



#### IV

### THE GREEK SETTLEMENTS IN SICILY.

B.C. 735-580.

[Of the Greek settlements in Sicily we have the precious sketch at the beginning of the sixth book of Thucydides, in which some say that he followed the Syracusan writer Antiochos. The books of Diodoros in which he must have described them more fully are unluckily lost, save some fragments. A good deal may be learned from Strabo, from whom we see that there were often several stories current about the same foundation. And there are casual notices in many places, in Plutarch's lesser works and elsewhere.]

THE Western Greeks at least had some vague notions of Sicily and the Sikels as early as the time of the Odyssey. We there hear of a land called *Sikanië*, which can only mean Sicily, and of a people called Sikels, who may be those either of Sicily or of Italy. With them the Greeks seem to have carried on a brisk trade in buying and selling slaves. The suitors threaten to sell Odysseus to the Sikels, and old Laertês is waited on by a Sikel woman. But such a trade, carried on along the coast, as all intercourse between Greece and Sicily still was ages afterwards, carried on too most likely in Phœnician vessels, does not prove much intercourse between

the people at the two ends. It is plain that Greek notions of Sicily were still very vague when settlement in Sicily began. It is said that the Phœnicians spread tales likely to frighten any other people from settling there.

For a long time Greek settlement was directed to the East rather than to the West. And it was said that, when settlement in Italy and Sicily did begin, the earliest Greek colony, like the earliest Phœnician colony, was the most distant. It was believed that Kymê, the Latin Cumæ in Campania, was founded in the eleventh century B.C. The other plantations in Italy and Sicily did not begin till the eighth. Kymê always stood by itself, as the head of a group of Greek towns in its own neighbourhood and apart from those more to the south, and it may very well be that some accident caused it to be settled sooner than the points nearer to Greece. But it is not likely to have been settled three hundred years earlier. Most likely it was planted just long enough before the nearer sites to suggest their planting. Anyhow, in the latter half of the eighth century B.C. Greek settlement to the West, in Illyria, Sicily, and Italy, began in good earnest.

It was said that the first settlement in Sicily came of an accident. Chalkis in Eubœia was then one of the chief sea-faring towns of Greece. Theoklès, a man of Chalkis, was driven by storm to the coast of Sicily. He came back, saying that it was a good land and that the people would be easy to conquer. So in 735 B.C. he was sent forth to plant the first Greek colony in Sicily. The settlers were partly from

Chalkis, partly from the island of Naxos. So it was agreed that the new town should be called Naxos, but that Chalkis should count as its metropolis. So the new Naxos arose on the eastern coast of Sicily, on a peninsula made by the lava. It looked up at the great hill of Tauros, on which Taormina now stands. The Greek settlers drove out the Sikels and took so much land as they wanted. They built and fortified a town, and part of their walls may still be seen. As the first Greek settlers in the land, they set up an altar and statue of Apollôn *Archêgetês*, the Leader and Beginner. It stood outside the town of Naxos, and became the religious centre of the Greeks of Sicily, the *Sikelîots* as distinguished from the *Sikels*. Hither all who went from Sicily to any of the great festivals of old Greece came first to sacrifice to the common god of all Sikelîots.

Naxos, as the beginning of Greek settlement in Sicily, answers to Ebbsfleet, the beginning of English settlement in Britain. The oldest of Sikelîot towns, it never became one of the greatest, and about three hundred years after its foundation it was altogether swept away, and has never since been rebuilt. Its settlers, Chalkidian and Naxian, belonged to the Ionian division of the Greek nation. In the very next year, it is said, in 734 B.C., a Dorian city was founded in Sicily, which has a much greater history. Corinth on the isthmus, with its two havens looking east and west, was one of the greatest sea-faring cities of Greece, and sent out colonies both ways. A joint enterprise to Sicily and the Illyrian coast was now decreed, and two famous Corinthian colonies, Korkyra

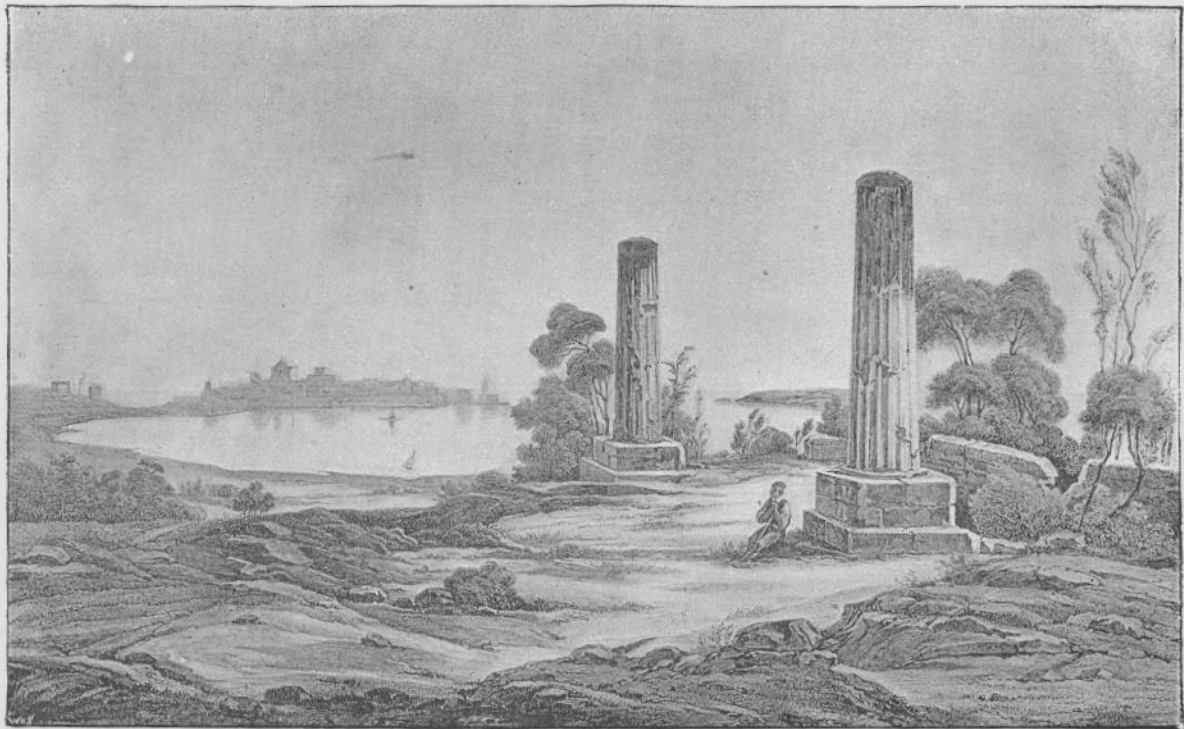
and Syracuse, arose as twin sisters. Chersikratês founded Korkyra and Archias founded Syracuse. Corinth seems to have claimed a measure of authority over her nearer colonies which was not usual on the part of a Greek metropolis. In the case of Korkyra this led to a War of Independence, and to bitter hatred between the mother and the daughter city. But no such authority was claimed over more distant Syracuse. Here therefore the metropolis and the colony were always on the best of terms, and the relations between them form the most pleasing story in Greek political life.

Kymê was planted on a high hill overlooking the sea; Naxos was planted all but in the sea, on a low peninsula. Syracuse was planted altogether in the sea on a low island. This shows how the Greeks had advanced since the days when all towns were built on inland hill-tops. The Greeks had caught up the Phœnicians. The island was that island of Ortygia which contains the spring of Arethousa. It lies close to the coast, so near that it was afterwards joined to it, sometimes by a mole, sometimes by a bridge. Running north and south, and with the peninsula called Plêmmyrion opposite to it to the south, the two fence in an inlet of the sea with a comparatively narrow mouth, which forms the Great Harbour of Syracuse, great as a harbour, though small as a bay. North of the island is another smaller harbour, so that Syracuse, like her mother Corinth, had two havens, though they were much nearer to each other than those of Corinth. A little to the north again is a long hill at its east end which rises sheer from



the sea, and which stretches inland till it ends in a point. It thus looks down on the Great Harbour and on another bay to the north, with another peninsula, Xiphonia, stretching south to match Ortygia, and another small and low peninsula, Thapsos, in the middle of the bay thus formed. On the south there is a piece of low ground between the island and the hill. And there is a wide stretch of low and swampy ground between the Great Harbour to the east, the Syracusan hill to the north and the higher inland hills to the west and south. Through this low ground runs the river Anapos and its tributary Kyana, of which we have heard in a legend. The topography of Syracuse is of the greatest importance for its history.

When the Corinthian settlers came, the Island and the whole land were held by Sikels; but it is quite possible that Phœnicians had a factory for trade. The first Greek town arose on the Island. Syracuse grew by spreading on to the mainland and climbing up the hill. But it would seem that the settlers had, from the beginning or from a very early time, more than one outpost on the mainland to defend the land which they occupied. They had one post called *Achradina* on the east end of the hill overlooking the sea, and another called *Polichna*—we might say in English *Littleton*—on a small hill in the low ground just west of the Great Harbour. Here arose the *Olympieion*, the famous temple of Olympian Zeus. And there was most likely another outpost on the south side of the hill, where was a temple of Apollón, called *Temenitès*. Each of these outposts protected



OLYMPIEION, SYRACUSE.

one of the chief roads leading to Syracuse. Achradina and Temenitēs were afterwards taken into the city, but Polichna never was. From the time of Archias till now, Syracuse has always been an inhabited city; but for ages past it has shrunk up again within its first bounds on the Island. No part of the hill is at all thickly inhabited. From the Island the Sikels were of course driven out, and in so much land as the Greeks gradually took to divide among themselves, they were brought down to the state of villainage. The origin of the name Syracuse (*Syrakousai* in various spellings) is not clear. It never was the name of the Island as such; it was the name of the city on the Island, and spread as the city grew.

By the foundation of Syracuse Dorian Greeks had occupied the best position on the east coast of Sicily. This seems to have stirred up the Ionians of Naxos—they are commonly called Chalkidians, from their metropolis Chalkis—to found two new cities between Naxos and Syracuse. This was in B.C. 729. Theoklēs himself founded Leontinoi, the only Greek city in Sicily on an inland site. But it was placed on a point needful to hold, as commanding the way from the inland hills to the plain of Leontinoi, the largest and most fruitful in the island. The town lay in a valley between two hills, with two *akropoleis*; it still lives on and keeps its name as *Lentini*. The other Chalkidian settlement at this time was KatanĒ, *Catina*, *Catania*, founded on a site close by the sea, but not actually in it, like Naxos and Syracuse. This town has been destroyed many times by earthquakes and by the lava of Ætna, but it

has been rebuilt as often as it has been destroyed, and it is now a far greater town than Syracuse. The working of the lava has given rise to both pagan and Christian legends. The tale went that at the first eruption after the foundation of Katanè, the lava parted to spare the Pious Brethren, Amphinomos and Anapios, who were carrying off their parents on their shoulders. This became a very favourite story, and the brethren are often seen on the coins of Katanè. Of two other Chalkidian towns, Euboia—so called from the island where Chalkis stands—and Kallipolis, the sites are unknown; they must have been somewhere to the north of Naxos.

Almost at the same time that the Chalkidians were thus advancing in Sicily itself, there came a new Dorian settlement from Old Greece. This was from Megara, which, like Corinth, is a city on the isthmus with two havens, and was then one of the chief sea-faring and colonizing cities of Greece. In B.C. 726 the Megarian settlers, under their founder Lamis, set forth to seek a home on that part of the east coast of Sicily which lay between Syracuse and the Chalkidian towns. There they met with some strange adventures. It is remarkable that they seem never to have tried to settle on the peninsula of Xiphonia, a site which seems the best after Ortygia, and where now is the town of Augusta. First, they tried to settle a little to the north of Xiphonia, at a place called Trôtilon, where the river Pantakyas, Pantagias, or Porcari, runs into the sea with a wide mouth, hardly a mile or two from the place where it is a tumbling brook in the meadows. Thence they moved to take

a share in the newly-founded Chalkidian settlement of Leontinoi. Theoklês, so the story goes, had planted his colony by agreement with the Sikels, and Greeks and Sikels lived together in Leontinoi as fellow-townsmen. Now no Greek held that he owed any duty to a barbarian, unless he was bound by special agreement, and both towards Greeks and barbarians an agreement was often kept in the letter and broken in the spirit. Theoklês told the Megarians that he and his Chalkidians could do no harm to the Sikels, because they were bound by a promise, but that the Megarians were not so bound, and that they might do what they chose. So the Megarians drove out the Sikels, and dwelled in Leontinoi along with the Chalkidians. Presently Theoklês began to devise another trick against the Megarians. The Chalkidians, when warring with the Sikels, had vowed an armed procession to the Twelve Gods. It was now time to fulfil the vow ; but the Megarians had no right in it. The Chalkidians went through their ceremony, and then a herald proclaimed that every Megarian must leave the town before sunset. The unarmed Megarians could not stand against the armed Chalkidians ; so they set forth to seek a third home, while the Chalkidians kept Leontinoi to themselves, without either Sikels or Megarians. Then the Megarians tried a winter on Thapsos, where Lamis died. Lastly they settled on a point of the bay between Thapsos and Xiphonia, near the greater Hybla. As is not very uncommon in such stories, they are said to have been helped by a Sikel prince who betrayed his own people. His name is Hyblôn,

called after his town, as we shall find some other men. The wanderers at last founded a town on the coast, which they called after their metropolis, Megara, in which Hybla was pretty well swallowed up. Megara is no longer an existing town, but considerable remains may be seen.

According to our dates, Greek settlement in Sicily must have stopped for about forty years after the foundation of Megara, and it is certain that for a while Italy rather than Sicily was chosen as the land to be settled. But one famous city seems to have been founded not long after Megara. This is Zanklê, afterwards called Messina, which still keeps its later name in the form of *Messina*. It seems to have been first settled in an irregular way by pirates from Kymê. This would not give their town the rights of a regular Greek colony; but it was afterwards founded again in a more orderly way from Kymê and Chalkis, with a founder from each. It was a wonderful site, on the strait at the foot of the hills, with a noble harbour, fenced in by a narrow strip of land in front of it. *Zanklê*, or rather *Danklon*, is said to have meant a reaping-hook in the Sikel tongue; hence the name. The settlers at Zanklê presently turned the north-east corner of Sicily, and made themselves an outpost on the northern coast. This was on the peninsula of Mylai or Milazzo, which one legend called the grazing-place of the oxen of the sun in the time of Odysseus. Zanklê or Messina has always been a prosperous city, but in Greek times it never held at all a foremost place among the cities of Sicily.

The foundation of Zanklé completed the Greek possession of the eastern coast of Sicily. By far the greater part of that coast was now occupied by Greek settlements; but, unless we count the Zanklaian outpost at Mylai, no Greeks had as yet attempted to occupy either the northern or the southern coasts. About B.C. 689 Greek settlers began to occupy the southern coast also. These were Dorians from the island of Rhodes, with some companions from Crete, and some perhaps from other islands. The new colony was planted near the march of the Sikans and Sikels, on a row of low hills between the sea and a rich plain fenced in by mountains. It was close by the river *Gelas*, so called in the Sikel tongue from the coldness of its waters, which shows how near the Sikel tongue was to the Latin *gelu* and *gelidus*. The new settlers first occupied a point of the hill, which they called *Lindioi*, after one of the Rhodian towns; as the new city grew, Lindioi became the akropolis of *Gela*, so called from the cold river. Gela became a famous city, but it has neither wholly perished like Naxos nor yet has it lived on like Messina. It was destroyed after a life of several centuries; and after many more centuries, the present town of Terranova was built on part of its site.

There is little doubt that the foundation of Gela, the first Greek town on the south coast of Sicily, stirred up Syracuse to enlarge her borders. No town was so well suited as Syracuse to be at once a land and a sea power. Her object was to occupy the whole south-eastern corner, and to have a sea-board on the southern coast as well as the eastern. To

this end she worked steadily but slowly, advancing both inland and along the coast. She had outposts at Helôron on her own coast and at Neaiton or Netum inland. Netum is *Noto*; but the present town is nearer the sea. Next Syracuse struck further inland, clearly aiming at the south coast. In 664 she occupied inland Akrai, now Palazzuolo, a hill full of Sikel tombs. In 644 she went on to Kasmenai, now Spaccaforno, on a hill some way inland, but looking down on the southern sea. Lastly in 599 she planted Kamarina on the southern sea. Syracuse now held the whole south-eastern corner of Sicily, with a long sea-board round the corner and an unusually large inland territory to enable her to hold the sea on both coasts.

What followed was as instructive as the relations between Corinth and Korkyra. All these Syracusan towns were doubtless meant to be, not separate commonwealths, but outposts of Syracuse, held by Syracusan citizens. At this time none of them coined money. And we hear of no disputes between Syracuse and any of them, except one. Kamarina was well suited to be a separate city and it sought for independence. A war followed, in which each side found allies, Greek and Sikel. In B.C. 553 the men of Kamarina were defeated, and their town was swept from the earth by its offended metropolis.

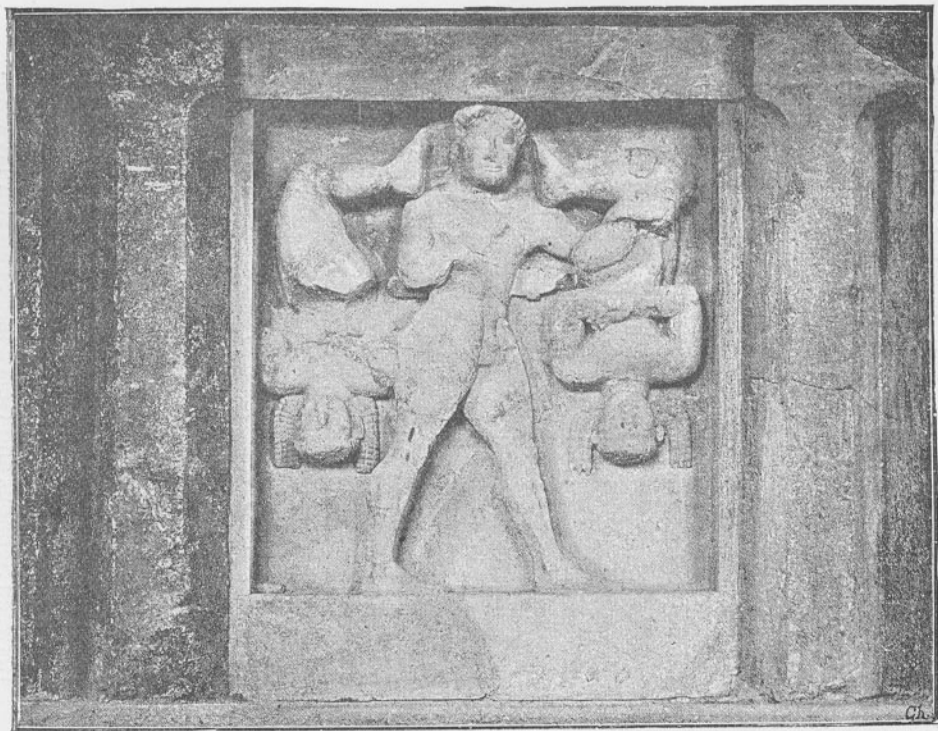
Meanwhile there was no Greek settlement on the north coast westward of the Zanklai outpost at Mylai. But presently, about 648 B.C. Zanklê went on to found a real colony much farther to the west, namely Himera, long the only Greek city on the north



coast. Cephalœdium and other Sikel points lay between it and Zanklê, and towards the west it stood right in the teeth of the Phœnicians. It stood on a not very high hill near the sea, by the mouth of the northern river of its own name. It lived only two hundred and forty years, and now it is wholly forsaken. But it had an outpost towards the Phœnician territory, the Hot Baths (*Thermæ*, *Θερμαί*) of Himera, which the legend said were thrown up by the nymphs to refresh the wearied Hêrâklês after his wrestling at Eryx. The baths still remain, and the modern town keeps its name as *Termini*.

We must now go back a little. While Syracuse and Zanklê were working round their several corners, after the foundation of Himera, but before that of Kamarina, in 628 B.C. the Megarians of Sicily planted Selinous on the south coast, the most western of Greek cities in the island. It answers to Himera on the north side, as being planted as an outpost of Hellas on the very march of Phœnicians, Sikans, and Elymians. It had an outpost on the river Mazaros, the furthest Greek post in the island. The akropolis stood on a hill above the sea, between the rivers Hypsas and Selinous, and the temples and other buildings spread over that hill and over another hill on each side, a wonderful group. Selinous, like Himera, is now quite forsaken, but its ruins are the grandest in Sicily.

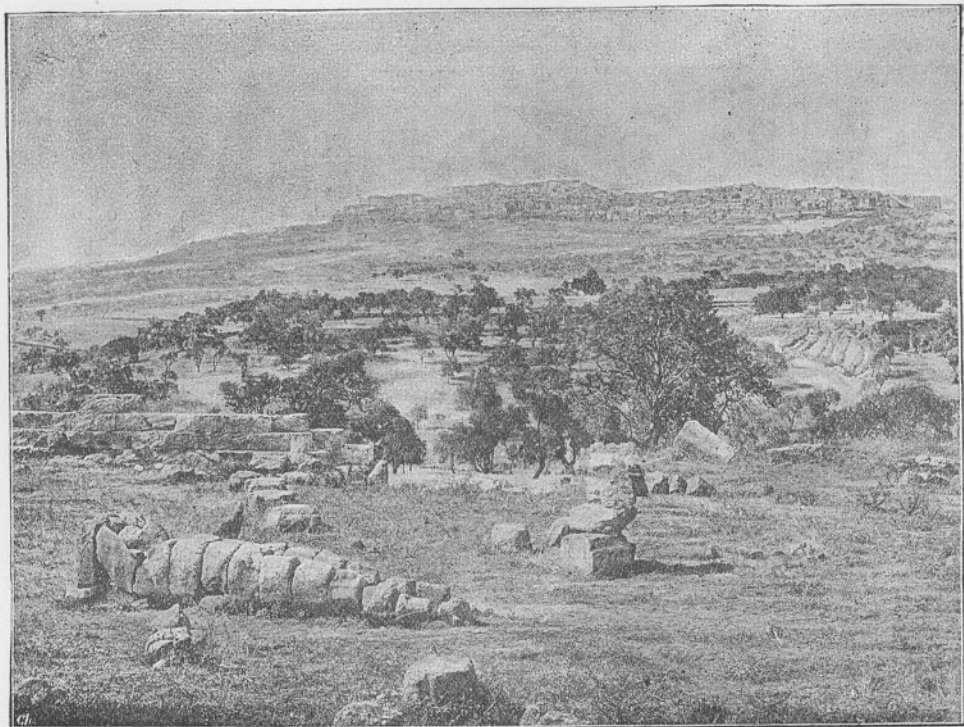
Between Selinous and Gela a large gap still lay without any Greek city. This in 599 B.C. was filled up by the foundation of Akragas, *Agrigentum*, *Girgenti*,



HÊRAKLÈS AND THE KERKÔPES.  
(*Early Sculpture from Selinous.*)

which has always lived on without any real change of name. This was a foundation of Gela, which could thus endure to plant an independent colony on her own borders. Greeks from other places, especially from Gela's own metropolis of Rhodes, joined in the settlement. The new city was not so close to the sea as most of its fellows. It stood on a hill between two rivers in their valleys, Akragas and another Hypsas. The akropolis arose on a lofty and almost isolated point of the hill, from which the town gradually spread down, as Syracuse spread up. And, like Syracuse, the modern town has shrunk up again into its oldest part; the present Girgenti is only the akropolis of Akragas. But though the city spread, it never reached the sea; its small haven remained at a little distance. Akragas had a great trade with the opposite coast of Africa; but it never became a real naval power like Syracuse. But it grew rich and powerful in many ways, and was certainly the second Greek city in Sicily, as Syracuse was the first. The lower city is now forsaken, but nowhere can there be seen so many temples more or less perfect, besides the fallen one of Zeus Olympios, the greatest in Sicily.

Thus in about 140 years, the greater part of the coast of Sicily was occupied by Greek settlements. The Phoenicians and their neighbours kept their own barbarian corner. Independent Sikels kept the inland parts and a large part of the north coast between Mylai and Himera. But the east and south coasts were Greek. We shall come to see that Akragas was not the youngest Greek city in Sicily;



AKRAGAS, FROM THE OLYMPIEION.

but it was the last independent commonwealth settled from another independent commonwealth. It was not however the last attempt at such settlement. Soon after the foundation of Akragas, about 580 B.C., a body of settlers from Knidos and Rhodes, under the Knidian Pentathlos, strove to make a settlement in the heart of the Phœnician territory, near Lilybaion in the extreme west of Sicily. The new comers found a war going on between the Greeks of Selinous and the Elymians of Segesta :—we shall hear of several more such wars. The men of Segesta had Phœnician allies, while the new comers, Greeks and Dorians, naturally gave help to the men of Selinous, also Greeks and Dorians. But the Greeks were defeated, and Pentathlos was killed. His followers then sailed away round the north-west corner of Sicily to the isles of Aiolos ; there they planted a colony on the largest of them, the isle of Lipara, which has ever since been an inhabited town. The new city of Lipara looked to Knidos as its metropolis, and revered the dead Pentathlos as its founder.

Thus the islands which lay between Sicily and southern Italy, two great lands of Greek settlement, themselves became Greek. The islands at the extreme west of Sicily, Aigousa and its fellows, naturally followed the fortunes of the neighbouring mainland, and the islands between Sicily and Africa were not touched by Greek settlement at any time. A time of nearly a hundred years now follows, which, as far as the Greek settlements were concerned, was a time of comparative peace and advance. We cannot say

that there were no wars, either between Greeks and Greeks or between Greeks and Phœnicians; but there is much less war than usual for so long a time. In the course of the sixth century B.C. the independent Phœnician cities of Sicily began to come under the power of their great sister-colony Carthage. Soon after that time begins the first great war of any Sicilian Greeks with Carthage, the first time when Syracuse stood forth in her great calling as the champion of Europe against Africa. But during the greater part of the sixth century Phœnicians and Greeks in Sicily meddled but little with one another. The Phœnicians kept their own corner; the Greeks strengthened their hold on the parts which they had won, and extended their borders against neighbouring Sikans and Sikels. But Syracuse alone, in her south-western corner, held any considerable inland territory. By the time the great strife came, Syracuse, though not holding the same dominion over the other Greek cities as Carthage did over the other Phœnician cities, was as clearly the first among them. We must now go on to tell what little we know of the internal affairs of the Greek cities while this work of settlement was going on, and also what we know of the general affairs of the island from the completion of Greek settlement till the great war with Carthage. That will be, roughly, the history of the sixth century, B.C.