II

THE DAWN

AFTER Homer, all are agreed, comes an age of darkness, and when we see the Greek world again, it is a new world with new interests and new problems. How it came into being as we find it, the Greeks explained in their stories of the Great Migrations—how the Dorians came into Greece, and how the Ionians moved over to Asia Minor. Modern archaeologists are re-writing the story of those centuries, with new data on the civilization of the Aegaean, its rise, its flourishing and its decline, and with new problems and strange discoveries as to the inland powers that dominated Asia Minor—the Hittites preëminently. Perhaps, suggests Mr. Hogarth,[1] it was not till that great empire weakened and broke up that the western coasts of Asia were open for settlers; but, he is cautious enough to say, "what exactly we are to understand by that Migration of the Ionians, when it began and when it ended, it is very difficult to say. Certainly it did not pass in one great horde. The landings in Asia probably went on for several generations", and he points out that Greek tradition hints at comparatively small parties, which did not always hit at once upon the spot where they would or could have their abiding city. But with the planting of these cities, the fights of the colonists with the Carians, their reasons for leaving Europe, we are hardly concerned. Let us take them as we find them, planted, as Herodotus emphasizes,[2] "in

[1] D. G. Hogarth, *Ionia and the East,* pp. 48; 103.
[2] Herodotus, i, 142.

places more favoured by skies and seasons than any country known to us". They planted their cities, how and when we hardly know; little by little like other colonies they grew in the unrecorded way familiar to students of colonial history. By the time when we really begin to know them, they are suffering from their success—they are overcrowded, the land is not sufficient for them, and the problems of trade loom up for them. There was trade landward and trade seaward. Smyrna's position gave the city the advantage of the Hermos valley, and it became a rival of Sardis beyond the mountains so long as it could control the pass; and hence came the wars which ended in the Lydian capture and destruction of Smyrna, perhaps about 585 B.C. Miletus in the same way was the seaport for trade with Celaenae and the upper Maeander region.[1] Samos had the advantages and disadvantages of being an island, and escaped in measure from the horrors of Cimmerian and other barbarian raiders.

But it is apparently not to trade but to land questions that we have first to turn. It is significant that in Samos the aristocrats, or nobles, or oligarchs, whichever name you prefer, were *Geomoroi,* men with a portion in the land. So far away as Sicily the same name for the same sort of class meets us in another colony of another stock and a later date—Syracuse. Land is the issue, because land is the source of food. The Homeric hero lived on flesh of bull and swine; the Athenian citizen at a later date on dried fish from the Black Sea, and fish locally caught and not always as fresh as he liked. Both wanted bread. In this middle period the major necessities of diet and life generally imply land—heat, meat and wheat mean woodland, pasture

[1] For Smyrna and Miletus see Sir W. M. Ramsay, *Historical Geography of Asia Minor,* pp. 61 and 58.

and arable field; cleanliness, light, fat in diet and gaiety involve olive-yard and vineyard. The birthrate—we have no statistics as to the birthrate; that must be admitted; but the abounding Greek expansion of several centuries is unintelligible without a high birthrate, so we must reckon it also as a factor. Cities then with limited land about them—limited physically by mountain and sea, and sometimes politically limited by neighbours great or small who would allow no expansion—and a high birthrate, the outcome is congestion, and hard living, and faction—with famine in the background. Long after this period the Persian Mardonius commented on Greek warfare—"they make war with utter want of counsel, wrongheadedly and senselessly. They find out the fairest and most level ground, descend into it and fight, so that the victors come off with great harm. Of the defeated I say nothing at all; they are blotted out." Yes, they fought so, but not quite wrongheadedly. That fair and level ground was their main hope of food, and if any enemy cut the corn and felled the trees there, it would be famine. They must fight there and fight to a finish, and hence came the Greek hoplite, not armed or trained for large manoeuvres, but to stand and fight for that small plain till his enemy was blotted out.

The narrow domain, the risk of plunder from neighbour and pirate—neighbour always, and pirate more especially in the early days—that is the story. When, later on, as Thucydides says,[1] navigation grew safer and surplus revenue accrued, and cities were built on the shore itself instead of inland and were walled, still there was this pressure of the food supply. But the growing safety of the sea suggested an outlet. Men from overseas spoke of lands not too full of people, lands that could easily be captured from sparse

[1] Thucydides, i, 7.

barbarians or even stray Greeks, good lands to cultivate and in a climate as fine as Ionia itself, or not so much worse, and Sicily and Southern Italy became as it were the America of that age. The earliest overseas settlements seem not preëminently designed for seaports or centres of trade. Chalcedon, "the city of the blind," was planted before Byzantion—a fact that hints it was not the incomparable port that was sought, nor empire, nor trade, but something simpler, good land for overcrowded farmers. And in time, as we saw already, the farmers' descendants were the aristocracy of the new place. Of course this must not be overpressed. Without navigation—and the practical Greek navigated for the concrete purposes of trade rather than for sheer love of exploration—men would not have known of these fine sites for colonies, such as Syracuse to which went the farm people from Tenea near Corinth. Tenea is forgotten by historians, but did not a god give an oracle about it?—

> "Corinth is a happy place;
> But Tenea for me!" [1]

And farm-lands they found near the haven they did not at first use to the full, and serfs to work the lands they found in the natives; "Cyllyrians they are called".[2]

The dates of the foundations of the chief colonies have been handed down to us; for instance, Syracuse was planted, they say, in 734 B.C. The tradition has been doubted, but it may be sounder than has been allowed; the planting of a colony is a definite new start, the kind of date from which men reckon years. It is easier to be sure of the first year of New York than of York in England. The colony in the Greek world, moreover, was not an affair of a few

[1] Strabo c. 380, for the oracle and the story that most of the colonists with Archias had come from Tenea.

[2] Herodotus, vii, 155.

adventurers like Plymouth, Massachusetts; it was the venture of the mother-city, officially made, with such divine sanction as an oracle could give, and a leader definitely appointed. It was, if it dare be said, more like the founding of Salt Lake City—two points excepted. It was, in general, the work of one city and did not include, as a rule, foreigners; and it was the work not of an autocrat, but of an aristocracy. And there we may pause for a moment.

Call the government aristocracy or call it oligarchy, it is plain that, like the Athenian democracy of the fifth century, it had a good deal of political capacity. When one thinks of Corinthian expansion Westward or of the eighty colonies planted by Miletus on the Black Sea, it is obvious that the work was done with foresight and prudence. When we read the story of European settlement in America, North or South, with its roll of disasters regularly preluding the foundation of a successful colony— disasters due to ignorance of the ground, of the natives, of the most elemental necessities, to jealousy and recklessness, it is plain that these early Greeks knew better what they were doing. If it is objected that they had not the New England or the Canadian winter to face, the reply is that neither had the settlers in Virginia, California or La Plata. Englishmen, Spaniards and Frenchmen have tales to tell of failure. Perhaps the Greeks had more to tell than have come down to us; but while one remembers the Phocaeans and can believe that the Black Sea had its bad memories (its old name Inhospitable is eloquent enough), the Greek certainly occupied a great many places designed by Nature for the importance that Greek energy gave them. And they fall mostly into the period of oligarchic rule.

Two accounts are suggested to explain the general directions taken in colonial ventures. At a date, which moderns

variously compute as the end of the eighth century B.C., some point in the seventh century or at its end, two cities of Euboea quarrelled over the plain that lay between them, and their allies gathered to them. Chalcis enlisted Corinth and Samos, and the neighbours (comparatively speaking) of these cities, Megara and Miletus, rallied to Eretria. The two groups divide the colonial map, if you exclude the Chalcidic peninsula of Thrace. Miletus and Megara held the Black Sea. Corinth looked Westward. On the other hand, those who are interested in the rivalry of Dorian and Ionian remark that this rivalry extends to colonization—Megara is Dorian, Miletus Ionian—and each race tries to divide the other's field of influence.

The colony solved, for the time, the problem of overcrowding, and, if gradually, still for a time that of food. Englishmen to-day, perhaps people generally, forget that the first and most terrible problem in colonization has been to escape starvation. The new country is full of promise, and in time it may abundantly fulfil that promise; but the initial years are full of difficulty, as we can see in New England and in the stories Herodotus reports of the founding of Cyrene. Whatever happened in Sicily, it is safe to guess that the early colonies in the Black Sea involved enormous risks, and that, even when it was plain that Greek colonies could prosper there, each fresh colony must have needed a great deal of support before it could stand alone and maintain itself. Wine and oil played a large part in the life of the Greek, and Southern Russia produced neither; and, if it did, the olive takes some eighteen years of growth before it is of much use. From the beginning to the end, wine and oil had to be sent to the Black Sea; and there lies for us a hint of the future. But we must not quite neglect all the other things, made by smith and carpenter, that wise

colonists will take with them and at first must often send home for till they have leisure to make them. What sort of things will be decided by the homely phrase that it all depends on what you are used to. When the Doukhobors settled in Canada, they chipped the cast steel scythes supplied to them and had to send to Russia for others of wrought iron, which they knew how to handle and how to mend.

Now, conceding as we are bidden that the early colony was mainly agricultural in intention, and refraining even from the suggestion that centres of trade may also have been contemplated, we can see that the mere planting of a successful colony implies knowledge of the sea and its coasts, a genuine familiarity with the Mediterranean, and that its early years must necessitate a great deal of traffic with the mother city. If the older state sends out oil and wine in great quantity, the owners of vineyards and oliveyards should prosper. Yes, and the potters, for these commodities had to be carried in great clay jars. Herodotus speaks of the numbers of the jars that came to Egypt, where you never see them, he says, for travellers across the desert take them away full of water. The archaeologists find the broken jars in abundance, and trace by their fragments the changes in fashion among wine-drinkers, not uninfluenced by the ascendancy of Corinth or Athens. So in addition to smiths and carpenters—mere artisans—honest country-folk are bettered, and the potters share. But what will the ships bring back? Classical scholars, like protectionist politicians, sometimes forget that empty ships double freights. What could the colony send back? In time Sicily sent back large cargoes of cheese,[1] lard [2] and

[1] Aristophanes, *Wasps*, 838.
[2] Plutarch, *Nicias*, 1.

hides, perhaps wool, and by and by wheat; and the Black Sea colonies must have sent wheat from the first, and later on those about the Sea of Azov fed Athens with dried fish. So far we have stuck mostly to eatables. The Black Sea climate, with frozen rivers and frozen seas, called for heavy clothing, and Miletus became famous for its woollens and exchanged them for flax from Colchis, and perhaps Scythian gold—though the last is never a bulky freight. Finally whether the colonists had to deal with barbarians, or like the Syracusans with other Greeks (Chalcidians) on the spot before them, colonization meant war, and war meant work in the mother city for what we might call munition workers, all the trades whose representatives protest in Aristophanes' comedies against Peace and are so deservedly trounced there.

Oil, wine, wool—then Colonization, while it relieved Miletus of poverty, must have called attention still more to land; and the relief gained by the settlement of the swarming children of the poor overseas, still left problems of ownership, rents, wages and prices, while the owners of land better adapted (or which they chose to suppose better adapted) to wheat growing might not altogether share the satisfaction of owners of vineyards and olive-yards. How far can a state safely, they would ask, depend for its food on sources it does not control, perhaps hundreds of miles away? Solon in Athens dealt with that question, but we have not yet come to him. Meantime, every colony meant after all a relative increase in the town population as opposed to the country folk. Eighty colonies of Miletus and lands of wheat call for men from the land, not from the street, and not from the shop in quite such quantity. It may mean increased numbers in the shops—far more mechanics, ship-wrights and smiths, and it certainly does mean far more

men busy about the docks. It means also a wholly new, or almost entirely new, class of middleman, especially after the invention of coinage. The owner of an olive-yard may have to hire an olive-press, and there may be a middleman there, as the story of Thales' experiment shows.[1]

For Thales felt the reproach that philosophers are unpractical. So one year he spent the spring wandering over the countryside. When the olive-harvest came and proved to be exceptionally good, it appeared that the philosopher had foreseen it, and had quietly "cornered" the oil-presses, well aware that olives must be pressed at once. He did it to prove that philosophers can make money if they like, though they are as a rule more interested in other things. The grower will hardly be able always to consign his oil direct in his own jars to Theodosia. The outcome is the trader, the dealer, whom the Greeks never liked and never quite understood. Add up the new classes, subtract the farming sort who emigrate—weigh up the wealth that, whether crops are good or bad, always gets into the dealer's hands—and what is the result?

A State, says Aristotle,[2] has many parts, of which some one may often grow imperceptibly; and political revolutions spring from disproportionate increase in some part of a state. Elsewhere [3] he picks up and catalogues certain of the classes we have seen imperceptibly increasing—viz. (a) the food-producing class or husbandmen; (b) mechanics engaged in arts, some absolutely necessary, some contributive to luxury or grace of life; (c) traders, "and by traders I mean those engaged in buying and selling, whether in commerce or in retail trade"; (d) serfs or labourers; (e) warriors. "In many places," he continues, "some one of these

[1] Aristotle, *Politics,* i, 11, 8.
[2] Aristotle, *Politics,* v, 3, 6.
[3] Aristotle, *Politics,* iv, 4, 9.

classes may form quite a large population; for example, fishermen at Tarentum and Byzantion, crews of triremes at Athens, merchant seamen at Aegina and Chios, ferrymen at Tenedos". And before we leave that chapter of the *Politics,* let us just note and remember by and by that "all men claim to possess political ability, and think they are competent to fill most offices". Elsewhere again he speaks of husbandmen, mechanics and labourers, and adds that "if the first of these be added to the second, or the third to the two others, the very nature of a democracy is changed".[1]

Aristotle alludes to warriors. The earliest government, he tells us,[2] after the overthrow of the kingly power, grew up out of the warrior class and was originally taken from the knights; when cities increased, and the heavy-armed grew in strength, more had a share in the government; and this is the reason why the states, which we call constitutional governments or republics, have been hitherto called democracies. In ancient states, where population was small, they had no considerable middle class; the people were weak in numbers and organization, and so they were more content to be governed. He indicates a reaction on government not only from the increase of one section of a community but from the numbers of the heavy-armed. I do not remember any passage in the classics that specifically gives the cost of a hoplite's outfit. But those smiths, whom we have tried to watch for so long, have surely had an influence here. What else can their progress in simplifying processes and cheapening the cost of production in every line of metallurgy mean, if it does not mean also lower prices for armour, and an increase in the number of the heavy-

[1] Aristotle, *Politics*, vi, 1, 8.
[2] Aristotle, *Politics*, iv, 13, 10.

armed and political change to follow—nay, that has followed? For look back a moment to the Homeric battle; there is the hero in bronze, and the common folk nowhere, ill-armed and ill-protected in dogskin caps; it is an age of princes. And then Aristotle tells us of a period when knights and nobles ruled in armour; and Thucydides shows us later again whole armies of Athenian hoplites. Are we going too far or too fast in connecting progress in democracy with progress in metallurgy? If not, we were well advised to watch the smiths. And metallurgy is not exhausted with the making of armour; for who made the coins? I must not digress to handmade coins, and the mysteries of top and bottom punches and their relative durability, and the wonderful results that numismatists draw from the shorter life of the top punch; but the student of politics must not forget either the punches or the craftsman for the sake of the man who gives the order for the issue of the currency.

The craftsman then, the maker of armour, has gradually contributed to the rise of the nobles and to the decline of the king. The nobles, in spite of his services, despised him. Herodotus records that Scythians, Persians and Lydians, who represent very different levels of culture, and nearly all barbarians in fact, have less esteem for citizens engaged in trades, and count more honourable those who let artisan's work alone and practise war. And so, too, he adds, do the Greeks, especially the Spartans; but the Corinthians have least contempt for artisans.[1] Corinth, we may interpolate, remained a prosperous, and (Pindar says) a well-ordered town, an oligarchy in fact in Pindar's day and for long after. These two facts about Corinth may be weighed along with a remark of Aristotle's to the effect that a change

[1] Herodotus, ii, 167.

may come in an oligarchy through a time of prosperity, due perhaps to long peace, when the property of many persons multiplies many times over and they automatically become qualified to hold high office.[1]

Thus the respective numbers of the various groups in the state keep changing; and in the ports especially the seaman class and the artisans gain numerically against the nobles and the landowners and the land-workers. We must not say abruptly that they outnumber them, but that they gain on them; and this, Aristotle holds, is not to the advantage of the state—"the best material of democracy is an agricultural population; there is no difficulty in forming a democracy where the mass of the people live by agriculture or tending cattle. Being poor they have no leisure, and therefore do not often attend the assembly; and, not having the necessaries of life, they are always at work, and they do not covet the property of others. Indeed, they find their employment pleasanter than the cares of government or office, where no great gains can be made out of them." [2] So Aristophanes suggested in his Comedies, and so has thought ruefully many a political thinker since 1800 A.D.

But the land-holding class was to decline. For one thing, where the nobles, the heavy-armed and the rulers are one class, it is obvious that every war, successful or not, will tend to reduce their numbers.[3] Next, we have to remark, though we cannot tell how long it took, the gradual breaking-down or wearing-down of the clan-system. The early lawgivers here and there are recorded as giving freedom of testamentary disposition of property to people who chafed against uncongenial heirs from collateral branches

[1] Aristotle, *Politics*, v, 6, 17.
[2] Aristotle, *Politics*, vi, 4, 1-2.
[3] Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, v, 3, 7, cases of Tarentum, Argos and Athens.

of the clan or the family. It was a wise move in the legislator, and helped to encourage energy and thrift, and to increase the general wealth of the city; but it is a sure sign of the decline of the clan. Children are failing in the noble or well-to-do house; and the set of opinion even in such homes is toward freedom from old bonds. But if the well-born push for freedom from tradition where it suits them, the base may do the same; and they did. For, as Aristotle says with delicate moderation, "it does not always happen that the ruling class are graceful".[1] They were not always graceful; and, as the general atmosphere changed around them, as standards of wealth and perhaps of living and of comfort rose, and all the reactions from the traders' world and the sea broke upon them, as old ideas wore down and new ideas surged in, the newer generation of nobles became something like landlords pure and simple instead of the clan-chieftains their forefathers had been. The great man may well have been at once head of the family and landlord; but the spirit of the age encouraged other people to think of him as principally landlord, and he may have inclined to that view himself and become less "graceful" as a result.

Agriculture had other troubles. The change in the common ways of living, trade and manufacture, meant higher prices for food, and thence higher rents, and, with time and in some places, oversea competition. Agricultural methods were always slow to improve in Greece, if they improved at all. It is difficult to be sure how far in any given region at any given time a Greek farmer could find hired labour or slave-labour. Achilles beyond the grave pictures it as the worst fate for a living man to be a hired labourer with a man who had no lot of land—whatever precisely that last phrase implies. The new era of trade

[1] Aristotle, *Politics*, iv, 13, 8.

and sea-faring must have drawn the hired man from the land before everybody else. Slave labour does not mend bad methods or improve poor tools, but it kills free labour. Just at the time then when the balance of conditions begins to swing against the small farmer in any case, his chief turns into a landlord and can use slave labour on a larger farm in competition with him; and moreover the rent has to be paid in coin instead of kind. It may well be that in this or that place, the change to coin was for some years an advantage to the tenant farmer; he gained when prices rose. But when prices dropped and seasons were bad, he fell into arrears and debt, and if he borrowed to pay, or to sow, things were worse at once. Debt is recorded in place after place as the curse of the tenant farmer, and of the small farmer who farmed his own land. It became growingly clear that the big farm and slave labour were economically more valuable than the small farms of free men. Strange as the word may seem when used of the tiny territory of a Greek city state, *Grossgrundwirtschaft* began to prevail. The once free farmer saw mortgage pillars on his land; he found himself and his children sold into overseas slavery for debt; and the uneasiness and discontent you would expect followed. The country people began to pay attention to what they heard in town, and two favourite catchwords were the cancelling of debts and the redivision of the land. It is doubtful if either catchword was ever actually put into operation, but both had an appeal for the poor and suggested terror to the rich. Famine, we are told, was always a great deal nearer an ancient Greek city than it has been for generations to the European city before the war; the margin was narrow, and when it was crossed, anything might happen, and looting and murder were the first things to expect. And once you are murdered you are

probably little interested in further political change; murder should come at the end of it, not at the beginning, if political change is to be well done.

Life has other aspects beside the economic and the political, and in the general period which we are considering—say from 850 to 500 B.C.—life was extraordinarily various and fertile. Navigation and agriculture depended very directly on popular knowledge of astronomy, and that led to the beginnings of science, and one scientific inquiry leads to another. To look before and after, to sum up the values of such inquiry, and to ask still more sweeping and fundamental questions was the function of the Greek philosopher, and he, too, began to appear upon the scene. Thales is dated by the eclipse of the sun of 28 May, 585 B.C., which he is said to have foretold, and that philosophy was in touch with common life in those times we are reminded by the tale of the oil-presses. Neither story may be true, yet it is significant that one man is said to have done both things—foretold an eclipse and made a corner, and no Greek perhaps did either before. Philosophy reacts on life without men expecting it. Political change may be averted by sound morals, by convention—*νόμος* will cover both—and morals, as Aristophanes suggests in the *Clouds,* have some connection with religion. Xenophanes about 530 B.C. asked pungent questions about Greek gods after he had seen African idols, and he asked them in a Greek city. A hundred years later controversy raged in Athens as to the parts of Nature and Convention in human life—*φύσις* and *νόμος*—was morality, was marriage, was justice, natural, inevitable in the natural order of things, or is it all talk, idle chatter or the cunning suggestion of parties interested in our deception? This was the problem that Socrates faced. We cannot say categorically that it was urgent in the same form

in Asia Minor a century and a half or two centuries earlier, but a line of reflection may be very really operative and may lead to striking results, long before it receives its great classical formulation. Men may not so readily have contrasted Nature and Custom in these two words; but they did not wait for the handy antithesis to notice the facts which in truth led to its being formulated. Arts and crafts, navigation, poetry, astronomy, architecture, music, the alphabet, travel, the Greek sense of wonder—everything was working to liberate the Greek mind. Contrasts were many in that world of small communities and difficult distances, and now they were being noted.

So we have economic liberation and intellectual liberation advancing together—the rich emancipated from their traditional duties and the clever from conventional silence, and poverty, unevenly felt, sharpening every question and embittering every answer. In old days the tribe throve together and shared misfortunes; all starved or all prospered at once. Now some thrive and others don't. The crops may be good, and the dealer prospers; they may be bad and still he prospers and nobody else does. Why? Why should coin do this, when barter did not? Why should coin, a dead thing, produce "offspring"—the Greek word for "interest," *τόκος*? It is incidentally very curious that the accident of a term, a metaphor originally, should have played so large a part in political discussion and involved questions of the violation of a natural order. One could have expected greater clarity in the Greek mind; but perhaps when you starve you do not refine about metaphors.[1]

Certain classes gain in numbers; the old nobles lose numbers, in war and perhaps through inbreeding. Wealth

[1] It is especially curious to find this sort of view in Aristotle, *Politics*, i, 10, 5.

shifts about, no one can quite understand how or why, it does not go to the good,—an observation which has given us a pleasant comedy of Aristophanes. Wealth used to come from the land, now it comes from the sea; and other things come from the sea. As Plato said later on in his *Laws,*[1] "the sea is pleasant enough as a daily companion, but it has also a bitter and brackish quality; filling the streets with merchants and shop-keepers, and begetting in the souls of men uncertain and unfaithful ways". In old days, more men than Plato's Athenian might say,[2] "Reverence, αἰδώς, was our Queen and Mistress, and made us willing to live in obedience to the laws of that time". As ever, Law ruled the past and Change rules the present. Such a man went out to the colony a nobody; on the new soil he has grown to be very much of a somebody; and his brother at home is still nobody; why? And another man, by mere luck in trading, is a very rich somebody at home. And the great bulk of the people you meet in bazar and round docks, came from nobody knows where. Everything is changing. What are you to do in the state with a new-made man of wealth? Is he to rise in class, to be allowed to hold office, though of no birth? "Birth and education," observed Aristotle,[3] "are commonly the accompaniments of wealth," they are not in this case; shall he rule, can he rule, is it in our traditions that he should, or in Nature? And if a city state is really and truly a clan settled in a canton and living rather close together, what of the aliens that crowd in, Greeks perhaps, but not Ionians, perhaps not even Greeks? Are *they* to marry our daughters and give wives to our sons, rich as they are? And all the wrong

[1] Plato, *Laws,* iv, p. 705 A.
[2] Plato, *Laws,* iii, p. 698 B.
[3] Aristotle, *Politics,* iv, 8, 3.

people thrive, and the good, the old inhabitants, the honest farmers and clansmen starve?

"Kyrnos," says a Greek poet to his friend, "this city is pregnant, and I fear me lest she bring forth a man that shall straighten out our wicked wantonness. Our citizens, indeed, they are yet sound of heart, but our leaders have turned to fall into all wickedness. . . . Think not thou that city shall long go unshaken—no, not though even yet it lieth in great quietness—when to evil men these things grow dear, to wit gain that cometh to them with evil to the state. For of this come revolutions and the murdering of men by their own kin, and monarchs; may never such things please our city!" And later, it would seem, he tells such a tale. "Kyrnos, this city is still a city, but the folk are other folk, who in time past knew not laws nor customs, but with pelts of goats about their loins they lived, and fed like stags outside the city. And now they are *noble* (ἀγαθοί); and they that aforetime were good are now base. Who could endure to see it? And one another they deceive, laughing one to another, with no knowledge of evil or good." "*Hybris* ruined the Magnesians, and Colophon and Smyrna; yes, Kyrnos, and you also it shall destroy." [1]

Theognis may not be much of a poet, but he has the gift of conveying his meaning. Unlike that other Greek poet whom Mrs. Browning described as "a man of many and wandering thoughts," Theognis is a man of few ideas and he never gets very far away from them. In these few lines, which I have given you, we have a good deal of Greek history and something of Greek morality. Demos, revolution, the incursion of the peasant in goat skins, the inversion of everything by people who know nothing, the fear of a tyrant, *Hybris*—it is a familiar story. Megara had been an

[1] Theognis, 39-60; 1103, 4.

oligarchy and a great colonizing power: by and by about 640 B.C. we hear of a man Theagenes slaughtering the cattle of the rich, when he found them by the river side where they had turned them to graze; and then he is tyrant of Megara.[1] The people's champion strikes a blow at the oligarchy; the people rally to him, and, next thing, he is sole ruler—that was the way, says Aristotle, "most of the ancient tyrants were originally demagogues"; and Theagenes is one of his illustrations. One small point we note—the water supply was a weak spot in these clan settlements grown to cities, as in our Canadian cities of the prairie. Polycrates made the water tunnel on Samos, it would seem; Theagenes stands up for water rights for the common folk; there had been *Hybris* in the well-to-do. By and by we find *Hybris* in Demos, so we may pause another moment for a clearer view of it.

Hybris, if etymology and slang may help each other, means "getting on top of oneself". Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, we read elsewhere—

And up against the Lord his God
He flaunted and he flang.

Hybris is the one great social and personal crime the Greek knows; it is essentially, as he says, the child of *κόρος* —Satiety. The man is too well fed, he is uplifted, and *Hybris* follows—callous neglect of the rights and the feelings of other men. And after *Hybris,* say the Greek moralists, comes downfall; and it did. Men in goat-skins follow a leader into the city and kill the aristocrats. At Corcyra we read how, by a refinement of revenge, they took away the dead bodies of their enemies on carts, two laid along and two crosswise on top of them, and so on, as

[1] Aristotle, *Politics,* v, 5, 9; and v, 5, 6.

many as the cart would carry [1]—human frames geometrically packed, the punishment of *Hybris* real or supposed, and the prelude of more *Hybris* and more murder.

Revolutions come, says Aristotle, "from the desire of equality when men think that they are equal to others who have more than themselves, or again from the desire of inequality and superiority".[2] "They arise not about little things, but out of little things" (*οὐ περὶ μικρῶν ἀλλ' ἐκ μικρῶν*.[3] Election intrigues, carelessness, neglect about trifles, dissimilarity of elements will start them [4] and fear will precipitate them.[5] The real ultimate difference between oligarchy and democracy is poverty and wealth—there you have it, in Aristotle's sentence.[6] Men dispute about citizenship and about justice—who is, or should be, a citizen? Everybody? the rich? the armed? the worthy? And what is justice? "Democrats say that justice is that to which the majority agree"—let me interrupt Aristotle to interject that I have heard something like that outside ancient Greece —"and oligarchs," resumes Aristotle, "say justice is that to which the wealthier class agree; in their opinion the decision should be given according to the amount of property. In both principles," he concludes drily, "there is some inequality and injustice." [7] People do not resent, he says, being kept out of office, but they hate to think their rulers are stealing public money; [8] and the idea is attractive that, while in an oligarchy the rich rule, the free rule in a democracy,[9] and the common opinion comes to be that only

[1] Thucydides, iv, 48.
[2] Aristotle, *Politics*, v, 2, 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, v, 4, 1.
[4] *Ibid.*, v, 2, 6.
[5] *Ibid.*, v, 3, 4.
[6] *Ibid.*, iii, 8, 7.
[7] *Ibid.*, vi, 3, 2.
[8] *Ibid.*, v, 8, 16.
[9] *Ibid.*, iv, 4, 3.

in a democratic state is there liberty.[1] And the philosopher himself concedes that "since cities have increased in size, no other form of government appears to be any longer possible." [2] There comes a time when out of a false good there arises a true evil,[3] and men rise in revolt and there is real trouble. The right to overthrow a bad government—how discussion has turned on that! what bloodshed has it involved! "When a government cannot govern," wrote Mommsen, "it ceases to be legitimate, and whoever has the power has also the right to overthrow it."

Some of you will remind me that I signed a statement before I entered the United States that I am no party to the belief that it is legitimate to overthrow your government, and that I have no intention of doing so. I signed that pledge and I stand by it; I only quote what men say, and to put all right, I will again quote Aristotle: "Those who excel in virtue have the best right of all to rebel, but then they are of all men the least inclined to do it." [4] The regrettable fact, and he records this too, is that they are always in a minority.[5]

So Theagenes stands by the common people and their water-supply, and he becomes sole ruler—tyrant in fact. Now the word "tyrant" has not a pleasant sound; perhaps it was Lydian first of all, a foreigner's word, barbarian in sound and meaning; but the associations which it acquired in Greek states have not helped to sweeten it. Aristotle says tyranny combines the perversions and the drawbacks of both oligarchy and democracy [6] and the arts by which it is preserved are hideous. "He must put to death men of

[1] Aristotle, *Politics,* vi, 2, 1.
[2] *Ibid.,* iii, 15, 13.
[3] *Ibid.,* iv, 12, 6.
[4] *Ibid.,* v, 1, 6.
[5] *Ibid.,* v, 4, 12.
[6] *Ibid.,* v, 10, 2.

spirit; he must not allow common meals, clubs, education and the like; he must prohibit literary assemblies and take every means to prevent people from knowing one another; he must practise these and the like Persian and barbaric arts. He must know what each of his subjects says and does; he must sow quarrels among citizens, impoverish his subjects"; he will make war to keep his people occupied; he will give power to women and license to slaves, because slaves and women do not conspire against tyrants and they will be his agents and informers.[1] Division, war, feminism —it is a horrid catalogue. But I prefer on the whole the simpler story of Herodotus.[2] "How could sole rule be a fit thing, when the ruler can do what he will, nor be held to account for it? Such rule would set the best man in the world, once he stepped into it, outside the ordinary thoughts. . . . He will do many wicked deeds, some sated by *Hybris,* some from envy. He is jealous of the safety of the good; he is the best of men at believing calumny and the least easy to accommodate. And now I will say what is worst of all, he overturns ancestral customs, he does violence to women, he kills men without trial."

But historically the tyrants made real contributions to progress. They often restored order to disordered states for a while, and broke the power of the old families, as the Tudor Kings did in England; they promoted commerce and guided agriculture, even if, like Pisistratus, they confiscated the lands of their enemies to make small holdings for the poor; they did much for art, for poetry, music and architecture, and trained the Greek imagination to aim high in these directions. They emphasized pan-Hellenic religion—perhaps as a counter-attack on the exclusive rites of the

[1] Aristotle, *Politics,* v, 11, 4-11.
[2] Herodotus, iii, 80.

noble families, but it was also, in its way, a means of grace. The tyrants, perhaps, did not need Aristotle to tell them that, if men think a tyrant is religious and has a reverence for the gods, they are less likely to conspire against him, as they will believe him to have the very gods fighting on his side.[1] Finally the tyrants united all classes against themselves, and their dynasties never lasted long.

But there was in some places a happier way found to peace and prosperity—the office of *Aisymnetes,* which Aristotle calls a sort of elective tyranny, legal but not hereditary.[2] Sometimes a foreign commission was called in, as in that city where the foreigners came and made a survey of the land and gave the government over to the men who managed their own farms best, as being the likeliest to do best for the state also. But the greatest of the kind was Solon "the greatest economist whom the Mediterranean world produced before the foundation of the Roman principate." [3]

Solon found the agriculture of Attica in a deplorable state—debt, mortgages, sale of farmers and farmers' wives and farmers' children, pain, suffering, chaos, and revolution at hand. His work was threefold. He dealt abruptly with the actual situation; he put things in such trim that the disorders should not return; he adjusted the government from the traditions of the past to the facts of the time. He cancelled debts and mortgages on farms, and peremptorily stopped forever the sale of citizens for debt—this he called by a pleasant and human name *Seisachtheia,* the shaking off of burdens. It was not the crude cancelling of debts that extremists demanded; it was a measure to lighten the mind of the farmer and give him fresh interest and

[1] Aristotle, *Politics,* v, 11, 28.
[2] *Ibid.,* iii, 14, 8.
[3] Grundy, *Thucydides,* p. 68.

hope, in possession of his farm and his wife and his children. His next group of measures shows the man who understood the history of Miletus. He headed Athens for industry and overseas trade, gave her a new and handier currency, and turned the farmer from wheat to the olive, from the crop which the land could not well produce to that for which it was ideally suited. He forbade export of field produce other than olive oil. He emphasized trades and crafts; a parent must teach his son a trade; a foreigner with a trade, if he would bring his family, or if he were a single man banished from his own state, might freely settle in Athens, ply his trade there and readily become a citizen. That at once solved the problem of clan or city, the doubt about birth and citizenship. It is notable that Themistocles carried on this idea, and that Pericles stopped it. Solon gave the trader and merchant new freedom, he abolished stupid impediments to industry like the old client rules, and laws fixing the rates of interest. The use of capital is the secret of economic prosperity, and it is best used by those who know the conditions. Who could best fix the proper interest for a loan on bottomry, on a voyage to the Black Sea? Surely the men who know the sea and the seasons and the other risks; then let them fix their own rates of interest. He also conceded, as we saw, the right to make a will to a childless man; let him work, trade, navigate and augment his fortune and the national wealth, with the stimulus of being free to dispose of his own as he liked. Solon saw that the best asset of Athens was the individual—better than the olive, better than pottery; the individual wants air, exercise, freedom to develop; then he shall have it. And when he was developed, what then? Solon adjusted the constitution to give the new rich man a place in it alongside of

Eupatrid and Eteobutad. A property qualification may not seem to you democratic, but it was a real step forward. A realist, a humanist, an economist and a poet, Solon may well be counted among the seven sages or, better still, above them; for where was his equal? The Athenians were not wrong when they attributed to Solon the foundation of their democracy. He was not, indeed, the author of all their laws or the last stages of their democratic development; but if, as we shall see, there was truth and greatness in the ideals described by Pericles in the famous Funeral Speech, the original author of this ideal citizenship was Solon.