech containing the description of the shield is as follows :

'In all the vicissitudes of public affairs the constancy he [Aristides] showed was admirable, not being elated with honours, and demeaning himself tranquilly and sedately in adversity, holding the opinion that he ought to offer himself to the service of his country without mercenary views. . . . Hence it came, probably, that at the recital of these verses of Aeschylus in the theatre, relating to Amphiaraus,

> For not as seeming just, but being so
> He aims ; and from his depth of soil below,
> Harvests of wise and prudent counsels grow,[1]

the eyes of all the spectators were turned on Aristides as if this virtue, in an especial manner, belonged to him.'

I have collected thus particularly the evidence about Aristides, because I consider that Aeschylus was his admirer and supported his views, which coincided with his own, on the stage ; and that the character of Prometheus in the *Prometheus Bound*, through which, in my opinion, the poet expresses himself, is built up, in part, out of the career and character of Aristides. It is very probable that the fall or unpopularity of Aristides would involve the poet in a similar experience. We know that in the case of Pericles the attack made on him was begun by prosecutions in the popular courts of his intellectual friends, notably Phidias, and this was done in order to test public feeling with a view to an impeachment of Pericles himself. Certain it is, on the evidence of a passage in Aristophanes, that Aeschylus 'did not get on with the Athenians,'[2] and there is a story that

[1] The passage in the original is as follows :

> ἔγωγε μὲν δὴ τήνδε πιανῶ χθόνα,
> μάντις κεκευθὼς πολεμίας ὑπὸ χθονός.
> μαχώμεθ', οὐκ ἄτιμον ἐλπίζω μόρον.
> τοιαῦθ' ὁ μάντις, ἀσπίδ' εὔκυκλον νέμων
> πάγχαλκον, ηὔδα. σῆμα δ' οὐκ ἐπῆν κύκλῳ·
> οὐ γὰρ δοκεῖν ἄριστος, ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει,
> βαθεῖαν ἄλοκα διὰ φρενὸς καρπούμενος,
> ἐξ ἧς τὰ κεδνὰ βλαστάνει βουλεύματα.
> τούτῳ σοφούς τε κἀγαθοὺς ἀντηρέτας
> πέμπειν ἐπαινῶ. δεινὸς ὃς θεοὺς σέβει. (583-590).

[2] *Frogs*, 807, οὔτε γὰρ 'Αθηναίοισι συνέβαιν' Αἰσχύλος.

he was tried before the Areopagus on a charge of revealing the mysteries [1] in one of his plays, and that he was only saved by an appeal to the valour which he had displayed at Marathon. The proceedings appear to have been instituted in connection with an outbreak of popular feeling in the theatre, in which the poet is said to have narrowly escaped with his life by taking refuge at the altar of the god. There is an ironical line in the *Prometheus* which, as I said in my other volume, may conceivably contain an allusion to this incident. That play has all the appearance of having been written in Sicily, and my conclusion is that it was written about this time, namely, in 467 B.C. or shortly after.

This view is further confirmed by another story in Plutarch about Aeschylus, which some critics have shown a disinclination to accept. But read with what we know of the history of the times, it appears to me to bear the stamp of truth. The story is told in illustration of the popularity of Cimon and is as follows :

'This act [the bringing back of the bones of Theseus] made him very popular with the people of Athens, evidence of which is to be found in his being asked on one occasion to decide the tragic prize. When Sophocles produced his first play, being then a young man, the archon, seeing that there was strong rivalry and opposition among the spectators (φιλονεικίας οὔσης καὶ παρατάξεως τῶν θεατῶν) would not cast lots for the judges of the contest, but when Cimon with the other generals, his colleagues, entered to make the usual libation to the god, he refused to allow them to depart, but put them on their oath and made them sit down and give sentence, they being ten in number, one for each of the ten tribes. The excitement of the contest was much increased by the high position of the judges. The prize was adjudged to Sophocles, and it is said that Aeschylus was so vexed, and took it so heavily, that he did not remain in Athens much longer, but went in anger to Sicily, where also he died and was buried near Gela.'

[1] The charge would be for ἀσέβεια (impiety), which, however used on that occasion, was a recognised means of political attack, as it gave a wide scope for prejudice, and the penalties were crushing.

[2] Plut. *Cimon*, 8.

This event occurred in 468 B.C., and my impression is that the 'excitement' referred to in the passage was political rather than artistic.[1] The archon probably anticipated a riot. The surviving plays of Aeschylus are all 'political,' that is to say he used his powers in order to influence the citizens in the interests of what he believed to be sound government and of self-restraint. The art of Sophocles, on the other hand, is more ideal, and in consequence his plays were much less likely to provoke controversy or give offence. He was rocked in the cradle of Pericles, and had probably to accept its limitations as regards refraining from overt political allusion.

With the advance of democracy the times grew more dangerous for those who undertook to address the public seriously. The politics of Aeschylus, which were those of the 'moderates,' who believed in the 'constitution,' but not in unrestrained democracy, inevitably brought him into conflict with the popular party, who by this time were in the ascendent at home, and his ideas in other respects were ceasing to appeal to the rising generation. No doubt to be beaten by a young aspirant was hard for a man of an irritable and solitary temperament,[2] who had devoted his life and splendid powers to the service of the State in the highest sense ; but the sting of defeat evidently lay in the fact that the award had been made by those whom Aeschylus

[1] The ancient Athenians are generally spoken of as an artistic people—certainly they produced some great artists ; but their main preoccupation was politics and war. In any case I believe that many false ideas have been propagated in modern life through the habit of unduly idealising them, and attributing to them motives and feelings which belong to later and more highly developed ages. In his edition of Aristotle's *Poetics*, the late Dr. Ingram Bywater has a very judicious note which bears on this. Discussing the question how far Aristotle had a 'theory' of art, he writes, 'the parts are Aristotle's, but the synthesis is always to some extent our work, not his,' and he expresses a suspicion that Aristotle 'would be surprised to find how large a meaning we are able to read into some of his more incidental utterances.' He adds, 'We must not forget, too, that the very idea of a Theory of Art is modern, and that our present use of the term "Art" does not go further back than the age of Winckelmann and Goethe.'

[2] Compare the presentation of Aeschylus by Aristophanes in the *Frogs*.

would regard as the first men in the city,[1] and he probably felt that his influence was waning and that the cause for which he had laboured was lost.

We may proceed now with the further historical material which leads up to the consideration of the play of Aristophanes which is more particularly the subject of this book.

[1] The Board of Generals were the chief executive authority in all matters relating to war and foreign policy.

CHAPTER III

Historical Survey (*continued*): Cimon, Pericles.

In the period which follows we come to the age of Cimon. Aristides organised the naval league, but it was under the leadership of Cimon the son of Miltiades that the Athenian empire was built up. Our knowledge of him is mainly derived from Plutarch. As he was the last representative, in a supreme position on the conservative side, of the old aristocracy of Attica, and came into conflict with Pericles and the popular party, it is necessary to say something about him, the more so as he has been unduly disparaged, in contrast with Pericles, by writers of a certain school. Professor Bury, for example, whose history seems to be now largely accepted for educational purposes, disposes of him as follows :

'The son of Miltiades had been at first regarded as a youth of little promise. His grandfather was nicknamed "Simpleton"; and he was supposed to have inherited a wit poorer than that of the ordinary Athenian. Fond of the wine-cup and leading a disorderly life, he was not a man of liberal education ; and a writer of memoirs, who knew him, described him as Peloponnesian rather than Athenian—uncultivated but honest and downright. He lived with his step-sister Elpinice, and they both affected Lacedaemonian manners. Aristides seems to have discerned his military ability and to have introduced him to public life. His simplicity, geniality, and lavish hospitality rendered him popular ; his military successes confirmed his influence.'

This, however, is Plutarch's account :

'Stesimbrotus of Thasos, who lived about the same time as Cimon, says that he was never taught music (μουσικήν) or any other of the liberal studies usual among the Greek upper classes, and that he was altogether without Attic smartness and facility of speech, but that he was of a noble and candid disposition, and

his character in general was more like that of a Peloponnesian [than an Athenian]:

φαῦλον, ἄκομψον, τὰ μέγιστ' ἀγαθόν,
"rough, unrefined, for great things able,"

as Euripides says of Hercules, which may well apply to Cimon according to the account given of him by Stesimbrotus.'

As to the Elpinice story, Plutarch gives two accounts, that he lived with her in early life, or 'according to some historians that she was openly married to him and lived as his wife, being too poor to obtain a husband in her own rank of life.' The Roman Nepos throws further light on the story by explaining, both in his preface to his Lives and in his account of Cimon, that among the Greeks marriage between a brother and half-sister on the father's side (*i.e.* not a uterine sister) was lawful. Also it appears that Cimon was imprisoned for inability to pay the fine inflicted on his father, that Elpinice kept him company, and secured his liberation by accepting marriage with a rich man on condition of his discharging the debt. Plutarch also says that the irregularities in Cimon's life were most pronounced in his untried youth, and he notes that they were raked up against him for political purposes in later life, but he appraises him, as a public man, in the following terms:

'He was not less brave than Miltiades, or less intelligent than Themistocles, and he was acknowledged to be more honest than either. Nor was he inferior to them in military skill, while he far surpassed them in conduct as a citizen.'

Even allowing for some partiality in the writer, he leaves us the impression, which is confirmed by the events, of a very remarkable man. In fact, if we are to compare Cimon with Pericles, it is difficult to deny that, though he evidently was not so intellectual as the latter, he was the more capable of the two.

The power of Cimon evidently lay in his personality and great natural gifts, developed by long experience, such as an excellent judgment, freedom from passion and prejudice, and exceptional ability in dealing with men. But such gifts

were employed mainly, and of necessity, in the foreign and military sphere, not in that of domestic politics. His popularity at Athens after his successes against the Persians and the acquisition of new fields for colonisation and trade has been already noticed. But it did not survive the test of inactivity and closer contact with the citizens at home. We read that he began to be disliked for the preference which he showed for the Lacedaemonian character and institutions, that he was charged with taking a bribe from the Macedonian king (Pericles being his most active accuser, though at the last he did not press the charge), and when an expedition which he took to the Peloponnese to assist the Spartans, who were in difficulties,[1] was treated by them with distrust and sent away, the irritation at Athens was such that they vented it on Cimon and ostracised him (461 B.C.). This proceeding was also closely connected with the popular movement led by Ephialtes and Pericles against the authority of the upper classes. So long as Cimon remained in Athens he had been able to control it. 'He continued,' says Plutarch, 'to oppose the encroachments of the people, who would have trampled on the aristocracy (*ἀρίστοις*) and were endeavouring to get into their own hands all sovereignty and power.' Plutarch continues :

'When, however, he again started on foreign service, the populace finally succeeded in overthrowing the established order of the polity, and the ancestral institutions which they had used before, and under the leadership of Ephialtes took away from the Areopagus jurisdiction in all causes except a few, and making themselves masters of the courts of justice, turned the city into an undiluted democracy, Pericles also by this time being on the way to power and taking the side of the many. Cimon, on his return, was disgusted at the degradation of the ancient Senate, and tried to recall the suits to its jurisdiction, and to restore the aristocratic government of the time of Cleisthenes. Whereupon the conspirators raised an outcry against him and exasperated the people against him. . . .' (15.)

[1] Owing to the revolt of the Helots and Messenians after the great earthquake in 464 B.C.

After the ostracism of Cimon Pericles became supreme with the Assembly,[1] an alliance was entered into with Argos, Megara, and Thessaly against Sparta and her allies, and a period of war with Corinth and Aegina, in which the Athenians won great successes, was entered upon. Their military energy was never greater than at this time; the campaigns of Cimon had evidently brought them to a high pitch of training and produced generals of great capacity, notably Myronides. Not content, however, with the efforts they were making near home, they sent out an expedition, comparable in scale to the later Sicilian adventure, to Egypt in support of a local prince against the Persians, and occupied Memphis (459 B.C.). It was the first foretaste of disaster, for the invading force was completely destroyed, with the ships, by the Persians and Phoenicians five years later.

A serious check to their successes also occurred at Tanagra in 457 B.C., where the real weakness of the Athenian power was revealed, namely, in their inability to face the Spartan army. The Spartans were on an expedition in the Dorian interest in Boeotia, and Thucydides relates that 'about that time the Athenians began to build their Long Walls extending to the sea, one to the harbour of Phalerum, and the other to the Piraeus,' and that the delay of the Spartans in returning home from this expedition was due to the fact that the Athenians were posted by land and sea with a view to intercepting them, but also to another motive, which he proceeds to relate:

'Certain Athenians were privately making overtures to them, in the hope that they would put an end to the democracy and the building of the Long Walls. But the Athenians were aware of their embarrassment, and they also suspected their designs against the democracy. So they went out to meet them with their whole force, together with a thousand Argives and contingents from the other allies. . . . The battle was fought at Tanagra in Boeotia, and the Lacedaemonians and their allies, after great slaughter on both sides, gained the victory. They then marched

[1] Ephialtes had been assassinated in 461 B.C.

into the Megarian territory, and, cutting down the fruit-trees, returned home by way of Geraneia and the Isthmus.' [1]

This account is completed by Plutarch, whose remarks throw further light on the politics of Athens at this time. He relates that at this crisis the exiled Cimon presented himself before the Athenian army and offered his services in the battle, but that the Council, fearing that his design was to bring in the Lacedaemonians, forbade him to join them ; whereupon 'he retired, after desiring Euthippus and the rest of his friends, who were most censured as partisans of Sparta, to exert themselves gloriously against the enemy, and by their behaviour to wipe out the aspersion. And they, taking his panoply and placing it in their midst, took their stand together, being a hundred in number, and fought till they fell, leaving behind them much regret and repentance among the Athenians for the unjust censure they had put upon them.' [2]

Even if this noble story is a picturesque fiction—though there is no reason for thinking that it is of that character—the conclusion remains that the battle of Tanagra, more than any other single event, marks the close of the old régime at Athens. Cimon was the last great leader from the Attic aristocracy who were trained as hoplites and held to the ancient conception of Attica as a land power, and we may be sure that the devoted hundred who fell in this battle comprised, for the most part, the representatives of that tradition. Henceforward Athens became more entirely a sea power, and her social and political life underwent modifications which were determined largely by the altered conditions.

The significance of the battle of Tanagra is also shown by the recall of Cimon which followed it. Plutarch says that after their defeat the Athenians 'expected another army would come against them from the Peloponnese the next spring. Hence it was that they recalled Cimon from exile, and it was Pericles who proposed the decree.' They were

[1] Thuc. i. 107. [2] Plut. *Cimon*.

saved from this by the good offices of Cimon, who 'reconciled the two cities.'[1]

The Athenians now completed their Long Walls[2] (456-455 B.C.) in pursuance of the policy inaugurated by Themistocles and now prosecuted by Pericles, under which they secured comparative independence from the effects of invasion by land,[3] and were enabled to harass their enemies by sea. They also, for a brief period (457-447 B.C.), became masters of most of Boeotia, partly by a daring and successful raid under Myronides, partly through the complicity of faction in the several cities. During the same period they subdued Aegina, which surrendered its fleet and became tributary, and obtained control over several cities in the north of the Peloponnese. From these energies, which embroiled them with Sparta and the other Greeks, Cimon temporarily diverted them by taking out an expedition to Cyprus, where he died (449 B.C.). This was the last considerable effort against Persia and her Phoenician allies. Pericles henceforward concentrated all his attention on Athens and her naval empire, and probably did not regard with much regret the loss of Boeotia[4] and the Peloponnesian cities which shortly followed. The revolt of Euboea, however, on which Athens largely depended for her cattle supply and pasturage, accompanied as it was by the revolt and loss of Megara and the threat of a Peloponnesian invasion of Attica, was a more serious matter. It is said that Pericles bought off the Spartan king, who withdrew his forces, and thus was enabled to subdue the Euboean revolt. Thereupon he concluded a peace with Sparta for thirty years on the basis of the surrender of all Athenian possessions in continental Greece (445 B.C.). The Athenian empire was now exclusively maritime and tributary, and comprised most of the islands of the Aegean

[1] Plut. *Cimon*.

[2] Thuc. i. 108.

[3] They were enabled to depend on sea borne trade and they imported corn from the Euxine.

[4] At Coronea, where the Athenians were surprised and completely routed by Boeotian exiles who were adherents of the ejected oligarchical governments.

Sea, the cities on the Asiatic coast, on the northern shores of the Aegean, and on the Hellespont and Bosporus opening into the Euxine Sea.

It is tolerably clear that Pericles, even at some sacrifice of national prestige, had now arrived at the haven which he desired—a period of peace in which, while maintaining and fostering the maritime empire, he could do something for the intellectual life of Athens, and at the same time enjoy the society of his friends. The main obstacle to this lay, as it always has done in the history of the world, in the ambition of individuals and the difficulty of ruling the masses. Pericles is an eminent example of that class of politician, who, born and educated in the upper class, make use of the jealousy of it always to be found among the poorer classes in order to establish their own personal ascendency. Somewhat unsavoury in its beginnings, the process may be productive of a great, and even beneficent career, though it may also be the prelude to catastrophic changes, with disaster for those immediately concerned. Cimon had the advantage of the disposal of wealth which fell to him from the spoils of war, and he made royal use of it in improvements to the city and charitable gifts among the citizens.[1] Pericles, finding himself at a disadvantage in this respect, had recourse to grants from the public treasury. The writer of the Aristotelian treatise gives the following summary of his position and policy at this time, namely, after the ostracism of Cimon and the assassination of Ephialtes in 461 B.C.:

'After this Pericles assumed the position of popular leader, having first distinguished himself while still a young man by prosecuting Cimon on the audit of his official accounts as general. Under his auspices the constitution became still more democratic. He took away some of the privileges of the Areopagus, and,

[1] Cimon's improvements seem to have been mainly of a practical character. Plutarch says, 'Cimon first embellished the city with those fine and elegant places of exercise and resort which they afterwards so much delighted in. He set the market-place with plane trees, and the Academy, which was before a bare, dry and dirty spot, he converted into a well-watered grove, with open spaces for races, and shady avenues to walk in.'

above all, he turned the policy of the state in the direction of naval dominion, which caused the masses to acquire confidence in themselves, and consequently to take the conduct of affairs more and more into their own hands. . . . Pericles was also the first to institute pay for service in the law-courts, as a bid for popular favour to counterbalance the wealth of Cimon. In this he took the advice of Damonides of Oia [1] (who was commonly supposed to be the person who prompted him in most of his measures, and was therefore subsequently ostracised), which was that since he was worsted in the competition in the matter of private possessions, he should give the people what was their own, and accordingly he instituted pay for the members of the juries (dicasts). Some persons accuse him of thereby causing a deterioration in the character of the juries, since it was always the inferior people who were anxious to submit themselves for selection as jurors rather than men of better position. . . . (27.) So long, however, as Pericles was leader of the people, things went tolerably well with the state; but when he was dead there was a great change for the worse. Then for the first time did the people choose a leader who was of no reputation among men of good standing. . . .' (28.)

In addition to the payment for service in the popular courts, Plutarch mentions other grants of a popular character, such as allowances for attendance at the dramatic contests, for sacrificial victims at religious festivals on a larger scale and on more frequent occasions, the meat of which was distributed among the people, and so forth. A good deal has been written about these grants, particularly with a view to disputing the opinions of antiquity that they were demoralising. But though these opinions may contain some prejudice, they are not easily set aside.[2]

[1] The relations of Damon with Pericles may be compared with those of Mnesiphilus with Themistocles (see p. 11 above). It is significant of the dangers of public life at Athens that Damon was supposed to be engaged by Pericles as a teacher of music, but the Athenians 'smoked' him for 'a man with long views and a lover of absolutism' (Plut. *Per.* 4).

[2] As, for example, the opinion of Plato, alluded to by Plutarch in the remark that under the influence of the public measures of Pericles the Athenian people 'were changed from a sober thrifty people, who maintained themselves by their own labours, to lovers of expense, intemperance, and licence' (Plut. *Per.*). And see further, below, in the illustrations given from Aristophanes and from the writer of 'The Polity of the Athenians.'

On the other hand, in comparing ancient with modern life, we must not lose sight of the essential difference in the conditions. Every Greek city, says Plato, was practically two cities, rich and poor, and there was incessant political conflict, sometimes passing into reprisals of an atrocious character,[1] between them. At the same time the fundamental theory of the Greek city-state was the political equality of those who had the rights of citizenship, somewhat on the lines of a modern club. The 'demos' or 'people' of Attica were not, as in a modern state, coterminous with the proletariate, but were a privileged class, which, in relation to the much larger number of unenfranchised human beings, might be described as a vulgar aristocracy. The adult male citizens of Attica in the time of Pericles at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War have been estimated at about 30,000 or 35,000 (with their families, say, 100,000), but the whole population at about a quarter of a million, of whom perhaps 100,000 or more may have been slaves, and there may also have been some 10,000 (with their families 30,000) metics, namely, residents for purposes of trade, belonging to other states and countries. The material value attached to citizenship under the conditions prevailing in the time of Pericles is shown by the fact, reported by Plutarch, that after his measures came into effect, a law was passed limiting it to those who were Athenians born on both sides, a law which would have excluded both Themistocles and Cimon. Plutarch says that this measure was proposed by Pericles, and that 'when the king of Egypt sent a present of forty thousand medimni of wheat to the Athenian "demos," and it came to be distributed among them, many vexatious lawsuits arose about the citizenship of individuals, with the result that, under this law, nearly five thousand were condemned to loss of citizenship and sold for slaves.' This would mean that, being rendered ineligible for grants or paid positions, they would

[1] Compare, for instance, the account by Thucydides of the revolution (στάσις) in Corcyra, which he gives as an example of the political passions generated by the Peloponnesian War.

have to sell themselves to masters (as we read they did in pre-Solonian times) through having no other means of support. Paid work, especially manual work, was in antiquity regarded as placing the stigma of a lower status on a man. Perhaps the majority of Athenian citizens drew their livelihood from the farms, but in the town there was an increasing free population, and to be a citizen with a grant, however small, was to be in a better position than if working for a living as an artisan. Trade was probably largely in the hands of foreigners; in any case it would employ more slaves than citizens. Slave labour was, of course, employed by all who could afford it, and the position of wealth and comfort in which some of the slaves who brought in 'slave rents' lived indicates their value. In fact, not only the rough work, but most of the intellectual work of an ancient community was probably done by slaves,[1] for that is a form of labour—being the most arduous—which a man who reaches a position of independence is inclined to drop as soon as he can afford to do so. Hence the citizens—and this is a point too little noticed—were not submitted to the training and discipline which modern industrial life automatically affords. Living in comparative idleness in peace, they became conceited, combative and turbulent, and war and its labours were to some extent a moral astringent. In any case war was the normal condition under which the world lived, and the arts of peace were enjoyed on sufferance. In providing pay for the courts it is very possible that Pericles had such considerations, to some extent, in mind. Certainly the Athenian citizens took very kindly to the new opportunities for employment and interest thrown open to them, as the plays of Aristophanes show. Other differences in ancient as compared with present-day communities might be noted, as, for example, in the habits of thought produced under the influences of

[1] See, for example, the account in Plutarch of the work done by the confidential slave of Pericles, whom he had educated for the purpose, and, more interesting still, of the educated slave of Nicias, who seems to have stood between him and the public.

religion and superstition, in the relations between men and women and between master and servant, in the means of communication and the dissemination of ideas, in the standards of average attainment and the relation thereto of eminent personalities, and in the differences of physical and mental constitution produced by the different conditions of life as, for instance, by the prevalence in antiquity of war, and the absence, comparatively speaking, of doctors and sanitation, which would result in a high infant mortality, and a consequently more vigorous standard of adult health and endurance.[1] But it seems unnecessary to labour these points, which will occur to any one whose reading is accompanied by observation.

The payment for service in the popular courts (dicasteries) may perhaps be regarded as a corollary of the measure for the abolition of the jurisdiction of the Areopagus, and in that case it is of interest to inquire what could have been the inducement in the minds of Pericles and Ephialtes for so hazardous an experiment. The conclusion to which I have come is that they must have been influenced by the consideration that the change of jurisdiction would place the opponents of the democratic movement at the mercy of the democratic leaders, especially of the *προστάτης*, or popular leader of the Assembly. In other words the change placed in the hands of the popular courts, which were in effect the popular Assembly (with an age limit of thirty) sitting in sections for judicial purposes without appeal, the jurisdiction in cases through which a man could be most easily ruined. I refer especially to such a charge as that for *ἀσέβεια* (impiety), up till then heard before the Areopagus, where there was unlimited scope for exciting popular anger

[1] The astonishing resilience of Athens after the great plague might be given as an illustration of this. And, in the specialised intellectual sphere, examples are seen in the concentration of thought which Greek philosophy indicates, in the production of the three great tragic dramatists, which, in each case, continued with unimpaired vigour into old age, and in the administrative labours of Pericles—and Nicias may be added—of which Plutarch's accounts give some indication ; comparable to those of our own Burghley, except that the latter never went into the field.

or apprehension, and where the penalties were crushing.[1] The lower the intellectual and social standard of the court, the more the members of it would be influenced by rhetoric, and the less chance of a fair trial would there be for a person who was politically obnoxious. We have evidence that this is what actually occurred. These courts, being subject to the same influence as the Assembly, were always formidable to the public men, but, after the change in question, they became more partisan and of the nature of a despotism of the people.[2]

The special character of these courts gave rise to a system of informations which must have been the bane of social life in Athens, at least for the upper classes. The 'sycophant' was a recognised institution, and his activities probably more than anything else led to the transformation of the 'clubs' into centres for mutual protection in the courts, and later of continuous political intrigue against the democracy. There are many allusions to these informers, and it is evident that they increased under the system of paid service in the courts. As payment was by the day, they were regarded with favour as providing the dicasts with work, and also as serviceable instruments in fleecing the rich and keeping an eye on anti-democratic intrigue, not only at home, but among the subject allies. Of course the system leant itself readily to blackmail, and it is not surprising to find the putting down of the sycophants among the reforms attempted by the Four Hundred and later by the Thirty.[3] However, they must have continued to flourish,

[1] Pericles himself was attacked and almost brought down in this way, through the charges for impiety brought against his friends. Compare the account in Thucydides of the civil war in Corcyra, which arose out of an action on a charge of the nature of *ἀσέβεια* (cutting poles for vines in a sacred precinct), having a political object (Thuc. iii. 70).

[2] For illustrations see the passages cited from Aristophanes in the subsequent chapters ; also from the anonymous 'Polity of the Athenians' (*circ.* 415), *e.g.* *τοὺς μὲν τοῦ δήμου σώζουσι, τοὺς δ' ἐναντίους ἀπολλύουσιν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις*—'In the courts they protect those of the popular party, but they destroy those of the opposite party.'

[3] After the fall of Athens in 404 B.C. Xenophon says that the Thirty were chosen to compile a code for the future constitution, and that, among

as there is an allusion to them in Xenophon (*Mem.* II. ix.), where Crito is made to say that 'life at Athens was no easy matter for a man who wished to mind his own business, as, for instance, at this moment (Crito proceeded) he was threatened by a set of fellows with lawsuits, not for any alleged misdemeanour, but under the conviction that he would sooner pay a sum of money than be troubled further.' No doubt no community of men is exempt from such practices, but the peculiar constitution of the Athenian courts evidently encouraged them on a large scale.[1] Their origin is traced by Plutarch, who quotes an authority, to the period when Aristides (as I have suggested) fell into disfavour: 'After the banishment of Themistocles[2] he [Craterus the Macedonian] says, the common people, growing insolent, produced a numerous brood of informers, who were constantly accusing the better and most influential men in the State, with a view to subjecting them to the envy of the multitude, whom their prosperity and power had filled with self-conceit.'[3]

The relation of these courts to the subject allies must now be considered, as the point has an important bearing on the argument of this book. In his brief summary of the origin and growth of the Athenian maritime empire Thucydides mentions the reduction of Carystus in Euboea and the revolt and reduction of Naros, which occurred in 466 B.C., and he remarks, with regard to the latter, that 'this was the first of the allied states which was enslaved contrary to Hellenic right,[4] the turn of the others came later.' He adds: 'The causes which led to the defection of the allies were of different kinds, the principal being the neglect to pay the tribute or to furnish ships, and, in some cases,

other reforms, they destroyed the professional informers, who, under the democracy, were 'thorns in the sides of all respectable people' (*Hellen.* ii. 3).

[1] For the evidence from Aristophanes see subsequent chapters.

[2] *Circ.* 471 B.C.

[3] Plut. *Arist.*

[4] They were compelled to surrender their fleet, pull down their walls, and pay a fine and money tribute. So far as we know it was not till after the death of Pericles that the practice of killing the men and selling the women and children into slavery was resorted to.

failure of military service. For the Athenians were exacting and oppressive, using coercive measures towards men who were neither willing nor accustomed to work hard. And for various reasons they soon began to prove less agreeable leaders than at first. They no longer fought on an equality with the rest of the confederates, and they had no difficulty in reducing them when they revolted. The allies brought this upon themselves, for the majority of them disliked military service and absence from home, so they agreed to contribute their share of the expense instead of ships.'[1] Plutarch says that Cimon originated this plan of dealing with the allies, and that while 'the other generals took every method to compel them to make good their quota, and by prosecutions and fines rendered the Athenian government oppressive and invidious,' Cimon was always ready to accept money from them instead of ships, whereby he rendered them unwarlike, with the result that from allies they became subjects. As, under his victories, the fear of Persia became more remote, they began to chafe under these contributions, and when the treasury of the league was removed to Athens by Pericles, and the money spent on Athenian expeditions, and especially on the adornment of the city, the feeling grew stronger and became a party question at Athens. One reason for this, no doubt, was that the allies had to resort to the courts at Athens in cases of a political character, and presumably in all cases connected with the tribute and others of which we have no exact information. The bias of these courts against the rich extended to the richer classes in the islands, and many Athenians having, no doubt, family connections with these visitors, and being similarly circumstanced politically, would make common cause with them. The majority who composed the popular courts, on the other hand, had no such sympathies, and they depended for their power, and in many cases for their livelihood, on the tribute of which they were the rigorous and exacting guardians. We find evidence of this situation in the speech in Thucydides of the

[1] Thuc. i. 99.

Mytilenaean envoys to Sparta, preparatory to their revolt in 428 B.C.: 'The revenues of the Athenians are derived from their allies,'[1] and further on the writer says, 'The Athenians, being in want of money to carry on the siege, raised among themselves for the first time a property tax of two hundred talents.'[2] The tenacity shown by the 'demos' in carrying on the Peloponnesian War is not attributable, in my view, to any special bellicosity in democracies, but to the fact that the livelihood of so many people depended on the tribute, and not only that, but the many privileges and opportunities which it enabled them to enjoy.[3] They realised that with a victory for Sparta and her allies all this came to an end. As time went on an increasing number of people in Athens wished it to come to an end, because they were oppressed by the courts, which were the mainstay of the system.

A word must be said about the agitation against the public buildings and statues of Phidias, which was made a party question, and resulted in the ostracism of Thucydides,[4] the leader of the upper-class party. No doubt there were political motives, and the upper-class feeling for the allies, to which I have alluded, was involved in connection with the objections, justifiable on principle, which were raised against the use by Pericles of funds belonging to the League for this purpose. But there can be little doubt that there was also a genuine feeling of apprehension about such a display of power, which was ingrained in every thoughtful Greek, as likely to provoke the 'envy' of divinities. Fear of deities lay at the root of pagan religion, and the safety

[1] Thuc. iii. 13.

[2] *Ibid.* 19. There were of course other sources of revenue, including the customary 'liturgies' which were expected from the rich.

[3] For instance, Pericles arranged cruises of sixty triremes every year 'in which many of the citizens served for pay for eight months' (Plut. *Per.* ii.). Citizens of every class were in this way given an opportunity of visiting the cities of the League, in connection with financial and other business, and as they were the men who composed the courts before whom the allies had to appear, it is easy to imagine with what respect and homage they would be received.

[4] Not the historian.

of the city was involved in their physical presence, which was conceived of as being retained through temple-dwellings, statues, sacrificial victims, and adulatory addresses.[1] The prosecutions which we meet with at Athens for 'bringing in strange divinities' were based on the apprehension that the old ones would take offence and withdraw to some other city. This explains the intense conservatism of the Athenians in matters of religion. These new temples and sculptures were not generally regarded, as we are inclined to regard them, from the aloof standpoint of art, but from that of religion and the safety of the city, and from that standpoint the old wooden image of Athena, which tradition said had fallen from heaven, was the 'real thing' far more than any modern representation, however beautiful in conception and execution.[2] Pericles however handled the matter by an appeal to emulation and glory, by which he had no difficulty in winning the popular Assembly and discomfiting his opponents.[3] From this time (442 B.C.) until his death in 429 B.C., his power was practically absolute, though he had troubles towards the close to which we shall presently allude.

Great as the authority of Pericles was, he was never wholly free from danger. The Athenian people were capricious and difficult to govern, and, when moved by a wave of feeling, liable to acts of cruelty and oppression. The facilities which the constitution provided for gratifying such impulses may partly account for the frequency of these outbursts. Plutarch says that in his youth Pericles was afraid of the people, and that as he was supposed to have a personal resemblance to Pisistratus, and was rich, of noble

[1] Compare the expressions of feeling on this subject by the Chorus of women in the *Septem* of Aeschylus.

[2] The 'Aeacids,' ancient wooden images with a tradition, which were sent for from Aegina and put on board ship before the battle of Salamis, are another example.

[3] Plutarch, who gives an excellent account of these great works, the number of people they employed, and so forth, says that Pericles offered to pay for them himself if the people would allow him to put his name on the votive statues. 'At which they shouted with one accord to spend on them what he pleased.' (14.)

birth, and had powerful friends, he feared that he might be ostracised, and consequently at first held aloof from politics, but proved himself a brave soldier in the wars. But after the death of Aristides and the banishment of Themistocles, he took to the popular side, 'that of the poor and many against that of the rich and few, quite contrary to his own feelings which were entirely aristocratic,' partly in order to get a party against Cimon, partly for securing his own safety. He immediately altered his mode of life, and lived in retirement. After the ostracism of Thucydides, Plutarch says that he became a different man; that he no longer gave way to the people or watched the breath of popular favour, but turned his 'demagogy' into an 'aristocratic, or rather a monarchical form of government,' which he exercised with great ability for the benefit of the State. This account is not inconsistent with the higher authority of Thucydides, because the unqualified eulogy by the latter is, perhaps with intention, explicitly confined to the later period of his life. Also the words of Thucydides are: 'During the peace while he was at the head of affairs he ruled with moderation and kept the city safe, and in his time it reached its greatest power.' 'During the peace' was from 446 to 431 B.C. Thucydides disregards the earlier period, perhaps partly because he was not writing the history of it, but more, as I should suppose, for political reasons. He does not, for instance, even mention the abolition of the powers of the Areopagus.[1] Speaking of the difference between Pericles and his successors, Thucydides says that Pericles, 'deriving his authority from his capacity and acknowledged worth, being also a man of transparent integrity, was able to control the multitude in a free spirit, and led them rather than was led by them.'[2] These qualities, however, did not save him from the unpopularity which sooner or later overtook most Athenian public men. In a passage dealing with the

[1] The words to which I allude are ἐν τῇ εἰρήνῃ, ii. 65. Thucydides was an exile, and probably wrote in fear of the democracy. The arm of the courts was a long one, and a man had to think of his friends and family as well as himself.

[2] Thuc. ii. 65.

origin of the Peloponnesian War, Plutarch describes, from sources at his disposal, what occurred :

'How the dispute originated it is hard to say, but all writers agree in throwing on Pericles the blame of refusing to reverse the decree [the decree of Pericles prohibiting Megarian goods coming into the markets of the Athenian empire]. Some attribute his firmness to a wise calculation . . . while others say he treated the Lacedaemonians so cavalierly through pride and a desire to show his own strength. But the worst motive of all, and that to which most men attribute his conduct, was as follows.' And he proceeds to relate the affair of Phidias, that in order to experiment on the temper of the people towards Pericles, Menon, a workman of Phidias, was bribed to accuse him of embezzlement. 'The people took this man under their protection, and Phidias was prosecuted before the Assembly' (*ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ*), but not convicted on the charge. But he was subject to envy for the reputation he had obtained through his works,[1] especially for having introduced a portrait of himself and of Pericles in some scenes of his sculptures. 'So Phidias was carried off to the prison, where he fell sick and died, or, as some say, was poisoned by enemies of Pericles in order to cast suspicion on him. At the instance of Glycon the people voted to Menon, the informer, immunity from public burdens, and ordered the generals to provide for the fellow's safety.'

About the same time (Plutarch continues) Aspasia was prosecuted for impiety (*ἀσεβείας*), and for procuration of free-born women for Pericles. Also a decree was carried that prosecutions should be instituted against all persons 'who neglected religious observances and taught theories of their own about heavenly bodies (*περὶ τῶν μεταρσίων*), This was aimed at Pericles through the philosopher Anaxagoras.' The passage continues :

'As the people adopted this decree and readily listened to these slanderous charges (*διαβολάς*), another decree was carried

[1] ἡ δὲ δόξα τῶν ἔργων ἐπίεζε φθόνῳ τὸν Φειδίαν (31).

by Dracontides, that Pericles should lay the accounts of his dealings with the public revenue before the Prytanes, and that the dicasts should take their voting-pebbles from the altar on the Acropolis and decide the case there. On the motion of Hagnon this part of the decree was reversed, and another was carried that the case should be heard before fifteen hundred dicasts on an indictment which one might call either one for embezzlement, taking bribes, or public wrongdoing (ἀδικίου). Pericles obtained the acquittal of Aspasia, quite contrary to justice according to Aeschines, by shedding tears and making a personal appeal to the dicasts on her behalf ; but for fear about Anaxagoras he sent him out of the city. And now, as he had stumbled against the people, in fear of the dicastery, he blew the war, which was smouldering, into a flame, hoping thereby to disperse these accusations, and to allay the envy which had arisen, in great and dangerous affairs in which the city would have to rely for guidance on himself alone. These are the causes which are assigned for his refusal to allow the people to make any concession to the Lacedaemonians, but the truth of the matter is obscure.'

I have given this account at length, by means of a more literal translation than will be found in the existing versions, because it throws a strong light on Athenian life at this time, and especially on the close connection between the Assembly and the popular courts ; also because it bears on the evidence of Aristophanes to be given later. Grote relates the story, but in such a way as to minimise the responsibility of the sovereign people and throw the odium on the opponents of Pericles, the reader being left with the impression that they were of the aristocratic party—a typical instance of the way in which Greek history has been manipulated in modern times in the interest of political theory. It is one thing to express views on the value of an ancient author, but another to report him in terms which give a different colour to his story.[1]

We see then that the 'people' under the fully developed democracy at Athens were extremely formidable, and if

[1] These remarks are not made in general disparagement of Grote's work, but of a particular tendency in it for which perhaps there was more excuse then than there is now.

they could bring to his knees such a man as Pericles we may expect to find a growing sense and fear of their displeasure among his successors. We do, in fact, find this, and it was, in my belief, one of the main causes of the fall of the Athenian empire. The failure, for instance, of Nicias to draw off the army from Syracuse while he still could, was due to this fear, not, as is often said—without, so far as I can see, any justification from the narrative of Thucydides—from incapacity. He was for years, by popular consent, in general control of affairs, and he was admittedly the most successful general of his time, and the fact that the Athenians refused to relieve him in Sicily, even when they knew he was very ill, proves that that was the general opinion. But he was afraid of the people, and he had good reason, for there can be little doubt that they would have put him to death had he returned.[1] According to Plutarch the man who brought the first news of the disaster was put on the wheel. The proceedings after the battle of Arginusae furnish another illustration.

After these prosecutions Pericles appears to have regained his influence, but the sufferings caused by the plague, and the exasperation of the citizens at seeing their lands ravaged, caused a fierce outburst against him, accompanied by threats and scurrilous gibes. On this occasion Cleon is said to have been the leader, or one of the leaders, of the attack. The people were not appeased until 'they had taken the pebbles in their hands against him and condemned him to be general no more, and to pay a fine, which is stated at the lowest estimate to have been fifteen talents, and at the highest fifty.' [2] Whereupon they re-elected him to the supreme command.[3] But he did not long survive. Quarrels

[1] See Thuc. vii. 48 and iv. 65; also Plutarch's *Nicias*.

[2] Plut. *Per*. 35.

[3] Compare Thuc. ii. 65: 'The popular indignation was not pacified until they had fined Pericles; but soon afterwards, with the usual fickleness of the multitude, they elected him general and committed all their affairs to his charge. Their private sorrows were beginning to be less acutely felt, and for a time of public need they thought that there was no one like him.'

with his eldest son, losses of relatives and friends by the plague, including both his legitimate sons, at last broke his spirit, and he withdrew from public life;[1] but only to be persuaded to come forward again at the urgent invitation of the people. But he shortly afterwards sickened of the plague, and died two years and six months after the outbreak of the war.[2]

[1] Plutarch's account of this is well known—how he 'lost his sister and most of his relations and friends, and those too who were most serviceable to him in his public work. Yet he would not yield nor abate his firmness and greatness of spirit through these afflictions, but was not observed to weep or mourn, or attend the funeral of any of his relations, until he lost Paralus, the last of his legitimate offspring. Crushed by this blow he still tried to preserve his high manner and pride of spirit, but when carrying a garland to lay on the corpse he was overpowered by his feelings at the sight of it, so that he burst into wailing and shed copious tears, having never been known to do such a thing before in his life.'

[2] I take this opportunity to raise a question about the last words of Pericles, as reported by Plutarch. He says that as he was on his deathbed those of his friends and the leading citizens (*τῶν πολιτῶν οἱ βέλτιστοι*) who were sitting round him were speaking of his nobleness and power (*τῆς ἀρετῆς καὶ τῆς δυνάμεως*) and going over his victories in war, thinking he was no longer conscious. He, however, had been following them, and, suddenly interrupting, said that he was 'surprised at their remembering and praising such things in him, which were common according to fortune, and had occurred before to many generals, while they did not mention the fairest and greatest thing. "For," said he, "no one of those who are Athenians has ever put on black through me"'—*Οὐδεὶς γάρ, ἔφη, δι' ἐμὲ τῶν ὄντων Ἀθηναίων μέλαν ἱμάτιον περιεβάλετο.* This is commonly translated, 'No Athenian ever wore black through any act of mine,' and understood as being a claim by Pericles to having been sparing of the lives of the citizens in war, and expressive of his humanity. There are several objections to this interpretation. First, it is not sustained by the context, the speaker deprecating mention of success in war, as depending on fortune. Moreover, it could not have been true, in that sense, in fact. Secondly, there is no evidence that Pericles, though exercising power with enlightened moderation and forbearance, was much in advance of his age in point of general humanity. His driving out of the Hestiaeans in Euboea may perhaps have been justifiable according to the code of the day (see Plut. *Per.* 23); but the similar treatment of the Aeginetans at the beginning of the Peloponnesian War (*Ibid.* 34 and Thuc. ii. 27) was an act of power comparable to the massacre of a remnant of these people—who helped largely to win the battle of Salamis—by the Athenians later, as Thucydides says, 'in satisfaction of their longstanding hatred' (iv. 57). Of course they had the support of Sparta, and the act may be regarded as one of war and policy, but, even so, it seems to have been a very pitiless one. The fact is that it is dangerous to

Pericles may be said to have been the last of the old Attic leaders—of that succession from Pisistratus within whose ambit the Athenian empire, as a growing power, is enclosed. As we read the history, and see his figure pass from view, we feel a sense of loss, and that we are left among smaller men. But this perhaps is an illusion produced by all exceptional personalities, especially when viewed at a distance and through the medium of art. The period which follows is of greater human interest, because it is more self-conscious, and it not only has Thucydides for its historian, but it is illuminated by the genius of Aristophanes.

Before, however, we come to his work it is necessary to say something of the intervening period, which includes the rise to power of Cleon.

attribute 'humanity,' in the general sense in which that word is now used, to any one in antiquity. Thirdly, what is the point of the participle ὄντων, which, if the phrase simply means 'no Athenian,' seems to be redundant? I cannot undertake to answer this question, but I think that the point of the remark is this—that the rule of Pericles was spoken of by his adversaries as that of a 'tyrant' (Plut. *Per.* 39), that he was addressing men who were of the βέλτιστοι, with whom he was really in sympathy, and among whom he had been born and brought up, that 'tyrannies' had always been oppressive to them but indulgent to the poorer classes, and that on his death-bed Pericles was able to say to them, in effect, 'Whatever you may have said about my rule being a tyranny, you cannot say that I compassed the death of any of you, as the real tyrants—even Pisistratus—did.' The tradition in Greece against tyrants was not instituted originally by the people so much as by the rival families whom they oppressed. Thus, according to Herodotus, a leading Corinthian envoy said to the Spartan king Cleomenes, when he was seeking to restore the tyranny at Athens: 'There is nothing in the whole world so unjust, nothing so bloody, as a tyranny'—reminiscent of the Cypselides. If ὄντων is emphatic, it might conceivably allude to the old Eupatrid feeling that only a class were really Athenian, αὐτόχθονες. But even without this, the remark seems to me, in the particular context, to be an expression of satisfaction in the speaker as to the character of his rule, as a set-off against the charge that he had thrown over his class and broken up the constitution. The writer of the article in *Ency. Brit.*, under 'Pericles,' apparently takes a similar view, that the remark 'perhaps refers to his forbearance towards his political rivals, whom he refused to ruin by prosecution.'

CHAPTER IV

Historical Survey (*continued*): Cleon, Nicias, Alcibiades. 'The Polity of the Athenians.'

THERE is a tendency among modern writers to represent that the later attacks on Pericles were organised by the upper-class party. But such evidence as there is indicates that, in their most acute form, they proceeded from the rival politicians on the popular side. Thus Plutarch gives us a quotation from a contemporary comic dramatist, Hermippus, which names Cleon as the thorn in the side of Pericles, when he was refusing to lead out the army against the Lacedaemonians.[1] It is idle to discount such passages by saying, as some do, that the comic stage was under the influence of the 'oligarchs.' To attack a reigning politician, if possible through the popular courts, was a recognised method by which a new aspirant brought himself forward. Pericles himself did this.[2] And why should the upper-class party have been more anxious than the other party to attack Pericles in his latter phase, when his fall would only make way for such men as Cleon? Unless, indeed, it was thought that, in the general disorder which might follow, the democracy would come to grief, which is possible in the case of some of the extremists, though not, I think, as yet, as regards any considerable body of citizens. The writers to whom I allude might sometimes almost be thinking of democracy at Athens at this time as a movement for the

[1] *βασιλεῦ σατύρων, τί ποτ᾽ οὐκ ἐθέλεις*
δόρυ βαστάζειν, ἀλλὰ λόγους μὲν
περὶ τοῦ πολέμου δεινοὺς παρέχῃ,
ψυχὴν δὲ Τέλητος ὑπέστης;
κἀγχειριδίου δ᾽ ἀκόνῃ σκληρᾷ
παραθηγομένου βρύχεις κοπίδας,
δηχθεὶς αἴθωνι Κλέωνι. (*Per.* 33.)

[2] See p. 50, above.

political freedom of the masses on the analogy of the politics of Europe since the French Revolution, whereas the position was entirely different. The Athenian democracy had obtained absolute control of all the powers of the State, and could exercise them, if they wished, without any constitutional restraints. In considering the character of Cleon, and the democratic leaders who followed him, this fact must be kept in mind.

Cleon was a manufacturer—apparently a master tanner—who had pushed his way to the front through the popular Assembly, by means probably of attacks on individuals of the upper class. They, in their turn, despised him, partly because of his origin and occupation, partly, and with reason, because of the crudity and violence of his opinions. That he had ability, however, there can be no question, for Thucydides refers to him twice as the man who at that time 'had the greatest influence over the people.'[1] But he also says that he was 'the most violent of the citizens,' and his proceedings, as related by the historian, evidently justify the description. At the same time he may be given credit for strong, if narrow, patriotism, and great energy in promoting the interests, as he regarded them, of the majority of the citizens, of whom he considered himself the champion against upper-class intrigue and the dishonesty of office-holders. Hostility to Sparta and strong measures with the subject allies[2] were the keynotes of his policy. So far as we know he was the first Athenian statesman who carried decrees in the Assembly for the punishment by extermination of cities which revolted. Both Thucydides and Aristophanes accuse him of peculation and taking bribes, but there may, of course, be some prejudice in this, and these charges were common at Athens. The words of Thucydides are: 'Brasidas and Cleon, who had been the two greatest enemies of peace—the one because the war brought him success and reputation, and the other because

[1] ὢν καὶ ἐς τὰ ἄλλα βιαιότατος τῶν πολιτῶν τῷ τε δήμῳ παρὰ πολὺ ἐν τῷ τότε πιθανώτατος (iii. 36; cf. iv. 21).

[2] He gave effect in an extreme form to the policy of Pericles, 'to keep the allies well in hand.'

he fancied that in quiet times his rogueries would be more transparent, and his slanders less credible.' [1]

It is customary to describe Cleon as 'coarse' and 'brutal,' but the single speech in which Thucydides represents him does not give colour to that view.[2] It suggests, rather, vulgarity of feeling and a domineering self-confidence. But the argument is well sustained, and the speech has nothing about it of the 'claptrap' of modern mob oratory.[3] The standard of intelligence, though perhaps not of education,[4] of the Athenian Assembly was evidently high. Cleon reproves them for being too 'clever,' and for failing, in consequence, in practical judgment. He begins by boldly criticising them :

'I have remarked again and again that a democracy cannot manage an empire, but never more than now, when I see you regretting your condemnation of the Mytilenaeans. . . . You should remember that your empire is a despotism exercised over unwilling subjects who are always conspiring against you ; they do not obey in return for any kindness which you do them to your own injury, but in so far as you are their masters ; they have no love of you, but they are held down by force. Besides what can be more detestable than to be perpetually changing our minds ? '

He suggests that the advocates on the other side have been well paid for their speeches, and says that the Assembly is to blame for listening to them as though they were

[1] v. 16.

[2] Speech against the reversal of the decree condemning the Mytilenaeans to death (Thuc. iii. 37).

[3] I do not suggest that political oratory at Athens was free from 'claptrap.' We know, in fact, from Aristophanes that it was not.

[4] A suggestion has been made (Adolf Holm, Eng. trans., ii. 390, 510) that Athenian citizens were all equally educated, by means of the theatre. But, apart from the fact that there is direct evidence to the contrary, no one ever heard of people becoming 'educated' by going to the play, where no effort on the part of the beholder is required. Moreover, the tragic contests only took place twice a year, and the fact that the mass of the citizens, apparently from the time of Pericles, were paid to attend them appears to indicate that the taste for them among the democracy when it had become free to express itself, was not universal. There is further evidence for this view, to be noted later.

'spectators attending a performance of sophists, but very unlike counsellors of a state.' Let them put aside such trifling and punish the offenders as they deserve. 'And do not absolve the people while you throw the blame upon the nobles. For they were all of one mind when we were to be attacked.' He concludes :

'Do not then hold out a hope, which eloquence can secure or money buy, that they are to be excused, and that their error is to be deemed human and venial. Their attack was not unpremeditated ; that might have been an excuse for them ; but they knew what they were doing. This was my original contention, and I still maintain that you should abide by your former decision and not be misled either by pity, or by the charm of words, or by a too forgiving temper. There are no three things more prejudicial to your power. . . . For if they were right in revolting, you must be wrong in maintaining your empire. But if, right or wrong, you are resolved to rule, then rightly or wrongly they must be chastised for your good. Otherwise you must give up your empire, and, when virtue is no longer dangerous, you may be as virtuous as you please. . . . Chastise them as they deserve, and prove by an example to your other allies that rebellion will be punished with death. If this is made quite clear to them, your attention will no longer be diverted from your enemies by wars against your own allies.'

Diodorus, in his speech on the other side, deprecates the advocacy which, having a bad cause, seeks to terrify opponents by the audacity of its calumnies. 'Worst of all are those who, besides other topics of abuse, declare that their opponents are hired to make an eloquent speech. . . . And so the city suffers, for she is robbed of her counsellors by fear.'

The impression of Cleon which we get from these two speeches is that of a man of great force, but narrow outlook, on easy terms with the people, morally not above them, and encouraging them in the suspicions to which they were naturally prone. We find further from Plutarch that he entertained them with bold jests,[1] and the Aristotelian

[1] 'Neither had he [Nicias] the dexterity of Cleon or his powers of ribaldry by which he used to manage the Athenians by amusing them' (Plut. *Nicias*, 3).

treatise says that 'he was the first to shout and make use of abuse on the Bema, and to harangue the people with his cloak girt up short, whereas his predecessors had spoken with decorum' (ἐν κόσμῳ).[1] Plutarch also speaks of his 'avarice, audacity and presumption,' and of his 'levity and extravagant conduct,' which the Athenians 'were accustomed to bear with in him as affording them sport, not unpleasantly.'

As leader of the Assembly Cleon, of course, had great influence over affairs by means of the system of popular decrees, which was encroaching more and more on the executive authority of the Council. Especially would this be so in finance, and we find that, at Cleon's instigation, the tribute from the allies was doubled, and the pay of the dicasts was raised from one to three obols.

But for the more critical business of military administration and foreign affairs the man to whom the Athenians looked, after the death of Pericles, was Nicias. Though a wealthy man, and coming forward as the representative of upper-class interests against the attacks of Cleon, he nevertheless seems to have had the entire confidence of the democracy from the beginning to the end of his career. I have already alluded to his fear of the people. He was evidently constitutionally a timid man, but in action he showed hardihood and vigour. He was a great military expert and famous as a military engineer.[2] His superstitious regard for deities and recourse to divination have been regarded as the cause of his failure to withdraw the army from Syracuse while he still could, but this was probably a pretext, the augur being on such occasions subservient to the views of the general.[3] Fear of the people

[1] Plutarch's account of this is as follows: 'Among other things he destroyed all the decorum of public speaking; he was the first who broke out into exclamations, flung open his dress, smote his thigh, and ran up and down when he was speaking' (*Nicias*, 8).

[2] Thuc. iii. 51; Aristoph. *Birds*, 363.

[3] Otherwise the augur would have taken the responsibility for military movements. Compare the account in Herodotus of Pausanias at the battle of Plataea, where fear of the issue rather than the auguries must have been the motive for the long delay.

at Athens was, as Thucydides tells us, the dominating motive, as well as hope of ultimate success through the party with which he was in correspondence within the city.[1] There are, moreover, indications in Plutarch that Nicias made use of religious devotion, to some extent, as a method of self-protection. Like Pericles, he withdrew from social intercourse: 'So cautious was he of informers, and so reserved, that he never would dine out with any citizen, nor allowed himself to indulge in talk and conversation with his friends, nor gave himself any leisure for such amusements. He would excuse himself on the plea of state business, and he kept a slave, one Hiero, whom he had educated in his own family and instructed in letters and music,' who stood between him and the public, 'giving out to the people what a toilsome and miserable life he led for the sake of the commonwealth.' This man, apparently, also organised the dramatic exhibitions, games, and other public shows, with which Nicias courted the people on a more sumptuous scale than had hitherto ever been known. Plutarch also has the following:

'He observed that the people, in the case of men of eloquence or eminent parts, made use of their talents upon occasion, but were always jealous of their abilities, and held a watchful eye upon them, taking all opportunities to humble their pride and abate their reputation, as was manifest in their condemnation of Pericles, their banishment of Damon, their distrust of Antiphon the Rhamnusian, but especially in the case of Paches, who took Lesbos, who having to give an account of his conduct in the command, in the very court of justice (τῷ δικαστηρίῳ) drew his sword and slew himself. Upon such considerations Nicias tried to decline all difficult and lengthy enterprises; if he took a command he was for doing what was safe; and if, as thus was likely, he had for the most part success, he did not attribute it to any wisdom, conduct, or courage of his own, but, to avoid envy, he attributed it to fortune and took refuge in the divinity.' (6.)

The Lacedaemonians had confidence in Nicias, and he was the means of bringing about the peace which went

[1] Thuc. vii. 48, 49.

under his name (421 B.C.). Plutarch says that this was 'as on account of his general character for moderation and equity, so also because of the kindness and care he had shown to the prisoners taken at Pylos and kept in confinement, making their misfortune the more easy for them.' The writer of the Aristotelian treatise on the Constitution says of him: 'The best of the statesmen of Athens, after those of early times, seem to have been Nicias, Thucydides [the opponent of Pericles], and Theramenes. As to Nicias and Thucydides, nearly every one agrees that they were not merely men of birth and character, but also statesmen, and that they were paternally disposed towards the city as a whole.' [1]

The peace of Nicias, with which the first phase of the Peloponnesian War concludes, was brought about, on the Spartan side, mainly through the capture by the Athenians at Pylos of a considerable force of Spartan citizens, who were kept in captivity at Athens. This coup was followed by the seizure of Cythera, from which place, as well as from Pylos, raids were made, and the Spartans unused to predatory warfare, in which the Athenians excelled, began to lose confidence in themselves. Indeed, before the capture of the Spartan force, when they were cut off on the island of Sphacteria, the Spartans had sent to Athens to negotiate for a peace. With the simplicity which characterised them, they announced that they had come 'to negotiate for the recovery of our countrymen on the island, in the hope that you may be induced to grant us terms such as will be at once advantageous to you and not inglorious to us in our present misfortune. . . . The Lacedaemonians invite you to make terms with them and finish the war. They offer peace and alliance and a general friendly and happy relation, and they ask in return their countrymen who are cut off in the island. . . . While the contest is still undecided, while you may acquire reputation and our friendship, and while our disaster can be repaired on tolerable terms, and

[1] *καὶ τῇ πόλει πάσῃ πατρικῶς χρωμένους*, 28. The emphasis seems to be on *πάσῃ*, the whole city, not a party only.

disgrace averted, let us be reconciled, and choosing peace instead of war ourselves, let us give relief and rest to all the Hellenes.'[1] Cleon, however, persuaded the Assembly to stand out for impossible terms, and on the Lacedaemonians offering to discuss the matter privately with commissioners, their proposal 'was assailed by Cleon in unmeasured language. He had always known, he said, that they meant no good, and now their designs were unveiled; for they were unwilling to speak a word before the people, but wanted to be closeted with a select few; if they had any honesty in them, let them say what they wanted to the whole city.' The Lacedaemonian ambassadors, realising that the Athenians 'would not grant what was asked of them on any tolerable terms,' thereupon returned home.[2]

The overweening confidence induced in the Athenians by their successes at this time is further illustrated by their treatment of the generals who had taken out an expedition to Sicily in support of the Leontines against Syracuse. At the instance of Hermocrates the Sicilian cities agreed to make peace among themselves, with a view to checking the designs of the Athenians, and the cities in alliance with Athens informed the Athenian generals that they intended to join in the treaty; 'and so the Athenian ships sailed away from Sicily.' Thucydides then relates:

> 'When the generals returned the Athenians punished two of them, Pythodorus and Sophocles, with exile, and imposed a fine on the third, Eurymedon, believing that they might have conquered Sicily but had been bribed to go away. For in their present prosperity they were indignant at the idea of a reverse; they expected to accomplish everything, possible or impossible, with any force, great or small. The truth was that they were elated by the unexpected success of most of their enterprises, which inspired them with the liveliest hope.'[3]

The tide, however, very soon turned. An attack on Boeotia failed disastrously in the defeat of the Athenian

[1] Thuc. iv. 17-20. [2] *Ibid.* 21, 22. [3] *Ibid.* 65.

forces at Delium, and Brasidas, who had passed with a picked force through Thessaly into Chalcidice, was detaching city after city from the Athenian alliance. Here it was that Thucydides, the historian, came to grief, having to go into exile for failing to save Amphipolis. A further index of the spirit prevailing at Athens is seen in the decree against one of the revolted cities. 'They instantly carried a resolution, moved by Cleon, to destroy Scionè and put the citizens to the sword.'[1] Cleon himself then sailed with a large force to the Chalcidian cities, and was killed, with the loss of many Athenian hoplites, in a fight with Brasidas, who won a complete victory (though falling himself) before Amphipolis. Both sides were then disposed towards peace, and the peace, known as that of Nicias, was accordingly effected (421 B.C.).

Alcibiades now comes upon the scene, and with his career the destiny of Athens, to its fall, was inseparably linked. An Alcmaeonid on his mother's side, on his father's he was of the family of the Aeacidae, who claimed descent from Ajax. Through the death of his father at the battle of Cononaea he became a ward of Pericles, and an amusing and significant conversation between him as a youth and the great statesman is given by Xenophon :

'Thus the story is told of Alcibiades—how before the age of twenty he engaged his own guardian Pericles, at that time first minister of the state, in a discussion concerning laws :

ALC. Please, Pericles, can you teach me what a law is ?

PER. To be sure I can.

ALC. I should be so much obliged if you would do so. One so often hears the epithet "law-abiding" applied in a complimentary sense ; yet, it strikes me, one hardly deserves the compliment, if one does not know what a law is.

PER. Fortunately there is a ready answer to your difficulties. You wish to know what a law is ? Well, those are laws which the majority, being met together in conclave, approve and enact as to what is right to do, and what it is right to abstain from doing.

[1] Thuc. iv. 122.

Alc. Enact on the hypothesis that it is right to do what is good? or to do what is bad?

Per. What is good, to be sure, young sir, not what is bad.

Alc. Supposing it is not the majority, but, as in the case of an oligarchy, the minority, who meet and enact the rules of conduct, what are these?

Per. Whatever the ruling power of the state after deliberation enacts as our duty to do, goes by the name of *law*.

Alc. Then if a tyrant, holding the chief power in the state, enacts rules of conduct for the citizens, are these enactments law?

Per. Yes, anything which a tyrant as head of the state enacts, also goes by the name of law.

Alc. But, Pericles, violence and lawlessness—how do we define them? Is it not when a stronger man forces a weaker to do what seems right to him—not by persuasion but by compulsion?

Per. I should say so.

Alc. It would seem to follow that if a tyrant, without persuading the citizens, drives them by enactment to do certain things—that is lawlessness?

Per. You are right; and I retract the statement that measures passed by a tyrant without persuasion of the citizens are law.

Alc. And what of measures passed by a minority, not by persuasion of the majority, but in the exercise of its power only? Are we, or are we not, to apply the term violence to these?

Per. I think that anything which any one forces another to do without persuasion, whether by enactment or not, is violence rather than law.

Alc. It would seem that everything which the majority, in the exercise of its power over the possessors of wealth, and without persuading them, chooses to enact, is of the nature of violence rather than of law.

'To be sure (answered Pericles), adding: At your age we were clever hands at such quibbles ourselves. It was just such subtleties which we used to practise our wits upon; as you do now, if I mistake not.

'To which Alcibiades replied: Ah, Pericles, I do wish we could have met in those days when you were at your cleverest in such matters.' [1]

[1] Xen. *Mem.* i. 2, 39 *sq.* (trans. Dakyns).

Alcibiades represented the new generation, for many of whom the old beliefs had been shattered by the discourses of the sophists, and who had found nothing to take their place. By his splendid physique, personal magnetism, high descent, and display of wealth,[1] he had gained great influence among the people, and on the death of Cleon he aspired to lead the democracy. To this end he set himself against the policy of Nicias, and organised a confederation with Argos, Mantinea, and Elis against Sparta. By a shameful trick on the Spartan envoys, by which he persuaded them to deny in the Assembly the powers which they had acknowledged in the Council, in return for a promise on his part that he would get Pylos restored to them, he so excited the people against them that they concluded the new alliance. But it brought them no good, for the confederates were utterly routed by the Spartan forces at Mantinea. The account of this engagement by Thucydides is so vivid as to have led to the suggestion, for which there seems to be good ground, that he was an eye-witness.[2] 'The pursuit,' he adds, 'was not fierce nor the flight protracted, for the Lacedaemonians fight long and refuse to move until they have put an enemy to flight, but, having once defeated him, they do not follow him far or long.'[3] 'Thus, by a single action, they wiped out the charge of cowardice, which was due to their misfortunes at Sphacteria, and of general stupidity and sluggishness, then current against them in Hellas. They were now thought to have been hardly used by fortune, but in character to be the same as ever.'[4]

So long, however, as Sparta remained a land power she was powerless to strike a mortal blow at Athens, and in recommending the expedition against Sicily three years later

[1] He had competed at Olympia with seven chariots, and gained the first, second, and fourth prizes.

[2] *E.g.* 'The Lacedaemonians moved slowly and to the music of many flute-players, who were stationed in their ranks, and played, not as an act of religion, but in order that the army might march evenly and in true measure, and that the line might not break, as often happens in great armies when they go into battle' (Thuc. v. 70, and cf. 60).

[3] *Ibid.* 73.

[4] *Ibid.* 75.

it was open to Alcibiades to say with some show of truth : 'Never were the Peloponnesians more hopeless of success than at the present moment ; and let them be ever so confident, they will only invade us by land, which they can equally do whether we go to Sicily or not. But on the sea they cannot hurt us, for we shall leave behind us a navy equal to theirs.'[1] Moreover, the Spartans had no money, whereas Athens had the sinews of war from the tribute. After the Sicilian disaster necessity compelled them to become a naval power,[2] and with the help of Persian gold they were thus enabled to overcome Athens.

At the time, however, of which we are speaking, the sovereign democracy of Athens sat secure, with its long walls to the Piraeus, its impregnable harbour, its ships bringing corn from the Euxine, and its navies unchallenged throughout the Aegean and Ionian seas. Perhaps it was by way of illustrating this position of unbridled power to which the democracy had attained that Thucydides selects the incident of the unprovoked attack on the island of Melos which took place at this time. It was an offence to them that, being islanders, the Melians were independent,[3] and after summoning them to pay tribute as subject allies, and receiving a refusal, they reduced them by blockade, and put to death all the men who were of military age and made slaves of the women and children.[4] Plutarch says that Alcibiades was the principal cause of the slaughter, 'having spoken in favour of the decree.' And indeed the extreme cynicism of the arguments put by Thucydides into the mouth of the Athenian representatives at the conference suggests this. The doctrine of the 'will to power'—not so very new after all—is asserted there in a manner which seems somewhat foreign to the traditional Athenian spirit : 'For of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a law of their nature wherever they can rule they will.'

[1] Thuc. vi. 17. [2] *Ibid.* viii. 2.

[3] 'The Melians are colonists of the Lacedaemonians who would not submit to Athens like the other islanders' (Thuc. v. 84).

[4] *Ibid.* 116.

Then followed the Sicilian expedition: 'During the same winter the Athenians conceived a desire of sending another expedition to Sicily, larger than those commanded by Laches and Eurymedon. They hoped to conquer the island. Of its great size and numerous population, barbarian as well as Hellenic, most of them knew nothing, and they never reflected that they were entering on a struggle almost as arduous as the Peloponnesian War.'[1] But the dreams of Alcibiades and his friends were on a still vaster scale, and in his speech to the Spartan assembly, after he had gone over to them, he is represented by Thucydides as disclosing them:

'We sailed to Sicily hoping in the first place to conquer the Sicilian cities; then to proceed against the Hellenes of Italy; and lastly to make an attempt on the Carthaginian dominions, and on Carthage itself. If all or most of these enterprises succeeded, we meant finally to attack Peloponnesus, bringing with us the whole Hellenic power which we had gained abroad, besides many barbarians whom we intended to hire. . . . Thus we hoped to crush you easily, and to rule over the Hellenic world.'[2]

Though Thucydides is silent on the domestic affairs of Athens, we have preserved to us, among the works attributed to Xenophon, a document belonging to this time, or a few years earlier, which throws light on them from the point of view of a member of the upper class. The paper is called 'The Polity of the Athenians,' and was apparently written for some Lacedaemonian friend. It is a defence of the democracy from its own standpoint, and, though written in a tone of insidious irony, it is nevertheless a serious production and of contemporary value. Wherever democratic government prevailed in the Greek city-states there was oppression of the richer class, and there were always exiles whose property was confiscated. That this was so at Athens is proved by the fact that one of the stipulations of the Lacedaemonians at the fall of Athens was the return

[1] Thuc. vi. 1. [2] *Ibid.* 90.

of the exiles. To this class the writer of the paper in question evidently belonged. Evidence of its activity at this time appears in the remark of Nicias in his speech dissuading the Athenians from the Sicilian expedition: 'If we are wise we shall not trouble ourselves about the barbarous Egestaeans in Sicily; the real question is how we can make ourselves secure against the designs of an insidious oligarchy.'[1] The writer of the paper, however, adopts an attitude of good-humoured resignation rather than of active opposition. I will give a few extracts from it, and with them conclude this historical survey.

'THE POLITY OF THE ATHENIANS'

I. 1-5. 'As concerning the Polity of the Athenians, and the type or manner of constitution which they have chosen, I praise it not, in so far as the very choice involves the welfare of the baser folk as opposed to that of the better class . . . but given the fact that this is the type agreed upon, I propose to show that they set about its preservation in the right way.

'In the first place, I maintain, it is only just that the poorer classes and the demos should be better off than the men of birth and wealth, seeing that it is the people who man the fleet, and put round the city her girdle of power. The steersman, the boatswain, the pentecontarch, the look-out-man, the shipwright—these are the people who engird the city with power rather than the hoplites and the men of birth and quality. This being the case, it seems only just that offices of state should be thrown open to every one. . . . Then there are many of these offices which, according as they are in good or bad hands, are a source of safety or of danger to the people, and in these the people prudently abstain from sharing; as, for instance, it does not think it incumbent on itself to share in the functions of the general or of the commander of cavalry. . . . It is only those departments of government which bring emolument and assist the private purse that the people care to keep in its own hands.

[1] Thuc. vi. 11. The meaning apparently is, 'against Lacedaemonia, as an oligarchical power, in league with the oligarchical party.'

'In the next place, in regard to what some people are puzzled to explain—the fact that everywhere they show greater consideration to the base, to poor people and to common folk than to persons of good quality—so far from being a matter of surprise, this, as can be shown, is the keystone of the preservation of the democracy. . . . All the world over the better element is opposed to the democracy. For among the better classes there is the smallest amount of intemperance and injustice, together with the greatest amount of scrupulousness in the pursuit of a high standard, but within the ranks of the people the greatest amount of ignorance, disorderliness and rascality.'

8. 'A state founded on such institutions will not be the best state, but, given a democracy, its preservation will be so best secured.

'For the people does not want a well-governed city and itself to serve, but to be free and rule; as to bad legislation it cares little about that. In fact what you believe to be bad legislation from this the demos gets strong and is free.'

9. 'But if you seek for good legislation, in the first place you will see the ablest legislating for the rest. And in the next place the better class will curb and punish the lower orders; the better class will deliberate for the state, and not suffer crack-brained fellows to sit in the Council, or to address the Assembly. No doubt; but by such blessings the people will in a very short time be reduced to slavery.'

13. 'Citizens devoting their time to gymnastics and music are not to be found at Athens; the sovereign people has disestablished them, thinking this unsuitable, upon consideration that the cultivation of these things is beyond its own power. On the same principle it is the rich man who trains the choruses and is trierarch or gymnasiarch, and the people that gains the benefit. In fact what the people looks upon as its right is to pocket the money, whether singing, running, dancing, or sailing, in order that it may be the gainer, while the rich are made poorer. And so in the courts of justice, justice is not more an object of concern to the dicasts than their own interests.'

14. 'To speak of the allies, and in reference to the point that emissaries from Athens come out and, according to

common opinion, blackmail (συκοφαντοῦσιν) and vent their hatred upon the better sort of people, they do so as recognising the fact that the ruler is sure to be hated by the ruled, but that if the rich and powerful are to wield power in the subject cities, the rule of the demos at Athens shall be for a very short time (ὀλίγιστον χρόνον ἡ ἀρχὴ ἔσται τοῦ δήμου τοῦ Ἀθήνησι). This explains why the better sort of people are punished with loss of civil rights, robbed of their goods, driven from their homes, and put to death, while the baser sort are promoted to honour (διὰ ταῦτα οὖν τοὺς μὲν χρηστοὺς ἀτιμοῦσι καὶ χρήματα ἀφαιροῦνται καὶ ἐξελαύνουσι καὶ ἀποκτείνουσι, τοὺς δὲ πονηροὺς αὔξουσιν). On the other hand, the better class at Athens endeavour to protect the better classes in the allied cities, recognising that it is to the interest of their own class at all times to protect the best element in the cities.'

15. 'It may be said that the real strength of Athens lies in the capacity of the allies to contribute their money quota. But to the democratic mind it is a greater advantage still for the individual Athenian to get hold of the wealth of the allies, leaving them only enough to live upon and to cultivate their estates, but powerless to harbour treacherous designs.'

16. Compelling the allies to voyage to Athens to have their cases tried, looked on by the writer as a mistaken policy; but the demos gains numerous advantages from this:

1. 'A steady receipt of salaries all the year from court fees.'

2. Holding their sessions at home.

3. 'They thus preserve the friends of democracy and ruin her opponents in the courts' (καὶ τοὺς μὲν τοῦ δήμου σώζουσι, τοὺς δ' ἐναντίους ἀπολλύουσιν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις).

18. 'Whereas now every single individual among the allies [not only generals or ambassadors] is forced to pay flattery to the Athenian demos, because he knows that he must betake himself to Athens and win or lose his case, not before anybody, but before the sovereign demos, which is really law at Athens; and he is compelled to do the suppliant in the courts, and when a juryman enters, to take him by the hand. For this reason the allies find themselves more and more slaves to the demos at Athens.'

II. 14. They lack one thing, namely, being an island. As it is, the farming portion of the community and the wealthy landowners are too ready to cringe to the enemy. The demos [mainly the town population], on the other hand, have no such fears.

15. If they were an island they would be free from the fear of the city being betrayed by a few to the enemy. 'But now, if there should be faction, those who would set it on foot would do so in the hope of success by bringing in an enemy by land.'

16. 'Since, however, they did not chance to inhabit an island from the first, what they now do is this—they deposit their property in the islands, trusting to the command of the sea, and they suffer the soil of Attica to be ravaged, knowing that to expend pity on that would be to deprive themselves of other greater advantages.'

18. 'It is not allowed to caricature or otherwise libel the demos on the comic stage, so that they may not hear themselves ill spoken of. Individuals may be satirised ; and this because they are well aware that, as a general rule, the person caricatured does not belong to the demos or the masses, but he is more likely to be some wealthy or well-born person, or man of influence.'

20. 'For my part I pardon the people its own democracy, as, indeed, it is pardonable in any one to do good to himself.'

We shall find further illustration of these points in the plays of Aristophanes, to be now considered.

CHAPTER V

The *Birds* of Aristophanes and its meaning.
The 'Zeus' analogy.

We are now in a position to resume the consideration of the *Birds*, which we left in Chapter I.

The scene opens in a wild and remote region. Peisthetaerus, a typical elderly Athenian of the better class, whose name suggests the meaning of 'a persuader of his friends,' with an allusion perhaps to the political clubs at Athens (*ἑταιρεῖαι*), accompanied by a follower Euelpides ('Hopeful'), arrive there after long wanderings. Euelpides explains to the spectators :

'We have fled from the city of our birth, though having the rights of citizenship in tribe and birth, citizen with citizen, not scared away by any one, not hating that city in itself, so as not to consider it by gift of nature great and wealthy, and common to all—to pay fines in. For the cicadae, indeed, sing one month or two upon the branches, but the Athenians are always singing during their whole life upon lawsuits. For this reason we are journeying on this path . . . in search of a place free from trouble, where we may settle and live. Now our journey is to Tereus, the hoopoe, wishing to learn from him if anywhere, where he has flown, he has seen such a city.' (1-48.)

Tereus, in my view, stands for the ancient régime at Athens. According to the legend he was king of Thrace, and was metamorphosed into a hoopoe, and his wife Procne into a nightingale ; but the point is that she was a daughter of one of the early kings of Athens. She is also referred to later in the play as of kindred with the two Athenians (368). The Hoopoe, who in the play is king of the birds, is also alluded to as an Athenian, as, for instance, in line 75. 'he

was once a man, and now and then longs to eat Phaleric anchovies '—Phalerum being one of their sea beaches.

An allusion follows to the naval expedition then in Sicilian waters, and to the litigiousness at Athens (108-111): EPOPS. 'What country do you hail from? EUEL. From where the fine triremes come. EPOPS. Are you heliasts? EUEL. Quite the reverse—antiheliasts.' It is then indicated, under allegory, that the country people of Attica were less litigious than the townsmen.

114-148. They explain to the Hoopoe that they are in search of a comfortable city to settle in, and he asks if they are looking for a greater city than Athens. They reply: 'Certainly not greater, but one more suited to us.' To which the Epops: 'Evidently you are seeking to live under an aristocracy.' 'What, I? By no means,' Euelpides replies, 'I even hate the son of Scellias' (whose name was Aristocrates[1]). All they want is a town where they can spend their days in security and pleasure. The Epops sarcastically suggests various outlandish places, among them the coast of the Red Sea. 'Ah,' replies Euelpides, 'by no means by the seaside for us, where the Salaminian galley will come in sight early in the morning with a constable on board'—an allusion presumably to the recall, a few months before, of Alcibiades from Sicily. This state ship was used for executing the orders of the courts.

162-172. Peisthetaerus has now conceived an idea: 'Verily, I see a mighty plan possible for the race of birds, and a power by which it might be effected if you would trust yourselves to me. . . . In the first place give up fluttering about everywhere with open mouth, for this is an undignified business. For example, if any one there among us (*ἐκεῖ παρ' ἡμῖν*) should ask among the flutterers, "What sort of bird is this?" Teleas will say as follows: "A man-bird, unstable, fluttering, fickle, never at any time remaining in the same place."' EPOPS. 'By Dionysus, you

[1] Aristocrates, a rich Athenian, of moderate conservative views, and associate of Theramenes in the establishment of the constitution of the Five Thousand.

rightly find fault with this. What then can we do?' PEISTH. 'Found one city' (οἰκίσατε μίαν πόλιν). This is evidently a description of the people of 'moderate' views at Athens, who were 'out of it,' and advice to concentrate on some plan of action for improving their condition. The sequel shows what it is.

173-197. Aristophanes is now sailing very near the wind, so he conveys his meaning under *double entente*, and an appearance of a hit at the theories of the astronomers. The place Peisthetaerus advises the birds to fortify is the 'pole' of the heavens above, which will then be called 'polis'—a city. The situation is indicated ambiguously, but quite clearly in one sense of the words, as one where they were standing, one which was frequented, and where everything passed through (*ὥσπερ εἴποι τις τόπος. | ὅτι δὲ πολεῖται τοῦτο καὶ διέρχεται | ἅπαντα διὰ τούτου*). This points clearly to Sicily, the geographical position of which would justify the expectation that, under a good government, it would become a centre of the then world's over-sea trade. But the passage cannot be rendered into English, because it depends on the dual meaning of *πολεῖται* (181), which, in its application to the pole (*πόλος*), means 'is turned about,' and, in its application to the city (*πόλις*), means 'is frequented by people' (from the sense of 'circulating'). By an ingenious transition the writer gets rid of 'pole,' slips in 'place' (*τόπος*), after leading up to it by the alliterative *τρόπον*, and then, by substituting the neuter pronoun *τοῦτο*, which can be made to refer to either *πόλος* or *τόπος*, according to the gesture of the actor, is able to make the ambiguous play with the word *πολεῖται*, and even with the dangerous phrase *διέρχεται ἅπαντα διὰ τούτου*, which he gives as a reason why the heaven above is called the 'pole.' The *τούτου* is again ambiguous; applied to the 'place,' the phrase refers to the convenience of trade; applied to the 'pole,' it is a strained way of expressing the then prevailing idea as to the revolution of the heavens. The natural way of putting that would be to say that the 'pole,' in its revolution, passed round

everything.[1] That the significance of this passage would largely depend on the actor's method of rendering it is further shown by the frequent recurrence of the demonstrative pronoun; thus *οὗτος, τοῦτο, διὰ τούτου, τοῦτο, τούτου*, in six lines (179-184). The same remark applies to the directions of Peisthetaerus to the Hoopoe—'look down,' 'look up,' 'look around.' 'If,' concludes Peisthetaerus, 'you found "this," and once fortify it, from this "pole" it shall be called "city" (*πόλις*), so that you shall rule over men like locusts [*i.e.* your subjects will have plenty to eat], but the gods, on the other hand, you shall destroy with a Melian famine.'[2] By the 'gods' is meant, in my opinion, the sovereign democracy at Athens, and by 'men' (*ἀνθρώπων*) the subject allies; these two terms being adopted, with their significance, from the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus, under the theory of its meaning which I have summarised in the preface and developed in the volume on that play.

It may be asked why, if the passage carries this meaning, it was not seized by a Greek audience. The answer surely is that it is impossible to take in the meaning of a complicated set of lines on hearing them for the first time spoken from the stage. Let me give an illustration. Not long ago I went to a performance of *The Merchant of Venice*. I had not read the play since school days, and had forgotten much of it. The speech of the Prince of Morocco, beginning 'Mislike me not for my complexion,' was magnificently rendered by the actor. Unfortunately I stopped to think, I suppose only for a few seconds, what 'The shadowed livery of the burnished sun' meant. In the meantime the speech was going on, and I missed much of its effect. It was not until I looked it up afterwards in the book that I realised properly what had been said. So it is always with speeches on the stage which are heavily charged with thought. If they are good they are better at home, where the mind can

[1] The 'pole' in antiquity was not thought of as a fixed point, but as a concave sphere enclosing the earth, and carrying round in its revolution the fixed stars.

[2] For the reduction of Melos, see p. 81 above.

pause over them. Presumably the majority in an Athenian audience were illiterate; they would therefore be under a disadvantage, and those only would understand the inwardness of such a passage who were intended to understand it, namely, the author's political friends, whom he probably associated with at the 'Clubs,' and among whom copies of his plays might be handed about.[1] No doubt an Athenian audience was very quick, but they were human and subject to human limitations. The compliments which Aristophanes pays them about their 'cleverness' were largely in the nature of flattery, with the object of winning the prize for his play. When he brings an impersonation of the average Athenian on the stage, ignorance and stupidity have their full share in its composition. It is, however, always treated with caution, as a dangerous animal to play with.

To proceed with the passage—Peisthetaerus adds, by way of further explanation, that the atmosphere is between earth and heaven (*ἐν μέσῳ δήπουθεν ἀήρ ἐστι γῆς*). 'Then, like as we (*ἡμεῖς*), if we wish to go to Delphi to consult the oracle, ask of the Boeotians a passage, so, when men sacrifice to the gods, unless the gods bring in tribute to you (*φόρον φέρωσιν ὑμῖν οἱ θεοί*), you shall not grant a passage to the odour of the thighs through the city which is not theirs (*τῆς ἀλλοτρίας*) and the "chaos"' (*τοῦ χάους*, the void of atmosphere, a word used instead of heaven, the seat of the gods, probably to give an astronomical colour to the passage). This convinces the Hoopoe, who, with a shout of admiration and various bird-conjurations, says that he never heard a more clever device.

The Hoopoe now undertakes to summon the Chorus of Birds, in order that Peisthetaerus may explain his plan to them. At first they receive the two strangers with hostility, but are finally induced to give them a hearing.

[1] An illustration of this point occurs in the poet's reference in the Parabasis of the *Wasps* to his failure to win the prize in the previous year with the *Clouds* (423 B.C.). He tells the general audience that 'though no one had ever heard better comic verses' they failed to understand them.

After some mock-ceremonial Peisthetaerus begins by saying that his preparations are due to the importance of the utterance with which his mind has long been full, and proceeds (465 *sq.*):

'to such an extent do I grieve over you, who, being formerly kings—

CHER. We kings? Kings of what?

PEISTH. Of all things that exist, of me first, of this man, and of Zeus himself, had an existence more primeval and earlier than Cronus, and the Titans, and earth.

CHOR. And earth?

PEISTH. Aye, by Apollo.

CHOR. This, by Zeus, I had not heard.

PEISTH. Very likely, for you are unlearned and not curious about knowledge.'

and the question follows: 'Is not, then, the sovereignty [ἡ *βασιλεία*—which is personified as the 'bride' at the end of the play] rightly theirs if they had an existence prior to the earth and prior to the gods, inasmuch as they are the oldest?'

In this passage the favourite belief of the old Athenian Eupatrids is, in my belief, reflected that they were *γηγενεῖς* and *αὐτόχθονες* original inhabitants of Attica and sprung from heroes and gods of the soil. 'Zeus' is the victorious monarch of the legends, as in the *Prometheus Bound*; and just as he is the 'new ruler' in heaven in relation to the older dispensations whom he supplanted, so the new 'Zeus' at Athens, namely, the sovereign 'Demos,' has ejected the natural and rightful rulers of the land.

Illustrations follow that 'not the gods, but the birds, were rulers and kings over men in ancient times,' and Peisthetaerus then describes to the birds their present deplorable condition, in lines, for those who understood their inner meaning, of poignant significance (520 *sq.*):

'And no man in those days used to swear by a god, but all by the birds . . . so great and sacred did they all think you in former times, but now they regard you as captives, fools, and slaves. And they throw stones at you, as they do at mad people,

and even in the precincts of the temples every bird-catcher sets snares, traps, limed-twigs, springes, meshes,[1] nets, trap-cages for you, and then they take and sell you in heaps. . . .'

Under this allegory the treatment of the better classes at Athens by the popular courts is, as it appears to me, described, and in the comic lines which follow, as to the various ways of cooking the birds, the ruinous penalties to which they were subjected by fines, banishment, confiscations, etc., are alluded to. The lines must, of course, be read in the Greek, for half their significance lies in the rhythm, which expresses the feeling with which they are charged. The action of the play, which up to this point has been in appearance merely comic, does not lead naturally to this speech, and even less to the lament of the birds which follows it :

> πολὺ δὴ πολὺ δὴ χαλεπωτάτους λόγους
> ἤνεγκας, ἄνθρωφ', κ.τ.λ.

and they deplore 'the poor spirit of my fathers, who, when their forefathers had transmitted to them these honours, let them go to my injury.' 'But you,' they conclude, 'have come to me through some deity and by some happy chance as my preserver. . . . Tell us then what to do, since life is not worth our living unless we may

[1] νεφέλας, with a double meaning, *i.e.* meshes and cloudy arguments designed to confuse. Compare with this the appeal in the Parabasis of the *Acharnians* against the treatment of deserving old men in the popular courts :

'We aged veterans blame the city, for we are not supported by you in our old age in a manner worthy of those our sea-fights, but suffer grievously at your hands, who having cast us, old as we are, into prosecutions, allow us to be laughed at by stripling orators . . . and babbling through age we take our stand at the bar, seeing nothing except it be the mist of justice' [with a reference to the confusion of the case]. 'But the young man [eager to get on] strikes quickly, engaging us with trim, rounded phrases, and then dragging us up [*i.e.* like a ship on shore—the metaphor being from a naval engagement], he cross-examines us, setting spring-traps of words (σκανδάληθρ' ἐπῶν), rending, troubling, and confounding a man of the years of Tithonus. And he mumbles through age, and is condemned in his suit and departs. Then he whimpers and cries, and says to his friends, "I have to pay in a fine what I had wherewith to buy me a coffin"' (676-691).

by any means in our power recover our sovereignty' (τὴν ἡμετέραν βασιλείαν).

To this Peisthetaerus replies that first there must be *one* city for the birds (μίαν ὀρνίθων πόλιν εἶναι), and then that they must build a fortification round the whole air and πᾶν τουτὶ τὸ μεταξύ—an ambiguous expression, as before, 'all this that is between.' When they have done this, they will demand back the dominion from Zeus (τὴν ἀρχὴν τὸν Δί' ἀπαιτεῖν), and if he refuses they will proclaim a 'sacred war' against him, and forbid the gods (τοῖσι θεοῖσι) to pass through their territory. To the men (τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις)—the subject allies, as I read it—they must send one herald 'henceforth to sacrifice to birds, since they have the sovereignty'; and another to the gods (τοῖσι θεοῖσι)—the democracy at Athens—for the purpose of coming to some arrangement, as described, about the sacrifices; the speech concluding with an irreverent jibe about Zeus, which causes Euelpides to exclaim in a similar vein, βροντάτω νῦν ὁ μέγας Ζάν—'Let the great Jos thunder now,' spoken in derision, not of deity, for which Aristophanes had as much respect as Aeschylus, but of the Athenian democracy.

The good things which will come to men through the birds are then described, 'if they think of you as a god, as life, Earth, Cronus, Poseidon'; and Euelpides says, 'Bah! How much better are these (the birds) than Zeus to rule over us.' 'Much,' says Peisthetaerus. 'In the first place we shall not have to build them stone temples, with golden gates, for they will dwell under bushes and little holm-oaks. For the worshipful birds (σεμνοῖς) an olive-tree will be the temple. And we shall not have to go to Delphi or to Ammon to sacrifice, but standing amid the arbutus and the wild olives with barley and wheat, we will pray to them, holding up our hands, to grant us some share of good things. And these shall immediately be ours when we have thrown them a little grain.' (610-626.)

There is an evident allusion here to the Acropolis of Athens, where the sacred olive-tree grew, and where the

Areopagus, the seat of government in old days, was situated. The whole passage is, I believe, an allegory of the restoration to power of the better classes, not the extreme oligarchs, who never found favour with Aristophanes, but the better class of citizens generally, whose influence in the constitution it was, in his view, necessary to re-establish if Athens was to be saved. The passage is also striking from the evidence it gives of the growing dissatisfaction with the old pagan beliefs, and particularly the oracles, which existed among the educated classes.[1]

Peisthetaerus and Euelpides now, by the expedient of 'eating a little root,' are furnished with wings, and the Parabasis follows telling of the antiquity of the birds and the advantages to be derived from acknowledging them as gods. The opening lines are evidently reminiscent of the speech of Prometheus, in the play of Aeschylus, about the helpless condition of men before he took them in hand.

Directions having been given for building the city, which they agree to name 'Cloud-cuckoo-town,' and the two heralds having been sent out, Peisthetaerus prepares to sacrifice. He is interrupted, however, by the arrival of various pests, obviously from Athens—a poet, an oracle-monger, a geometrician, a commissioner 'elected by the bean,' a vendor of decrees. He drives them out, one after the other, with a whip. The sacrifices are announced as favourable, and the great fortification as completed. Iris, messenger of the gods, flies through the new city without a permit, on her way to men to tell them to sacrifice to the gods. She is stopped, and after being ridiculed very grossly by Peisthetaerus, departs, threatening the thunderbolt of Zeus. The significant points in this conversation are the questions of Peisthetaerus: 'Who are you?' 'Iris.' 'Paralus or Salaminia?' *i.e.* the two Athenian state galleys, the first used for embassies and ceremonial and political business, the second for summonses, etc., from the law courts. Further, Peisthetaerus: 'Do you dare to fly without

[1] Evidence of scepticism about the oracles is found in the great writers, *e.g.* in Aeschylus and Thucydides.

a pass through this city which belongs to some one else (τῆς ἀλλοτρίας) and the chaos ? . . . We should be putting up with a good deal, methinks, if while we rule the rest you gods are allowed to go on as you like, and not made to realise that you, in turn, must obey your superiors.' To her explanation that she is flying to men (πρὸς ἀνθρώπους) to tell them to sacrifice to the Olympian gods (τοῖς 'Ολυμπίοις θεοῖς), Peisthetaerus replies that 'birds are gods to men now, to whom they must sacrifice, not to Zeus' (1236). On her departure the Chorus exclaims, 'We have shut out the gods of the race of Zeus, so that they can no longer pass through my city, or any mortal throughout the earth any longer send smoke of sacrifices to the gods by this way'; in other words, by intercepting the tribute by means of a fortified base, from which a fleet could operate, they have 'held up' the democracy at Athens.

The herald who went to 'men' now returns and reports that they are all 'bird-mad,' and that thousands of them are coming to join the new city. The Chorus is delighted, and says that they could not do better than settle in such a place, where they will find 'Wisdom, Love, ambrosial Graces, and the cheerful face of gentle-minded Tranquillity' (1320). Various people then arrive, and ask to be provided with wings—a young profligate who wants to make away with his father, another poet, and a 'Sycophant.' Peisthetaerus sends the first, with good advice, to work off his pugnacity in Thrace; good-naturedly chaffs the poet; and after trying without success to persuade the informer, who is a young man, to earn an honest living, flogs him off the stage. The latter episode is interesting for the light it throws on the methods practised by such men for plundering the richer people in the allied cities, who had to come to Athens to plead before the courts there. In exhorting him to better ways, Peisthetaerus says that he is furnishing him with wings by his words, for 'by words the mind is raised aloft, and the man stirred. Thus I wish to set you also on the wing by good words and turn you to a legitimate occupation' (1449).

1470 *sq*. A chorus of the nature of topical gibberish follows, being, like the two later ones of a similar character, designed, as I think, for the purpose of diverting too critical attention from the dangerous scenes which they enclose. The first of these is a conversation between Peisthetaerus and Prometheus, in which obviously Aristophanes had Prometheus of the *Prometheus Bound* in mind, because he quotes words used by Aeschylus.[1] A person, who turns out to be Prometheus, enters concealed under a cloak and carrying an umbrella and a camp-stool. After discovering himself and getting Peisthetaerus to hold the umbrella over him while he talks, for fear he should be seen by Zeus or some of the gods, he announces to him that 'Zeus is ruined,' for, since they had fortified the new city, 'no one of men any longer sacrifices to the gods, nor has the steam from thighs ascended to us from that time . . . while the barbarian gods (*οἱ δὲ βάρβαροι θεοί*), famished with hunger, . . . say they will march against Zeus from above (*ἄνωθεν*) if he does not have the ports opened to allow the cut-up entrails to come in.' Asked about these barbarian gods beyond (or above) them (*ἄνωθεν*), he says they are 'Triballi,' and he tells Peisthetaerus as a secret in advance that ambassadors are coming to him from Zeus and the Triballi of the upper regions (*τῶν ἄνω*) about a truce; 'but do you not make peace with them unless Zeus delivers up the sceptre to the birds again, and gives you Basileia [*τὴν βασίλειαν*, the sovereignty, as before, but here personified] to have as your wife.' He describes Basileia as 'a most beautiful damsel, who manages Zeus's thunderbolts and everything else, good counsel, good administration, moderation, the dockyards, abuse, the pay-clerk, the three obols.' 'If,' says Prometheus, 'you get her, you get everything.' (1494-1543.)

All this applies quite naturally to the imperial government at Athens. The democracy which controlled it is represented as reduced to come to terms with the exiles, that is, the moderate conservatives, not only from Athens

[1] 1513, *ἄκουε δή νυν* (cf. *P.V.* 648); 1547, *μισῶ δ' ἅπαντας τοὺς θεούς, ὡς οἶσθα σύ* (cf. *P.V.* 996 and 120-122).

but from the islands, who have combined against them. The price of the withdrawal of the blockade is that the ancestral constitution, under which the better classes controlled the government, should be restored. In the mind of the author this probably meant a reversion to the constitution of Cleisthenes, as it was before Pericles, when the higher magistracies were confined to citizens of the higher rates of assessment, and the Areopagus had certain inhibitory and censorial powers.

The friendly recognition of Prometheus by Peisthetaerus (ὦ φίλε Προμηθεῦ) is a point to notice. It is to be explained, in my belief, by the admiration which Aristophanes felt for Aeschylus (cf. *Frogs*), and it goes to confirm the view which I hold that the character of Prometheus in the *Prometheus Bound* is intended as a representation of the poet himself. It will be observed that Aristophanes puts into the mouth of Peisthetaerus a pointed comment on the remark of Prometheus, 'I hate all the gods, as you know' (which comes from *P.V.* 996), in the reply, 'Yes, by Zeus, you always were disliked by the gods' (θεομισής). The significance of the remark is illustrated by the statement about Aeschylus in the *Frogs*, 807, that 'he did not get on with the Athenians.'

1565 *sq.* The deputation from the gods arrives. It consists of Poseidon, Hercules, and Triballus, the latter being represented as a boor, speaking an unintelligible patois. This would have seemed natural to the general audience, as the Triballi were a savage Thracian tribe, who had been heard of at Athens in recent years in connection with fighting in the north. In this sense, therefore, ἄνωθεν would be intelligible. But such a construction leaves the whole scene of the embassy without any intelligible meaning. I believe the three gods are intended to represent the old-time parties of the 'Plain,' the 'Shore,' and the 'Hill' (the Eupatrid country party, the mercantile or middling party, and the poorer peasantry), the quarrels between whom, in the previous century, led to the 'tyranny' of Pisistratus, and ultimately to the constitution of Cleisthenes

(see Chapter I.). In this construction ἄνωθεν would mean from the uplands of Attica, where the poorer peasant population lived. All the dialogue seems to point to this conclusion, and, in particular, the fact that the casting vote of Triballus decides the question whether the gods will agree to the terms of Peisthetaerus; for it was by the support of the poor men of the 'Hill' that Pisistratus gained the sovereignty of Athens. The exclamation of Poseidon at the awkwardness of Triballus, 'O democracy, what are you bringing us to if the gods have elected such a fellow as this to serve on an embassy?' (1570), confirms this view, as it was not until the time of Pericles that the lower-class assessment had been admitted to public office. Poseidon leads the deputation because the power of the democracy depended on the command of the sea. Hercules represents the old country party (in sympathy with the Lacedaemonians), and his attitude is very much that of the Titans in the *Prometheus Bound*, who despised diplomacy and trusted to brute strength. He would 'hang the fellow' (1575). He is otherwise represented as a guzzler in the traditional manner of the satiric drama. Peisthetaerus greets him familiarly, as an old friend, as he greeted Prometheus.

The cooking of certain birds is a clever expedient for disarming democratic suspicion, because it recalls the earlier description of the sufferings of the birds generally (523 *sq.*), and Peisthetaerus says, in reply to a question of Hercules, that they are 'certain birds who rose up against the birds of the democratic party and were adjudged guilty' (1583). The real allusion I take to be to the extreme oligarchs, a small but powerful faction who were opposed to any form of democratic constitution. Aristophanes, and the people he represented, were in favour of a 'polity,' as understood by the founders of the constitution. The appeal of Peisthetaerus to the ambassadors represents their attitude (1596 *sq.*):

'But we did not at any time first commence war with you [the ruling democracy], and now we are willing to come to terms

with you, if you, on your part, are willing to do what is just, now if ever. And the justice of the case is this, that Zeus restore the sceptre again to us birds.'

Compare with this the similar speech of Prometheus about Zeus in the play of Aeschylus (194-200), where Prometheus says that on certain conditions he is quite willing to be his friend.

In the argument of Peisthetaerus that 'you, the gods, will be more powerful if the birds have the rule below,' the idea seems to be that the state generally will be stronger if its rulers are drawn, as of old, from the better classes; and the legal argument with Hercules seems to mean that the country party will gain nothing by sticking to the 'demos,' because, if it falls, the reversion will not come to them. Hercules and Triballus come to an agreement to concede the demands of Peisthetaerus, and Poseidon says that 'since you two are decided, I will hold my tongue'; in other words the town democracy is overruled by the united country party. Peisthetaerus is then invited by Hercules 'to come with us to heaven, in order that you may receive Basileia and everything there' (*ἵνα τὴν βασίλειαν καὶ τὰ πάντ' ἐκεῖ λάβῃς*), namely, at Athens, where the new government over the Athenian empire is to be established. Peisthetaerus then appears with the thunderbolt of Zeus in his hand and leading Basileia, the assistant or coadjutor of Zeus (*πάρεδρον Διός*), as his wife. Amid general rejoicings he summons 'the winged tribes of associates' to follow in the marriage-train 'to the region of Zeus and the nuptial couch,' that is, to Athens, the seat of government.

If the foregoing interpretation is right, as I believe it is, this play, of course, throws light on the political condition of Athens at the time, and, in particular, on the proceedings connected with the mutilation of the Hermae and the recall of Alcibiades, to which so much obscurity attaches. Whether, however, in writing it, Aristophanes was deliberately fomenting conspiracy is another question. Obviously,

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

in view of the great length and careful writing of the play, it must have been written some time before it was produced in March 414, perhaps before the recall and escape of Alcibiades, which occurred some time in the latter part of 415, the expedition against Sicily having sailed in May or June of that year. In the state of public feeling at the time of the performance all political allusion was dangerous, and Aristophanes, feeling that he had no scope for his peculiar talent, but must resort to concealment, may have simply amused himself by seeing how far he could go in expressing under allegory ideas which were in the air, and which represented his real political aspirations. In other words he may have had no serious intention of advocating among his own friends, who would have been also those of Alcibiades, the desperate expedient of using the fleet in Sicily for holding up the democracy at Athens, and compelling them thereby to do justice to the Conservative party, whom they had driven by persecution through the popular law courts into disaffection. Still, whatever may have been the actual state of mind of Aristophanes in writing and producing this remarkable work, there can be no question, both from its tenor, and from the spirit of all his other surviving plays, that he was deeply in earnest in his efforts to bring about an improvement in the government of his country, and, as was natural, in the political position of his friends and the party with which his sympathies lay. The failure of the play to win the first prize may have been due to the fact that it was not intelligible to the audience. We read that a play called *The Comastae* ('Revellers') was first, the title of which implies that it had reference to the nocturnal outrages which had so perturbed the minds of the Athenians, and the subject may have been more to their liking, and in the manner of obvious political allusion to which they were accustomed in the comedy of those days.

With regard to the 'Zeus' analogy, my belief is that it was proverbial at Athens. We have seen that the age of

Pisistratus was referred to as the 'age of Cronus.'[1] Pericles, when he had become supreme, was nicknamed the 'Olympian,' 'our peak-headed Zeus,'[2] etc. Another illustration occurs in a fragment of Timotheus, a musician who lived in Athens at the end of the fifth century, and who is said to have most corrupted the purity of the classic lyric by the introduction of *ad captandum* artifices.[3] He writes :

> οὐκ ἀείδω τὰ παλαιά,
> καὶ τὰ καινὰ γὰρ ἅμα κρείσσω,
> νέος ὁ Ζεὺς βασιλεύει,
> τὸ πάλαι δ' ἦν Κρόνος ἄρχων·
> ἀπίτω Μοῦσα παλαιά.

'I do not sing the old songs, for the new are better. It is Zeus who reigns now ; the rule of Cronus is overpast ; away with the old Muse.'[4]

A similar analogy occurs in some parallel passages in Aristophanes and the *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus. Thus in the *Knights* we read :

CHORUS *to Sausage-seller*. 'O thou who hast appeared as the greatest benefactor to all mortals, I envy you your readiness of speech ; for if you attack him [Cleon] in this way, you will be the greatest of the Greeks, and alone bear sway in the city, and rule over the allies, having a trident with which you will make plenty of money by shaking and disturbing' (σείων τε καὶ ταράττων).[5]

The trident in this passage of course represents the sea-supremacy of Athens, just as the 'trident of Poseidon' does, as I consider, in lines 945-946 of the *Prometheus Bound*. In the σείων τε καὶ ταράττων there is a similar association of ideas, that is, between the position of the Sausage-seller as representative of the sovereign 'Demos' and the 'Zeus'

[1] See p. 10 above. [2] Plutarch, *Pericles*.

[3] Sir R. C. Jebb, introduction to *Bacchylides*, 1905.

[4] In contrast we have the complaint of Plato as to 'uncultured lawlessness' in taste, and that an 'evil theatocracy' were the judges, instead of the old 'aristocracy,' in music and poetry (*Laws*).

[5] The allusion is to charges against the demagogues of taking bribes in connection with the tribute.

of the allegory in the play of Aeschylus. This view obtains the strongest confirmation from some lines in the *Peace* of Aristophanes, where the demagogue Cleon (then dead) is derided by the Chorus in a line taken from the defiance of Zeus by Prometheus :

> ὡς κυκάτω καὶ πατείτω πάντα καὶ ταραττέτω,
> οὐ γὰρ ἂν χαίροντες ἡμεῖς τήμερον παυσαίμεθ' ἄν.
> (320-321.)

The passage in the *Prometheus Bound* is as follows :

> χθονίοις κυκάτω πάντα καὶ ταρασσέτω·
> γνάμψει γὰρ οὐδὲν τῶνδέ μ' ὥστε καὶ φράσαι
> πρὸς οὗ χρεών νιν ἐκπεσεῖν τυραννίδος.
> (1014-1017.)

Other striking examples occur of a proverbial analogy between the Athenian democracy and 'Zeus' in the *Wasps* and the *Peace*, which will be given in their place in the next chapter.[1]

On the same analogy the ruling citizens of Athens are, in my belief, alluded to under the designation of *θεοί*, 'gods,' both in the *Prometheus Bound* and in the *Birds*, which follows it. Thus, in the former play, Prometheus describes himself as—

> τὸν Διὸς ἐχθρὸν, τὸν πᾶσι θεοῖς
> δι' ἀπεχθείας ἐλθόνθ', ὁπόσοι
> τὴν Διὸς αὐλὴν εἰσοιχνεῦσιν,
> διὰ τὴν λίαν φιλότητα βροτῶν. (120-123.)

And in the latter they are so alluded to *passim*. *θεοί*, the surviving title of one of the comedies of Hermippus, may possibly have had the same significance. The original derivation of *θεοί* helped this suggestion, as the word had the meaning of 'disposers.'[2]

[1] See below, pp. 113, 114, 120, 121.

[2] 'They [the Pelasgians] had no distinct names for the gods'—*θεοὺς δὲ προσωνόμεσαν σφέας, ἀπὸ τοῦ τοιούτου, ὅτι κόσμῳ θέντες τὰ πάντα πρήγματα καὶ πάσας νομὰς εἶχον* (Herod. ii. 52). 'Probably from the root of *τίθημι*, so that the etymology of Herodotus seems to be correct' (Sayce, *Herod.* 1883).

In addition to the passages already mentioned two other lines in Aristophanes which are reminiscent of the *Prometheus Bound* may be noted :

The first line of the address to the Sausage-seller in the *Knights* above quoted, *ὦ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις φανεὶς μέγιστον ὠφέλημα*, is presumably taken from Io's address to Prometheus, *ὦ κοινὸν ὠφέλημα θνατοῖσι φανείς* (631) ; and in the same play the reply of the Sausage-seller, *τὸ μὲν νόημα τῆς θεοῦ, τὸ δὲ κλέμμ' ἐμόν* (1203), is evidently a parody of the reply of Prometheus to Io's question as to who bound him to the rock—*βούλευμα μὲν τὸ Δῖον, Ἡφαίστου δὲ χείρ* (637).

Note.—In the foregoing chapter I have made no mention of Süvern's theory, which was on somewhat similar lines, because I was led to my theory as to the meaning of the *Birds* solely by the conclusions as to the meaning of the *Prometheus Bound* which were suggested to me in the course of the effort to put it into an English dress, and I was not aware at that time of the existence of Süvern's theory. His theory broke down mainly owing to his identification of the 'gods' with the Peloponnesians, an interpretation which could not be sustained. It was made public in Germany in 1827, and the Essay was translated into English by W. R. Hamilton in 1835 (John Murray).

CHAPTER VI

Other plays of Aristophanes: *Acharnians, Knights, Wasps, Peace.*

THAT the *Birds* of Aristophanes has a definite political meaning, and is not an aimless extravaganza, is seen still more clearly from an examination of the other extant plays. They are eleven in all out of a reputed total of about fifty, and with the exception of the latest play, the *Plutus*, which is in the nature of a social allegory, every one of them has a purpose connected with the history of the times. It is reasonable therefore to ask why the *Birds* should be an exception, especially from those who, while asserting that the play has no political significance, are yet unable to tell us what it does mean.

The date of the birth of Aristophanes is not certainly known, but it appears that he came on the stage at a very early age, and at first, and for some time after, wrote under the names of other writers.[1] He professes, through the Chorus, that he did this through modesty, and 'because he thought the comic poet's art (κωμῳδοδιδασκαλίαν) to be the most difficult task of all; for that, after many had courted her, she had granted favours to few; and because he long since perceived that you were in nature changing with the year, and betrayed the former poets as soon as they grew old.'[2] But it seems probable that the real reason was the great personal risk which a writer of his views and aims would incur in the Athens of that time. I do not think that sufficient weight has been given to this consideration.

His first play is said to have appeared (under the name of another) in 427 B.C., the year after the death of Pericles

[1] See Parabasis of *Knights* and *Wasps*.

[2] *Knights*, 515-519.

and the fifth year of the Peloponnesian War. The leading men at Athens were Nicias and Cleon, the former being the first general and the representative man of the higher classes, the latter the 'demagogue' and at that time the most powerful man, politically, in the city. In the following year appeared the *Babylonians*, of which (though it has not come down to us) we know that the character was political. In it the subject allies were represented as barbarian slaves employed to grind in a mill, and it was a protest against the oppressive and impolitic proceedings of Cleon and the popular party in this connection. Exactions for the purpose of the tribute from the richer classes in the island states, blackmailing of individuals among them by informers, and plundering of them through decisions of the popular courts at Athens, to which they were obliged by Athenian law to have recourse, are among the subjects of a political character alluded to in the extant plays.

The *Acharnians*, which comes next (425 B.C.), is a strong appeal, under the exuberant wit, for putting an end to hostilities with Sparta, with the yearly ravaging of Attica which they involved. Incensed with his attacks Cleon had prosecuted the poet before the Council on a charge, apparently, of ridiculing the city and insulting the democracy, and in some way had tried to muzzle him.[1] He defends himself, and maintains that, so far from that, he deserves well of the citizens for 'putting an end to their being cajoled by strangers and delighting in being flattered.' 'Never, therefore,' he says, 'give up your poet, as he will represent in his comedies what is right (*ὡς κωμῳδήσει τὰ δίκαια*) . . . not by flattery, nor by bribes and cheating . . . but by teaching you what is best.'[2] In this the real Aristophanes speaks. The low standard of some of his appeal to the populace in the conduct of plot and dialogue is partly the measure of their own moral sense, partly the customary furniture of the old comedy, and partly (in certain passages undoubtedly) an expedient for self-protection.

[1] *Acharn.* 377 *sq.*, 502, 630 *sq.*
[2] *Ibid.* 655-658.

Whether, however, the writing seemed to him or to them as indecent in some passages as it seems to us, may well be doubted. It must be remembered that they were accustomed to indecent symbolism in public in their religious ritual and other forms which had come down to them from the past.

The next is the *Knights* (424 B.C.), which is politics from beginning to end. The courage of the author is shown by the fact that he here for the first time comes forward in his own name, though the play entirely centres round Cleon, represented as the 'Paphlagonian,' a tanner, and steward to 'Demos.' The plot is the rivalry of the demagogues for the favour of the people, in the course of which Cleon is outdone by a Sausage-seller, who, when he has won, adopts a new policy, and 'boils down' Demos, who becomes thereby rejuvenated and reformed. The closing scene represents, like the *Birds*, the poet's cherished dream of a reversion to earlier political conditions, such as prevailed before the lower classes had obtained control of affairs. Thus:

CHORUS (*to* AGORACRITUS, *till then a Sausage-seller*). O thou light for sacred Athens and succourer of the islands, with what good news have you come, at which we should fill the streets with the steam of sacrifice?

AGOR. I have boiled down your Demos, and made him beautiful from being ugly.

CHOR. Why, where is he now, O inventor of wonderful devices.

AGOR. He is dwelling in the violet-crowned, the old-time Athens.

CHOR. Would we could see him. What sort of dress has he? What sort of person has he become?

AGOR. Such as when he used to mess with Aristides and Miltiades in olden time. But you shall see him, for now there is a noise of the Prophylaea being opened. Cheer now the appearance of the ancient Athens, wondrous and much sung of, where the illustrious Demos dwells.

CHOR. O sleek, and violet-crowned, and much-envied Athens! Show to us the monarch of Greece and of this land.

AGOR. Lo! there he is for you to behold, wearing the cicada, splendid in the olden garb, not smelling of voting-shells, but of peace, anointed with myrrh.

CHOR. Hail thou king of the Grecians! . . .

DEMOS. O dearest of men, come hither, Agoracritus! How much good you have done me by boiling me down.

. . . .

DEMOS. Happy man, now I am reinstated in my pristine constitution (μακάριος ἐς τ' ἀρχαῖα δὴ καθίσταμαι).

AGOR. You will say so when I give you the thirty years' treaties. Come hither, Treaties (αἱ Σπονδαί), quickly.

DEMOS. O Zeus much-honoured, how beautiful! . . . How in the world did you get them?

AGOR. Did not the Paphlagonian keep them hidden away within, that you might not get them? Now therefore I hand them over to you, to take with you into the country.

DEMOS. But tell me what mischief will you do to the Paphlagonian who did this.

AGOR. Nothing much, except that he shall follow my trade. He shall have the exclusive sale of sausages at the gates, mixing dogs' with asses' flesh; and when he is drunk he shall slang with the women of the town, and drink the dirty water from the baths.

Demos. You have well devised what he deserves. . . . And let some one carry him out to exercise his trade, that the foreigners (ξένοι) whom he maltreated may behold him. (1318 *sq.*)

This is strong meat in the way of politics before a popular audience with sovereign powers, considering that Cleon was their recognised leader, and that only the year before he had 'brought off' the great stroke, with the assistance of Demosthenes, of capturing the Spartans who were cut off in Sphacteria, an event which Thucydides says 'of all the events of the war was the one which caused most surprise in Greece.' In the same year he had probably also doubled the tribute and raised the pay for service in the popular courts from one obol a day, as granted by Pericles, to three obols. But it is fairly clear that, though the 'demos' made use of Cleon in their own interests, and were much under the influence of his rhetoric, which combined violence

with racy personalities, they did not respect him, and were ready to enjoy a laugh at his expense.

The line about Athens in the foregoing scene, ‘O sleek and violet-crowned,’ etc., which in the original is *ὦ ταὶ λιπαραὶ καὶ ἰοστέφανοι καὶ ἀριζήλωτοι Ἀθῆναι,* is well known in an English rendering, which is more pretty than correct as a representation of the original:

> ‘O rich and renowned, and with violets crowned,
> O Athens, the envied of nations.’

The line (in the English form) is quoted by Professor Bury in his *History*, in connection with a discussion on the foreign policy of Cleon, and he remarks that ‘the poet who was inspired to write it cannot have been altogether out of sympathy with those who strove to maintain the imperial position of his country,’ that is, with Cleon and the other democratic leaders. But the Athens of this scene is the old-time Athens, governed by men with different ideas. Also the line is, in a sense, ironical. One of Cleon's ‘oracles’ earlier in the play is that Demos ‘is to rule over every country crowned with roses’ (966); and later the Chorus says to him, ‘O Demos, you possess a fine sovereignty, when all men dread you as a despot (*ὥσπερ ἄνδρα τύραννον*); yet you are easily led by the nose, and you love being flattered’ (1111 *sq.*). In the play of the previous year Aristophanes, as we have seen, had said that he deserved well of the people in exposing the flatteries of strangers by which they were cajoled, and he adds: ‘And formerly the ambassadors from the cities, with intent to cajole you, used first to call you “violet-crowned” [1] . . . and as often as any one soft-sawdered you by calling you “sleek Athens” (*λιπαρὰς Ἀθήνας*), he used to get all he wanted through the “sleekness,” for having attached to you the glory of an anchovy.’ [2] The line under discussion clearly contains an allusion to this point, which would be remembered by the audience, and they would see at once that the

[1] An epithet said to have been given to Athens by Pindar.

[2] *Acharn.* 636 *sq.*

poet meant that the Athens which deserved those titles was the city of the past, when it was led by men of position.

Oppression of the wealthier classes, to find money for the 'demos':

CLEON (*to the audience*). Veteran heliasts, clansmen of the three obols, whom I feed by bawling, right or wrong, come to my rescue, since I am beaten by conspirators.

CHORUS. With justice, since you devour the public goods before they are distributed by lot, and you press and squeeze those who are under account, to see which of them is green, or ripe, or not yet ripe; and if you perceive any one of them to be an easy-going man and a gaper,[1] you drag him back from the Chersonese[2] and . . . throw him and fall upon him. You observe, too, which of the citizens is a simpleton, rich and no rascal, and afraid of meddling in politics. (255 *sq.*)

. . . .

CLEON. How can there be a citizen, O Demos, who loves you more than I do, who from the first, when I was a councillor, collected very much money for the treasury by torturing some, strangling others, and begging of others, caring nothing for any individual provided I gratified you? (773 *sq.*)

. . . .

CLEON. At all events I will tend and nourish him [Demos], finding out by fair means or foul whence he shall continue to get his three obols. (799.)

. . . .

CHORUS. Have you [Cleon] not from the very first displayed impudence, in reliance on which you drain the wealthy ones among the foreigners, being the first to do this? (322 *sq.*)

The Sausage-seller relates how he brought news to the Council that anchovies were cheaper than they had ever been since the beginning of the war. Whereupon Cleon, not to be outdone, had made a proposal 'that on the occasion of the happy events which have been announced to us, we sacrifice a hundred oxen to the goddess for the good news.' But the Sausage-seller 'overshot him with two hundred oxen, and advised to make a vow to sacrifice

[1] *κεχηνότα*; cf. *Birds*, 165, *μὴ περιπέτεσθε πανταχῇ κεχηνότες.*

[2] *I.e.* where he had retired for a quiet life.

a thousand goats to Artemis on the morrow, if sprats went at a hundred for the obol' (642 *sq.*). The point of this is that under Pericles the number of public festivals had been greatly increased, only a small portion of the victims being used for the sacrifice, and the rest being eaten by the people. The skins were sold and the money realised went to a public fund. The cost of these entertainments fell on the richer citizens.

The dog Cerberus, who will 'lick clean your plates and islands'—of Cleon (1034).

In the year 422 B.C. (tenth of the war) the *Wasps* was performed. The 'Wasps' are the dicasts of Athens, represented as sharp, suspicious, irritable old men, who spend their whole time in the courts, and take pleasure in condemning people. Turning Philocleon (a partisan of Cleon) by his son Bdelycleon (the opposite) from a dicast into a gentleman of leisure, is the subject of the play, which is extremely ludicrous in character, as well as of great historical interest. It also throws light on the *Birds*, because, like that play, the plot owes its origin to the weariness and disgust felt by the poet at the proceedings of the popular courts, and their effect on the character of the citizens and the management of affairs.

The son has grown so tired of his father's ways, that he resolves to prevent him getting out of his house to attend the courts. Every other means had failed, for the old man's thoughts flitted ever 'round the clepsydra.' He had even accused the cock of having been bribed 'by those under account' to wake him too late in the morning, and 'through fear that he might at some time find himself short of voting-pebbles, he kept a shingle in his house.' They had tried various cures, even 'purifying him with Corybantic rites.' But he 'rushed out with the kettle-drum, and burst into the new court and began to judicate.' Then they made him 'lie down for a night in the temple of Asclepius, but he appeared in the early dawn at the bar.' After that

they tried to keep him indoors, but he used to 'escape through the drains and the chimneys.' 'So now we have covered the whole house with nets, and are keeping guard all round it. Now the name of the old man is Philocleon—that it is by Jove—but of his son here, Bdelycleon, having bean-fed and haughty manners' (Speech of the slave Xanthias, 85 *sq.*).

Philocleon now attempts an escape, and failing in one way, comes out, like Ulysses, under the belly of his ass. He is discovered, and being asked who he is, of course replies, Οὖτις (Nobody).

It is now early dawn, and the Chorus of old dicasts (the 'Wasps') arrive with a lamp, to rouse up their fellow-dicast for the day's work. They urge each other to hasten, 'since it is now the turn of Laches, and they all say that he has a hive of money. Therefore yesterday Cleon, our guardian, told us to be there in good time, with provision of three days' bitter anger against him, to punish him for his misdeeds.' (240-244.)

The allusion here is to the harsh treatment which the Assembly and the courts used to mete out to the generals who disappointed their expectations. Laches appears to have been called to account by Cleon for taking bribes in Sicily.

On the refusal of Bdelycleon to let his father out, the Chorus exclaims, 'Is it not then evident to the poor that "tyranny" is secretly stealing upon us?' Whereupon Bdelycleon suggests whether it would not be possible, 'without fighting and clamour, to join in a conference and a reconciliation.' 'A conference with thee,' replies the Chorus, 'thou hater of the demos, and lover of absolutism, and associator with Brasidas, and wearer of moustaches?' The Chorus reiterates the catchword of 'tyranny,' and he rejoins: 'How everything with you is "tyranny" and "conspirators," whatever be the accusation, great or small. It is fifty years since I even heard the name of a tyranny, and yet it is now going cheaper in the market-place than salt fish' (463-490). He then tells his father that he is a

slave, while he fancies he rules; 'for tell us, father, what honour you have in plundering Greece' (520). They now agree to debate the question, with the Chorus as arbitrators. Philocleon asks for a sword, which he 'can fall upon if he is overcome in argument,' which is evidently an allusion to the suicide of Paches, the general, who, according to Plutarch, fell on his sword before the dicasts.

Philocleon begins, and he undertakes to demonstrate that the dominion of the dicasts is inferior to no sovereignty (βασιλείαν): 'For what creature at the present time is more fortunate or blessed, or more luxurious or feared, than a dicast, especially an old one?' He describes the 'supplicators,' fellows of huge size who wait for his approach, 'put their hand, which has robbed the public funds, gently on me, and bowing low, say in a piteous voice—"Pity me, father, I beseech you, if ever you yourself stole anything when holding any office, or on service, when making purchases for the mess."' Then in the court, some lament their poverty, some tell us stories, others make jokes, 'that I may laugh and lay aside my wrath. And if we should not be won by these means, he drags in his little children by the hand, his daughters and his sons, while I listen. And they bend down their heads together and bleat; and then their father, trembling, supplicates me as a god to acquit him for their sakes.[1] . . . Is not this a mighty dominion and derision of wealth?' And more in the same vein, including the protection of Cleon, and the three obols. (548 *sq.*)

There are some lines at the conclusion of this demonstration of the dicast Philocleon which have a very important bearing on the view which I seek to establish, that the 'Zeus' of the *Birds* is the sovereign Demos of Athens:

'Do I not then hold a great dominion (ἀρχήν), and in no way inferior to that of Zeus, who am called by the same title as

[1] Compare with this passage the account of the trial of Socrates in Plato, where Socrates condemns these practices as bringing contempt on the law. They were, however, the inevitable result of the system under which the judges and jury were the same, and without professional knowledge or training.

Zeus ? At any rate if we make a clamour in court (θορυβήσωμεν[1]), those who pass by say, "O king Zeus, how the dicastery thunders !" And if I lighten, the rich and very dignified whistle and are in a horrid fright at me.' (620-628.)

The Chorus comment on this : 'We have never heard any one speak so clearly or sagaciously,' and is quite satisfied that their old friend will win.

It is now Bdelycleon's turn, and he begins : 'It is a difficult task, and one for a clever intellect, and greater than belongs to comedians, to treat an inveterate disease which has been bred in the State. But O our father, son of Cronus (Κρονίδη) . . .' This is a continuation of the 'Zeus' analogy of the previous speech. He then mentions the Athenian revenue from the tribute, and various tolls, rents, etc., and from confiscated property, which he puts at a total of 'nearly two thousand talents.' The number of dicasts 'being six thousand—and they do not as yet dwell in the country in large numbers,'[2] their yearly pay 'amounts, I take it, to 150 talents.' Not a tenth then comes to us as our fee, says Philocleon ; 'and pray what becomes of the rest of the money ?' It goes, replies Bdelycleon, 'to those who say "I will not betray the noisy crowd of the Athenians, but will fight always for the many" . . . and then these men take bribes from the cities in sums of fifty talents, threatening them in such terms, and terrifying them : "You shall give the tribute, or I will thunder and overturn your city." [The 'Zeus' analogy again.] But you are contented to gnaw at the offal of your dominion.'

He then mentions the presents received by these men, wine, carpets, cheese, cloaks, necklaces, drinking cups, etc., while the poor dicasts get nothing but their pay, and so on in the same vein. 'For they wish you to be poor ; and I will tell you for what purpose they do this, that you

[1] The word used by Xenophon of the movement among the dicasts during the trial of Socrates, when he began to speak to them about the warning voice, τὸ δαιμόνιον.

[2] *I.e.* they were mostly townsmen. The same observation occurs, under allegory, in the *Birds*.

may know your domesticator, and then, when they hound you on against some of their enemies, that you may spring upon them ferociously. For if they wished to provide a livelihood for the people it would be easy. For there are a thousand cities which now pay us tribute; if one ordered each of these to maintain twenty men, twenty thousand of the commons would live on all dainties, and chaplets of every description, and beestings and beestings-pudding, enjoying things worthy of their land and of the trophy at Marathon.' Finally he says he is prepared to give his father all he asks 'except to drink pay-clerks' milk.' (650-724.)

The Chorus are convinced by these arguments, but Philocleon cannot bring himself to give up acting as a dicast, so his son arranges for him to hold a court in his own house. This pleases him, and, after ludicrous preparations, a prayer is offered that the exceeding harsh disposition of the father may be mitigated, and that he may be merciful and pity the defendants more than the plaintiffs, and cease from his peevishness. A case for hearing has been found, for 'did not Labes, the dog, just now rush past into the kitchen, and snatch up and devour a fresh Sicilian cheese?' It is accordingly brought on with the indictment: 'A dog of the Cydathenian tribe has indicted Labes, the Aexonian, for injustice, in that he devoured the Sicilian cheese alone. The penalty a collar of fig-tree.'[1] The mock trial suggests that Laches, who is evidently referred to, did, in the opinion of the author, receive bribes or commit some peculation, but that he was a brave and useful soldier, who lived a hard life, and should be treated indulgently accordingly. By a trick Philocleon is made to acquit the defendant while intending (according to his usual practice) to condemn him. He is so overwhelmed by his mistake that he has to be led indoors, his son consoling him with promises to take him out to dinner everywhere, and enable him to 'spend the rest of your life agreeably, and Hyperbolus shall not cheat you and laugh at you.' (725-1008.)

[1] An allusion to the sycophants, from σῦκον, a fig. In the prosecuting dog Cleon is intended.

The ' Parabasis ' follows in which the poet descants upon his services to the State, and his courage in attacking Cleon ; and he reproaches the audience for failing to give him the prize for his *Clouds* : ' Having found such an averter of evil and purifier of this land, you betrayed him last year, when he had sown with the newest ideas, which, through your not clearly understanding them, you rendered barren. And yet he swears by Dionysus that no one at any time ever heard better comic verses than those. . . . This, therefore, is a disgrace to you that you did not understand them at once. But our poet has been thought none the worse of for that among the discerning (τοῖσι σοφοῖς), because, in shooting past his rivals, he destroyed his chance of victory.' (1015-1050.)

This claim to have raised comedy is frequent with Aristophanes. It reveals that an Athenian audience was not so intellectual as some writers would have us suppose. The self-praise in which the poet indulges in these addresses to the audience has been the subject of comment. Something of the same kind is found in the poetry of Spenser, and in my book on that subject I suggested that an explanation was to be sought, to some extent, in the absence of advertisements and press reviews. I think this explanation applies also, to some extent, to the practice of Aristophanes.

The play concludes with some farcical scenes in which Philocleon is instructed, with dire results, in the arts of living the life of a man of fashion, and ends with his challenging all comers to dance a match with him in one of ' those old-fashioned dances with which Thespis used to contend for the prize.' The challenge is accepted by the ' sons of Carcinus,' who are represented by professional grotesques, and the play ends with a wild acrobatic performance in which the Chorus of Dicasts join in for the exit.

We come next to the *Peace*, which was performed at the Great Dionysia of March 421, within a month of the ' Peace of Nicias,' ten years from the outbreak of the war. Cleon

and Brasidas were both dead, having been killed at Amphipolis in the previous year, and there was a strong desire on both sides for peace. The unexpected capture of a body of Spartan citizens at Pylos in 425 had put Athens in an excellent position for making peace, but, instigated by Cleon, the Assembly had rejected the Lacedaemonian overtures, thinking that they could get better terms, and recover at least some of the positions on the Continent which they had lost some twenty years before, soon after they had acquired them. The fact was that the Athenians, though still supreme at sea, were, as I have said before, no match on land for the Dorian spear, and their successes in the Peloponnese and in Boeotia were due more to naval raids, sudden incursions, and the accidents of fortune, than to organised military power. The boast which Thucydides, perhaps not without a touch of irony, puts into the mouth of Pericles in the funeral oration, that they were able to beat their adversaries 'without laborious training,' whereas their adversaries were 'always undergoing it from early youth,'[1] was more gratifying to Athenian vanity than true in fact. They had overreached themselves, having overlooked Brasidas, who had marched from the Peloponnese through northern Greece into their dominions in Chalcidice and Thrace, and having been heavily defeated at Delium in a badly managed, or unfortunate, expedition against the Boeotians (424 B.C.). It is said that the Athenian land forces were permanently affected in morale by this defeat ;[2] probably also owing to loss of confidence in the administration under the new class of demagogues.[3] At any rate the Athenians had no substantial success hereafter, but only a period of decline, with occasional naval victories, until their fall as an imperial power in 404 B.C. For in the meantime Sparta and her allies acquired the means, which they had lacked through poverty, of waging prolonged warfare at sea, that is to say through Persian gold, as an offset to the resources derived by Athens from the tribute.

[1] Thuc. ii. 39.
[2] Xen. *Mem.* iii. 5.
[3] Cf. Thuc. v. 7 and 10.

At the time, however, when this play appeared there was no sign of a fatal issue for Athens, as her strength, though much reduced for the time being by the great plague of 430 B.C., was still unimpaired, and if it had not been for the terrible disaster which befell the Sicilian expedition in 413 B.C., she might well have held her own. Indeed, at the moment we are considering, it seems that the desire for peace was, if anything, stronger in Sparta than at Athens, owing mainly to the desire to recover the prisoners held as hostages since their capture in Sphacteria, and to a loss of confidence which that event and various raids on their coasts had inspired in the Spartan citizens. Since the Athenians had these men in their hands they had been immune from invasion. On the other hand, the number of cities which had revolted from them in Chalcidice under the influence and successes of Brasidas caused them great concern for their empire, and the death of Cleon gave the moderate men at Athens, headed by Nicias, who represented the traditional conservative policy of a good understanding with Sparta, as practised by the pre-Periclean statesmen such as Aristides and Cimon, their opportunity.[1] The peace which was concluded as the result of their efforts, shortly after the appearance of this play, was on the basis of the restoration of the places captured on both sides during the war and the liberation of prisoners. Owing to disputes which immediately arose the treaties were never effectively carried out, and war was soon resumed, but the play, which I now proceed to describe, shows how great, in the minds of many, were the expectations from peace at that time.

Trygaeus, a rustic small proprietor, who describes himself as 'a skilful vine-dresser, no sycophant or lover of affairs,' is so weary of the war that he forms a plan to ascend to heaven to remonstrate with Zeus on the destruction which he is bringing on the cities of Greece. He accomplishes the voyage on the back of a gigantic dung-beetle, which he has fed and trained for the purpose, but on his arrival at the house of Zeus he is informed by Hermes that the gods

[1] For these facts see Thuc. v. 14-16.

'removed yesterday' to a higher region, 'in order that they might no longer see you fighting, or hear anything when you supplicate them.' In their place they had left 'War,' to whom they had delivered up the Greeks, to do with them as he pleased. They had done this through anger, 'because you chose to remain at war when the other side (*ἐκείνων*) were often ready to make peace.' 'On account of this I know not if you will ever see Peace again.' TRY. 'Whither then has she gone?' HERM. 'War has cast her into a deep cave.' (1-223.)

'War' now comes out with a huge mortar, in which he is preparing to pound the cities of Greece. The command of rhythm by Aristophanes, in producing striking effects, even with the language of comedy, is well shown in the opening lines spoken by 'War':

> ΠΟΛ. *ἰὼ βροτοὶ βροτοὶ βροτοὶ πολυτλήμονες,*
> *ὡς αὐτίκα μάλα τὰς γνάθους ἀλγήσετε.*
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *ἰὼ Πρασιαὶ*[1] *τρισάθλιαι καὶ πεντάκις*
> *καὶ πολλοδεκάκις, ὡς ἀπολεῖσθε τήμερον.*
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *ὦ Μέγαρα, Μέγαρ', κ.τ.λ.*

'War' then, with a blow, sends his boy 'Tumult' for a pestle, who replies that 'we have not got one, as it is only yesterday that we came in'; so he sends him to the Athenians for one, and he returns without one; 'for what-do-you-call-him, the pestle of the Athenians, is destroyed, the leather-seller who pounded up Greece.' He then tells him to get one from Lacedaemon, but he returns with the answer, that 'the pestle of the Lacedaemonians is also destroyed,' for they 'lent it to others against the Thrace-ward countries and then lost it.'[2] So he decides to go in and make one for himself. (236-288.)

[1] Prasiae was a town on the coast of Laconia, which the Athenians had captured and destroyed (Thuc. ii. 56). While saying this he throws leeks (*πράσον*) into his mortar.

[2] The allusion is to the death of Cleon and Brasidas at Amphipolis in the previous year.

In the meantime Trygaeus concerts a plan with the Chorus of husbandmen for dragging 'Peace' out of the cave: 'Come, O ye husbandmen, merchants, artificers, labourers, foreign residents, strangers and islanders, come hither, ye people all, as quickly as possible with shovels, crowbars, and ropes.' The speech expresses the Pan-Hellenic feeling of the poet, and it is again expressed in the line of the Chorus:

ὦ Πανέλληνες, βοηθήσωμεν εἴπερ πώποτε.[1]

Trygaeus warns the Chorus not to make too much noise, lest they wake 'the Cerberus below' (Cleon), and he prevent them, as he did when on earth, from dragging up the goddess; and they reply with a line taken from the defiance of Zeus by Prometheus in the play of Aeschylus:

ὡς κυκάτω καὶ πατείτω πάντα καὶ ταραττέτω. (320.)

If we get Peace, they say, 'you will no longer find me a severe or peevish dicast, nor harsh in disposition, as before, but you would see me mild and far more youthful.' They begin to move away the stones, but Hermes enters and warns them to desist, as 'Zeus denounced death against any one who should be found digging her out.' A scene follows which seems to be clearly intended as a parody of the 'Supplicators' before the dicasteries (see *Wasps*), in which they beg Hermes not to inform against them, and finally give him a gold cup (see *Wasps* again), which persuades him: 'Ah me! how compassionate I always am towards golden cups! Henceforth, sirs, the task is yours' (425). In this scene, as has been observed, there is a line of the Chorus suggestive of 'bleating' (385); also Trygaeus undertakes to show up a 'conspiracy,' which is being 'hatched against all the gods by the Moon and the knavish Sun, to betray Greece to the Barbarians.'[2] These are the

[1] Cf. *Lysistrata*, 574 *sq.*, 1112 *sq.*

[2] In order that they may thereby get the sacrifices, as the barbarians sacrificed not to Zeus, but to the Sun and Moon—a similar idea, it will be observed, to that exploited in the *Birds*.

very points alluded to in the description of the proceedings of the popular courts in the *Wasps*, and the 'Zeus' of this satire is, in my opinion, throughout intended for the ruling democracy, who, under the popular leadership, were always in favour of carrying on the war with Sparta.

In a very dramatic scene they then haul up Peace (together with Opora and Theoria), not, however, until they have got rid of every one from the ropes except the husbandmen. The occasion being free from risk, the poet names the useless or half-hearted, namely, the war party at Athens, the Boeotians, the Argives, who have been getting profit out of the war from both sides, some Lacedaemonians, the Megarians, who were too starved, and those Athenians who cared for nothing but trying law cases. (458-519.)

Some beautiful lines having been spoken about the delights of returning to the farms—'the figs and the myrtles, the new sweet wine, the violet-bed beside the well, and the olives which we long for' [1]—Hermes addresses the husbandmen in a set oration, which, from its position in the play, its tone, and the metre, is evidently intended as a serious political contribution. He explains the origin of the war, and how Peace was lost:

'Phidias first began the calamity, having fared ill; and then Pericles, fearing lest he should share his fate, dreading your disposition and inquisitorial way, before he suffered any calamity himself, with his own hands set the city in a flame, having thrown in a little spark of a Megarian decree, which blew up so great a war, that all the Greeks, both here and there [*i.e.* in the Peloponnese] shed tears by reason of the smoke . . . and this goddess disappeared.

TRY. By Apollo, I had not learned this from any one, nor had I heard how Phidias was connected with her.

CHO. Nor I, till now. On this account then she is fair of feature, because she is a connection of his. Certainly many things escape our observation.

HERM. And then, when the cities which you ruled over perceived that you were incensed against each other and showing

[1] Cf. Thuc. ii. 14-16.

your teeth, through fear of the tribute they contrived all manner of stratagems against you, and gained over the chief men of the Lacedaemonians with money. And they, since they were sordidly greedy of gain, and treacherous under the mask of hospitality, shamefully rejected this goddess and took up war. . . .

And then also, when the labouring population flocked together into the city from the fields, they did not perceive that they were being sold in the same way, but . . . they looked to the orators; and they well knowing that the poor were weak and in want of victuals, drove away this goddess with two-pronged clamours . . . and they used to harass the substantial and rich among the allies, attaching to each the imputation of being pro-Brasidas. And then you used to worry him like little dogs; for the city, pale and sitting in terror, was glad to devour whatever calumnies any one threw to her. But they, the foreigners, seeing the blows with which they were beaten, stopped with gold the mouths of those who did this, so as to make those men rich, while Greece was impoverished without your perceiving it. Now the tanner was the person who did this.'

He concludes with an allusion to their rejection of peace after the affair of Pylos, to which Trygaeus replies: 'We erred in this; but pardon us, for our minds at that time were wrapped up in the hides.'[1] (605-669.)

Trygaeus (whose beetle has conveniently disappeared) now descends to earth with the help of the goddesses, and the opportunity is taken to speak the Parabasis, which is a curious laudation by the poet of his own efforts. In it he claims to have been 'the best and most celebrated of all comic poets' (*κωμῳδιδάσκαλος*), in that he had put an end to 'low buffooneries, and made our art dignified.'

The rest of the play is concerned with the celebration of the return of Peace and her marriage to Trygaeus. It contains (among the usual coarse material with which these plays conclude and to which I have already alluded) an attractive description of country life, and some noteworthy exhortations by the poet against a war which he regarded as fratricidal (1098), as, for instance, the hope of the Chorus

[1] *I.e.* of the tanner, Cleon.

that 'we may be as lambs towards each other, and far milder towards the allies' (935), and the prayer to Peace by Trygaeus: 'And put a stop to our over-nice suspicions with which we chatter against each other; and blend us Greeks again, as from the beginning, with the balsam of friendship, and temper our minds with a milder fellow-feeling' (993-999). It also contains a contemptuous attack on the soothsayers, who deluded the people.

CHAPTER VII

The Theory applied to the History.

Let us endeavour now to see how far this theory of the meaning of the *Birds* throws light on the very guarded narrative of Thucydides as to the operations of the generals in Sicily up to the time of the recall of Alcibiades. In introducing the speech of Alcibiades in opposition to that of Nicias, the historian anticipates events in the following remarks about the former:

'He was hoping that he might be the conqueror of Sicily and Carthage; and that success would repair his private fortunes, and gain him money as well as glory. He had a great position among the citizens and was devoted to horse-racing and other pleasures which outran his means. And in the end his wild courses went far to ruin the Athenian state. For the people feared the extremes to which he carried his lawless self-indulgence, and the far-reaching purposes which animated him in all his actions. They thought that he was aiming at a tyranny and set themselves against him. And therefore, although his talents as a military commander were unrivalled, they entrusted the administration of the war to others, because they personally objected to his private life; and so they speedily shipwrecked the state.' [1]

In the midst of the preparations occurred the mutilation of the Hermae. 'The Athenians took the matter greatly to heart—it seemed to them ominous of the fate of the expedition; and they ascribed it to conspirators who wanted to effect a revolution and to overthrow the democracy.' [2]

Certain metics and servants also gave information that 'the mysteries were frequently profaned by the celebration of them in private houses, and of this impiety they accused, among others, Alcibiades. A party who were jealous of his

[1] Thuc. vi. 15. [2] *Ibid.* 27.

influence over the people, which interfered with the permanent establishment of their own, thinking that if they could get rid of him they would be supreme, took up and exaggerated the charges against him, clamorously insisting that both the mutilation of the Hermae and the profanation of the mysteries were part of a conspiracy against the democracy, and that he was at the bottom of the whole affair.' [1] He demanded that he should be heard on these charges before sailing, but they secured the postponement of the trial with the intention of stirring up stronger feeling against him in his absence. 'So it was decided that Alcibiades should sail.' [2]

The orders to the generals were as follow: 'They were told to assist Egesta against Selinus; if this did not demand all their military strength they were empowered to restore the Leontines, and generally to further in such manner as they deemed best the Athenian interest in Sicily.' [3]

At Rhegium the generals held a council of war. Nicias was for 'sailing against Selinus, which was their main errand'; they would then 'pass along the coast before the eyes of the other cities and display the visible power of Athens . . . after this they would return home, unless a speedy way of relieving the Leontines or obtaining support from some of the other cities should unexpectedly present itself. But they should not throw away their own resources and imperil the safety of Athens.' [4]

Alcibiades urged 'that it would be a disgrace to have gone forth with so great an armament and to return without achieving anything.' They should send envoys to all the cities, negotiate with the Sicels, and 'first appeal to the Messenians, whose city being on the highway of traffic was the key of Sicily, and possessed a harbour from which the Athenian forces could most conveniently watch the enemy. Finally, when they had brought the cities over to them, and knew who would be on their side in the war, they should attack Selinus and Syracuse, unless the Seluntians would

[1] Thuc. vi. 28.
[2] *Ibid.* 29.
[3] *Ibid.* 8.
[4] *Ibid.* 47.

come to terms with the Egestaeans, and the Syracusans would permit the restoration of the Leontines.' [1]

'Lamachus was of opinion that they ought to sail direct to Syracuse and fight as soon as possible under the walls of the city, while the inhabitants were unprepared and consternation was at its height.' He was also of opinion that they should make Megara their naval station. 'The place was deserted and was not far distant from Syracuse either by land or by sea. Lamachus having thus spoken, nevertheless gave his own voice for the proposal of Alcibiades.' [2]

Alcibiades then sailed to Messene and proposed an alliance to the inhabitants. He failed to convince them at first and returned to Rhegium, but it appears that before his recall he had made further progress with them, because we read that 'when he was recalled and gave up his command, foreseeing that he would be an exile, he communicated to the Syracusan party at Messene the plot of which he was cognisant,' namely, to betray the city to the Athenians.[3]

An Athenian force of sixty ships now sailed to Naxos, where they were received, to Catana, where they were denied admission, to Syracuse, 'to see whether there was any fleet launched,' and thence back to Catana, where they managed to effect an entrance. They then sailed back to Rhegium, and with their entire force moved to Catana, where on their arrival they began to establish their camp. Rumours then reached them that the Camarinaeans would join them, and that the Syracusans were manning a navy, 'so they sailed with their whole force first to Syracuse, but they found that there was no fleet in preparation'; they then passed on to Camarina and found that the citizens would not receive them. 'So they sailed away without effecting their purpose. They then disembarked on a part of the Syracusan territory, which they ravaged. But a few Syracusan horse coming up killed some of their light-armed troops who were straggling. They then returned to Catana. There they found that the vessel *Salaminia* had

[1] Thuc. vi. 48. [2] *Ibid.* 49, 50. [3] *Ibid.* 74.

come from Athens to fetch Alcibiades, who had been put upon his trial by the State and was ordered home to defend himself. With him were summoned certain of his soldiers, who were accused, some of profaning the mysteries, others of mutilation of the Hermae.' [1]

Now Alcibiades, whose plan was followed, was evidently in command during these proceedings, and the dilatory nature of them, as well as the plan itself, suggest that there was some ulterior motive in the mind of the commander. The *Birds*, under the interpretation above given, suggests what this motive was, namely, not to obtain a victory for the democratic fleet until a sufficiently strong party had been secured in Sicily which could be used by Alcibiades and his party in the fleet for their own purposes. It seems, indeed, quite possible that reports of his dilatory proceedings reached Athens, and tended to excite further suspicion against him. They were engaged there in attempting to track down the authors of what they believed to be a conspiracy against the democracy,[2] and about this and the feeling against Alcibiades Thucydides relates as follows :

'The enemies of Alcibiades, who had attacked him before he sailed, continued their machinations, and popular feeling was deeply stirred against him. . . . It so happened that while the city was in this state of excitement a small Lacedaemonian force proceeded as far as the Isthmus, having something to do in Boeotia. They were supposed to have come, not in the interest of the Boeotians, but by a secret understanding with Alcibiades ; and the Athenians really believed that but for their own alacrity in arresting the accused persons the city would have been betrayed. For one whole night the people lay in arms in the temple of Theseus, which is within the walls. About this time too the friends of Alcibiades at Argos were suspected of conspiring against the Argive democracy, and accordingly the Argive hostages who had been deposited in the islands were at once given up by the Athenians to the vengeance of the Argive people. From every quarter suspicion had gathered

[1] Thuc. vi. 50-53.

[2] 'The whole affair seemed to them to indicate some conspiracy aiming at oligarchy or tyranny' (Thuc. vi. 60).

round Alcibiades, and the Athenian people were determined to have him tried and executed; so they sent the ship *Salaminia* to Sicily bearing a summons to him and to others against whom information had been given.' [1]

On the departure of Alcibiades from Sicily the two remaining generals turned their attention to Selinus and Egesta, which was the initial object of the expedition.

Henceforth Alcibiades devoted himself to pulling down the power of the ruling democratic party at Athens. Addressing the Spartan assembly after his flight, he said, 'There were demagogues, as there always have been, who led the people into evil ways, and it was they who drove me out. Whereas we [his family] were leaders of the state as a whole, and not of a part only; it was our view that all ought to combine in maintaining that form of government which had been inherited by us, and under which the city enjoyed the greatest freedom and glory.' [2]

After the disaster to the Athenian arms in Sicily, Alcibiades, who had powerfully contributed to it by his advice, fomented revolt among the Athenian allies; then, falling out with Sparta, he went over to Tissaphernes, who was in alliance with Sparta, and began to work on him in the Athenian interest. He was now preparing the way for his own return from exile. 'He knew that, if he did not destroy his country altogether, the time would come when he would persuade his countrymen to recall him; and he thought that his arguments would be most effectual if he were seen to be on intimate terms with Tissaphernes. And the result proved that he was right. The Athenian soldiers at Samos soon perceived that he had great influence with him, and he sent messages to the chief persons among them, whom he begged to remember him to all good men and true, and to let them know that he would be glad to return to his country and cast in his lot with them. He would at the same time make Tissaphernes their friend; but they must establish an oligarchy, and abolish the villainous democracy which had driven him out. Partly

[1] Thuc. vi. 61. [2] *Ibid.* 89.

moved by these messages, but still more of their own inclination, the trierarchs and leading Athenians at Samos were now eager to overthrow the democracy.'[1]

The long-standing conspiracy in the 'clubs' against the rule of the democratic party, of which the *Birds* affords evidence, now begins to take effect, and the result followed in the revolution at Athens of 411 B.C. by which the oligarchical government of the 'Four Hundred' was established. This was succeeded by that of the 'Five Thousand,' a 'polity,' or constitution, under which representation was once more given to the propertied class. Pay for offices was abolished. 'This government,' writes Thucydides, 'during its early days was the best which the Athenians ever enjoyed within my memory. Oligarchy and Democracy were duly attempered. And thus after the miserable state into which she had fallen, the city was again able to raise her head.'[2] In the meantime Alcibiades, who favoured the moderate constitution, had got himself accepted by the democratic fleet at Samos, and showed his skill as a military leader by defeating the Peloponnesian fleet at Cyzicus (410 B.C.). This success led to the restoration of the democracy with the unlimited franchise, the leader of the Assembly being Cleophon. And now Alcibiades, after successful operations in the Hellespont, returned to Athens (407 B.C.). He there had an extraordinary welcome. 'Yet the joy of the citizens was mingled with tears when they thought of their past disasters.'[3] Some said 'he had been the victim of plots, hatched in the brains of people less able than himself'; others, that he was 'the master mischief maker.'[4] But the power of his personality asserted itself as usual, and Plutarch relates: 'He had so won the affections of the poor and the lower orders that they were strangely desirous of living under his rule. Many even besought him to put down his personal enemies, so that, having become superior to their envy, and having swept away decrees, and laws and other pernicious nonsense, he might carry on

[1] Thuc. viii. 47.
[2] *Ibid.* 97.
[3] Plut. *Alc.* 32.
[4] Xen. *Hellen.* I. i. 4.

the government without fear of the sycophants. What his own views about making himself despot of Athens may have been we cannot tell; but the most influential of the citizens were so alarmed at this that they hurried him away as quickly as possible to sea, voting whatever measures he pleased, and allowing him to choose his own colleagues.' [1]

Lysander had now the command of the Peloponnesian fleet and Cyrus was supplying him with money. Alcibiades, who had difficulties in the way of supplies, was less successful against him than the Athenians expected, and a defeat of one of his lieutenants, when he was himself absent in search of means to pay his troops, brought matters to a head. Plutarch says that 'Thrasyllus, a bitter personal enemy of Alcibiades, now set sail for Athens to accuse him, and to exasperate his enemies in the city against him. He made a speech to the people, representing that Alcibiades had ruined their affairs and lost their ships by insolently abusing his authority and entrusting the command, during his own absence, to men who owed their influence with him to deep drinking and sailors' yarns, and that he securely traversed the provinces to raise money, indulging in drunken debauches with Ionian courtesans, while the enemy's fleet was riding close to his own. He was also blamed for the construction of certain forts in Thrace, near Bisanthe, which he destined as a place of refuge for himself, as if he could not or would not live in his native city. The Athenians were so wrought upon by these charges against Alcibiades that they elected other generals to supersede him, thus showing their anger and dislike for him.' [2] On learning this, Alcibiades, 'who was moreover in bad odour in the camp, sailed away with a single trireme to his private fortress in the Chersonese.' [3] He had evidently made up his mind that he could not, on any terms, live under the democracy.

Conon now took the chief command, and the battle of Arginusae was fought (406 B.C.), in which the Athenian fleet was victorious. The Spartans thereupon offered terms of

[1] Plut. *Alc.* 34, 35. [2] *Ibid.* 36, 37.
[3] Xen. *Hellen.* I. i. 5.

peace, which the Athenian Assembly, at the instance of the popular leader Cleophon, rejected. After the engagement there was a failure on the part of the generals, owing, as was alleged, to a storm, to rescue the survivors on wrecks and disabled ships. The eight generals (not including Conon) who were present were deposed by the home authorities and put on their trial. Two of them kept away, and the other six were condemned by a single vote of the Assembly and executed. One of the generals is said to have been actually on a sinking ship, and to have been rescued. Much mystery attaches to these proceedings, and much has been written about them. It seems probable, however, that the explanation lies in the same cause as in the case of the mutilation of the Hermae, namely, in the suspicion of oligarchical conspiracy. As time went on the democracy had got rid of numbers of men of position, and had so alienated the sympathies of the educated class that they had no one on whom they could depend in emergency. As a result they were a prey to apprehension. On the present occasion there seems to have been a sudden access of suspicion that the generals, who were, some of them at any rate, men of standing, had let a number of the fleet drown with a view, as I suggest, to getting rid of members of the democratic party. The words used by Euryptolemus in pleading for the life of Pericles and Diomedon before the Assembly show that some such plot was suspected. 'In what I urge there is no trap or plot whereby you can be deceived by me or any other man'; and the two laws under which, alternatively, he begged that they should have a fair trial were both concerned with treason.[1]

Having made a clean sweep of these commanders the Athenians were left, no doubt, with inferior material, and the disaster at Aegospotami in the following year gives evidence of this. The suggestion that there was treachery cannot be substantiated; the narrative of Xenophon shows

[1] The decree of Cannonus referring to men 'who are guilty of treason against the people of Athens,' and 'that other law which is directed against robbers of temples and betrayers of their country' (Xen. *Hellen.* I. i. 7).

sufficiently that the loss of the fleet was due to incompetence in the commanders and lack of discipline among the men. Alcibiades, who came down to the shore on which the fleet was drawn up, made an effort to save them, but was refused a hearing.

In contemplating the failings of the Athenian democracy we must remember that they were pioneers in the experiment of free government, and that, with all their cleverness, they were primitive people. Attempts to draw analogies between the institutions which they evolved and those of modern western states are for the most part misleading. The gulf which lay between the few and the many, social, philosophical, and religious, was too widely fixed to render compromise possible, and compromise is of the essence of modern life. Even with Socrates the condition of a high standard of conduct was knowledge, of which the many are, for the most part, incapable. However we may interpret them, we have other oracles. If any political lesson may be drawn from imperial Athens, it lies perhaps in the failure of the ruling democracy to govern with impartiality, and in their alienation, with fatal results to themselves, of the educated and upper-class element. But human nature and spiritual guidance being what they were, could anything different be expected?

INDEX

[The general sequence of events will be found under 'Athens,' and of social and political movements under 'Athenians.']

AESCHYLUS, on the accountability of officers of state, 8; perhaps a pupil of Lasus of Hermione, 10; the theme of the *Persae*, 18 *n.*; the political character of his plays and the quality of his writing, 21, 46; alludes to treason, 23; his efforts to revive military discipline, 26, 41; his admiration of the Spartans, 29; the historical value of his plays, 32; an admirer of Aristides, 35, 40-44; probably involved in the fall of Aristides, 44; his unpopularity at Athens, 46-47, 98; his politics, 46; probable allusion to, in the *Birds*, 98.

Alcibiades, 1, 2, 3, 4, 22 *n.*, 25, 34, 78-82, 88, 100, 124-132.

Alcmaeonid family, the, 13, 22; accused of treachery at Marathon, 21; Alcibiades a member of, 78; also Cleisthenes, 13, 22; also Pericles, 22.

Antiphon, description of, by Thucydides, 12.

Areopagus, the Council of the, 6, 7, 14, 15, 37, 38, 50, 54, 58, 64, 95.

Aristides, his dread of the new naval policy, 26, 36; his political principles, 33, 34, 36; his part in the confederacy of Delos, 33; his integrity, 34, 43, 44; representative of the archaic age, 35; rivalry with Themistocles, 35-37; new departure in his policy, 36-39; accused of peculation, 39, 40; his fall and death, 39-41, 43; alluded to by Aeschylus, 40-44.

Aristophanes, the political character of his plays, 4, 105; allusions to Marathon and Salamis, 24; allusions to the 'moderate' party, 88, 92, 93, 95, 99, 101; his respect for religion, 94, 95; not in favour of oligarchy, 95, 99; an earnest politician, 101; date of birth and early writings, 105; *Babylonians*, 106; *Acharnians*, 106; *Knights*, 107; *Wasps*, 111; *Peace*, 116; the low standard of some of his appeal, 106, 122; his Pan-Hellenic feeling, 120-123.

Aristotle, on the constitution of Athens, 5, 14, 37.

Art, among the Athenians, 11, 46 *n.*, 63, 72 *n.*, 102 *n.*

Assembly, the, 6, 7, 8, 14, 15, 58, 74, 131.

Athenians, the, excitement of, at the mutilation of the 'Hermae,' 2; and the Sicilian expedition, 3, 4; the nature and position of the democracy, 5, 29, 37-40, 50, 55-63, 66, 71, 82-86; condition of, in the time of Solon, 6; addicted to peculation, 7; effect on, of the payment for service in the popular courts, 8, 55-62; early simplicity of, 9; their ideas of deity, 10 *n.*, 11 *n.*, 62, 63; the nature of their genius and characteristics, 11; professors of practical political wisdom among, 12, 55; legislation among, 15 *n.*; the dress of the upper classes in the archaic period, 24, 25; the 'Laconising' tendency of the upper classes, 25, 26, 29, 50; their inferiority to the Spartans on land, 25, 28, 29, 52, 80, 117; the sycophants, 40, 59, 60, 85, 96, 106, 115, 130; their severity to unsuccessful commanders of expeditions, 40, 67, 75, 77, 113; their tendency to become unbearable in prosperity, 41, 77; the view that they were 'artistic' (*see* Art); conditions of society, 55-58; the nature of the franchise, 56; conditions of ancient states

compared with modern, 57, 58; religious conservatism of, 63; their standard of education, 72, 91, 116; the 'Clubs,' 87, 91, 129; suggested cause of the failure of the democracy, 132.

Athens, early constitution of, 5, 6, 7; constitution of Cleisthenes, 6 *n.*, 13, 14; ancient rival parties, the 'Plain,' the 'Shore,' and the 'Hill,' 8, 9, 13, 98; the period of the 'tyranny,' 9; the 'tyranny' put down by the Spartans, who endeavour to establish an oligarchy, 15; negotiations with Persia, 16, 17; the Spartan allies defeated in the north, 16; assists Ionians against Persia, 17; incurs defeat and heavy losses, 19, 20; battle of Marathon, 21, 24, 27; battle of Salamis, 24, 27, 37; change of policy after Salamis, 25, 37; the fleet and the army, 26; converted from a land to a sea power and tributary empire, 26, 29-31; battle of Plataea, 27, 28; duration and quality of Athenian empire, 30; the 'Fifty years,' 32; the confederacy of Delos, 33; the tendency of men of outstanding ability to court the populace with a view to a dictatorship, 34, 124, 129; the 'Long Walls,' 35, 51, 53; the subject allies, 36, 38, 60, 61, 73, 85, 90, 106, 114, 115; the effect of the battles of Salamis and Plataea on the constitution, 37-39; disaster to the Egyptian expedition, 51; defeat at Tanagra, 51, 52; becomes entirely a maritime power, 53; thirty years' peace with Sparta, 53; Pericles becomes the popular leader, 54; the tribute and revenues, 62, 74, 85, 114; improvements of the city by Cimon, 54 *n.*; the public buildings of Pericles, 62; the peace of Nicias, 76, 78, 116, 118; cruel decrees against revolted allies, 60 *n.*, 71, 73, 78, 81; the position of the sovereign democracy before the Sicilian expedition, 81; the reduction of Melos, 81; figuratively described by Aristophanes, 107-110; demoralisation of the army by defeats on land, 117; the 'four hundred,' 129; the 'five thousand,' 129; Arginusae, the trial of the generals, 131; Aegospotami, 131, 132.

Birds, the, purpose of, 2, 3, 4; first performance of, 3, 101; allusion in, to the old political parties, 9, 97-100; and the 'Clubs,' 87, 129; the 'gods,' 90, 94; 'men,' 90, 94; and Alcibiades, 101, 127; Süvern's theory of, 104 *n.*

Cimon, 14 *n.*, 34, 35, 36, 45, 48 *sq.*, 54 *n.*, 56, 61, 64.

Cleisthenes, constitution of, 6 *n.*, 13, 14, 33 *n.*; withdraws from Athens and returns, 16; perhaps ostracised, 22; perhaps suspected of aiming at 'tyranny,' 34; his constitution favoured later by the upper class, 50, 98 (*cf.* 6 *n.*).

Cleon, attacks Pericles, 67, 70; his career and qualities, 71-74; against peace with Sparta, 77, 120; his death, 78; attacks on, by Aristophanes, 106 *sq.*

'Clubs,' the, 87, 91, 129.

Comic stage, the, curtailment of freedom of political attack by, 4, 86.

Council, the, 6, 6 *n.*, 7, 14, 15, 38, 74.

Courts, the popular. *See* Dicasts.

Cronus, the age of, 10, 102, 114.

Dicasteries. *See* Dicasts.

Dicasts, establishment of, 7, 8; effect of the introduction of pay for, 8, 38, 55 *sq.*; the character of the popular courts, 8, 55, 58, 59, 85, 111 *sq.*; and the subject allies, 60, 84; one-sided views of historians as to, 66; allusions to, by Aristophanes, 87, 88, 93, 110-116.

Draco, the constitution of, 5.

Eupatrids, 6, 69 *n.*, 92.

Harmodius and Aristogeiton, 13.

Heliasts. *See* Dicasts.

Hermae, mutilation of the, 1, 100, 124, 125.

Hipparchus, 'tyrant,' 9, 10, 11, 13.

Hippias, 'tyrant,' 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 21.

MARATHON, battle of, 16, 21, 22, 24, 25, 27.
Miletus, revolt and destruction of, 17-19; the drama on the subject by Phrynicus, 19, 20.

NICIAS, his fear of the people, 67, 74, 75; his qualities as a general, 67, 74; confidence of the Lacedaemonians in, 75, 76, 118; his patriotic attitude, 76, 83; the peace of, 76, 78, 118.

OSTRACISM, 14, 15.

PERICLES, his rule described by Thucydides, 1; suspected of aiming at a 'tyranny,' 34, 69 *n.*; compared with Cimon, 49; introduces pay for the dicasts, 38, 54, 55; one of the leaders of the popular movement against the Areopagus, 50, 54; brings a charge against Cimon, 50, 54; his career, 51, 54, 64; builds the 'Long Walls,' 53; concludes peace with Sparta, 53; concentrates on a naval policy, 53; uses the league funds to adorn Athens, 61-63; his fear of the people, 63; his powers of control, 64; reasons alleged for his going to war with Sparta, 65, 121, 122; charges against Aspasia, 65, and Anaxagoras, 65, and himself, 65, 66; attacked by Cleon, 67, 70; fined, 67 (*cf.* 40); his death, 68; his last words, 68 *n.*; the last of the old Attic leaders, 69; a conversation with Alcibiades, 78.
Persians, the, symbolism made use of by their rulers, 16, 18, 19.
Phidias, 62, 63, 65, 121.
Phrynicus, his 'Capture of Miletus,' 19; originator of the political drama, 20.
Pisistratus, becomes 'tyrant' of Athens, 9; his administration and policy, 9, 10, 11; his 'tyranny' described as the 'age of Cronus,' 10; referred to as a 'democrat,' 34.
Plataea, battle of, 27, 28, 32, 33, 39.
Prometheus Bound, the, theory as to its meaning, 4 (*cf.* Preface); an allusion in, to treason, 23; its bearing on the career of Aristides, 44; when and where written, 45; allusions to, by Aristophanes, 90, 92, 95, 97, 98, 99, 102-104.

RELIGION, early ideas of, at Athens, 10 *n.*, 11, 62; ancient, contrasted with modern, 58; dissatisfaction with, among the educated classes, 80, 95; indecent symbolism of, 107.

SALAMIS, battle of, 24, 25, 27, 37.
Sicilian expedition, 1, 3, 67, 82, 118, 124 *sq.*
Solon, his legislation, 5-8.
Sophists at Athens, 12, 80.
Sparta, endeavours to force oligarchical government on Athens, 16; intrigues with Hippias, 17; its military discipline, the 'Dorian spear,' 25, 28, 29, 80; its policy at Plataea, 28; its leadership renounced by Athens after the Persian invasion, 33; tendency of its citizens to insolence away from home, 34; defeats Athens at Tanagra, 51; the affair of Pylos, 76; peace of Nicias, 76, 78, 118; recovers its prestige at Mantinea, 80; becomes a naval power through Persian gold, 81, 117, 130.
Sycophants (common informers) at Athens, 40, 59, 60, 85, 96, 106, 115, 130.

THEMISTOCLES, advised by Mnesiphilus, 11; his naval policy, 29-32; his character and aims, 34, 35; his banishment, 34, 41; rivalry with Aristides, 35, 36, 37, 39; his policy of building the 'Long Walls,' 31, 32, 35, 53.

'ZEUS' analogy, the, applied to the sovereign democracy, 92, 94, 96, 97, 100, 101-104, 113, 114, 120, 121.

Printed by T. and A. Constable, Printers to His Majesty
at the Edinburgh University Press

RETURN TO → MAIN CIRCULATION

ALL BOOKS ARE SUBJECT TO RECALL
RENEW BOOKS BY CALLING 642-3405

DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

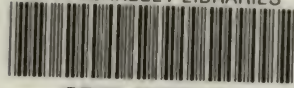
JUN 11 1996

RECEIVED
DEC 16 1996
CIRCULATION DEPT.

FORM NO. DD6

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
BERKELEY, CA 94720

YC 00332



437120

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY