peculiarly favourable to the development of such a charac­ter. Socrates, born at Λthens in the year 469 or 470 b.c. grew up to manhood during those years when Athens, standing on the proud eminence of her victories of Mara­thon and Salamis, was consolidating her power as a sove­reign state and seat of empire. In the course of the fifty years which intervened between her triumphant resistance to the Persian invasion and the commencement of the Pe­loponnesian war, Athens, like Rome in her struggle with her Italian neighbours, had gradually converted her allies in the islands and on the coasts of Asia Minor and Thrace into dependent subjects and tributaries. But Athens had not, like Rome, the prudence to combine these scattered members of her empire, elements of discord and trouble as much as of strength to the sovereign state, by the free communication of the rights of citizenship. Nor indeed could this wise expedient have availed in the case of Athens as in that of Rome. For the states over which the empire of Athens extended were either independent governments reluctantly submitting to her yoke, or the weak dependencies of a rival power, and indisposed to acknowledge the sovereignty of Athens but so long as that power wanted the vigour and the enterprize to head a coalition against the common oppressor. There were thus in the very constitution of the Athenian empire, materials of jealousy and disunion, which no line of con­duct but the impolitic one of surrendering an arbitrary rule into the hands of the people who had groaned un­der it, could long have kept from explosion. And, in fact, it was not the policy of Athens (masterly as that policy was under the hands of her great leaders) which sustained her empire for more than fifty years, so much as the inertness of her great rival, Lacedemon, and the diffi­culty of bringing the several grievances of the subject-states to bear on some decisive point, capable of influen­cing the movement of the whole in a strenuous concerted effort of resistance. At length we see this effort in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian war, as well as the difficulty of it in the complicated diplomacy by which that great movement was preceded, and in the reluctance of Lace­demon to bring home to herself the necessity of exertion.

But, whilst Athens was thus aggrandizing herself against a day of retribution from the insulted states of Greece, she enjoyed the sunshine of her day of empire, in the brilliant assemblage, which she then witnessed within her walls, of the great, and the learned, and the eloquent, from all parts of Greece.@@1 While her arms and her enterprize were set­ting foot on every sea and land, her attractiveness as a home of genius and civilization, was evidenced in the number of strangers frequenting her porticoes, and groves, and thea­tres, and temples, and the houses of her nobles. During thirty years of this period of glory, the philosopher Anaxa­goras was employed in propagating there the doctrines of the Ionic school, honoured by the patronage of her great men, and the revered master of her choicest spirits in the newly-acquired taste for philosophical inquiry. During, also, a considerable portion of the same period, the sophist Prodicus was domesticated within her walls, surrounded by crowds of admiring pupils from the highest ranks of her citizens, eagerly catching the inspiration of that rhetori­cal ability for which he was famed. Occasionally, too, amongst the distinguished visitors of the city, might be seen other illustrious professors of the day, also familiarly known by the name of sophists, then a complimentary designa­tion,—Protagoras of Abdera, Gorgias of Leontium, Hippi­as of Elis,—drawn there by the demand for that literary merchandize, of which they claimed the monopoly. There also were now collected, as in a school of all arts, the great masters of the drama, of sculpture, and painting, and music, and the gymnastic exercises. So that Athens, at this time, contained within her own bosom abundant resources for the enlargement of the mind, whether in the eminent men who formed her society, in the lectures and conversation of the professors of science, or in noble works, the speci­mens and examples of what genius could effect. Athens contained, also, doubtless, much to enervate and corrupt the moral judgment, whilst she presented every thing to exalt the imagination and refine the taste. Her political institutions, well-balanced as they had been left by Solon, were now violently disturbed. In the course of these years of imperial greatness and prosperity, they received a large infusion of that licentious spirit, which the naval successes of the Athenians had engendered in the lower order of the citizens,@@2 and the flattery of successive demagogues had fostered and diffused through the whole of the state. Now, also, faction divided the ties of family and kindred, and formed associations of the people for every lawless pur­pose of private ambition and cupidity. Their highest and purest court,—one principal anchor of the state, according to the intention of their great legislator,@@3—the Areopagus, was mutilated in its powers. And whilst numerous courts of law, thronged by their hundreds of judges, chosen by lot from the whole body of citizens, were constantly open,@@\* and an idle populace were encouraged, by pay from the public treasury, to attend on the business of these courts, the func­tions of the legislative and deliberative bodies were virtu­ally suspended. The peremptory power of these judicial committees, in which the people at large felt and exercised a despotic authority, became the real executive of the state. Then came into intense activity the vile system of syco­phancy,—a system, under which the life and property of the wealthy were at the mercy of every needy adventurer who could speak to the passions of the people, and earn a liveli­hood for himself by a career of successful prosecutions.

Nor was public corruption unattended by its usual evils of private luxury and debauchery. At this time too, there might be observed in the heart of a city which prided itself on its pious feeling,@@5 and amidst the frequency and splendour of festivals and external rituals of religion,@@® a profane scepti­cism with regard to the fundamental principles of religion and morality. A spirit of self-conceit and of presumption of knowledge, already natural to the Athenians, bad now widely spread among the people ; and every one was by turns dogmatist or sceptic,—according as it was his own opinion that he asserted,—or as he might display his ingenuity in questioning some received principle, or disputing some opi­nion proposed by another.

Add to these circumstances, the effect of a large slave population, the degraded ministers to the wants and the wealth of an insolent body of citizens, and of a number of resident foreigners engaged in carrying on the manufactures and trade of the city, paying a tax for their protection, and contributing to the military strength of the state, though excluded from its franchise. The slave, indeed, and the

@@@, Isocrat. Panegyr. Καί τό a-λ⅞⅛r *των άφικνονμίνων i>t ημas τoσovτov i<rτιv, κ.τ∙λ.* p. 59.

@@@’ Aristot. Polit, ii. 9, τ⅞r *vmapχiat γάρ lv tôiî Mηδικ0ιs* à *δf∣μot aιτιos γtvoμtvos iφpovημaτiσt)η,* κ.r∙λ.

@@@1 PlutarΛ∙ Solon, 19, *oωμtvot* ⅛i δv<ri 0ovλa<r *ωσπtρ ayκvp<ut 6ρμ5vσav, πττov iv* <rdλv *τηv ιro∖ιv tσ.σJaι,* e.r.λ. Tom. i. p∙ 35⅛ ed. Reiste.

@@@4 Aristoph. Nub. ‘208, arèv *μiv A0ηvat.* Στ. ri *trv* Xéyerr ; ou *ιτtιθoμmt tιrtt 9ικaστas ovχ oρω κaθημivovς.*

@@@5 Soph. (Ed. Col. 1006, « τir *γη θtoi>ς iπiστaτ<u τιμaιs σ.βiζeιv, fiδt τoυff imtpφeρtι.*

@@@β Xenophon, in his *Menorahilia,* i. c. 4, gives an instance in Aristodemus of one who not only had a contempt for all religion, but even derided those who concerned themselves with it.