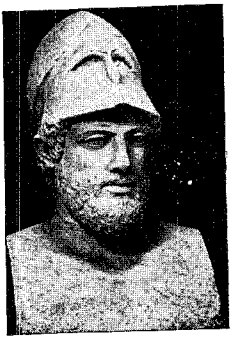
CHAPTER XVIII

THE AGE OF PERICLES 461–431 B.C.

I. THE IMPERIALISM OF PERICLES

218. Wars with the Peloponnesians and the Boeotians (461–456 B.C.). — After the ostracism of Cimon, Pericles became the leading statesman of his city. He was the son of Xanthippus,[1] a political leader and general of the Persian war, and through his mother he was related to Cleisthenes the lawgiver, and to the powerful gens of the Alcmeonidae. All the statesmen of Athens down to this time had been Eupatrids,[2] and the family of Pericles was as noble as any in the state. Through his public activities we shall be able to study his character.



PERICLES

(Copied after Cresilas, a Cretan artist of the fifth century, B.C.; British Museum)

Under his guidance Athens deserted the Peloponnesian League, and allied herself with Argos and Thessaly, and soon afterward with Megara. The policy of breaking loose from Sparta, which had been advocated by Themistocles and Ephialtes, was now carried out. Hellenic unity, so far as it had been attained, was broken; and Athens openly became the rival of Sparta for political supremacy. It was commercial rivalry, however, which first disturbed the peace. Aegina and Corinth felt cramped in their trade by the rise of Peiraeus. Supported by some of their neighbors, these two states declared war. But the Athenians were victorious over their enemies by land and sea. They then invaded Aegina and laid siege to the city. After a long resistance Aegina

[1] § 198.

[2] § 149.

surrendered, dismantled her walls, and entered the confederacy as a subject state.

In this struggle Sparta gave her allies no direct help. She preferred to create a strong rival of Athens in Boeotia. Disgraced by submission to Xerxes, Thebes had lost control of Boeotia, and the league of cities under her leadership[1] had dissolved. Sparta now sent a strong Peloponnesian army into Boeotia to restore the league, with Thebes at its head, as a counterpoise to Athens. Thereupon the Athenians marched forth, and engaged the Peloponnesians at Tan'a-gra (457 B.C.). In a bloody struggle the Athenians were worsted. So far as we know, this was the first battle fought between Athens and Sparta.

The Peloponnesians now returned home, leaving the Boeotians in the lurch. Two months later the Athenians took the field and defeated the Boeotians at Oe-noph'y-ta (456 B.C.).

219. The Continental Federation (456–447 B.C.); **Egypt and Cyprus.**—Through this victory Athens brought into her alliance all the towns of Boeotia except Thebes; also Phocis, already friendly, and Locris. The Athenians expelled the oligarchs from the Boeotian towns, and set up democratic governments favorable to themselves. About the same time Achaea made an alliance with Athens. The Athenians were now at the height of their power. Their Continental Federation[2] extended from the Isthmus to Thermopylae, and furthermore included not only Argos and Achaea in Peloponnese, but also Nau-pac'tus, an important station controlling the entrance to the Corinthian Gulf. From these events it is clear that Pericles intended to unite as many Hellenic states as possible under the military leadership of Athens.

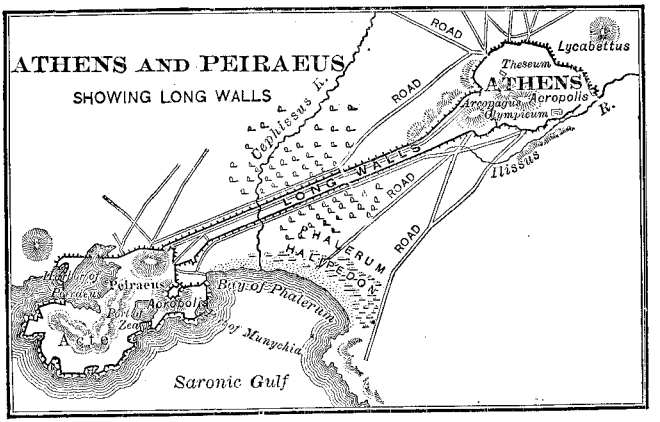
But the federation which he established on the peninsula came to a sudden end (447 B.C.). The oligarchs whom Athens had driven from the towns of Boeotia returned in force, defeated the Athenians, and compelled them to leave the country. About the same time Athens lost control of Locris, Phocis, and Megara, and came near losing Euboea. Only the military energy and the diplomacy of Pericles saved the empire at this crisis.

[1] § 120.

[2] This league is sometimes described less accurately as a "Land Empire."


ATHENIAN EMPIRE
AT ITS HEIGHT
Allied states
Dependent states
Longitude East from Greenwich
Williams Engraving Co., N.Y.
THRACE
MACEDON
BLACK SEA
Byzantium
Amphipolis
Eion
THASOS
PROPONTIS
CHALCIDICE
Potidaea
Lampsacus
Hellespont
PHRYGIA
TROYLAND
IDA MT.
MYSIA
EPEIRUS
PINDUS MT.
CAMBUNIAN MTS.
OLYMPUS MT.
Peneus R.
THESSALY
CORCYRA
MOLOSSI
THRACIAN SEA
AEGEAN SEA
LESBOS
Ambracian Gulf
AMBRACIA
ACHAEA PHTHIOTIS
Pagasaean Gulf
Malian Gulf
AENIS
LEUCAS
ACARNANIA
AETOLIA
LOCRIS
DORIS
PHOCIS
BOEOTIA
SCYROS
EUBOEA
CHIOS
Clazomenae
TMOLUS MT.
Hermus R.
LYDIA
Cayster R.
IONIA
CEPHALLENIA
Naupactus
Delphi
Thebes
Orchomenus
Tanagra
Oenophyta
ATTICA
Athens
Piraeus
Megara
Nisaea
Corinthian Gulf
Isthmus
Corinth
SALAMIS
AEGINA
ACHAEA
Pegae
ZACYNTHUS
ELIS
Olympia
ARCADIA
Argos
Tegea
Alpheus
Tricrene
PELOPONNESUS
Argolic Gulf
Laconian Gulf
Messenian Gulf
ITHOME MT.
LACEDAEMON
MESSENIA
Sparta
LACONIA
PAROS
NAXOS
DELOS
CYCLADES IS.
MELOS
THERA
SAMOS
MYCALE
Magnesia
Maeander R.
Myus
Miletus
CARIA
Cnidus
RHODES
IONIAN SEA
AEGEAN SEA
SEA OF ASIA MINOR
Strymon R.
20°
22°
24°
26°
28°
41°
39°
37°

The failure was in fact due to the imperialistic ambition of Pericles, which overtaxed the strength of his country. Egypt had revolted against Persia, and Pericles considered the moment opportune for striking a blow at the national enemy and for gaining a political influence over the rich valley of the Nile. Two hundred and fifty triremes were sent to the help of the Egyptians; but all were destroyed, and few of the crews ever returned to Athens. Even this terrible misfortune did not deter him from further attacks on Persia. Cyprus revolted against the king; and in 449 B.C. Cimon, recalled some time before from exile, sailed with two hundred triremes to aid in the liberation of that island. But he died on the expedition; and though his fleet destroyed a strong Phoe-



nician armament, the project came to naught. The disaster in Egypt, followed by this unsuccessful enterprise, so exhausted the strength of Athens that she had to adopt a more friendly policy toward her neighbors. She abandoned her federation on the continent without a struggle, and she opened negotiations for peace with Sparta.

220. **The Long Walls.** — During these wars with near neighbors Athens was exposed to attacks from her many enemies. While most of her forces were absent on service, it would not have been

difficult for a hostile army to invade Attica and in a few days' siege to starve the city into surrender. Pericles guarded against this possibility by building two long walls from Athens to Peiraeus, so as to have a fortified way from the city to the port — about four and a half miles distant. They ran parallel to each other, and far enough apart to enclose between them a broad road. In time of danger these "Long Walls" could easily be defended by a few guards, and thus could be maintained a safe passage for the conveyance of supplies and for the march of troops from the port to the city. Henceforth so long as her navy commanded the sea, Athens was secure from siege.[1]

221. **The Thirty Years' Truce** (445 B.C.); **Peace with Persia.** — In 445 B.C. a Truce for Thirty Years was made between the two hostile powers. Each party was to have the right to trade freely in the ports and markets of the other — the "open door" clause. Athens gave up all her continental allies except Plataea and Naupactus. Neither party was to interfere with the allies of the other, but alliances with strangers could be made at pleasure. Athens suffered most by the treaty, as she was not only excluded from Peloponnese, but also lost control of the Corinthian Gulf and the Isthmus. She gained, on the other hand, an acknowledgment of her maritime supremacy.

About the same time friendly relations were established between Athens and Persia, and thereafter they remained at peace with each other for many years.

222. **The Change from Confederacy to Empire Completed** (454 B.C.). — In the preceding chapter we have seen how the allies of Athens were gradually reduced to the condition of subjects.[2] The change from confederacy to empire was completed by the transfer of the treasury from Delos to Athens, probably in 454 B.C. Only the Lesbians, Chians, and Samians, as free and equal allies, retained whatever forms of government they desired. Some time afterward Samos revolted and was reduced to subjection. The dependent states were required to make new treaties with Athens by which they agreed to adopt democratic constitutions, and to send their im-

[1] The earlier view that there was a third wall extending from Athens to Phalerum has recently been abandoned by scholars.

[2] § 215.

portant law cases to the imperial city for trial. The tribute from the empire enabled Athens to beautify herself with public works, to encourage literature and art, to provide the citizens with magnificent festivals, to give paid employment to most of her people, and to build and maintain powerful fleets and strong defences. Among the allied states Pericles established many colonies, which, besides serving as garrisons for the protection of the empire, furnished the poorer Athenians with lands. Thus both city and citizens were benefited by the empire.

The allies, too, enjoyed the advantages of peace. Never before or afterward did they have equal opportunity for commerce or for quiet country life. The annual tribute was more than balanced by an increase in wealth and prosperity. The commons, everywhere protected by Athens from the insolence of their own oligarchs, remained faithful. Only the families which had once ruled their communities, and the market-place politicians, were actively engaged in fomenting opposition to the Athenians. Though by no means perfect, the empire was the highest political development which the Greeks had yet reached.

II. The Periclean Democracy

223. The Law Courts. — While Pericles was thus engaged in attaching to Athens the common people of the empire by giving them the control of their states, and by suppressing the oligarchs, he was no less busy with establishing equal rights for his fellow-citizens. In earlier times the Council of the Areopagus had exercised a parental watch over the government, but it had recently lost this power.[1] Pericles believed the Athenians were no longer children in politics, and could now govern themselves. He intended that the people themselves should protect their constitution by means of the supreme court which Solon had established.[2] It was to contain six thousand jurors, who were divided normally into

[1] On the early parental government of this council, see § 149. The democratic reform of 462 B.C. consisted chiefly in depriving the council of this and all other political powers (§ 217, n. 1). It was now merely a court for the trial of wilful murder.

[2] § 158, VI.

panels, or smaller courts,[1] of five hundred and one each. As cases were decided by a majority vote, the odd number was to prevent a tie. Originally the archons were judges and the courts simply received appeals from their decisions; but in the time of Pericles the archons had come to be mere clerks, who prepared cases for presentation to the courts and presided over them through the trial, with no power to influence the decision. In other words, the court was a large jury without a judge. As the archons declined, the jurors gained in importance. Their large number made bribery and intimidation difficult. Every person involved in a trial as plaintiff or defendant had to plead his own case. There came to be professional writers of speeches for such occasions, but no real lawyers.[2] The Athenians considered these popular courts a necessary protection of the liberty of the common citizens from the oppression of the nobles and the wealthy. They served this purpose well.

The legislative power resided chiefly in these courts. Once a year, a special body of sworn jurors met and received from the assembly proposals for new laws, and after hearing them discussed, decided upon them by a majority vote. These legislative jurors were called "law-makers" (No-moth'e-tae). Laws thus made were distinguished from the decrees passed by the Council of Five Hundred and the assembly in their management of the current business of government.[3]

The introduction of a fee enabled the poorest citizen to attend to jury service. The pay was that of an unskilled day laborer. If frugally managed, it would buy food for a small family. The jurors had been oarsmen or soldiers in their younger days, and now, for the most part too old to work, they were drawing their juror's fee as a kind of pension, for which, however, they were required to sit on the benches judging from early morning till late at night. Payment for public duties alone made equality possible;

[1] *Di-cas-te'ri-a*, plural of *dicasterium*. Some panels were larger, others smaller, but the number was always odd.

[2] § 326.

[3] The laws were *nom'oi*, plural of *nomos*; decrees were *pse-phis'ma-ta*, plural of *psephisma*.

it permitted the poor, equally with the rich, to share in the duties and the benefits of government.

224. **The Assembly.** — The assembly was composed of all citizens above eighteen years of age who had the leisure and inclination to attend. There were four regular meetings in every prytany, or tenth of a year, with as many extraordinary sessions as were thought necessary. One meeting of each prytany was occupied with examining the conduct of magistrates; and any one of them who was thought guilty of mismanagement could be deposed and brought to trial before a popular court. All measures brought before the assembly had to be previously considered by the Council of Five Hundred, but the citizens could offer amendments at pleasure. They had no master; they acknowledged no authority but the laws which they and their fathers had made. There was no higher or more dignified office than that of the citizen who attended the assembly and law courts; he was at once a legislator, a judge, and an executive officer. This position of honor and trust made him public-spirited. The Athenian citizen was called upon, as was no other in the ancient world, to find his larger interests in those of the state. In the assembly and in the courts he received an education in law and in statesmanship such as has been granted to but a select few in other states, whether ancient or modern.

225. **The Magistrates.** — There were fourteen hundred offices, all of annual duration. A few of the more important magistrates were elected by the people in their assembly, the rest were appointed by lot. The people could reëlect a man as often as they pleased, but the places filled by lot could not be repeated.[1]

By far the most important magistrates in this century were the generals. They commanded the army, and were ministers of war, of the navy, of finance, and of foreign affairs. They had to be in constant communication with the assembly. For this purpose the gift of speaking was necessary, and that general who was at the same time an orator was naturally leader of the board. Through this office Pericles ruled Athens and her empire with an authority which surpassed that of kings and tyrants. His power was founded on

[1] An exception was made in favor of the Council of Five Hundred, the members of which could serve twice, though not in consecutive years.

ability and integrity. "He was able to control the multitude in a free spirit; he led them rather than was led by them; for, not seeking power by dishonest arts, he had no need to say pleasant things, but on the strength of his own high character could venture to oppose and even to anger them. When he saw them unseasonably elated and arrogant, his words humbled and awed them; and when they were depressed by groundless fears, he sought to reanimate their confidence. Thus Athens, though still in name a democracy, was in fact ruled by her greatest citizen." [1]

III. Society and Education

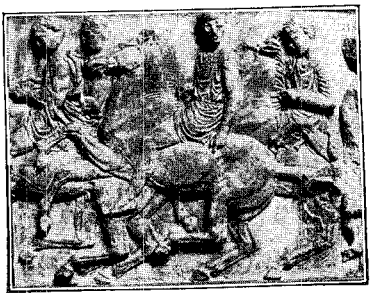
226. The Population: Slaves. —In the Age of Pericles the population of Attica was about 350,000. About 150,000 were slaves and 40,000 were resident aliens, leaving about 160,000 citizens, including women and children. These facts show at once that however far advanced Athens was beyond Egypt, her people had not yet adopted the idea of equality for all mankind. The slaves differed from the freemen, not in color, but simply in nationality. Some were born in the country, but most of them were imported from the parts of Europe northeast of Greece, from Asia Minor, Syria, and more distant lands. As a rule captives in war were reduced to slavery, and when traders could find none of this class to buy up, they often resorted to kidnapping. Every well-to-do Athenian had one or more slaves, and we hear of a certain wealthy man who owned a thousand, whom he let out to work for hire in the silver mines of the country. Slaves did all kinds of work in the house and field, in the mines and workshops. On ships they served as oarsmen. Some were overseers in charge of other slaves; a few were well enough educated to manage their master's business.

The few wealthy persons who owned slaves, and were supported by their labor, had the means and leisure to devote themselves to the cultivation of the mind and the taste, and to devising ways of making life more comfortable, refined, and beautiful. It is true, too, that the slaves at Athens were treated well — better perhaps than anywhere else in the history of the world. Yet, after all has been

[1] Thucydides, ii. 65

said in favor of slavery, it must be admitted that the institution is cruel and inhuman. Appreciating this fact, some of the more enlightened Greeks demanded, but in vain, its abolition.

227. **Resident Foreigners.** — Above the slaves in rank were the resident aliens. Some were from Asia Minor and the Orient, but most of the class were from other Greek states. They came to enrich themselves by manufacture and trade. A law of Solon (594 B.C.) required the state to admit all such persons to the citizenship; but as the Athenians grew more exclusive, they accepted none but those who had done some great service in behalf of the state, and then only by special vote of the assembly. Thereafter an alien family might reside many generations in Attica without acquiring a right to the citizenship. In this respect Athens was far different from a modern state. The aliens paid a tax for the privilege of residing in the country, and a heavier war tax than that imposed upon the citizens. They were required to serve in the army when the state was in danger of invasion. All, however, were on a social level with the Athenians according to their personal fitness. They shared in the religious festivals, and their boys enjoyed the same education. Some lived in Athens, but most of them in Peiraeus. The commercial greatness of this city was due largely to the labor and the wealth of these resident aliens.



ATHENIAN KNIGHTS
(Parthenon frieze; British Museum)

228. **Citizens; their Exclusiveness.** — Some of the citizens were laborers for hire; others had little farms, which they cultivated alone or with the aid of a slave or two; still others were shopkeepers or artisans. Many were wealthy enough to live without work, to serve in the cavalry — their only standing army — or to fill the offices of the state. There were no paupers, with the exception of a few disabled persons, and they were pensioned by the government. Less than half the population were citizens — members of the

state. They considered one another as kinsmen — all descendants of the same "ancestral Apollo."[1] Each family in its own house worshipped Apollo. As the state was one great family, with many sons and daughters, it felt disinclined to admit aliens — that is, to adopt other sons and daughters. As there was the keenest rivalry with other states, often breaking out into war, Athens felt that her citizens must be loyal, and that aliens, who had little interest in the welfare of the country, must remain aliens. This exclusiveness of the Athenians affected their treatment, not only of resident foreigners, but also of allies, who were now in reality subjects. However loyal an allied state might be, its citizens were given no hope of ever securing the Athenian franchise. Thus the whole body of Athenian citizens had become aristocratic, were now living in part at the expense of the many over whom they ruled, and were taking pride in their exclusive privileges of birth. In earlier time Athenians were allowed to marry women from other states, and the children of such marriages enjoyed full citizenship. When, however, Athens had become an imperial city, and the privileges of citizenship had grown to be correspondingly valuable, the Athenians would no longer tolerate the old custom. Pericles put an end to it by a law, 451 B.C., which restricted the citizenship to those whose parents were both Athenians. By this measure the Athenians made of themselves a closed caste, practically refusing to intermarry with other Greeks. The great advantage to the progress of the world which we find in the character of the Greek state lies in the fact that it is possible by careful training, generation after generation, to make of such a society a superior race of beings, as far above the common level of humanity as that level is above the savage. Unfortunately, on the other hand, a narrow, caste society, like that of the Athenians, with no fresh blood to revitalize it, is doomed sooner or later to physical decay. This narrowness, therefore, though a cause of the greatness of Athens, was to prove more pernicious than all the calamities of war that ever befell her.

229. **The Children.** — In nearly all ancient states the father had the right to kill his children at their birth, if he did not wish to bring them up. The custom began in barbarous times, and was

[1] § 116.

not abolished by so highly civilized a state as Athens. But the Athenian father rarely made use of his right; for he needed children to continue his family and its worship after him. His own happiness in the next world was secure, only if he had children to bury him and to sacrifice at his tomb according to the hereditary family rites.[1] In this way ancestor worship made parents more humane in their treatment of children, and bound the members of the family together in the closest ties of affection and of mutual helpfulness. Soon after the birth of a child, usually the tenth day following, the parents gave a festival to their friends and kinsmen. On this occasion the child received its name, the eldest son gen-

WOMEN PLAYING KNUCKLEBONES
(From a painting on marble, Herculaneum)

erally being called after the paternal grandfather. For the first six years boys and girls alike grew up under the care of the mother and nurses. With their many toys and games they certainly enjoyed life as much as children now do. In order that a person might be known as a citizen, it was necessary that he should be publicly recognized while still an infant. This duty was attended to by the phratry, as explained in an earlier chapter.[2]

[1] § 100.

[2] § 115.

230. The School. — At the age of seven the boy was sent to school, kept by a master who received pay from the parents of the children whom he instructed. All boys, however poor, learned to read and write. Great care was taken in school and at home to

A SCHOOL
(From a vase-painting)

teach the boy good morals and manners. He was not to see or hear anything vulgar or debasing, and he was kept entirely away from bad company. He learned modesty, respect for his parents and elders, love for his country, and other virtues. Most of all he was taught self-restraint and moderation. Pleasures were good, but nothing should be done to excess. He had to learn the proper way to sit, walk, dress, and eat. If the father could afford it, he placed over the boy as governor — *pae-da'go-gos*, " boy leader " — a slave,

IVORY STYLUS
(Fifth century B.C.; found in Euboea; British Museum)

generally an old man who accompanied the boy wherever he went and saw that the rules of training were strictly obeyed. At school the boy learned reading, writing, arithmetic, and a little geometry and astronomy. With a sharp iron instrument — *sty'lus* — he practised writing on a tablet covered with wax. His books were rolls

of Egyptian papyrus.[1] The literature he studied was poetry. His chief books were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* of Homer.[2] These poems picture every phase of life; they encourage in the reader bravery, patriotism, truth, and other virtues with which Homer endows his heroes. They inspire, too, a love of beauty; for they are among the most beautiful poems ever created. The Athenian boys committed them to memory.

DISCOBOLUS (DISCUS-THROWER)
(After Myron, an older contemporary of Phidias; Vatican Museum, Rome)

231. Music; Athletics. — Lessons at school were but a small part of education. Every boy who was to have a place in respectable society had to learn to sing and play on the lyre. This instruction was given by a special master. We are far less sensitive than were the Greeks to the influence of music, and for that reason we cannot understand how powerful a force it was with them for moulding character. Care was taken that the youth should hear and practise those melodies only which cultivate the nobler feelings.

Meantime the boy or youth regularly attended the wrestling ground — *pal-aes'tra* — for the practice of gymnastics under a professional teacher. There he was trained in running, wrestling, jumping, boxing, and throwing the discus and spear. The object was not the development of professional athletes who could entertain the public with exhibitions of wonderful strength and skill. All boys took equal part in the exercises for the purpose of making their bodies strong and supple, that as citizens they might serve the

[1] § 29. [2] §§ 95 ff.

state most ably in peace and war. They held frequent competitions in the palaestra and in the religious festivals, and the most promising winners were sent to represent their state at the great national games. The prize was a simple wreath of parsley, laurel, or olive; for the Greeks set honor above money. No greater glory could come to a state than such a victory by one of her citizens.

232. A Well-Rounded Education. — From what has been said above it is clear that the education of the youth was physical, intellectual, artistic, and moral. The aim was not to prepare him for business or a profession, but to make of him the best possible man and citizen. Meantime all his surroundings helped in this direction. Men and boys merely ate and slept at home, and passed nearly all the day in the open air. Living close to nature, the youth came to understand it far better than we do, and learned to live in harmony with it. In that brilliantly clear atmosphere he could see objects near or far just as they were, not blurred by mist as they are in a great part of our country. He kept his own mind as clear, so that he could describe objects and actions just as they were, with perfect naturalness and truth. His surroundings encouraged the growth of his imagination. He saw about him an endless variety of islands, seas, plains, slopes, and hills. From the Acropolis of Athens he looked across the plain to its border of mountains and to other heights still farther and farther away. His imagination led him to these distant places; it tempted his mind to pass from the known to the unknown on mental voyages of exploration. The mind was so well-trained that he could safely follow it. Thus he became a discoverer of new truth, an inventor in science and art. Though he might never have handled the chisel or the brush, he was by nature an artist, whose taste was satisfied with nothing short of perfection in sculpture, architecture, and literature.

233. Military Training. — At the age of eighteen the youth became a man. His name was then enrolled in the register of his father's township (deme).[1] From eighteen to twenty he was required to take military training along with his fellows of the same age. At the end of the first year these young soldiers had to give

[1] § 165.

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