

STORIES FROM
GREEK HISTORY

BY

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WITH PICTURES BY

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TO ARCHIBALD R.B. HALDANE

My dear Archie,

Do you remember that bright summer morning last year when we lay out on the lawn and read together the "Labours of Heracles," and how you once interrupted to ask "if the tales were true?"

The tales in this little book *are* true, and beside the winter fire I wrote them, fancying that I still had your eager face beside me, heard still your eager demand for "another story." Will you like these as well, I wonder?

Your loving friend

Ethelwyn Lemon

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CHAPTER I

SOLON (B.C. 638–558)

Long, long ago, more than six hundred years before the time of Christ, the Greek city of Athens had gone to war with Megara to get possession of the island of Salamis.

The war had lasted so long that every one was tired of it; the poorer men, because they had to leave their farms for their wives and children to manage as best they could; and the richer ones, because they had to fight and endure hardships instead of amusing themselves, and living at their ease at home, as they did when there was peace. So they all agreed to let Megara have Salamis, and passed a law that no one was ever to say that Salamis should by right belong to Athens, or he would be put to death. This was a very cowardly law, but as no one wanted to be put to death, no one dared to say a word against it for some time.

But one day a great noise was heard in the market-place of Athens, and every one ran out of doors to see what was the matter. A handsome young man was shouting at the top of his voice, mid waving his arms about, like one that was mad. He was wearing a cap, which none but sick men wore in those days. And many whispered, "Who is he?" And others answered, "Hush! listen to him; he has gone mad, but he is talking words of wisdom." "Ay," said another, "for he is telling us to get back Salamis. Poor fellow, it is young Solon, the poet, whose father wasted all his money. I hope they will not punish him for this with death."

But Solon, the poor nobleman, was only pretending to be mad. He thought it a disgrace for Athens to lose Salamis, and chose this way of saying so. And the people were so moved by his words, even though they were the words of a madman (as they thought), that they decided to fight again.

They chose Solon as general, and he won back Salamis for them.

And after that, though he still wrote poetry, it was more serious poetry than before, for he went about among the people, and saw many sad things happening.



SOLON IN THE MARKET-PLACE

Poor men, who had fallen into debt, because of bad harvests, like the Highland Crofters some years ago, were dragged off to prison by their creditors, or to the slave-market. There they were sold as slaves, and their wives and children

were taken from them, since the same masters did not often buy all of a family. And Solon asked many questions about all that he saw, and soon was wiser than almost any other Athenian. So when it was decided that something must be done to make matters better, all the citizens thought that Solon was the best man to do it.

Solon made some very wise laws. One of these forbade rich men to sell poor men into slavery because they could not pay their debts. Another took away all the rights of a citizen from every Athenian who did not take one side or the other at a time of civil strife. This was a very important law, and it made Athenians take a great interest in politics always, so that they soon grew to be the ablest people in the world at making new laws and reforming old ones.

Solon's other laws were meant to keep the nobles from getting all the power into their own hands. If they had been obeyed, the people would all have lived happily together. But they were not obeyed; though Solon was not there to see this at first. For after bidding the Athenians keep all his laws faithfully, he went away to travel in distant lands for ten years. He wished to see how the people in other lands managed their business. He felt that it would be better to leave his own people alone for a little while until they grew accustomed to the new laws. Some writers, who were not very careful about dates, used to tell a very nice story of this part of Solon's life. I am going to tell it to you, although it never happened, because until quite lately it was thought that perhaps it was true.

There was in Lydia a king named Croesus, who was the richest man in the world. Solon was said to have visited him. Croesus took his famous guest all over his palace and his treasure-room to show him all the store of gold and silver and precious stones he had. And many beautiful pictures he showed too, and statues, the loveliest in the world. Solon looked at them all, and admired them, but he did not seem so full of astonishment as Croesus would have liked. At last

Croesus said, "Tell me, Solon, if you think any man in the world is happier than I?"

He hoped that Solon would say that he was the happiest of all. And he was vexed when Solon said, "O King, Tellus the Athenian, who died fighting bravely for his country, is the happiest man I know of."

"Do I, then, come next to Tellus?" asked Croesus.

"Nay, O King, but two noble youths, who were kind to their aged mother. And she prayed to the gods to reward them. The gods answered her prayer by taking her sons to themselves."

Croesus was very angry at this answer. Yet he asked again, "Then do you not count me a happy man?"

But Solon answered gravely, "O King, count no man happy till he dies. For none of us know what the gods have in store for us while we yet live."

And with that he went sadly away, thinking he had angered Croesus for no good.

Years afterwards, so the story goes, Croesus was defeated in a great battle by Cyrus, King of Persia. Cyrus made a great pile, bound Croesus tightly, and laid him on the top. And he had set the pile on fire, so that Croesus would soon have been burned. But he shouted, "Solon, Solon." Cyrus asked a servant why Croesus called for Solon. The servant told him what I have just told you. Then Cyrus, who was a much better and wiser man than Croesus, told his soldiers to lift Croesus off the fire. He took him home, and treated him kindly as long as he lived. So Solon was the means of saving Croesus' life.

When at last he went home to Athens, Solon was very distressed to find that the only law that had been kept was that which told the citizens to take part in political life. The people had obeyed that thoroughly, and there were three political parties in the State. The "Men of the Upland" formed one; they

were all poor farm-labourers. Then there were the "Men of the Plain," who were nearly all rich noblemen. Thirdly, there were the "Men of the Shore," who were merchants. Every citizen belonged to one or other of these. Solon's clever cousin, Peisistratus, led the Men of the Upland, and in the end this party had the best of it.

Poor Solon was very unhappy, even though his cousin was very kind to him, and told the people to keep Solon's laws. He often asked Solon's advice. But Solon warned the people that they were "treading in the footsteps of the fox" by helping Peisistratus.

And indeed Peisistratus behaved as slyly as a fox. One day he drove into the market-place, bleeding from dreadful wounds which he had given himself. The poor people crowded round his chariot to ask him how he had been so hurt. He pretended that some wicked men had tried to kill him because he was working for the good of the poor Men of the Upland. Unless he had some soldiers to guard him, he said, he might soon be murdered.

The Men of the Upland voted that he should have a guard of soldiers to follow him about. And then it became clear what his plan was. Soon he used the soldiers to seize for himself the chief power in the city, and made himself Despot. (This was the name given to a ruler who could do whatever he liked with the people and the laws.)

The leaders of the Men of the Plain and of the Men of the Shore had to leave Athens. For a time Peisistratus had his own way in everything.

Solon grew more and more unhappy over this change in the way of government, and could not be comforted. He shut himself up in his house in grief because his beloved Athens was no longer a free city. Two years after Peisistratus became Despot he died.

Every one had loved him, and all were very sorry for his death.

Peisistratus ruled wisely and kindly, and welcomed to his Court many wise and clever men. He tried to make Athens famous for great literature and beautiful statues and noble buildings. Twice he was driven from his throne and city by his enemies. Yet before he died he had done his country much good, and might have satisfied even his cousin Solon had he been there to see.

CHAPTER II

THEMISTOCLES (B.C. 514–449)

Not many years after Solon's death there was born at Athens a boy destined to be one of the most wonderful men Athens ever saw. He was not a noble, like Solon, nor was he poor; but, like Solon, he was rather an unusual sort of boy, though in a different way. He was not particularly clever at his lessons at school, nor was he fond of games. When the other boys were playing at quoits or ball, or harnessing captive beetles to a paper car, he went off by himself and made up speeches, pretending that one of his classmates was accused of a crime, and that he himself was pleading before the judge that his friend should be let off. Or else he would call his schoolfellows together and make a long speech about politics, in which at that early age he took a great interest. His schoolmaster used to say he would turn out to be some one extraordinary, and would become either a great blessing or a great curse to his country.

And when he grew up, and was studying philosophy with a tutor, he knew more about politics and the affairs of the day than he did of his studies, which was a great disappointment to his father and mother.

In fact at that time Themistocles gave them much trouble, for he was rather inclined to be wild and extravagant, and they thought that if he would only leave politics alone, everything would be all right again. One day his father pointed out some worn-out warships that were rotting away in the docks, and told him that that was the fate in store for him if he became a statesman. "The Athenian people will work you very hard," he said, "and take all they can out of you, and then, when you can be of use to them no longer, they will leave you alone to die." But it was of no use for his father or any one else to talk like this to Themistocles, for nothing in the world

interested him but politics, and just then in Athens very exciting things were happening.

When Themistocles was about fourteen years old, the Athenians had helped their kinsmen on the Asiatic shore of the Mediterranean Sea to fight against King Darius of Persia; and though they did not win in the end, they did much harm to Darius's dominions, and burned the great city of Sardis before they returned home.

This made Darius very angry indeed, but he was too busy just then to follow the Athenians home and avenge the insult. Yet, so that he should not forget his anger against them, he ordered one of his slaves to say to him every day at dinner, "Sire, remember the Athenians." Atossa, his wife, constantly, urged him to go against the Athenians, for she wanted Greek women for her slaves, as she had heard that they were very beautiful.

But eight years passed away before Darius found time to do anything. Then at last he called a very clever general to him, named Mardonius, and told him to make ready to go to war with the Athenians.

Now, if you look at the map, you will see the country through which Mardonius led his soldiers after he had crossed the Hellespont. It was a wild and barbarous country, in which lived savage and warlike tribes. Mardonius had ordered his ships to meet him after sailing round the point of Mount Athos (which you will see in the map).

But a dreadful storm arose, three hundred ships were almost all wrecked, and the twenty thousand men they carried were drowned near the rocky coast, which was as dangerous as many parts of the coast in the north of Scotland. And when the barbarian tribes heard of this, they attacked Mardonius's army, and destroyed more than half of it. So poor Mardonius lost heart, and felt that it would be wiser on the whole to go back to Persia.

Back he went, and for nearly two years after Persia was full of the hurry and bustle of preparing to make war on the Greeks. At last King Darius sent off heralds to each Greek city to ask the people for earth and water. You will think this a very funny thing for him to ask, but if the Greeks gave the earth and water, it meant that they would agree to Darius ruling them on land and sea. Many of the States were so frightened that they gave earth and water at once.

But you may be sure that Athens was not one of these. There the people caught hold of the herald and threw him into a deep hole, where, they said, he could get earth and water for himself. And they told all their soldiers to make ready for war. Just think how excited Themistocles must have felt when he came out of his philosophy class one day, and heard that in that deep hole in the quarry near by, into which he had loved to throw stones when he was a child, the enemy's herald had been thrown that morning.

You may be sure he delivered a fine speech to his fellow-students, which was so fiery that they all took sides for or against the Persian invader. Themistocles and another, Aristides (besides others whose names I need not tell you), went off to the war under Miltiades, the great Greek general, for they agreed with him that they ought to fight at once, for fear the friends of Persia in Athens would open the city gates and let the enemy march in.

Out on a hill above the plain of Marathon gathered that brave little Greek army, looking down on the great host of the Persians between them and the sea.

For four or five days they awaited the attack of the Persians, but in vain: and so Miltiades himself decided to attack. All the fighting men of the little town of Platae had joined him (in gratitude for past kindnesses received from Athens), and his force now numbered between ten and eleven thousand. After arranging them in the best way possible for so small a force, he ordered them to start at a run down the hill towards the enemy.

The Persians either did not expect them, or thought that so small an army would never be so mad as to charge their large forces, and were far from ready to oppose them. They soon learned, however, to their cost, that if the Greeks were mad, there was a method in their madness, when the line of pikes charged into them with a great force gained by their run of a mile downhill. Both sides of the Persian army broke away in disorder, and were routed; but the Greek centre, which was their weakest part, would have been beaten had not the Greeks at the right and left come to the rescue. Even then there was a desperate struggle on the beach before the Persians were all driven into the sea or to their ships, and the field of Marathon was won.

"Miltiades, thy victories
Must every Persian own:
And hallow'd by thy prowess lies
The field of Marathon."

This was one of the songs they sang in Athens after the battle, when every one was so happy that even the friends of Persia were quiet, and pretended to be glad too. But some of Themistocles' friends noticed that he was keeping away from the feasts that were held in honour of the victory, and that he was growing pale and looking ill. He did not attend to his studies any more, but went about alone, and would not talk to anybody.

At last a friend stopped him in the street one day, and said: "What is the matter with you, Themistocles? Are you ill? You have not been to the club nor to the philosophy class for several days, and we are quite dull without you to make us speeches." Themistocles grew very red, and after a little said: "I cannot sleep for thinking of the trophies Miltiades has won." "Go and win some yourself," said the other; and Themistocles took his advice. From that time forward he was never absent from the public council.

Athens was at war just then with the island of Aegina, and Themistocles advised the Athenians to build a great many

ships, so as to conquer Aegina the more easily, as he said. But in the back of his mind he had another plan. He felt sure that Darius, the Persian king, would come back some day soon to try to conquer the Athenians, and this time he would not bring his army by land only, but would bring a great many ships as well. And he thought if the Greeks had two or three hundred ships in readiness, they might win another glorious victory.

But his old schoolfellow, Aristides, who had gone with him to fight at Marathon, thought him quite wrong in this, and believed that the Athenians had better not waste their money in building so many ships. So whenever Themistocles spoke in the Assembly in favour of the proposal, Aristides used to oppose him. Aristides was not nearly so clever or wise as Themistocles, but he was a much better man. He had never grieved his parents, nor been wild and extravagant, and he was always so fair to every one that men called him "Aristides the Just," and trusted him a great deal. He had never done anything of which he needed to be ashamed, whereas Themistocles had often done acts that were dishonourable, and was not always as careful of the people's money as he should have been. Then he sometimes told lies, and gave people bribes to do what he wanted, whether it was right or not. But he could never bribe Aristides; and as Aristides was always against him when he tried to get a larger navy for Athens, he at last grew very angry with him, and the two quarrelled so badly that every one grew tired of listening to them.

The Athenians had a plan for getting rid of people of whom they were tired, and they chose this way now. They all came into the city one day, and the clerks of the Council gave each of them an oyster shell, on which they were to write the name of the man they wanted to send out of the city. Then they dropped their shells into a large vase that stood near for the purpose. More than six thousand of them on this day wrote the name of Aristides on their shells. After the clerks had counted the shells, Aristides was told he must leave the city.

This voting by oyster-shells was called Ostracism, and Aristides was said to be ostracised. He had to leave the city for ten years, and take no share in its doings all that time. Aristides loved his country so dearly that this was a very cruel punishment to him, for he knew quite well that once he was out of the way, Themistocles would easily persuade the people to make a great navy; and this was just what happened. But in this matter Themistocles was right, and it was best for Athens, as you will see, that Aristides should be sent away just then.

For across the Mediterranean King Darius of Persia was not sleeping all this time, but was very busy indeed. Furious that a small city like Athens should have defeated his large army, he made up his mind to make ready a larger army and a bigger fleet, and to sail against Athens again. Themistocles knew of all this, and never tired of telling the people of the use of a large fleet, and that Athens must become the "Mistress of the Seas"; until the Athenians believed it so thoroughly that they thought they had always wanted this.

And when they had the best of it in the Aeginetan War, they felt sure that Themistocles was right, though Darius died, and so ended their fear that he would come again. But his son Xerxes continued to prepare for war against the Greeks, and at last the report came across the sea that he had left home with a very large army and fleet.

Xerxes was a foolish king, and had been so spoiled in his childhood that he often behaved like a big baby. When he could not get across the Hellespont in his bridge of boats because of a great storm, he flew into a rage, and ordered his servants to thrash the sea for being so rough. At last, however, he crossed the Hellespont, and then marched through wild country towards Greece. The Greeks on their side were preparing to fight him.

Leonidas, King of Sparta, met him in the narrow pass of Thermopylae (which is on the Malian Gulf, in your map) with seven thousand men against the Persian myriads. Xerxes

was very angry because Leonidas and his men did not run away, but combed their long curls and practised many gymnastic exercises, as if the enemy were not there at all.

"Are they mad," he cried, "that they do not run away or surrender?"

"Nay, sire," said an exiled Spartan who was with him, "they always comb their hair very carefully before a big battle. They have determined to fight to the death."

After a time Xerxes sent some troops against them, to take them alive and bring them before him. But the Spartans soon showed that they could fight as well as they could curl their hair. There was room for a few only to fight at a time, and they fearlessly cut down the Persians who came against them time after time, until one set grew tired and another took its place. For two days this terrible fight went on, till the Persians were so frightened that their captains had to drive them into the fight with whips.

On the second night a dreadful thing happened. A treacherous Greek of the neighbourhood, who wanted to grow very rich, went to Xerxes, and said that if he were given a large sum of money, he would show him a path over the mountains which would bring him in at the back of brave Leonidas and his men. Xerxes was only too glad to give him as much gold as he asked, and sent soldiers over the mountain path with this traitor as their guide.

But they did not attack Leonidas until noon next day, and he had many friends who came to warn him that the enemy had found the path at his back. He called his captains, and held a council of war, and decided that, in obedience to Spartan laws, he must stay and fight it out, even though he was sure to be killed. He kept with him three hundred Spartans, and seven hundred Thespians who said nothing would make them leave him, and four hundred Boeotians whom he could not trust out of his sight, and sent all the rest of his army away.

Then there was nothing for it but to fight till they fell, and this they did, each one killing many Persians or hurling them over the steep cliffs into the sea below, before they fell themselves, covered with glorious wounds. Leonidas fell in the thick of the fight "on the field of honour."



THERMOPYLAE

And over the spot where he fell a great marble lion was placed, after the war was over, and two other monuments, on one of which were carved these lines, which a great poet of that time had written:

"Go tell the Spartans, thou that passest by,
That here obedient to their laws we lie."

I think I hear you asking: "But where was Themistocles all this time? Why did he not come to help Leonidas? Was he afraid?"

He was fighting the Persians somewhere further south. You must remember that the Persians came not only overland, but with many ships too. Fortunately for the Greeks a tremendous storm, which raged for three days and three nights, did so much harm to the enemy's ships that four hundred of them were destroyed, many men drowned, and much treasure and many stores lost. The coast almost in sight of Thermopylae was covered with the wreckage of boats, and with dead bodies, and Themistocles, like the other Greeks, was glad at this news.

But he knew that even after losing four hundred ships the Persian fleet would still be much larger than that of the Greeks. So he was not surprised, as the other Greeks were, when they saw on the morning after the storm a very large fleet off the north of the long island of Euboea. They wanted to sail away at once down the coast of Euboea to Chalcis to take shelter. Themistocles tried hard to persuade them to stay where they were and fight; and the people in the island heard this, and sent him a very large present of money, so that he should keep the Greek fleet off the north of the island. You noticed before that Themistocles was not very particular about taking money or giving it, if he could get his own way by so doing; so he thanked the islanders, and gave presents to all the other admirals, if they promised to stay there and fight.

They promised; in those days most Greeks would do anything for money (and this was the worst point in the Greek character), but they did not begin the fight till the evening. Then they fought very bravely for some time, but just when they were beginning to get the worst of it, it grew so dark that they had to stop the battle for that night.

Strange to tell, during that night too arose a great wind, which dashed the Persian ships about so much that many were wrecked altogether, and others so much damaged that they could not fight next day. By the day after the Persians had patched up their ships, and began to fight again. The battle lasted all day, till the poor Greeks were so battered that even Themistocles thought they must escape southwards down the channel between the long island of Euboea and the mainland. But he would not have been Themistocles if he had not played a trick by the way.

In the fleet of the Persians were the Ionian Greeks, who lived across the Mediterranean Sea, and were servants of the Persian King. For their benefit Themistocles wrote up in very large letters near every well all along the cliffs: "Let all the Ionians desert the Persians and help the Greeks; or at least throw the Persian fleet out of order after the battle begins." Of course he knew that the Ionians were too weak and too much afraid of Xerxes to do anything of the kind, but he thought it would make Xerxes uneasy if he saw this writing, as he was sure to do.

But while Themistocles was writing on the cliffs, the other admirals in the Greek fleet, who were not Athenians, and did not care very much what happened to Athens, decided to sail far south to guard their own homes. Nothing that Themistocles could say made them change their minds, so he told the Athenians that they must all leave their beloved city of Athens and their homes and everything dear to them. Many of them wept and said they would not go; they would rather die than go.

Themistocles, who meant for the best, played another of his clever tricks to persuade them to go. He walked into the midst of the wailing citizens, crying out that the Gods had left Athens, so it was time that men left it too. "What do you mean?" they shouted; and then he told them that Athene, the goddess who loved their city most and always lived in the temple on the hill, had gone away, taking with her her pet

snake, which had been there so long that no one knew its age. Further, that a prophet in another temple had prophesied that Athenians would "find safety behind wooden walls only"; and "of course," said Themistocles, "the wooden walls are the sides of the ships, into which you had best go at once."

Perhaps Themistocles could have told you where the goddess and the snake had gone, but the unhappy Athenians did not stop to ask him that. They all hurried off and caught their little ones in their arms, and took them and their wives, and afterwards as much of their furniture as they could pick up in their hurry, and went on board the ships. For two or three days the ships were busy sailing to and fro between Athens and Salamis, taking Athenian families and property across to safety in the island of Salamis. The Greek fleet promised to stay near Salamis till all the Athenians were removed. By that time Xerxes had reached Athens and set it on fire, and the Persian fleet was drawing near again, ready for another fight.

Then followed a most exciting discussion in the Greek Council of War. Themistocles felt sure that if the Greeks with their small ships stayed in the narrow strait of Salamis, and provoked the Persians to attack them there, the enemy's lumbering ships would not have room to move about, and could be thrown into great disorder; whereas if the battle was fought in a wider place the Persians would have the best of it. But no one else in the Council agreed with him, and they all left, after deciding to sail away from Salamis next morning.

Themistocles was not satisfied, however, and went on board the ship of Eurybiades, the Spartan admiral, and tried to persuade him to alter the plan. But all Eurybiades would promise to do was to call another Council. The other admirals were very angry at being called back again, and when Themistocles kept urging them to choose his plan, one of them cried out, "Themistocles, those who rise up at the Games before their turn are whipped."

"May be," answered Themistocles, "but those who never rise at all never win the crown of victory."

At which words the other fell into such a passion that he raised his heavy stick to strike Themistocles. Themistocles did not flinch, but said quietly, "Strike me if you like, but listen to me."

At this the other was ashamed, and let his stick fall, and listened. But as Themistocles went on to give fresh reasons why they should stay where they were, the news came that Xerxes had taken the city of Athens, and Adeimantus, the Corinthian admiral, said with a sneer that Themistocles had not even the right to speak, for he had now no city.

At this Themistocles lost his temper entirely, and in a rage he cried that if he had not a city, he had a fleet of two hundred ships, and if he took them away, as he thought of doing, he could build a splendid city for his men away in the west, where Xerxes would not trouble him. This made the others very much afraid, and they agreed to stay and fight at Salamis. Then each went to his own ship and to rest.

Next day, however, so many of their friends came from their homes begging them to come south at once, that they said they must have another council meeting. Themistocles now saw that he would not succeed in persuading them this time, so he planned to trick them into doing what he thought best for them all. He sent a very clever and trusty servant to King Xerxes, saying that he (Themistocles) was very fond of Xerxes, and hoped that Xerxes would win. But the Greek fleet were just planning to give Xerxes the slip. So Xerxes had better come close up at once, and begin the battle.

Xerxes was much pleased, and thought kindly of Themistocles for such seemingly friendly advice, and remembered it to his credit years afterwards. Meanwhile the Greek admirals were still quarrelling over the plans of attack, and Themistocles listened sadly, but said nothing. Suddenly the door opened, and a servant came in and pulled gently at Themistocles' sleeve, and said, "A ship-captain, who will not tell his name, wishes to speak with you, sir." Themistocles

hurried out and saw—whom do you think?—his old rival, Aristeides.

Some time before, he had asked the Athenians to let Aristeides come back, and they had agreed, and here he was—too full of important news, however, to remember to thank Themistocles. He begged that they should now be rivals only in doing their country good, and whispered that the Persian fleet had sailed quite close, and there was now no longer a chance of escape for the Greeks.

This was just what Themistocles was longing to hear; and remembering Aristeides' patriotic spirit in the old days, he decided to trust him with his secret. So he said, "You bring good news, Aristeides, for you tell me that my plans have turned out well. I had to do this to make the Greek admirals fight here." And he told him the whole story. Aristeides praised the plot, and they went into the Council together. Aristeides was well known by name to all the admirals, and much respected by them; and at another time they would have given him a warm welcome; but just then they had hardly patience enough to hear what he had to say. They would not believe him until the captain of another ship came in and told the same tale.

When they woke next morning, they did not doubt any longer, for there lay the Persian ships in front of them, and the battle soon began. It was a terrible fight, and lasted all day, but in the end the Greeks won, losing only forty ships, while the Persians lost two hundred. And as soon as the Persian ships fled, Aristeides went hastily on shore and fought against the army of the Persians, and defeated them utterly.

The Persian fleet, or rather what was left of it, fled home, with King Xerxes on board, and a great part of the army. But quite a large force was left behind, which continued the war until the next year, when the Persian general, with most of his army, was slain in the great battle of Plataea; and at last the great war was over.

The Athenians were now free to go to their own city, and Themistocles with them, covered with well-deserved glory from the war, and beloved by all his fellow-citizens. They found all their houses in ruins, but there was one thing that cheered them very much. The pet snake of the goddess Athene was back again in the spot where the temple used to stand, and in the spot near by where there had been for years an old gnarled olive-tree, which the Persians had burned down to its roots, a fresh sprig of olive had sprung up. These things made them feel that the goddess meant to come back again herself, and wanted them to come too.

Themistocles said they must build finer temples and houses than before, and make Athens the most beautiful and the strongest city in the world. They must build many new ships, too, and a fine new harbour, and strong walls all round the city, and all round the port and harbour of Peiraeus, too. The Peiraeus was about four miles from Athens, and there most of the shipping business of Athens was carried on.

The people were delighted at the idea, and after they had built enough houses for themselves to live in, they all set to work with a will, so that the neighbouring states were quite frightened to see such energy. They were jealous because the Athenians had so many ships, but now they began to say that the Athenians must mean to conquer them as well as Persia, and to make themselves masters of Hellas.

At last the Spartans heard about it, and were very angry. Up till the time of the war, they had always been thought the best and bravest of the Greeks. But now many were saying that the Athenians were better and braver than they, and that the Athenians had really been the saviours of Hellas, and the Spartans had always come too late to every battle except Thermopylae. So the Spartans sent ambassadors to Athens to ask why the people were building such strong walls.

"Surely," said they, "if the Persians come again, we shall help you, and if they get inside your walls, then it will be

very difficult to drive them out again. We think there is no need to build such strong walls, but rather come and help us to pull down all the city walls throughout Hellas."

"Now," said the people to Themistocles, "what are we to do? We are not ready for a war just now, and the Spartans will make war on us if we refuse to pull down our walls."

And they spoke in very anxious tones.

"Send me as ambassador to Sparta," answered Themistocles, "and choose a few other men to follow me later on, and I will smooth away the difficulty"; and he laughed so much that the people began to laugh too, though they were not quite sure why they laughed. But they thought that Themistocles was sure to manage the matter well, as he always did. He made ready to go to Sparta, and sent word that he was coming to talk things over. Before he left, he called the people together, and said: "While I am away, do you finish the city wall as fast as you can—all of you, men, women, and children."

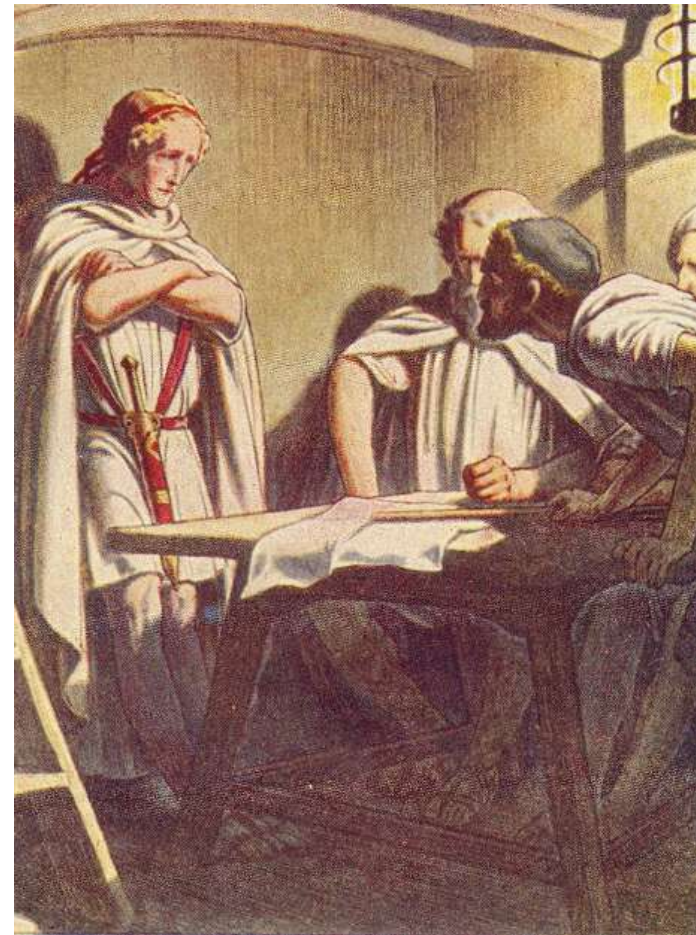
So every one of them set to work, the little children as busily as any, and the walls grew higher and higher every day.

When Themistocles reached Sparta every one was very polite to him, for they were all rather afraid of him. He was so quick-witted and clever, that he seemed to be laughing at them; for they themselves were always slow in their wits and in their speech.

He made them suspicious now, because he kept away from their Council, always saying that he could do nothing without his fellow-ambassadors; and something seemed to be delaying them on their journey. But when the news reached them that the Athenians had built the wall to a great height since Themistocles had left Athens, they asked him rather angrily for an explanation.

He answered that they were mistaken, and should send ambassadors to Athens to see for themselves. He said this

because, if the Spartans, after they learned the truth, should want to do any harm to himself and his friends, who had at last arrived, they would not dare to do so for fear the Athenians should pay them out by seizing their ambassadors.



THEMISTOCLES AND THE GREEK CAPTAIN

And he sent word to Athens that the people were to be very kind to the Spartan ambassadors, but were not to stop building the wall. They followed his advice, so that the Spartan ambassadors sent word to Sparta that the story was all true, and the walls round Athens were very high and very

strong. Then Themistocles and his comrades went into the Spartan Council, and said boldly that the Athenians had meant all the time to have walls, so that if enemies again attacked Hellas, the Athenians would not again be homeless outcasts. The walls were now of a great height, and nothing would persuade them to pull them down. It was quite different for the people who lived in the south, and farthest away from the enemy, but Athens was, so to speak, the rampart of the Greeks on the North, from which part alone an enemy could attack the Greeks by land.

The Spartan Council was very angry when it heard this, but dared not say anything, for there was, after all, some truth in what Themistocles said. Besides, they could not afford to quarrel with Athens just now. Then Themistocles and his friends went away home.

When he found the Athenian walls so high he persuaded the Council to do more wall-building, this time all round the port and harbour of Peiraeus. This was agreed upon, and soon Athens had one of the largest and finest harbours in the world, in which hundreds of ships could anchor safely. And not long after, the smaller states of Hellas made Athens head of the United Fleet, which gave great satisfaction to Themistocles; and the people felt more than ever that Themistocles' policy was the right one for them. Every one soon acknowledged that Athens was the great naval power of the day.

It is very sad to have to tell you that after this Themistocles grew so boastful and proud that by the time he was forty-three years old the Athenians, heartily tired of him, ostracised him as they had done Aristeides some years before the war. Only they never allowed Themistocles to come home again, for after they had sent him away the Spartans told them that he had taken part in a wicked plan to give the Greeks over into the power of Xerxes of Persia.

The Spartans had said this in the hope that the Athenians would never allow him to come home again, for

they hated him, and knew that he did not believe in them. Unfortunately the Athenians believed this horrible story, and tried to capture Themistocles to put him to death. But he ran away, and hid himself in one place after another, until, after many hairbreadth escapes, he reached Artaxerxes' realm. He sent a letter to Artaxerxes reminding him of the kindness he had done his father at Salamis, and claiming kindness in return. And he pretended that he hated Athens so much that he would help Artaxerxes to conquer her. But he asked for a year's time in which he could learn the Persian language, so as to talk over such important matters with the King.

Artaxerxes gave him not only a year, but a province in which to live, and ordered three towns to supply him with all he needed of food and clothes, and other things, for himself and his family. After a year in this place, called Magnesia, he returned to the King, but found him too busy with other wars to be able to fight Athens just then. Themistocles was very glad at this, for he did not want to harm Athens.

For several years he lived quietly in Magnesia, and the people round about grew very fond of him. Then one day an order came from Artaxerxes that he was to lead an army against the Greeks, to punish them for all the harm they had lately done to his kingdom. Themistocles felt he would have to obey, or die. So he prepared a great feast, and invited all his friends to bid them good-bye; and without telling them what he was about to do, he put a strong poison in his wine, and died almost immediately.

When they told this to the King he admired him more than ever, because he had chosen to die rather than to do his country any harm, although it had been so ungrateful to him. And the King was very kind to Themistocles' family as long as he lived.

The Magnesians put up a monument in their market-place in memory of the hero, and the historian Plutarch tells us it was still standing there five hundred years later, when he visited the place.

CHAPTER III

PELOPIDAS (DIED B.C. 364) AND EPAMINONDAS (DIED B.C. 362)

If you have read all the earlier chapters of this history, you will have noticed that the heroes described in them were almost all of them Athenians. Perhaps you are beginning to think that the Athenians were the only Greeks who did deeds that were worth telling. But that is not quite true, and the two whose names head this chapter were citizens of Thebes, which city was never on very friendly terms with Athens.

In the great Persian War at the time of Themistocles, Thebes yielded to Persia, and this action made the liberty-loving Athenians always distrust her, and not a few bad and mean deeds since then had strengthened this feeling.

Besides, the Thebans were very unlike the Athenians in character; they were dull and stupid, fond of drinking too much, of eating large meals and much meat, and they were great sportsmen. The Athenians were lively, witty, ate and drank little, and loved to talk philosophy and politics, to find out new things, and were a naval and very "go-ahead" people, while the Thebans, who lived far inland, had no ships.

But at the time of which I write, things that happened, as you will see, made the two cities for a time more friendly, and Thebes, which had never done anything brilliant in her whole history, now blazed forth like a comet, which leaves behind it a bright trail before it goes off into utter darkness again.

And this happened all because of the two heroes of our present chapter, whose birth years I cannot tell you, for no one at the time thought of writing them down, but whose stories

are so tangled up together that you must take them both or not have them at all.

This famous friendship began when they must both have been over twenty years of age, for they were both fighting with the Spartan army against the Arcadians in the siege of the Arcadian city of Mantinea.

After the war between Athens and Sparta, at the beginning of which Pericles died, and at the sad end of which the Athenians were conquered and their freedom taken from them, Sparta became the leading city of Hellas. She was a hard and cruel mistress, and had attacked this city of Mantinea for no reason whatever except that its people did not manage their city affairs in the way that the Spartans managed theirs. The Spartans were so narrow-minded that they always disliked the people who did things differently from themselves.

The Thebans were at this time very friendly with Sparta, and had sent some troops to help her in this wicked war. Pelopidas and Epaminondas were in the same regiment, which for the time being was getting the worst of a fight. The two came close together, and fastened their shields together, and holding these in front of them, did much harm to the enemy. But though they were so covered by their shields, Pelopidas received seven wounds, and at last, from loss of blood, fell on a heap of dead. Epaminondas thought he was dead, but felt that so brave a soldier should not be left for the enemy to strip of his armour, and so stood by his body to keep the enemies off.

He was in the sorest danger himself, and so badly wounded that he must have fallen soon on top of his comrade, had not the Spartan Prince Agesipolis seen his danger. He at once rode up with some followers to Epaminondas's aid, and rescued both him and Pelopidas, who was then found to be still alive.

Pelopidas was a warm-hearted and generous man and a splendid warrior, ready to risk his life for his friends and

country, and the truest friend ever a man might wish to know. He never forgot that he owed his life to Epaminondas. And in Epaminondas he found a friend true as steel, loyal and generous as himself, though they were unlike in many ways.



PELOPIDAS AND EPIMANONDAS

For Pelopidas was fonder of doing, and Epaminondas of thinking and planning, though he could do whatever needed

to be done; and while Pelopidas was a very rich noble, and as free in giving and spending as he was rich, Epaminondas was a very poverty-stricken noble, often hard pressed for money.

But what kept their friendship unbroken till death was their common love of their own city Thebes and of the good of Hellas at large; and whether they served her under somebody else's orders or under each other's mattered nothing to them.

For about five years after the siege that so nearly ended both their lives nothing is said about them. Meanwhile a very terrible thing happened.

Just then at Thebes one of the two Polemarchs or chief rulers, Leontiades, hated the other, Ismenias, bitterly—so bitterly indeed that he was ready to do anything, however wicked, to harm him.

One night in September (382 B.C.) a Spartan army was marching through Theban lands not very far from the city. The Spartan general Phoebidas was in his tent, and just going to bed, when his servant told him in low tones that some one wished to see him on very important business.

"He comes late," said Phoebidas, "but bring him in." To his surprise a moment later in walked Leontiades. He was still more surprised by the offer Leontiades made to him.

"Would you like to be master of the city of Thebes?" he asked.

"That would I," said Phoebidas, and swore a great oath.

"Then if you will listen to my plan, soon will you be master," the other said. "To-morrow is the Feast of Thesmophoria, when we send the soldiers away from the citadel, and give it over to the women of Thebes for them to keep a sacred festival. I have the keys of the gates in my care. Come you with your soldiers at the noonday heat. I will open the gates and let you pass in quietly, and you can surely manage the women yourselves. All Thebans rest in that hour, and none need see or meet you as you pass through."

"'Tis no hard task you give me," said the Spartan, "and here's my hand on it. I'll not fail at the hour you say." Then Leontiades went away as suddenly as he had come, and laughed wickedly to himself, as he stole home in the September dark, over the surprise he would give Ismenias.

Next day, when all Theban men were resting indoors during the blazing midday heat, and the women's festival was in full swing, Leontiades quietly opened the gates to Phoebidas and his two thousand men. Up to the citadel they went, and made all the women prisoners. Afterwards Leontiades rode down to the Senate-house and joyfully shouted to the few citizens there that the city was in the hands of the Spartans. They were all so frightened that they yielded without saying much. They allowed Leontiades to arrest and imprison his enemy Ismenias, and send him to Sparta later on, where he was put to death.

Three hundred of the chief Thebans (Pelopidas among them) fled for refuge to Athens, where they were very kindly received, Thebans though they were.

And for three years the Thebans who stayed at home were very cruelly treated by the Spartans. And the rest of the Greek cities began to think that perhaps after all "Might was Right," and that if only a man were strong enough he might do any bad deed, and yet the gods would look on and neither stop him nor punish him.

But they were mistaken.

Punishment came at last, all the harder to bear that it had been so long in coming. And this was the way in which it came about.

At Athens all this time Pelopidas and others had been sending messages to those friends (Epaminondas was one of them) that were still in Thebes. And they had news from them often. These men were growing more and more angry every day with Leontiades and their Spartan governors, Archias and Philippos. Phyllidas, one of these patriots, had agreed to be the

Secretary of the Polemarchs. Then he could keep his friends inside and outside Thebes informed of all that was going on.

At last he thought they were ready for a change. He sent word to Pelopidas that he and a few others should come and kill the Polemarchs. A plan like this is called a conspiracy, and the people who make it are conspirators. One of his friends, Charon, a rich resident in Thebes, offered to hide the conspirators in his house when they came. Phyllidas was to give a banquet in honour of the Polemarchs, and to promise them that seven of the fairest ladies in Thebes would be invited to meet them after the dinner was over.

In these unhappy times the Thebans were very strictly watched in all they did. So Pelopidas and his friends had to dress themselves like farm-labourers, and one at a time to enter the city at the dusk of evening. But they reached Charon's house without any accident. All the next day they remained indoors. This was the day fixed for Phyllidas's banquet, and the conspirators were rather excited as they dressed themselves in the beautiful robes which Charon's wife had lent them for the occasion. While they were dressing, and laughing at each other's funny looks, there was a loud knock at the street door. When the servant opened all in the house heard a soldier's gruff voice saying that Charon must come at once to see the Polemarch Archias on important business.

Imagine the fright of the would-be ladies at hearing this. One of them groaned, "Friends, we are all undone; our plot is found out"; and the rest said the same. But they thought that Charon should put a brave face on the matter, and go to see Archias. Charon was one of the bravest of men, and would not have cared if he were risking his own life merely. But just now he was so nervous about his friends, who were safe only if he kept calm in his visit to Archias, that he rushed into the nursery and clasping his little son in his arms took him to Pelopidas.

"Pelopidas," he cried, "if I play the coward in this visit, promise me to kill my son."

Some of the conspirators were so moved by their host's excitement that, brave men though they were, they burst into tears, and with one voice cried, "Nay, Charon, we know you will not betray us. Go, brave friend, we are safe in your hands."

And so after praying to the gods to give him courage and calmness Charon bade farewell to them all as if he might not again see them alive. Then he went off after the Polemarch's messenger, leaving seven anxious men behind him.

When he reached the house of Phyllidas, Archias and Phyllidas came out from the dining-hall to speak with him.

"Well, Charon," began Archias, "what people are these just come to town, who are hiding in some citizen's house?"

And Charon, who by this time felt less nervous, answered, "What people do you mean? and in whose house are they hiding?"

"That is just what I wish to find out," said Archias, "and I thought you might perhaps know."

"There are many idle gossips in Thebes, Archias," said Charon, "but if I were you, I would not mind what they say very much. However, I shall ask about this. It would be important were such to be the case."

"You are a wise fellow, Charon," said Phyllidas, "and I know you will see to this."

And with this the two went back to their feasting, and Charon hurried home as fast as he could.

The joy of his visitors when he told them of his visit was very great. They then started forth, well muffled up, four of them, to Charon's house, and Pelopidas and two others to Leontiades' house, for Leontiades had not been invited to the banquet.

Little did they know till afterwards how very nearly even then their plot was spoiled for them. For after Charon had left the feasters, a slave arrived from Athens from a friend of Archias with a letter in which a full account of the plot was written. The slave said Archias ought to read it at once, but by this time Archias had drunk too much wine to be able to read letters, and he stuffed it under the cushion of his couch, saying, "Business to-morrow."

Soon after, the pretended ladies were announced. Dressed in very wide, loose robes, with wreaths of flowers on their heads and round their necks to partly hide their faces, Charon, Melon, and the others entered. Archias and his fellow-guests clapped their hands in welcome, while the new arrivals looked round the room to see how best they could carry out their dread deed.

In a few minutes it was all over, and neither Archias nor Philippus was alive to do "business to-morrow."

Meanwhile Pelopidas and his companions had harder work to do, for Leontiades was not drunk, and fought like a tiger for his life. He killed one of them, and fought long against Pelopidas before he was struck down.

Then the conspirators joined each other, and rushed off to the prison. There they killed the jailer and set free one hundred and fifty of their friends, who were prisoners, and gave them arms. With these they marched through the city, shouting that the tyrants were dead, and Thebes was free, and singing

"I'll wreath my sword in myrtle bough,
The sword that laid the tyrants low,
When patriots, burning to be free,
To Thebans gave their liberty.
While Freedom's name is understood,
We shall delight the wise and good;
We dared to set our country free,
And give her laws equality."

Most of the people had gone to bed, but soon the streets were crowded, and when morning dawned they all seized arms and went to attack the Spartan garrison in the citadel.

Next day two Athenian generals brought troops to their aid. For Athens was always ready to help the oppressed. After three or four days' hard fighting, the Spartan garrison yielded and was sent out of the city to return to Sparta.

Pelopidas, Melon, and Charon were elected as Governors of Thebes, and then the Thebans began to talk over what they should do next.

There was little doubt that Sparta would take her revenge on them for the events of that winter night, and Thebes was hardly strong enough just then to face her.

But other things happened to favour Thebes.

A Spartan officer, left with a few thousand troops to guard Thespieae, tried, but failed, to take Athens as Phoebidas had taken Thebes. Still, his act made the Athenians so angry that they declared war on Sparta. This for a time gave Sparta so much to do that she left Thebes alone. Thebes had time to recover herself, to punish all the Boeotian towns which had been friendly to Sparta, and to make herself once more the ruler in Boeotia.

It was not until eight years after Thebes was set free that the Spartan king, Cleombrotus, marched into Boeotia with a large army. Even then Epaminondas could not easily persuade the other Theban generals to fight against Cleombrotus, though he had reached Leuctra, which was only eight miles from Thebes.

Near to Leuctra was the tomb of two Boeotian maidens who had killed themselves after ill-treatment at the hands of Spartan officers. There was an old prophecy which said that the Spartans would be defeated at the "Tombs of the Maidens." Epaminondas reminded his officers of this saying,

and they then agreed to fight. But Epaminondas himself really believed more in good fighting than in anything else for bringing victory, and he arranged his men in what was then an unusual way. In the early afternoon, the Spartan generals led their army down into the plain. The Thebans moved out rapidly to meet them, with their left wing far in advance; for such was Epameinondas's new way of battle. The cavalry began the fight by charging the Spartans, and drove them off the field. Then the Theban heavy infantry charged against the Spartan king and his native Spartan troops, and broke their line. The king fell, and was carried off the field by his bodyguard. The Spartans still stood like an iron wall against the Theban charge, while the soldiers on their flank began to close around the Theban flank.

But Pelopidas interfered at this moment. He had been posted in the rear of the Thebans, with three hundred picked men, called the "Sacred Band." And his orders were to move out and protect the main body of the army at just such a time as this.

And now the hardest struggle took place; the Spartans did not flinch nor desert their place, but they fell before the charge of the heavy Theban column. Epaminondas cried, "Give me a step more, my brave men, and the day is ours."

This cry gave so much fresh courage to his men, that they made one more great effort, broke through the middle of the enemy's line, and the battle of Leuctra was won.

In the few moments of that last desperate fight about four hundred noble Spartans had fallen, besides one thousand of the commoner sort. Hardly a Spartan officer was left alive.

On the advice of Epaminondas, the Thebans allowed the Spartans to retire after the battle, without pursuing them or storming their camp. This seems more generous, perhaps, than it was really; but Jason of Pherae, from Thessaly in the north, marched into Boeotia just then at the head of his troops. He said he was friendly to the Thebans, but Epaminondas did not

feel sure that he was to be trusted. So he thought it best to leave the Spartans alone for the time, especially as in their despair over their defeat they were likely to keep quiet for some time to come.

For more than a year the Thebans had to keep very quiet and near home, in fear of what Jason might do next. Then he was murdered, and they were freed from further fear.

So late in the summer Epaminondas led an army against Sparta, and did much harm to the country. He also set free the ancient people of Messenia from Spartan tyranny, and made for them a new city, Messene.

This took so much time, that he had kept his command four months longer than the law allowed. When he returned to Thebes, his enemies there wished to punish him for this. But they were few in number, and the greater number hooted them down, and chose Epaminondas as general for the year. He soon returned to Sparta, and helped in the siege of Sicyon, which was a town friendly to Sparta. He took it, but failed to take Corinth. When he went home, the Thebans thought he had done less than he might have done, so they did not choose him as general for the next year.

There was trouble again in Thessaly, and the Thebans were asked for their help, so that they had to leave the Spartans alone for a time.

Jason's two brothers had been murdered, and his son-in-law, Alexander, had seized his throne.

This Alexander was a monster of cruelty. He ill-treated his people in such a way that they cried out for the Thebans to come and help. Pelopidas, more generous than wise, answered their call, and brought the cruel tyrant to his knees.

Alexander never forgot and never forgave him for this, and after a time he had his revenge.

For some time after, Pelopidas, who was always more brave than wise, was going through Thessaly with a very few

followers to do business in Macedon. Alexander heard of this, and sent a party to lie in wait for him and kidnap him. The plot succeeded, and the Thebans sent seven thousand men, under two very stupid generals, to fight against Alexander and to recover Pelopidas.

Fortunately Epaminondas was among the seven thousand, and when the two stupid generals saw that they were losing the battle, they begged him to take the command. He saved the Theban army from being cut to pieces. He had his reward by being sent as general over a larger force to rescue his friend. In a few days' time he had so thoroughly frightened Alexander that he willingly set Pelopidas free, and begged for peace.

The one sad deed on the part of Pelopidas followed soon afterwards. Perhaps he can be excused a little, if we remember that the Thebans had never hated Persia so much as the other Greeks had.

Pelopidas went to the Persian capital, Sousa, to ask the "Great King" for money to carry on the war against Sparta. Artaxerxes II. granted his request, and so once more Thebes was joined with an Oriental despot against her sister states of Hellas.

It is comforting to remember that this alliance did Thebes little good, although Epaminondas, who helped to plan it, and Pelopidas, who carried it out, are none the less to blame for that.

Three years later, Pelopidas was again given the command of an army against the savage Alexander of Phraeae, who was once again on the war-path. As he marched out of the city at the head of the army, an eclipse of the sun took place. This was counted a bad omen, and the men refused to march. Pelopidas could not move them, and went off almost alone to Thessaly. There he called together the Thessalians to rebel against their king.

He soon had a few thousands to follow him, and with these he fought against Alexander and twice as large an army at Cynoscephalae. He was on the point of winning a most glorious victory, when he caught sight of Alexander himself. Eager to avenge his old wrongs, he pressed towards him, but was cut down before he reached him.

And so in his next campaign against Sparta Epaminondas had to go without his friend. Several clever plans that he made to take the Spartans by surprise failed because some one betrayed them. At last he met his enemy near Mantinea, the very place where he had so bravely risked his life to save Pelopidas twenty-three years before. Surely this was the best spot for him to end his life, and set his spirit free to rejoin Pelopidas in the Isles of the Blest. There all great heroes go after death.

And so it befell. For in the glorious moment of victory a desperate Spartan pierced his breast deep with his pike. His men raised him at once, and carried him in a fainting condition up to a small hill behind the battlefield.

At last his eyes opened, and he asked if his men had won; and when they answered "Yes," but that his two chief officers were slain, he gasped out: "Then you had better make peace." A little later he whispered that they should draw the spearhead from his wound. Immediately the blood spouted forth in a torrent, and he fell back dead. And with him died the glory of Thebes, which had shone out so brightly for the brief quarter-century of his manhood.

CHAPTER IV

TIMOLEON (DIED B.C. 336)

We do not know the year in which Timoleon was born, but in 336 he died, at, we are told, "a good old age, and full of honours." In truth, he, of all the heroes whose stories are told in this book, had a happy ending to his life. There is a proverb which says, "All is well that ends well." It might have been written about Timoleon, as you will see.

No stories are told about his childhood. His father and mother were people of rank and wealth in Corinth, where his brother Timophanes and himself were born. Timophanes was not like Timoleon in character, for he was cruel and greedy, though very brave. Timoleon, on the contrary, was gentle and kindly, hating no one but those who did not serve their country well.

Because of his bravery Timophanes was often sent out with the army to fight the enemies of Corinth. Timoleon sometimes went with him, and so loyal a brother was he that he did all he could to hide his brother's faults, and to make him seem a better man than he really was.

On one occasion both the brothers were fighting in a battle against the Argives. Timophanes was commander of the cavalry, while Timoleon served as an infantry soldier. Timophanes' horse was wounded, and threw him on to the ground amongst the enemy; the soldiers near him were partly driven back, partly ran away in fright. Then Timoleon saw his brother in danger, and ran to help him.

Timophanes lay helpless on the ground; Timoleon covered him with his own big shield, and, fighting bravely, at last drove the Argives away. Then he carried his brother off to a place of safety.

Yet this young man, who willingly risked his own life to save his brother, had it in him to be very stern towards that same brother when he did wrong.

For, not long after this battle, the people of Corinth were afraid that their enemies were coming to attack the city. They hired four hundred soldiers to fight for them, and asked Timophanes to be the leader of this troop. Timophanes was at heart a bad man. He was pleased to have four hundred soldiers to do as he bade them. But he meant to use them to make himself tyrant of Corinth, as you remember Peisistratus had done long before in Athens. Only Peisistratus behaved well when he became tyrant, but Timophanes did many wicked deeds.

The soldiers, being but hired men, were ready to do whatever their captain ordered. They helped him to seize the city, and to kill all the best men in it, who would have been strong enough to prevent Timophanes from having his own way, or to punish him for his crimes.

Timoleon was grieved at his brother's behaviour, and went to him alone to beg him to change it. He asked him earnestly to give up the tyranny, and to beg the forgiveness of the citizens for all the crimes and murders he had done. Timophanes would not listen to him, but haughtily drove him from his house.

Timoleon was not to be discouraged, however. He went to a few of his friends and kinsmen who had once been fond of Timophanes, and arranged with two of them to visit Timophanes again. On the next day, therefore, Timoleon, with Aeschylus, a brother-in-law of Timophanes, and Orthogras, a friend, went to Timophanes' house.

They all spoke very seriously to Timophanes; but it was of no use. At first he laughed at them; then the more serious they grew, the more angry he became. At last Timoleon drew aside and hid his face in his cloak, while the others slew the tyrant.

The news of this terrible deed soon spread through Corinth, and many praised Timoleon for being so true a patriot. For they remembered how, while his brother served his country well, no kindness was too great for him, but when he betrayed his country, then Timoleon did not spare him. This, they said, was the truest love both to his brother and to his country.

But there were others who were horrified at Timoleon, and thought him a bad and cruel man. His own mother was one of these. She would not let Timoleon see her, nor would she speak to him again. This broke Timoleon's heart; and he was so filled with sorrow that he would not eat, and wished to die. But his friends came about him, and forced him to eat and live. Had he been less gentle in temper, Timoleon might have got over the dreadful event soon. He would have reminded himself that he had done the right thing in consenting to the death of a tyrant and traitor. But as his mother still said she would never see him again, he sank into low spirits, and for years would take no part in anything that was done in Corinth.

For this we cannot praise him, though we may feel sorry for him. But he still owed to his city his service, and should have crushed his own grief aside.

Almost twenty years after his brother's death, there came messengers from Syracuse, a large city in the island of Sicily in the west (you will find it in the map of Italy, near the "toe" of the "boot"), to ask the Corinthians to come over and help them.

They had a tyrant whom they wished to drive away, and other enemies besides. These others were Carthaginians from the North of Africa, who were often very tiresome neighbours of Syracuse.

The Corinthians were glad to help the Syracusians. Timoleon, who hated tyrants so much, seemed to them the right man to send against the Syracusan tyrant Dionysius. So they made him general of the army which they sent. When he

reached Sicily, he had much fighting to do. It was not very long before the chief among his enemies, Dionysius and Hiketas, quarrelled with one another. They hated each other so much that Dionysius chose to yield to Timoleon rather than to trust Hiketas any longer.

So in a very humble way he came to Timoleon's camp as prisoner. Timoleon sent him to Corinth with one ship only, so great was the change of fortune for a man who had been the wealthiest tyrant in the world. In Corinth he lived in a mean and poor way, giving lessons to little children, or, as others tell us, to poor singing-girls; and at times drinking and talking gossip in a butcher's or a barber's shop to any one that would stop to talk to him. Visitors to Corinth used to go and see him, so wonderful did it seem to every one that a man who had been so great in the world should be happy to live such a mean and sordid life. For Dionysius looked always as if he were happy enough.

But we must return to Timoleon. Even after Dionysius was gone, Timoleon had still much fighting to do. Yet he took the great city of Syracuse in less than two months after leaving Corinth. Then Hiketas quarrelled with the Carthaginians, and went to his own city of Leontini. Hither Timoleon followed him, and after hard fighting defeated him. Then he was free to turn against the Carthaginians. He meant to drive them right out of the island. So he made ready to fight them; but in the meantime a great many more Carthaginians had come across to Sicily, and were landing in thousands at Lilybnum.

The Sicilians were so frightened that only three thousand of them would help Timoleon to fight. Besides these he had four thousand hired soldiers. But one thousand of these ran away in fright, crying out that Timoleon must be mad to think of fighting against seventy thousand men with but six thousand.

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TIMOLEON AND THE EAGLES

If he was mad, there was much method in his madness, for he cheered on his six thousand, and led them to the banks of the river Crimesus. He was glad the others had left him, for

he had no use for cowards when he had such a mighty foe to meet.

As they drew near the river, expecting to see the enemy in a few moments, they met men leading mules loaded with baskets of parsley. At that time in Sicily people placed parsley on the graves of their dead friends, just as nowadays we place everlastings. The Sicilians were simple people, and they thought that parsley was a bad omen. You know that sometimes your old nurse has told you, when you see a beetle running across the road when you are out for a walk in the country, that "it is a bad omen, for it means rain"; or again, when the cat washes itself, and rubs its paw over its ears, "it is a bad omen," for again it means that it will rain. Well, in the same way, the Sicilian soldiers said to Timoleon, "This parsley is a bad omen, for it means we are all soon to be in our graves."

But Timoleon said, "In my country we crown the victors with parsley, and these mules have brought us parsley to make ourselves crowns ready to wear after we have beaten the enemy." And he went up to the mules, pulled some parsley from their load, and twisting it into a crown for himself, put it on his head. When his officers and soldiers saw this, they ran and took parsley also, and went forward bravely towards the enemy.

Just then two eagles came flying towards them. One of them held a snake in its talons, which it had killed. It was always a good omen to be met by eagles. So the soldiers thanked the gods for sending them these signs, and prayed them for help to win a great victory. How the gods answered their prayers, you will soon hear. And now the little army went on more bravely than before. But Timoleon did not think it wise to fight the whole army of the enemy at once with his small troop. So he waited till the Carthaginians began to cross the river, and when some of them had crossed, but were still in disorder, he attacked them with fury.

The Carthaginians fought bravely, almost as bravely as the Sicilians, so that it is doubtful which side would have won had not a terrible thunderstorm burst upon the two armies. Rain and hail descended in torrents, beating upon the faces of the Carthaginians, so that they could not see what they were doing. Then the hail made so much noise as it rattled down upon their shields that they could not hear their own officers giving them orders. Further, they wore heavy clothes and armour, and when these got full of water, the Greeks could easily send them over on their backs on to the ground. They were so heavy with the wet that they could not get up again, and so were killed. The river too was in flood, and its waters came up above its banks, and spread all over the field in which they were fighting. So often the men that were knocked down were drowned by the water into which they fell. Terrified by all these things, those that had not fallen turned tail and ran away. But the Sicilians were more lightly armed, and could run faster. So they caught and killed many.

Timoleon's soldiers picked up many beautiful and precious things of gold and silver after the battle was over, and sent much of this home to Corinth to be hung up in a temple, as an offering to the gods, "who had given them the victory."

The Carthaginians left Sicily after this defeat, and for thirty years they did not trouble its people again.

Timoleon had still a few more tyrants to crush. But after he had defeated them all, he settled down to end his days happily among the Syracusans in their beautiful city. They gave him a magnificent house in the city to live in, and a very beautiful one in the country. In this he spent most of his time, for he was growing old and weary, and he wanted the Syracusans to feel free to do what they thought right without him. Yet they liked to ask his advice about everything they did, and often went out to his country-house to visit him and to take strangers to see their dear hero.

His wife and family came from Corinth to live with him as soon as his wars were over, for he would not go back to Corinth.

It was in the midst of all this happiness that he went blind. The blindness had been coming on for a few years, since a white speck had appeared on one of his eyes during his wars against the Sicilian tyrants. But he did not mind it very much, for his work was done, and he felt that it had been blessed by the gods.

A few years later he died quietly in his bed, after a short illness; and was followed to the grave by a loving and grateful people. A monument in his honour was set up in the market-place, and a large block of buildings was afterwards added in which the young men of the city took their exercise. This was called the Timoleonteum, and for long it served as a memorial to Timoleon.

CHAPTER V

DEMOSTHENES (B.C. 384–322)

Demosthenes, of whom I am now going to tell you, was not born in such a happy age as Themistocles. Athens was a more beautiful city certainly, with nobler buildings and statues in it than Themistocles had seen there, but its people were not so good. They had grown lazy as they grew richer, and would not go out to fight against the enemies of the Greeks as they did on the famous days of Thermopylae and Marathon. They liked to be told of all the glorious deeds that their forefathers had done, but that was enough. And they would rather spend their money in going to the theatre and to shows than give it to pay other soldiers to fight their battles for them.

When an orator reminded them, as Demosthenes often did, of all the Athenians had done long ago, they applauded

him loudly. And after his speech was over they went home very proud of themselves, but they did nothing.

Times were sadly changed.

Demosthenes had not a happy childhood. He was a sickly little boy who could not do as other boys did, and was looked on as a milksop. He stammered in his speech, and that made other children laugh at him, so that he kept out of their way as much as he could.

His father died when Demosthenes was seven years old, and left great riches for his little son. But Demosthenes' guardians were bad men, who used much of the money for themselves, and did not take care of the rest. They did not pay people properly to teach and take care of the child, and so he grew up ignorant as well as sickly.

He was so shy that nobody liked him, and this made him still more shy.

His mother was fond of her delicate little son, but we hear so little of her that it seems probable that she did not live long after her husband's death. With her and his little sister he spent a quiet childhood, troubled, however, by the feeling that "something was going wrong."

He was too clever a child not to find out soon that his guardians were behaving badly; and often he promised himself that he would "pay them out" when he grew to be a man. And something that happened when he was about sixteen years old made him think of a way in which he could pay them out.

He heard his tutor talking about a great trial that was to take place, where a great orator called Callistratus would speak. He begged to be allowed to go to hear him, and his tutor arranged that he should sit in the hall where he could see and hear without being seen.

Callistratus made a grand speech, and pleased the people so well that they followed him through Athens in crowds after his speech was over. "What a fine thing it is to be

a great orator," said Demosthenes to himself. "When I am a man I mean to be like Callistratus.. Then I can make speeches against my wicked guardians, and the people will punish them as they deserve."

But he knew he must work very hard at his books, and learn a great deal, before he could make such fine speeches as he had just heard. So from that day he set to work, listening whenever he could to the orators, making up speeches of his own, and learning a great deal of history. For every one who means to make good speeches needs to know history very well.

As soon as he was eighteen years old he began to speak in the law courts against his guardians. He had to speak often before he won his case. But though the guardians were punished, yet his money was almost all spent, and very little was left for him.

As he grew older he wanted to make political speeches, as our Members of Parliament do nowadays, when anybody who likes may come to listen. As you know, some people cheer the speaker and cry "hear, hear," because they like what he says. But others hiss him or laugh at him because they think he is speaking badly or talking nonsense.

Demosthenes did not talk nonsense, yet we are told when he made his first political speech to the people he sat down amid roars of mocking laughter.

This made him very unhappy, and he went away home alone, not with crowds following him as they had followed Callistratus a few years before. No doubt he was saying to himself, "It is no good, I shall never be a great orator," when some one tapped him on the shoulder. He looked round and saw a very old man smiling at him.

"You speak very like Pericles," said this kindly old man. (Now Pericles, you must know, was one of the finest orators that ever lived.) "But you are too timid. When the crowd shouts you must not give way as you did to-day."

But though Demosthenes tried not to mind the noisy crowd so much, he did not get on very well. Some time afterwards he was so miserable after making a speech that he pulled his gown over his head while he walked home, so that no one should see who he was, nor how unhappy he was.

But Satyrus, a great actor who knew him, followed him home, and went into his house with him.

"It is no use," said Demosthenes; "I work hard, and yet the people will listen to any drunken sailor rather than to me."

"That is true enough," said Satyrus, "but do you repeat to me now some lines from a drama of Euripides."

Demosthenes did as he was asked, making not a single mistake. But he said the lines in a dull way, and not as if he meant what he was saying, just as, in fact, some boys and girls whom you and I know repeat their poetry at school.

Satyrus waited till Demosthenes had ended, and then he began and said over again the same passage. What a difference there was; you would hardly have known it was the same piece. For his eyes flashed, his voice sounded now loud and angry, then soft and kindly, and at one part he waved his arms about as if he meant to hurt some one. And then he stopped, smiling at Demosthenes' wide open, surprised eyes; and

"Do you see what I want to tell you," he said. "Ah," cried Demosthenes, "I see, I see." After that he made himself a study down in the cellar of his house, and there he used to stay for hours, sometimes for days at a time, shouting aloud what he meant to say the next time he spoke to the people of Athens. His neighbours and friends soon found this out, and many laughed at him for taking so much trouble; but he let them laugh.

And as time went on it was, as we say, his turn to laugh. For he became so famous as an orator that people in distant lands heard of him, and feared him and his speeches

more than they feared the generals and armies sent to fight them by the Athenians.

Later in his life he told a friend that he had made his voice stronger by putting pebbles in his mouth, and then standing on the seashore in a storm and trying to make himself heard above the roar of the waves. At other times he used to run up a hill, and while he was still panting from his run used to recite some speech or poem.

Such, hard work richly deserved the reward it won. For many hundreds of years Demosthenes has been talked of as the greatest orator the world has ever known.

When he was thirty-three years old, he made the first of many speeches against Philip, King of Macedon, the great enemy of Athens. Philip wished to make Athens a part of the kingdom of Macedon, and the patriotic party in Athens wished to keep Athens free, as she had been for so long. To the end of Philip's life, Demosthenes, who was one of this party, was Philip's enemy. He was always speaking against Philip, and always working against him, in every possible way.

He persuaded the Athenians to fight against Philip, but they did not win; and on the field of Chaeronea they met with a terrible disaster. Yet Philip thought much of Athens, because of her glorious history in the past, so he would not hurt the Athenians.

Still Demosthenes could never like him, or forgive him. When at last Philip was murdered (you will hear more about it in the next chapter), though Demosthenes was in mourning for his daughter, who had lately died, he put off his black clothes. He dressed himself magnificently, and put a wreath of flowers on his head to show his joy that Athens was free at last from her great enemy.

The Athenians held thanksgiving festivals throughout the city. One man only found fault with their gaiety—Phocion—a general and orator who rarely agreed with Demosthenes. Not that he liked Philip or believed in him. But

he thought that the Athenians were too fond of pleasure, and that Demosthenes wasted time in telling them or expecting them to be like their forefathers. So when Phocion saw them all gaily dressed and making holiday, he reminded them gravely that the enemy's army was less by one man only.

Neither the Athenians nor the other Greeks would listen to him. They gladly heard Demosthenes, who worked hard and spoke often to persuade all the Greeks to join together against Alexander, Philip's son, of whom you will hear more in the next chapter.

Yet all the preparations came to nothing. When Alexander marched against Thebes, the city of Epaminondas and Pelopidas, the other Greeks were afraid, and left poor Thebes alone to fight the great enemy. The Thebans were defeated utterly, and their fine old city pulled down, except the temples and the house of the great poet Pindar.

Demosthenes was bitterly disappointed at the defeat of Thebes, and perhaps even more because Athens had not gone to help the Thebans. He feared, too, that Athens might suffer as well as Thebes. And soon a messenger came from King Alexander, ordering the Athenians to send eight of their orators (Demosthenes among them) to him to be hostages for the Athenians' good behaviour. Now hostages are treated well by the victor only if the conquered city behaves well. And, in any case, they may be kept away from their homes for years, and no one likes to go as a hostage. Again, Alexander behaved so cruelly to the Thebans whom he had conquered, that it seemed as if he might treat even hostages badly. So Demosthenes made a speech to the people to persuade them not to send the men whom Alexander wanted. Instead, an Athenian named Demades, who was a friend of Alexander, went and begged the others off, and came back safely to Athens.

For the five years after this Demosthenes had a very quiet life. Then he had to fight a great case in the law-courts. It happened in this way.

Some years before, Demosthenes had, at his own expense, rebuilt the city walls of Athens. For this and all that he had done for Athens, an Athenian named Ctesiphon had asked the people to give Demosthenes a golden crown. The people agreed gladly, and it was suggested that at the great festival of the year, when all the citizens and many distinguished visitors were together in the theatre, the herald should say aloud, for all to hear, that this golden crown was to be given to Demosthenes for his noble services to his country.

But before this was arranged, Aeschines, an orator who hated Demosthenes, and who had taken King Philip's money to betray Athens, rose up and said that the laws forbade this. If the golden crown were given, he would bring a lawsuit against Demosthenes.

The people, however, had given the crown to Demosthenes, in the theatre at the great festival; and so long as Demosthenes was still the chief favourite at Athens, Aeschines did not dare to begin his lawsuit against him.

But in this year, when all that Demosthenes had lived for and hoped for seemed to fail, Aeschines thought it a good time to begin his attack.

Some day you will read his speech for yourselves; and afterwards you must read Demosthenes' speech in answer. It was a long speech; but of all the speeches Demosthenes ever made, it is the finest. No wonder he won his case, while Aeschines had to leave Athens, and live all the rest of his life in the island of Rhodes.

It was a glorious victory for Demosthenes, and one which he well deserved.

It would have been happy for him could he have died in the hour of his victory. For, six years later, he was charged with accepting a bribe from a dishonest servant of Alexander, named Harpalus, and with being careless in keeping a large sum of money that Harpalus had left in his care. There are so many different stories told about this money, that we cannot be

sure of what really happened. Of one thing we are sure—that Demosthenes did not want, nor use, the money for himself. He wished the city to be rich enough to fight King Alexander again some day, and thought it fair to take Alexander's money to use in that way. For then, as now, men believed that "All's fair in love and war."



DEMOSTHENES IN EXILE

But the Athenians said that Demosthenes must pay a very heavy fine as a punishment. He was not a rich man, and he could not pay it. So he was thrown into prison. He soon escaped from prison to Aegina, not far from Athens. There he sat often on the seashore, looking over towards Athens, with tears in his eyes; for he loved his city so much that he could not be happy away from her. Fortunately, he had not to stay away long.

Alexander died in the Far East, and the Greeks joined together again to fight for their freedom. Demosthenes helped them as he had done before, and as eagerly as if he were not in exile. The Athenians were so pleased that they invited him to come home again. They went down to the harbour in crowds to welcome him home, so that his return was like that of a conquering hero. Some work was given him to do by which he earned as much money as the fine had been. So he was able to pay the fine at last.

But the end was near.

Though Alexander was dead, his generals were not, and they came to fight against the Greeks. The Greeks fought very bravely, but were defeated. Antipater, the general of the Macedonians, sent his soldiers to live in Athens to keep the people in order. He ordered Demosthenes and Hypereides, the orators who had been Alexander's greatest enemies, to be put to death. Demosthenes left the city, and fled to the temple of Poseidon, in Calauria. Antipater sent an actor named Archias after Demosthenes to kill him. But it was not lawful to kill any one in a temple, so Archias tried to persuade Demosthenes to come out. Since he could not, he said he would take him out by force.

Then Demosthenes said: "Wait until I have written a letter to my friends at home; then I shall come with you."

So he sat down and took his pen, which he had with him, and which he had filled with a strong poison, and began to write. He had a habit of biting his pen while he was thinking

what he should write; and now, as he bit the pen, he sucked in the poison.

Archias was tired of waiting, and sent the soldiers in to hurry Demosthenes out. But he followed them in, and saw that Demosthenes was leaning on the altar with his head covered. When Archias spoke to him he uncovered his head, and rose up as if to go with Archias. The poison had done its work, and as he tried to walk out of the temple, he fell with a groan near the altar, and died.

Forty years after, the Athenians set up a bronze statue of him in the city, and passed a law that his eldest son should be treated as a guest of the city, and dine with the officials of Athens in the public hall, which they called the Prytaneum.

But the most lasting memorial of the great orator is in his own golden words, which scholars read and study all over the world to this very day.

CHAPTER VI

ALEXANDER THE GREAT (B.C. 356–323)

I am now going to tell you the story of the most wonderful man that ever lived, who in his short life of thirty-two years did a great deal more than most others have done in seventy or eighty years.

Though he was a Macedonian king, he must be counted as one of the great Greek heroes, for he spread Greek habits and manners all over Asia, and so made the Greek nation one of the most widely known in the world.

His father and mother were both remarkable people. His father was a great soldier, and still more a clever and cunning statesman, and in whatever his mother did she showed herself to be very much cleverer than any other woman of her day. But she had a violent temper, which was soon seen to be in her son, and as he was a young prince, he was not checked as other boys would have been.

The July day on which he was born was a very happy day for his father Philip of Macedon, who had just taken an enemy's city after hard fighting. Early in the day came the news that his chief general had won a great victory; later on he was told that his racehorse had won a prize at the great Olympic Games; and last of all, a messenger came at full speed from his palace at Pella to say that a baby boy was born to him.

The wise men told him that Alexander, as the baby was called, was sure to be a great man, born on such a day of victories. Alexander was a remarkable boy, though not very amiable, and he seems to have caused his father much trouble by his frequent outbursts of temper. But all the people about the Court spoiled him so completely that it was a wonder that he had any goodness left in him at all.

His mother Olympias used to tell him that he was sprung from Achilles, the bravest of the princes who fought against Troy, of whom Homer sang. She wished him to grow up like Achilles. And his first tutor, Lysimachus, pleased him by calling him Achilles, and himself Phoenix, because that was the name of Achilles' tutor.

His head tutor, Leonidas, was one of the few who did not spoil him. He made him rise early every morning, and take a walk before breakfast, so that he should have a good appetite for very simple food.

Leonidas used to look into Alexander's wardrobes and chests in which his clothes and bedding were kept, to see that the pillows were not too soft, or the covers too warm, or that the clothing was not too soft and fine. He was afraid that Alexander would grow fond of things soft and comfortable, if he were not watchful.

He must have been pleased with the result of his care; for until nearly the end of his life, Alexander always liked simple food best, and plain clothing, and just enough of it to keep him decently clad.

Alexander was very fond of all outdoor sports, hunting, racing, swimming, and riding. But he never could be persuaded to try wrestling himself, nor to give prizes for wrestling at the games. His father, who was very proud of the handsome boy, with his deep-set blue eyes, and masses of curling golden hair,

"a sun that ray'd from off a brow,
Like hill-snow high in heaven,"

and his supple, well-made limbs, once said to him, "Alexander, will you not run in the Olympic races for a prize?" "Yes," said the boy quickly, "if I had kings to race with me, but not else."

Alexander must have been about fourteen years old, when one day a Thessalian came to the palace at Pella leading

a very fine black horse. He asked £2600 for it. He hoped King Philip would buy it, and at first the King thought he would. That afternoon, with his grooms, some friends, and Alexander, he went outside the city to try the horse. But it had a dangerous temper, and would let none of the grooms nor the King nor his friends touch it. Philip was vexed, and told the Thessalian to take the horse away. Alexander had been looking on all the time, and had taken a great fancy to the horse. He now said loud enough for his father to hear, "What a horse to lose, just because they are not clever enough to manage him."

Philip pretended not to hear, but as Alexander kept repeating this in louder and louder tones, he said angrily, "Boy, do you suppose you could manage the horse better than your elders?"

"Yes, I could," said Alexander proudly.

"And what forfeit will you pay if you cannot?" said Philip, now laughing at the confident tone in which the boy spoke.

"As much as the horse is worth," Alexander answered quickly, at which every one laughed loud and long.

Alexander, more determined to manage the horse than before, went up to it, and turned it to face the sun, for he had seen that the creature was frightened by its own shadow. He patted and stroked it till it stood quiet, and then jumped into the saddle. The horse shied and tried to throw him, but Alexander set him off at a canter, which he soon turned into a hard gallop right across the country.

The King and his attendants were very anxious, and when Alexander came galloping back at full speed, all the crowd cheered. But when the boy suddenly stopped the horse, and jumped off, Philip burst into tears of joy at his safety, and cried out: "Macedon is too small to hold you and me any longer."

He gave Alexander the horse as a present, and it was Alexander's chief favourite till its death. Bucephalus, as he called it, lived nearly as long as his royal master.

That afternoon's doings made Philip think that Alexander was a very wonderful boy indeed, and that it would be worth while to take more trouble about his education.

So he invited a very wise man called Aristotle to be his tutor. Aristotle was quite willing to come. Philip gave the two a nice large garden all to themselves, where they could walk and talk together, and for the next few years, Alexander learned much from his famous tutor. Among other things, he learned a great deal about people who lived a long way off from Pella. When one day some Persians came to see King Philip on business, and found King Philip away from home, they were very much surprised at the lad of sixteen who came to welcome them. For he asked them all sorts of clever questions. He wanted to know what their king was like, and how he treated his friends and enemies. He asked what sort of roads they had, and which would be the best way to travel through Asia, and other things of the kind, which do not usually interest a boy of sixteen.

Alexander's friends noticed at this time that whenever he heard of his father's great victories he was not at all glad. He used to sigh and say, "If my father goes on conquering at this rate, there will soon be nothing left for me to do."

And while he practised all outdoor sports very eagerly, he did not neglect his books, but read poetry, history, and all words of wise men very eagerly. His Homer he knew almost by heart, and used to sleep with it under his pillow, beside his sword, both now and till the end of his life.

While his father was away just then, one of the hill tribes in Thrace rebelled, and he led an army against them. He conquered them, and built a new city in their land, which he called after himself,—Alexandropolis, which means Alexander's city.

King Philip was much pleased when he came home, and after that he took the boy with him in his expeditions. But at last they quarrelled, because Alexander thought that his father had ill-treated his mother Olympias, whom he loved very dearly. So he carried Olympias off to a safe place, and went off himself to another, and it was some time before he would go back to his father.

Meanwhile some of Olympias's friends who were angry with Philip for his treatment of her, met a young noble called Pausanias, who hated the king for some reason of his own. This man they egged on, until at a marriage feast he sprang out of a corner upon King Philip, and stabbed him to death.

So at the age of twenty, and when every one was panic-stricken at this horrid murder, Alexander became King of Macedon.

But the "stripling," as Demosthenes the great Athenian orator called him mockingly, had some very hard work to do at home, and near home, for the next year and a half. He was so proud and often so cruel that he soon made people forget that he was so very young.

When he started on his great march against Persia, the terror of his name had spread into many lands. The Greeks held a Council at Corinth to see how many soldiers they could send with him, and a great many famous men came there to meet Alexander.

While he was waiting there to learn what the Greeks would do, he went to see a wise man named Diogenes, who thought it wrong to have many possessions, because it wasted time to take care of them. He lived in a tub, to save himself the trouble of housekeeping. When Alexander came near, with many people crowding after him, Diogenes stared at him, but said nothing. At last Alexander said, very politely, "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," grunted Diogenes, "stand out of my light, so that I may get the sunshine on me." And not one word more would he say.

Alexander's attendants asked if they should not punish so insolent a fellow, but Alexander liked him so much, that he said, "If I were not Alexander, I should wish to be Diogenes."

But he soon forgot all about Diogenes and his tub, in the hurry and bustle of preparing for his long march. As he said "good-bye" to his dearly loved mother, and the palace at Pella, on that bright spring morning before his twenty-second birthday, he knew that he was not likely to see Pella again. For he meant to conquer the whole of Persia, and to set up his throne far away from Pella, in some city which should be in the middle of the world when he had finished fighting.

By the month of April he had reached the spot where Troy had once stood, seven hundred years before. There he visited the tomb of his ancestor, Achilles, or what was thought to be his tomb.

And then with his head still full of Homer's stories of Achilles' bravery, he went forward to do battle with the Persians at the river Granicus. The Persians were across the river on flat land, and Alexander had to make Bucephalus swim the river before he could get at them. When he and his troops scrambled up the other bank, the Persians rushed upon them. Alexander was easily known by the white plume in his helmet, and by his splendid horse, and several Persian princes attacked him. One of them hacked the white plume off his helmet, and another was just going to stab him in the back, when he was cut down by Alexander's friend, Cleitus.

After a little more hard fighting, the Persians turned and ran, and the battle was won.

But Alexander still had much fighting to do before that summer was over, and his victories were not easily gained.

In the winter he reached Gordium, in which town there was a very old chariot. About this chariot a very interesting story is told.



ALEXANDER AND DIOGENES

Long, long years before Alexander was born, the people in Phrygia were in great trouble. They asked the Oracle for advice in their distress, and were told that soon an old waggon would come along the road to their city, carrying a man inside it. This man would be their king, and would save them from all their distresses.

Soon afterwards a man called Gordius came among them in a waggon, and they all hailed him as their king. Gordius then consecrated his waggon to Zeus, and fastened the pole of the waggon to the yoke by a knot of bark. This was called the Gordian knot. Gordius prophesied that whosoever unfastened that knot should be king over all Asia.

Alexander had heard of this saying, and he went to the old temple to look at the knot. He did not see how it was to be untied, as there seemed to be no loose end of bark to pull at; so he drew his sword, and cut it through. Hardly had he done this when a storm of thunder and lightning burst upon the town. This made the people think that the gods were glad that Alexander had cut the knot, and that he would be king of all Asia.

Soon after this Alexander fell ill, and was sick unto death. None of the ordinary doctors could do anything for him. He had been feverishly hot, and, wishing to cool himself, had bathed in the river Cydnus. This made his fever worse. At last, as he was not getting better, a doctor, named Philip, promised that if he would do exactly what he was told, he would cure him. Alexander promised, and Philip went away to get ready some medicine for him. While he was away, Alexander's chief general, Parmenio, sent him a letter, telling him not to trust Philip, who meant to poison him. Alexander hid the letter under his pillow, and when Philip came back, bringing with him a cup of medicine, he took the cup. Then he felt under the pillow, drew out the letter and gave it to Philip to read.

As Philip read, Alexander drank the medicine quite calmly. But Philip's eyes flashed with anger at the cruel things said about him, and flinging himself down by the side of the bed, he begged the king to trust him and the cure he meant to work.

The medicine was so very strong that it made Alexander speechless and unconscious for three days. A story spread to the camp where the soldiers were that the king was dying, and the men would not believe anything else until

Alexander was able to rise on the fourth day, and go out to the door to let them all see him. Soon after his recovery he met Darius in battle near Issus. Alexander had been busy conquering the province of Cilicia, and Darius feared that Alexander would give him the slip. So he took his army away from the large open plain, in which it would have been very easy for so large an army to crush the much smaller force of Alexander, and followed him until the two met in the narrow rocky gorges of Issus. Alexander saw at once that the conditions favoured him, as there was not room for all the Persian army to be drawn up properly. In fact the lines of the Persian subject troops blocked the road for miles behind their front line. Alexander's men filled up the two miles only between the sea and the hills.

Alexander, as usual, led the cavalry on the right wing, and soon broke up the enemy's left wing by several brilliant charges. Then he made for the Persian centre, where King Darius sat in his chariot. Darius grew very frightened as Alexander and his horsemen drew near, and soon leapt from his chariot, mounted a mare which was kept ready for him, and fled. He hardly rested till he reached Thapsacus, on the Euphrates River.

When the Persians saw the King's chariot was empty, they thought he was dead, and that all was lost; and the flight became general.

Alexander, who had been wounded in the thigh, but not severely, was left in possession of the Persian camp, and the harem. In the harem were the mother and queen of Darius.

He was very kind to the Persian ladies, and took the greatest care of them, so that they hardly felt like prisoners.

Alexander had not lost more than four hundred and fifty of his own men.

After this great victory many tribes came to make friends with Alexander, for fear he might turn against them too.

Some conquerors would have followed Darius until he had been captured. But Alexander did not think him worth troubling about. Darius had shown himself to be such a coward that he could with safety be left alone for a time. For Alexander was very anxious to gain the submission of Syria and of Egypt. From Syria he met with little trouble except at Tyre. The people of Tyre were haughty, and accustomed to have their own way. So when Alexander demanded that they should let him enter their city to sacrifice to their chief god, they said "No." Alexander was so angry that he made up his mind to besiege the city and make the proud Tyrians admit him. It was, however, a very difficult city to besiege. It was built on a steep rock half a mile out in the sea; and the sea was very deep at the foot of the rock. But no difficulties ever discouraged Alexander from trying to do anything he thought he ought to do. At first he had no ships, so that he could not get close to the rock. So he began to build a great stone roadway, called a mole, out from the mainland. But as soon as the mole came close to the city walls, the Tyrians fired down on the workmen, and killed so many that the building could hardly go forward at all.

Alexander thought he would make his men safe while they worked by building wooden towers, under which they could shelter from the enemy's missiles as they built the mole. But as soon as these wooden towers were set up, the Tyrians sent out fire-ships to set them ablaze. And as they were made only of wood, they were easily burned. Then to make matters worse, while Alexander's men were flying from the flames, the Tyrians in their ship broke down a great part of the mole.

This troubled Alexander very much, but still he would not lose heart or give up the attempt. He made two neighbouring cities give him their ships, and with these he kept the Tyrian ships away from the mole. At last it was finished, and then Alexander's men battered the city walls till they broke a hole through them.

Then they rushed in over the broken wall, and took possession of the city after their seven long months' hard work. Alexander held a thanksgiving service for his victory in the temple which he had wanted to visit some months before, and he consecrated to the god the war-machine by which the hole in the wall had been made, and placed it in the temple.

While the siege was still going on, Darius sent messengers to him to offer ten thousand talents of money, and his daughter as a wife, with all the land west of the river Euphrates as her dowry.

When Parmenio heard this offer, he said, "If I were you, Alexander, I should accept it."

"So would I," said Alexander smiling, "if I were you, Parmenio."

But the answer he sent to Darius was, that all these were his (Alexander's) already, so soon as he liked to take them.

From Tyre he marched south towards Egypt, but was delayed for three months at Gaza, where Batis the Governor held out very bravely for King Darius.

In Egypt Alexander founded the city that has since been known by his name, Alexandria; for the Egyptians received him gladly, as they had no love for the Persians.

And then after leaving Darius alone for almost two years, in which he gathered another huge force together, Alexander met him once more in the plains near Arbela.

This time Darius had chosen a plain in which he could give enough room for the movements of his enormous army of a million infantry, forty thousand cavalry, two hundred scythed chariots, and fifteen elephants.

Alexander's generals noted the great size of the Persian army with much anxiety, and Parmenio came and asked him to attack the Persians at night.

"I will not steal a victory," answered the king proudly, but he took care to make himself familiar with the kind of ground on which his men had to fight, before deciding to begin the battle.

Meanwhile Darius tired his men with too much outpost duty, for he was very nervous about the result of the battle.

The night before the battle Alexander slept so soundly and so long that Parmenio grew impatient as he waited for him to come out of his tent in the early morning. At last he went in, and stood at the king's bedside, and called him loudly. But he had to shake him before Alexander awoke.

"How is it," said Parmenio, when the king at last opened his eyes, "that you, who so often are up before all your soldiers, can sleep so soundly on such a morning as this?"

"I have followed Darius up and down through all Asia," the king answered, "and shall I not sleep now when he is given into my hand?"

Soon he was standing outside his tent, glorious in shining armour, and ready for the fight.

The battle was long and fierce, but was again settled in favour of the Macedonians, because Darius seemed to believe that

"He who fights and runs away
Will live to fight another day;"

and as at Issus, he leapt out of his chariot when he saw Alexander fighting his way. He caught a stray horse, mounted it, and rode away as fast as he could. He could not have escaped from Alexander so easily this time, however, if Parmenio had not sent a messenger asking Alexander for help. The messenger said that Parmenio was in very great danger. Some think that Parmenio lost courage in this battle, but as Alexander had stiff work to do when he went to his rescue, his danger must have been real enough.

Alexander was so full of the excitement of battle that he gave chase to Darius through the night after the battle. When at last he turned back to his own camp, with a mere handful of followers, he met a large troop of flying Persians. They recognised him at once, and charged against him.

But with bravery as great as his recklessness, he spurred first at the leader of the party, and cut him down; then at the next, whom he soon killed; and the next, until at last they thought they must be fighting "with devils, not men," and broke away, flying in terror. Alexander then went back to his own camp.

The chief result of this battle was the surrender of the two great cities of Babylon and Sousa; and for many months Alexander was as busy as he could be in putting in order the mighty kingdom he had won. One of the most wonderful features in Alexander was his cleverness in governing and arranging large districts. A clever general is not often clever in this other way, but in Alexander the twofold skill was found.

There is a little sadness in the part of his story that follows. Alexander's great plans for conquering the world, and for teaching all nations the many noble lessons that the Greeks had to teach the rest of mankind, were too clever for his Macedonian soldiers and captains to understand. They were getting tired of marching ever on and on, further away from their dear old Macedonian hills and homesteads, and they began to murmur, and to wonder when Alexander would think it time to stop and rest. But Alexander had no thought of resting yet, for his work was not nearly done.

But the grumbling spirit in his army spread, until Alexander had to pay attention to it. He was told that his old friend Parmenio, and Parmenio's son, Philotas, had made with others a plot against his life; and he gave orders for their execution.

But at last even the common soldiers, who had always been devoted to him, said they would not go any farther. They

were then in the Punjaub, in India, and though the King coaxed them and scolded them in turn, they would not move. "There they stood," as the old historian says, "looking hard at the ground, and with tears trickling down their cheeks" (so sorry were they to say their King 'nay'). "And so the King, at last, conquered by his soldiers, made up his mind to turn towards home."



ALEXANDER SCALES THE WALLS WITH THREE MEN

But it was a miserable march. At the beginning, Alexander was so severely wounded while besieging a town, that he nearly died. It happened in this way. Alexander's men

had no more than two ladders among them when making the attack on the town walls. And they did not want to engage the enemy until more ladders should be brought to them. But Alexander grew impatient, and seized one of the two ladders. Putting it against the wall, he scrambled up, followed by two men only, while a veteran used the other ladder to reach the top of the wall at the same time as the King.

At first the townsfolk thought the King was at the head of a large troop, and they drew away from the wall; but when they saw only three behind, they rushed upon him, and others at a distance pelted him with stones. His own men, still outside the town, saw his danger, and in their hurry to go to his help, all scrambled up the two ladders at once. As you might expect, the ladders broke under such a weight. Meanwhile Alexander, with the reckless spirit which we know of old in him, jumped down from the top of the wall inside the town. There indeed he had a terrible fight, with his back to the wall, against numbers of the enemy.

His men outside grew wilder and wilder as they guessed the danger threatening their King. Still there were no more ladders to be had. At last they made a human ladder, scrambling up on each other's shoulders, and reached their King's side only just in time. A stone that had fallen heavily on his helmet had nearly stunned him; then an arrow pierced right through his armour into his lung; and he fainted and fell. The veteran had been killed already, and the two other followers were able to protect the King's body till their comrades came over the wall to their help.

For many days Alexander lay sick unto death; and when he began to gain a little strength, many a scolding he received from his friends for running such risks when his life was so important to them all.

But though Alexander must have liked to be told that people could not do without him, I think he was most pleased with a blunt old soldier who said, "Ye have played the man;

for in this world those that will take no pains will get no gains neither."

As soon as he was strong enough, the march was begun again. It was full of such misery that it is too painful to describe; but even that came to an end at last; and then Alexander spent two years or more in putting the government of his vast kingdom in order.

Yet he did not mean to be done with travelling: far from it. He was busily planning a great expedition, which was to be by sea this time; and in the spring of the year 323 B.C. he went down the river Euphrates to see about the building of a new harbour, and there he caught a malarious fever. He would not take care of himself, but said that it was just a slight chill, of which he would soon be better. He did not get better, but much worse, and on the eleventh day of the fever he was so weak that it was clear that he could not live much longer.

In the afternoon all the Macedonian soldiers who were with him asked to be allowed to see him. The officers let them come in and walk one after the other quietly round his bed. When he heard them he opened his eyes and said, "After I am gone, will you ever find a king worthy of such heroes as these?" Just before the end he drew off his finger a large signet ring, and told the officer to whom he gave it that he left his kingdom "to the best man"; then sank back and died.

With the death of this hero ends Greek History in the strict sense of the word. Alexander had spread abroad the love for things good, glorious, and beautiful; and for this every nation in the world since his time owes him a debt greater than can ever be repaid.

Nowadays we name all that he stood for, Hellenism—a short word that means a very great thing.