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CHAPTER I

STATESMAN AND POET

Solon is the first figure that stands out distinctly in Greek story. When I say this, I do not mean to deny the historical reality of all the legendary heroes. There may well have been, for instance, an actual Theseus, a strong man who cleared Attica of brigandage, and brought all its towns and independent tribes into one political entity. But the life of Theseus, as Plutarch tells it, is clearly a romance, while the life of Solon, by the same writer, is as clearly an actual biography. Very possibly some things in it are not facts, but it has throughout the note of reality.

Solon was of the noblest Athenian birth, claiming descent, indeed, from the patriot King Codrus. His father had greatly impaired the family fortunes by his munificence, and the young Solon was constrained to repair them by trade. Trade in those days implied adventure. The trader did not stay at home to buy and sell in an inglorious security, but was ever on the search for new markets, and did the work of an explorer, though always with a view to his own advantage. Solon, indeed, was no idealist. Though reckoned among the Seven Wise Men of Greece, his wisdom was of a practical, even vulgar type. To describe him by names which belong, of course, to a much later time he was an Epicurean rather than a Stoic. He does not affect to despise pleasure; on the contrary, he declares his appreciation of it in terms that are undignified and even coarse. He avows with perfect frankness his wish for wealth. He will not, indeed, consent to acquire it by unjust rules; to do that provokes the divine wrath; but he holds it to be among the most desirable of human goods.

Solon's first appearance in public life was eminently successful, and probably did much to give him the influence which he afterwards acquired over his countrymen. Athens and Megara had long contended for the possession of Salamis, a

small island which lies close to the harbour of the former city, and would, in the hands of an enemy, be a perpetual menace to its trade. The fortune of war went so decidedly against the Athenians that they abandoned the struggle, and even passed a law which imposed the penalty of death on anyone who should suggest its renewal. Solon resolved to run the risk. He caused a report to be spread that he was mad—madness is invested with a certain sanctity and even respect in the eyes of a half-civilized people. When this had gained sufficient credence, he rushed into the Assembly, and taking his stand on the stone which the public crier was accustomed to occupy when he announced news of importance to the city, he told the people what he thought about Salamis. This he put in the form of verse. The poem was a hundred lines in length, and was, says Plutarch, who had it before him when he wrote, admirably composed. The eight lines that have been preserved go far to justify this praise. His friends and kinsmen, led by Pisistratus, of whom we shall soon hear again, loudly applauded. The people were taken by storm. The law was hastily repealed, and an expedition which Solon was to command was determined upon.

His first step was to assure himself of divine favour. He consulted the oracle of Delphi, and was told that he must propitiate the heroes of the island. This he did by landing at night, and performing the customary sacrifices in secrecy. The attack which followed was, as may be seen, skilfully contrived, though it may be doubtful whether the story of Solon's stratagem is authentic. According to this, he dressed up a number of Athenians as women, providing them at the same time with arms, which they concealed under their feminine apparel. This done, he sent a messenger, in the guise of a deserter, to the Megarian garrison in Salamis, with information that they might find a number of Athenian women celebrating a festival on the shore at a time and place specified. The garrison fell into the trap, and suffered so disastrous a loss that the island was left without defence. According to another account he had recourse to a more ordinary kind of strategy. The result

was that Athens acquired possession of the island, though, as Megara was not disposed to accept its defeat, not till after an arbitration which Sparta decided in favour of the Athenians.

Solon's next exploit was to procure the punishment of the inhabitants of Cirrha, the seaport by which the oracle of Delphi was approached. The Cirrhaeans were accustomed, it seems, to exact heavy imports from visitors to the oracle; they were even accused of robbery and violence. Solon induced the council of the Amphictyons to interfere; after a long struggle Cirrha was subdued. In the story told by one writer, many centuries after the event, it is true, we find Solon getting rid of his enemies by poisoning the waters of the river which they drank.

But more important work remained for Solon to do. He had to set the domestic affairs of the Athenian people on a sound basis. The condition of the lower classes of Attica, as it is described in the fragments of Solon's verses which have come down to us; curiously resembles that which Livy gives us of the Roman populace in the early days of the republic. Both were overwhelmed with debt. What Solon did to relieve this state of things, it is impossible precisely to say. The common account of the matter is that he introduced a measure which was called the "Removal of Burdens." All mortgages on land were summarily abolished, all debtors who had been deprived of their liberty were set free, all who had been sold into foreign slavery were ransomed. This account does not seem altogether credible. Such securities as mortgages, for instance, belong to a more advanced condition of things than seems possible in Solon's time. But the subject is too long and difficult to discuss in this place. That Solon brought about a great change in the tenure of the land may be taken as certain. This change may have resembled the great reform worked out by Stein in Prussia in the early years of this century. Possibly a parallel may be found to it in the Irish Land legislation of our own time. Whatever may have been the details of his measure, Solon certainly gained and probably deserved the credit of having

finally settled a very difficult question. We never hear again in Athenian history of agrarian troubles.

This social legislation was accompanied by political reforms. The citizens of Athens were divided into classes which remind us with curious exactness of the constitution attributed to the Roman King Servius Tullius. The division was based on property, the standard employed being such as we might expect to find in so early a state of society. The first class, which had the monopoly of all the high offices of state, consisted of such as possessed an annual income equal to the value of five hundred *medimni* (seven hundred bushels) of wheat. Next to these came those who had from three to five hundred *medimni*. These were supposed to be wealthy enough to keep a horse and so to serve as mounted soldiers, and were called Knights. Citizens who owned from two to three hundred, and, as being able to keep a team of oxen, were termed "Teamsmen," constituted the third class. This supplied the heavy-armed infantry of the army. All whose income was less than two hundred *medimni* made a fourth class. As being unable to furnish themselves with heavy armour, they were called upon to serve as light troops only, or if, as sometimes happened, the roll of the heavy-armed had to be supplemented from them, their accoutrements were furnished by the state. This fourth class was exempt from direct taxation, and was ineligible to public office. Members of the second and third could hold posts of minor importance, and paid a progressive tax on capital, the third being rated at five times, the second at ten times, and the first at twelve times the amount of their income.

Other details of Solon's political legislation must be left unnoticed. What has been said is enough to show the principle by which it was guided. This was not the modern doctrine of inherent political rights which every citizen possesses. On the contrary, it was little more than the representation of property. In aftertimes the constitution was largely modified in a

democratic sense. That for the present it did not satisfy the people is evident from what followed.

Afraid that his countrymen—so the story runs—might change the political order which he had devised, Solon exacted from them a promise, by which they bound themselves not to alter for ten years any of the laws which had been thus passed, except with his own consent; and then, to make the giving of this consent impossible, he left his country for a prolonged period of travel.

Round this travel various romantic stories have gathered. Solon's first visit, it is said, was to Egypt, where he spent some time in discussion with the most learned priests of the country. It was from them, according to Plato, that he heard the story of the continent of Atlantis, lost, as the legend had it, under the waves of the Western Ocean. From Egypt he retraced his steps to Cyprus, where he was the guest of one Philocyprus. This prince he persuaded to exchange his abode among the hills, for a more convenient and fertile settlement on the plains, and he did his best to make the new town a safe and well-ordered community. The gratitude of prince and people was shown, it was said, by giving the place the name of its benefactor.

But the most interesting of Solon's experiences of travel was that which befell him at the Court of Cræsus, King of Lydia. As long ago as the time, of Plutarch this story excited the suspicion of the critics, who found in it, indeed, great chronological difficulties. Great they may be, but they are scarcely insuperable. Solon, it is true, must have been an old man at the time, for his legislation is assigned with considerable probability to the year 595 B.C., whereas Cræsus did not begin to reign till the year 568. Yet, as we shall see, Solon was certainly alive eight years after this latter date, for he saw his own constitution overthrown by the usurpation of Pisistratus. It is only necessary to postpone the travel, and, instead of attributing it to a period closely following the legislation, to suppose that it was only when Solon saw the

growing tendency to change, that he took the opportunity of securing his country against it for as long a time as he could. Anyhow the story is so picturesque, and so full of Greek thought in its most characteristic aspects, that we should lose it with the greatest regret.

It runs thus: "Cræsus lodged his Athenian guest in the royal palace, and having bidden his servants conduct him over his treasuries, he put this question to him: 'Stranger of Athens, we have heard much of thy wisdom and of thy travel, how thou goest over many lands, seeking wisdom, and I have conceived the desire of asking thee whom of all the men that thou hast seen up to this day thou didst deem the most happy?' This question put Cræsus, thinking himself to be the happiest of men. But Solon, in nowise flattering the King, but answering him according to the very truth, said, 'Tellus the Athenian, O King.' Marvelling much at this saying, the King cried, not without anger, 'Why judgest thou Tellus to have been the happiest of men?' Solon made answer, 'Firstly, O King, because his country was prosperous, and he had sons that were both comely and good, and to each of these sons children were born that did not die before their time; and secondly, because, after a happy life, he came to a glorious end, for there being a battle between the Athenians and their neighbours at Eleusis, he did good service for his country, and routed the enemy, and so died right nobly, so that the Athenians buried him where he fell at the public cost, and paid him the greatest honours.' Then Cræsus asked him again, 'But whom hast thou seen that was next in happiness to this Tellus?' for he said to himself, 'Surely he will put me next.' Then said Solon, 'I judge Cleobis and Biton to have been next in happiness to Tellus. These were two youths of Argos. They had a sufficiency of worldly goods, and they were stronger than all other men, so that, besides winning many prizes at the games, they did this thing that I now relate. The men at Argos held a great feast to Heré the goddess, who hath a great and famous temple in their city. Now it is a custom that the priestess of Heré, who was the mother of these men, should be drawn in a wagon from the city to the temple, but the

oxen that should have drawn the wagon were not yet come in from the fields. Therefore, as the time was short and the matter pressed, the young men harnessed themselves to the wagon, their mother sitting upon it. So they came to the Temple, the distance being forty and five furlongs. And when all the people of Argos came round them, the men praising the sons for their great strength and the women praising the mother for that she had borne children so noble, the priestess, in the joy of her heart, stood before the image and prayed that the goddess would give to her sons that which the Gods judge it best for a man to have. So she prayed; and the young men, having offered sacrifice and made merry with their companions, lay down to sleep in the temple, and woke no more. Thereupon the Argives commanded that statues of the young men should be made, that they might offer them to the god at Delphi.' When Solon gave the second place to these young men, Cræsus was very wroth, and said, 'Man of Athens, thou countest my happiness to be nothing worth, putting me behind common men.' To him Solon made answer, saying, 'O King, the life of man is very full of chance. I see that thou hast great wealth and rulest over many men. But as for that thou askest of me, I count thee not happy, till I shall know how thou hast ended thy days. For he that is rich above measure is in nowise happier than he that hath sufficient only for the day, unless his good fortune abide with him and give him all that is to be desired all the days of his life. For many men that have very great wealth are yet very unhappy, and many that have neither poverty nor riches have yet great happiness. Verily, if such a man, being whole in body, and in good health, have also good children, and, over and above these things, also end his life well, then I judge him to be the happy man whom thou seekest. But till he die, I say not so, but call him, not happy, indeed, but fortunate. Also it may not be that one man in his life should comprehend all good things. Even as no country sufficeth for itself by producing all things, but having certain things of its own, receiveth others from other countries, so no man sufficeth for himself; some things he hath, but some he receiveth from

others. Whosoever, O King, keeping the greatest store of things, shall end his life in seemly fashion, this man is rightly to be called happy. For, indeed, we must look to the end, to see how it shall turn out; the gods give to many some causes of happiness, yet in the end overthrow them utterly.'

So did Solon speak, but he did not please King Cræsus. Rather the King took no account of him, but judged him to be a foolish and ignorant person, that thought lightly of present goods, and bade men look to their end."

Solon, we may say, did not fulfil his own condition of happiness. Before the end of life came, he saw all the work on which he had spent it undone. His kinsman Pisistratus made himself despot of Athens. Solon did all that he could to rouse the people to resistance. Finding that all his efforts were in vain, he took his armour and weapons and laid them in the street before his door. "I have done that I could for my country," he said, "now my work is over." For himself he had no fears. His friends asked him to what protection from the despot's anger he looked? "To my old age," was his reply. And Pisistratus, who, indeed, had no taste for severities, did not think of harming him. He treated him on the contrary with the greatest respect. Solon died in peace somewhere about the year 558 B.C.

CHAPTER II

A FAMOUS MARRIAGE

The earliest form of government that we hear of in Greece is what we may call "Constitutional Monarchy." The chiefs who led the Homeric hosts into battle were, to adopt the phrase of Thucydides, "hereditary kings with fixed prerogatives." The time of their predominance was before the dawn of history; so was the time of their fall. When we begin to see something like light in the story of the Greek states, *i.e.* in the seventh century B.C., we find ourselves again in an age of monarchy; but the rulers are not of a constitutional kind. Their prerogatives are not fixed. They are usurpers, or, to use the Greek word, used without any intention of imputing cruelty, "tyrants."

One of the most famous and, it may be added, most respectable of the class, was Cleisthenes of Sicyon, a small Doric city on the southern coast of the Corinthian gulf, which claimed to take precedence in point of antiquity of all the Greek communities, whether on the mainland or the islands. The first of the line was Orthagoras, who raised himself to supreme power from the humble station—so tradition had it—of a cook, about the year 670 B.C. He represented—so much seems clear—the non-Dorian element in Sicyon, *i.e.* the revolt of the subject class against the domination of an intruding race. He was, in fact, a despot who raised himself to the throne by the help of democratic support, and was probably not the first as he was certainly not the last of his kind. Myron, possibly his son, more probably his grandson, gained distinction for his city by winning a chariot-race at Olympia. All the family were well known as just and clement rulers. Cleisthenes came to the throne about 600 B.C. He was one of the most powerful princes of his time, taking a leading part in the war which, at the suggestion of Solon, was enjoined by the general council of the

tribes, the Amphictyons, for the purpose of punishing the impiety of the people of Cirrha.

But what I am concerned with at present is the curious story of how the wealth of Cleisthenes, who was the last as well as the greatest of his house, came into the possession of an Athenian family, and while contributing to its rise, indirectly affected the history of the most important states in Greece. This story will be best told in the actual words of Herodotus so far as I am able to give them an appropriate English dress.

"Cleisthenes had a daughter whose name was Agaristé. Her he desired to give in marriage to the best husband whom he could find in all the land of Greece. It was the year of the Olympic festival, and he, having won the prize for the race of four-horse chariots, caused this proclamation to be made: 'Whosoever of the Greeks deems himself worthy to be the son-in-law of Cleisthenes, let him come to Sicyon on the sixtieth day from this present, or, if he will, before, for Cleisthenes will, in the space of a year from the said sixtieth day, take order concerning the marriage of his daughter.' Thereupon such of the Greeks as had a high esteem either of themselves or of their country came as suitors for the maiden Agaristé. And the aforesaid Cleisthenes caused a running course and a wrestling ring to be made for the trial of them. From Italy came Smindyrides, son of Hippocrates, a citizen of Sybaris, a man that reached such a height of luxury as never did any other; and indeed this city of Sybaris was then at its very greatest prosperity. From Siris there came Damasus, son of that Amyris that was surnamed the Wise. These two and none other came from Italy. From the Ionian Gulf (the Adriatic Sea) came Amphinestus, son of Epistrophus, a man of Epidamnus; he only came from the Ionian Gulf. From Ætolia came Males, brother of Titormus. This Titormus excelled all the Greeks in strength, and flying from the face of men dwelt in the extremest parts of the Ætolian land. From the Peloponnesus came Leocedes, son to Pheidon, despot of Argos. This Pheidon was he that established weights and measures for the dwellers

in the Peloponnesus, and behaved himself more arrogantly than all the other Greeks, driving out the men of Elis from being masters of the Great Games, and making himself master.

"Also there came Amiantus, son of Lycurgus, an Arcadian of Trapezus, and Laphanes, an Azenian, of the city of Pæus, son to that Euphorion, who received in his house—so they say in Arcadia—the Twin Brethren, and after that showed hospitality to all men. From Elis came Onomastus, son of Agæus. These were they that came from the Peloponnesus. From Athens came two, Megacles, son of Alcmaeon, the same that visited Cræsus was, one. Another suitor from Athens was Hippocleides, son of Tisander, than whom no Athenian was richer or more comely. From Eretria, which was at this time a prosperous city, came Lysanias. None other came from Eubœa. From Thessaly came Diactorides, son of Cranon, one of the family of Scopas, and from the Molossians, Alcon. So many were the suitors.

"These, then, having come on the appointed day, Cleisthenes first enquired of each his country and lineage; and then, keeping them with him for a whole year, made trial of their courage and temper and education and manners, consorting with them singly and in company. The younger sort he would take to the gymnasium. But most of all did he make experiment of them at the banquet, living with them for the whole of this time and entertaining them sumptuously. Of all the suitors none pleased him so well as those that came from Athens; and of these two he was the more inclined to Hippocleides, both on account of his courage, and because he was of kin to the family of Cypselus of Corinth. When, therefore, the day came for the settling of the marriage and for Cleisthenes to declare whom he had chosen out of all, he sacrificed a hundred oxen, and entertained the suitors and, at the same time, all the inhabitants of Sicyon. And when the banquet was ended, the suitors had a contest among themselves in music and in speaking, some subject being given. As the drinking went on, Hippocleides, who had now a mastery over

the rest, bade the piper play him a tune, and when the piper did so, he danced. And dancing he pleased himself mightily; but Cleisthenes looking on liked the whole business but little. Then Hippocleides, halting awhile, bade a servant bring a table. Thereon he mounted, and danced several figures, first Spartan, then Athenian. Last of all, he put his head on the table, and made a great show with his legs. Now Cleisthenes, during the first dance and during the second also, though he was loathing that Hippocleides should be his son-in-law, by reason of this shameless dancing of his, nevertheless restrained himself, not wishing to break out upon him. But when he beheld him making this show with his legs, he could restrain himself no longer, but cried out, 'Son of Tisander, thou hast danced away thy wife;' to which the other answered, 'Hippocleides doesn't care.' And these words became a proverb.

Then Cleisthenes calling for silence, spake as follows, 'Suitors of my daughter, I commend you all, and willingly would I favour you all were it possible, not choosing one from among you and rejecting all the others. But seeing that, having but one daughter, I may not please you all, I do this. To you that go away disappointed of their hope, I give one talent of silver to each man. This is both for the honour you have done me in seeking this marriage and also for you long absence from home. But my daughter Agaristé I betroth to Megacles, son of Alcmaeon, of Athens, according to Athenian laws.'

"Thereupon, Megacles giving his consent, the marriage followed in due course."

Whatever the details of this story may be worth, it is clear that the family of the Alcmaeonidae made an alliance with the daughter of a foreign potentate, and that by this alliance it was greatly aggrandized. Cleisthenes, the author of the democratic constitution of Athens, and Pericles, the ablest of Athenian statesmen some generations later, were descendants of the Sicyonian princess.

CHAPTER III

THE EXILES OF PHOCAEA

Early in the sixth century—the precise date is given as 546 B.C.—a great change took place in the condition of Western Asia, a change by which the Greek colonies on the Ægean coast were profoundly affected. These towns had struggled with varying success to maintain their independence against their powerful neighbours, the Lydian dynasty of the Mermnadæ, which had its capital at Sardis. Cræsus, the most powerful and most famous of these monarchs, completed their subjugation. He did not, however, deal harshly with them. They suffered little beyond the imposition of a tribute, and the necessity of having to pull down, or at least make a breach in their walls. After a reign of about thirteen years Cræsus himself fell. He had provoked a conflict with the rising power of the Persians, had fought an indecisive battle with them on the border of his kingdom, and had returned to Sardis to prepare for another campaign. This intention was frustrated by the unexpected energy of the Persian leader. Cyrus followed him, attacked him before the allies whom he had summoned to his assistance, could join him, and inflicting on him a severe defeat, shut him up in Sardis. The city fell in the course of a few days, and the Lydian dynasty ceased to exist. The Greek colonies sought an interview with the conqueror, and endeavoured to obtain from him the same easy terms of dependence which they had enjoyed under Cræsus. In Eastern fashion, he answered them with a fable. It ran thus:

"A certain piper, seeing fishes in the sea, piped to them, thinking that they would come out to him on the land. But being disappointed of this hope, he took a cast-net, and enclosing therewith a great multitude of them, drew them to shore. Then, seeing them leaping about, he said to the fishes,

'cease now from your dancing, for ye would not dance, when I piped to you.' "

The application was this: Cyrus, on hearing of the attack which the Lydian king intended to make on him, had endeavoured to make a diversion by rousing his Greek subjects against him. The Greeks, satisfied with their condition, had refused his overtures, and this refusal he was not disposed to forgive. Nothing was left for the cities but to defend themselves as best they could.

The first to be attacked was Phocæa. Though not the largest, it was in one way the most distinguished of the Greek settlements in Asia. It had an admirable harbour, which is still one of the best on the coast, and its citizens were the boldest and most successful of the merchant adventurers who pushed their commercial enterprise over all the coasts of the Mediterranean, and even beyond the Pillars of Hercules. Some twenty years before the date of which I am now speaking, one of their trading ships—and it is a proof of their enterprising spirit that they used for purposes of commercial exploration, not the capacious merchantman but vessels of war—had reached Tartessus, on the Atlantic coast. The king of the Tartessians, Arganthonius by name, was so pleased with the new-comers, that he begged them to leave their home in Asia, and to settle in his country, offering them the choice of any spot which they might choose to select. When they declined this offer, he presented them with a sum of money which they were to spend in fortifying their city. The time was now come when, as we may easily suppose, the Phocæans repented of their refusal. The Persian general, Harpagus by name, invested their town: notwithstanding the menacing language of his master, Harpagus was not disposed to drive the besieged to extremities. "Pull down," he said, "one of your battlements, and dedicate one of your dwelling-houses to the King, and it will suffice." But the bold Phocæans were not disposed to make even this acknowledgment of subjection. They sought, however, to temporize. "Draw off your army," they said to the

Persian commander, "and give us a day for deliberation." Harpagus was not deceived. "I know," he replied "what you are thinking of; still I will do what you say." Accordingly he retired from the walls. The Phocæans launched all their vessels of war, put on board their wives and children, and all the property which could be removed from the temples and private houses, and departed. Harpagus, returning next day, found himself master, as he had probably expected, of an empty city.

The question was—whither were the fugitives to go? King Arganthonius was dead. He had lived to an extreme old age, completing, we are told, the one hundred and twentieth year of his age and the eightieth of his reign. The voyage was too long to take on the chance that his successor might be equally friendly. The colony which they had planted at a still earlier time on the south coast of Gaul, though it was afterwards to grow into the powerful city of Massilia (Marseilles), was then in a feeble condition. Under these circumstances they looked nearer home. Their first idea was to purchase from the people of Chios some unoccupied islets known by the name of the *Ænussæ*. But the Chians were afraid of their enterprising neighbours, and dreaded the establishment of a rival trading station so close to themselves. Accordingly, they refused the offer. The Phocæans then turned their thoughts to another colony founded by themselves, and not so remote as Massilia. This was Alalia in Corsica, then called Cyrnus. To Alalia, therefore, they resolved to go, but before going they executed a bloody revenge on the intruders who had driven them from their native town. They sailed back to Phocæa, and surprising the Persian garrison which Harpagus had put into the town, put them all to the sword. Probably they had another motive besides revenge. They knew their own weakness, and wished to make the thought of return and submission impossible, by the commission of a deed that the conqueror could not be expected to pardon. The further safeguard of an oath was added. They joined in invoking the heaviest curses on the head of anyone who should draw back from their contemplated enterprise; sinking a lump of iron in the sea, they

swore a solemn oath that they would not return before the iron should float. As it turned out, the Phocæan leaders had not over-rated the danger of faint-heartedness or, perhaps I should say, home-sickness in their followers. The larger half of the exiles braved the anger of heaven and the more imminent danger of Persian vengeance for their slaughtered countrymen, and returned to their native town. They probably threw the blame of the massacre upon their absent countrymen, and Harpagus was not unwilling to believe them.

The bolder and more resolute spirits among the exiles continued their voyage to Alalia, which they reached in safety. They brought with them a formidable force of warships, no less than sixty penteconters or fifty-oared vessels, and they at once took up an occupation which had been pursued in the Mediterranean from time immemorial, and which, indeed, has become extinct only within the memory of men still living—piracy. But they were intruding on the domain of two powerful rivals, Etruria and Carthage. Neither, we may presume, viewed the practice with any disfavour, but they could not tolerate it when carried on against themselves. An alliance was formed between the two for the purpose of putting down the newcomers. The combined Carthaginian and Etrurian fleet, consisting of one hundred and twenty ships, met the Phocæans near their new abode. A fierce conflict followed. We have only the Greek account of the result, and in this a victory is claimed for the Phocæans, but it was a victory that was not less disastrous than a defeat. Forty out of the sixty penteconters were sunk, and the remaining twenty had their beaks so bent and blunted that they were unfit for service. That their antagonists had suffered even more severely may, perhaps, be concluded from the fact that they did not attempt to attack again an enemy that was practically defenceless.

But the continuance of this immunity could not be relied upon, and the Phocæans had to seek another home. This they found on the west coast of Italy, or as it was then called, *Ænotria*. Vela, otherwise called Velia and Elea, was the name

of their final settlement. The place was suggested by a citizen of a neighbouring Greek settlement, Poseidonia, who at the same time did the exiles the service of reviving their faith in the Divine guidance which they had been attempting to follow. The unlucky expedition to Cynus had been made in obedience to an oracle, which had bidden them make Cynus the object of their search. Their Poseidonian friend explained to them that the true Cynus was not the island so called, but a local hero worshipped at Vela and reputed to be the son of Hercules.

Vela continued to flourish for many centuries, and still exists. It is now called Castell a Mare della Brucca. Under the name of Elea it became famous as the seat of a school of philosophy known as the Eleatic. The Phocæan settlers were joined by other exiles from Ionia, and among these was Xenophanes a native of Colophon, a philosopher and poet of no mean eminence.

Little remains either of his speculations or of his verse. Perhaps we may with most reason regret the poem in which he described the "Median Invasion," and celebrated the foundation of Elea by his heroic kinsmen, the "Exiles of Phocæa."

CHAPTER IV

THE BATTLE-FIELD OF FREEDOM

All the Greek cities of the mainland of Asia Minor shared the fate of Phocæa, though all were not equally resolute in protesting against it. The islands which lie near the western shore soon lost their independence, and even the more remote were threatened. Europe itself was not safe. Though the Persian King Darius made a disastrous failure in his attempt to annex the desolate wastes of Scythia, his lieutenants conquered Thrace and received the submission of Macedonia.

By this last acquisition the Persian Empire was brought up to the northern frontier of Mainland Greece, and it became evident that the conquering spirit of the new Asiatic power would not rest till an effort had been made to bring the whole Hellenic race under its sway. Meanwhile the Asiatic Greeks had been growing restless under the Persian rule. An open revolt, which doubtless had been long meditated, was hastened by personal causes. Histæus, tyrant of Miletus, had done a signal service to Darius, and the king had rewarded him by carrying him back to his capital and making him one of his confidential advisers. The Greek soon wearied of his splendid captivity, and conceived the idea—somewhat extravagant, it seems to us—of putting an end to it by exciting a revolt among the King's Greek dependencies. He hoped that he should himself be chosen to suppress it. The ambition of his son-in-law and vicegerent at Miletus had been working meanwhile to the same end. This man, Aristagoras by name, had hoped to aggrandize himself by adding the island of Naxos to the dominion of his Persian master. He had induced the King to send a fleet under his orders. A Persian noble was, however, associated with him in his command. A fierce quarrel broke out between the two colleagues, and the Persian took his revenge by sending secret intelligence to Naxos of the meditated attack.

The Naxians, thus put on their guard, put themselves into a state of defence, and the expedition failed, leaving Aristagoras hopelessly involved. He had lost his credit with the King, and he had made himself responsible for a great part of the expenditure. In the midst of his perplexity the message from Histiaëus arrived with the suggestion of a revolt, and he saw in it a way out of his difficulties.

His first step was to lay down his despotic power. This was a most politic measure. To combine deliverance from domestic tyranny and freedom from a foreign yoke, was a prospect which appealed strongly to the Greek mind. The tyrants were banished or slain everywhere, and before many months had passed every Greek city was in arms against the King.

Aristagoras sought allies in Mainland Greece. The Spartans repulsed him; but the Athenians and Eretrians sent a squadron of thirty-five ships to his help. The arrival of the contingent so emboldened the Asiatic Greeks that they attacked Sardis, the seat of the Satrap or Governor of Western Asia Minor. The city was captured, sacked, and burnt. After this success everything went wrong. Finally at Lade in 496 B.C. the Greek fleet was entirely destroyed, and the revolt was at an end. Miletus was destroyed, and its inhabitants were sold as slaves; the other Greek cities were punished, but less severely.

It remained, however, for Darius to exact retribution from the audacious strangers who had ventured to help his rebellious subjects, and even to sack and burn one of his capital cities. Every day—so the story runs—as the King sat at the feast a slave repeated to him three times, "Master, remember the Athenians!" Four years were spent in preparation. Then in 492 the Satrap Mardonius led an expedition westward. He marched with his army along the northern shore of the Ægean, while his fleet accompanied him. But the fleet met with a storm so furious that three hundred galleys were wrecked, while the fierce Thracian tribes furiously attacked the army. Mardonius repulsed them, but suffered so much in the encounter that he

thought it wiser to return. Again Darius busied himself with his preparations, and when two more years had passed they were once more complete. He could now punish his insolent enemies, and put them, for the future, under a government which would probably make them better behaved.

Six hundred ships of war with a fleet of transports, carrying more than a hundred thousand men, of whom a considerable part were cavalry, assembled at Samos. Few doubted, the Persian leaders certainly did not doubt, that their task would be easily accomplished. Greece was but an insignificant district, scarcely equal to one of the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the Persian Empire; and the prestige of victory was with the invaders.

The Persian generals—there were two, one of them, Datis by name, a Mede by birth—took a direct course over the Ægean. Naxos, which had stood a siege ten years before, was surrendered without a blow, though it could muster eight thousand heavy-armed. The neighbouring islands were reduced by the fleet. Eretria, one of the chief offenders in the late war, fell. Separated from Mainland Greece by only a narrow strait, it was captured after a brief siege, some of its principal citizens betraying it to the foe. From Eretria the Persians crossed to the bay of Marathon, a spot on the Eastern coast of Attica, and distant a little more than twenty miles from the city. The bay, sheltered as it was on the north side by a promontory, and skirted by a firm beach, was a favourable place for landing, nor, as it seems, did the Athenians make any attempt to hinder it.

The whole force of the city was, however, ready to do battle with the invaders. Help had been sought from Sparta, the runner who bore the request, traversing, the distance, which was not less than one hundred and forty miles, in forty-eight hours. The Spartans promised assistance, but could not give it at once. It was their custom to set out on an expedition at the full moon, and at no other time; the moon then wanted five days to being full, and there must therefore be five days' delay.

Accordingly the Athenians were left alone to bear the brunt of the Persian attack.

They were joined, however, on the eve of the battle by a thousand heavy-armed soldiers from Plataea. This was a little town, numbering, we may calculate, some eight or ten thousand inhabitants, which had seceded from the Boeotian confederacy, and to which Athens had accorded her protection some twenty years before. Unasked, moved by a gratitude which is not the less admirable because it was in accord with her interests, the gallant little state sent her whole force to stand by her ally in a critical moment.

The military organization of Athens was but ill suited to meet a sudden danger. The command of the army was held in commission by ten generals, one for each of the ten tribes of Attica. Its movements were decided by a majority of votes, but the details of tactics were under the direction of a single general, all taking the office for a single day, and in regular rotation. An officer entitled the polemarch, or "war-chief," the third in rank of the ten archons, was an eleventh in the military council.

On this occasion the ten were equally divided in opinion. Five were for postponing an engagement. It would be better, they thought, to wait for help, such, for instance, as the Spartans had promised, from the other Greek cities. Five, headed by Miltiades, who was beyond doubt the most distinguished Athenian of the time, pleaded for immediate action.

To shut themselves up within their walls, and there await the Persian attack, would, he argued, be to invite the fate of Eretria. There traitors had been found to open the gates to the enemy, and traitors would not be wanting in Athens. There were many whose affections and interests incline them to the cause of the banished tyrants, and these would certainly be active at such a time. Miltiades, backed, it is said, by Themistocles and Aristides, urged these views in the council of war, and privately on the polemarch, Callimachus by name, on

whose casting vote the decision depended. Happily the polemarch was persuaded, and it was resolved to fight at once. Miltiades's nine colleagues yielded to him their right of command, and the unity of purpose that is so essential to success was thus secured. Whether the army was already encamped on the rising ground that overlooks the plain, or was still within the city walls when this discussion took place, cannot be determined. That Miltiades should have waited till his own proper day of command came round, it is difficult to believe, though we are told that he did so.

However this may be, it was on the 12th of September 490 B.C., that the battle which was to decide the fate of Greece, we may even say of the world, was fought. Miltiades drew up his force, ten thousand, or, if the Plataeans are to be added to that number, eleven thousand in all.

The ten tribes of the Athenian people had each their separate place; that to which the polemarch belonged occupying the place of honour on the right wing, while the Plataeans were on the extreme left. The line was so extended as to be equal in length to that of the far more numerous Persian host. It was a bold piece of strategy, for it involved a dangerous weakening of the centre, where, indeed, the troops were but three deep, but it was a protection against the danger, so formidable to all non-professional soldiers, of being outflanked. At the word of command the little army moved forward, at first at a moderate pace, afterwards, when the distance between them and the enemy was something less than a mile, at a run.

The effect of this movement, which, indeed, seemed to the Persians the act of madmen, was astonishing. It put an end to the confidence with which the invaders anticipated the result of the conflict. The men who dared so to charge a far superior foe must have, they thought, a more than human strength or must rely on more than human help. When the two lines closed in conflict, the Athenian wings, on which Miltiades had massed his troops to the utmost of his resources, were speedily

victorious. The Greeks were superior in strength and equipment to their adversaries, and here at least their formation was not wanting in solidity. Things went less favourably at the centre. Here—always the post of honour in an Asiatic army—the best troops, the native Persia and the warlike Sacæ, were posted. The Greek line, perilously weak as it was, was broken, and the troops composing it were forced back to the very edge of the plain. Miltiades was not so occupied with his own success as not to perceive this reverse, which, indeed he must have anticipated. He recalled the victorious wings from their pursuit of the flying enemy, and wheeled them round against the Persian centre, which they took in the rear. This, probably disordered by its own success, was speedily broken, and the whole army fled to their ships. Many were lost in the marsh which bordered the plain on the north, but the rest made good their escape. The Athenians, it is true, made a determined effort to destroy the ships, but they failed, and, indeed, suffered no small loss in the attempt. Several of their bravest warriors fell at this spot, Callimachus the polemarch, Ctesilaus, one of the ten generals, and a brother of the poet Æschylus, himself also among the combatants. Only seven ships were burnt. The total loss of the Persians was six thousand four hundred; that of the Athenians and their Platean allies was one hundred and ninety-two. These were buried on the field; a mound was raised over them, and ten pillars—one for each tribe—preserved for posterity the names of those who had fallen. Ever after the "Men of Marathon" were regarded as the foremost heroes of Athenian history. Any satire or censure directed against the degeneracy of later times was always pointed by a contrast with the warriors who had fought and conquered in this famous battle.

The victorious troops had, however, something yet to do. The Persian fleet, instead of putting out to sea, sailed towards Athens. The partisans of the tyrants had exhibited a signal which indicated that they were prepared to betray the city. But the signal, the flashing of a shield, probably from the height of Pentelicus, had been caught by the eye of Miltiades,

and he conjectured its import. Instantly he gave the signal to march; the army made its way with all speed to the city, which they reached before the fleet, which had to traverse the long coast line from the bay of Marathon to Athens, could arrive. Overawed by this sudden movement, the traitors did not venture to act, and the Persians, after lingering a few days, sailed homewards.

Two thousand Spartans arrived on the day after the battle. They had started immediately on the appearance of the full moon in the heavens, and marching with all the speed that they could use had reached the frontier of Attica on the third day. This was a feat scarcely less astonishing than that of the runner Pheidippides, as it implies a march of more than forty miles on three successive days. All that they could do was to visit the field battle, where the corpses of the fallen Persians still lay unburied.

It is a remarkable fact that no mention is made of the Persian cavalry. Yet a force of cavalry certainly accompanied the expedition, and might have been used, we cannot but think, with great effect. Professor Curtius thinks that the Persians were preparing to embark when Miltiades attacked them and that the cavalry were already on board. He would thus account for the success with which the embarkation seems to have taken place after the battle. If everything had not been in readiness the Persians must have suffered far more severely than they actually did.

CHAPTER V

THE THREE HUNDRED

My next chapter will tell the story of how Greece was finally saved from the Persians: this will be devoted to a narrative of the first attempt to stop the advance of the invader, an attempt that was not less noble because it was unsuccessful. The isolated Greek communities, always jealous of each other, and often hostile, had been coerced into something like union by the danger that threatened them. A congress met at the Isthmus, and it was determined to make a stand at the northern boundary of Greece. This was the range of Olympus, dividing Thessaly from Southern Macedonia, and penetrable, through part of the year, only by the pass of Tempe. The Thessalians strongly urged the taking up of this position. They promised to assist in the defence of it with their whole available force, declaring, that if it was not done, they would be compelled to provide for their own safety by submitting to the Persian King. A force of ten thousand heavy-armed was accordingly sent northward, and for a short time actually occupied the pass. But their stay was brief. They discovered that the position was untenable. There was another pass some little distance to the westward, impracticable indeed, owing to its altitude, in winter, but at that time—it was early summer—perfectly available. The Greek force retreated southward, leaving the greater part of Northern Greece at the mercy of the invader. The position which it was now resolved to take up was the Pass of Thermopylæ, the "Hot Gates," so called from the hot springs which rise in the neighbourhood. The "Gates" were not a pass in the ordinary sense of the term, *i.e.* a narrow defile between two closely—approaching mountains. There was a mountain on one side, and an impassable marsh on the other, reaching to the sea. This was the case at both the western or outer and the eastern or inner "Gates," the road at both being so narrow that

only a single vehicle could travel on it. The intervening space, about a mile in length, was much wider. It was here that the springs rose from the ground.

Thermopyle offered to the defending force an advantage which Tempe did not possess. In its near neighbourhood the strait, dividing the island of Eubœa from the mainland, was so narrow that it could be easily blocked. It was hoped, therefore, that the advance of the invader could be simultaneously stopped by both sea and land. The fleet accordingly took up its position at a spot called Artemisium. It numbered two hundred and eighty ships, under the command of the Spartan Eurybiades, the Athenians, with patriotic self-denial, forbearing to press a claim to which their superior skill and the magnitude of their contingent, a hundred in all, would have given great weight. At the same time Leonidas, one of the Spartan kings, occupied Thermopylæ with a force which numbered about four thousand heavy-armed. How many other troops were present we do not know. The three hundred Spartans were doubtless attended by armed Helots. But it is difficult to suppose that many more than four thousand could have found camping-room in the limited space within the "Gates."

The movements of Xerxes do not belong to my story. It will suffice to say that, arrived at the outer end of the pass, he waited four days before ordering an attack, in expectation, Herodotus tells us, that the defenders would fly. A horseman whom he sent to reconnoitre, brought back as his report that he had seen the Spartans engaged, some in martial exercises, some in carefully combing their hair. The King asked an explanation from one Demaratus, himself an exiled king of Sparta, who was accompanying the expedition. Demaratus repeated what he had often said before, that Xerxes could not expect to make his way without a desperate struggle "These men," he went on, "are preparing to fight for the pass; they have a custom of carefully combing their hair when they know that they will have to fight to the death." He did not convince the King, who

waited for a submission that never came. On the fifth day he sent a force of Medes and Persians with orders to bring these presumptuous men into his presence. They attacked the position—it was by this time fortified by a wall built across the pass—but failed utterly. From morning to evening they renewed the assault, fresh troops continually coming up, but only to meet with the same disastrous repulse. The following day the Persian Guard, known as the Immortals, took up the fighting, but to no better purpose. They suffered even more heavily, for a feigned retreat on the part of the Greeks drew them on to a spot where a frightful slaughter was inflicted on them. Thrice did Xerxes leap up from his seat as he watched the conflict, in fear for his army. A third day's fighting ended in the same way.

At this point an act of infamous treachery helped the King out of his perplexity. A Melian, by name Ephialtes, came to him and offered to show him how he might outflank the defenders of the pass. There was a path over the hills which brought out the traveller beyond the inner "Gate." Leonidas knew of this path before he had taken up his position at Thermopylæ. The Phocians, however, had undertaken to guard it, and he felt secure. But the Phocians failed him. Apparently they neglected to place any outposts. Anyhow the Persians were close upon them before they knew of their approach. It was only by the crackling of the dead leaves under foot, as the invaders made their way through the oak forest that clothed the mountain side, that they became aware of their danger. They hastily armed themselves. The Persians, surprised to see an armed force where they expected no opposition, halted. "Who are these?" said Hydarnes, the Persian leader, to the traitor who was guiding them. He was afraid, Herodotus tells us, that they were Spartans. He had found out what manner of men these were two days before, for it was he who led the Immortals. "They are Phocians," replied Ephialtes. At once Hydarnes ordered an attack. The difference between Spartans and Phocians was soon evident. A shower of arrows sufficed to send the guardians of the path in headlong flight.

The Greeks at Thermopylæ were by this time informed of the fate that was approaching. The seer Megistias had seen in the sacrifices the signs of impending death; and soon more certain information was brought by deserters from the Persian army; finally the scouts came hurrying into the camp, with the news that the enemy were in sight. Leonidas acted at once. His allies he sent away; they were willing, probably anxious, to save themselves; and he would not hinder them. But he and his Spartans elected to stay. Honour forbade them to fly from an enemy; as for Leonidas, he had the still stronger motive, that his death, if the oracles spake truly, would save Sparta. The city must perish, or one of its kings; and he gladly chose the alternative so glorious to himself. The seer, though not a Spartan by birth, refused to depart; but he sent away his only son. The Thespian contingent, seven hundred strong, also elected to stay. Four hundred Thebans were kept, it was said, against their will.

Up to this time the defending force had fought, for the most part, behind a wall which had been built across the western end of the pass many years before by the Phocians. They had found it in ruins, and had repaired and heightened it. Now that they had resolved to die, the Spartans were bent on selling their lives as dearly as they could, and advancing beyond the wall, assumed the offensive. The Persians gave way before them; urged on though they were by the scourge, they could not resist the furious valour of the Greeks; many were slain, many thrust into the sea, many trampled down by their own countrymen. One writer declares that the Spartans actually penetrated to within a short distance of Xerxes. Still, to a conflict fought at such tremendous odds, there could be but one issue. Early in the day Leonidas fell. There was a fierce struggle for his body; four times the Spartans were borne back by overpowering numbers, four times they rallied, succeeding at last in carrying off the body of the king. As the day passed, their spears and swords were shivered by incessant use, and they were driven to use their hands and even their teeth. At last, almost unarmed, they withdrew to a hillock which stood at the

eastern end of the pass. Here they were surrounded by the Persians, and overwhelmed with showers of stones and arrows. Not a man survived; but the Thebans pleaded the treacherous submission of their state, and though personally of the patriotic party their plea was allowed, and their lives were spared. But they suffered the ignominy of being branded, as cattle are branded, with the king's mark. The slain were buried where they fell, the Spartans lying by themselves. A pillar surmounted the mound which covered their remains, bearing this inscription:

"Go, tell at Sparta, thou that passest by,
That here obedient to her laws we lie."

Another monument commemorated in general terms the valour of the whole force which had attempted to stay the Persian advance.

"Four thousand warriors from the Apian land
Did thrice a hundred myriads here withstand."

Both these epigrams were the work of the famous Simonides of Ceos. It was he also who paid this tribute to the memory of his friend the seer who scorned to leave his Spartan patrons:

"Beneath thy feet the wise Megistias lies,
Skilled to discern the warnings of the skies;
From swift Spercheius came the Mede, and slew
The blameless prophet. Well his fate he knew;
Yet scorned to fly, choosing to share the doom
Of his dear Spartan friends. Behold his tomb!"

Above Leonidas the "lion king" the piety of his countrymen erected a tomb, which bore the appropriate semblance of the king of beasts. For this also Simonides composed an inscription. It runs:

"Bravest of beasts am I; of men most brave
Who lies below, and now I watch his grave.
Lion he was alike in name and heart,
Else had I ne'er endured this watcher's part."

CHAPTER VI

THE WOODEN WALLS

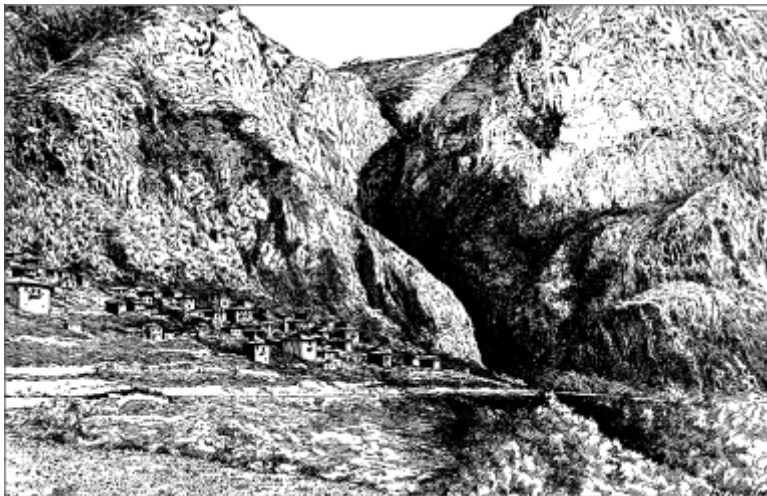
Nothing strikes us more painfully as we read the history of Greece than the incessant feuds which were carried on by neighbouring cities, worshipping the same gods, speaking substantially the same tongue, and so closely akin in race that their strife was little less monstrous than civil war. It sounds, therefore, something like a paradox when a Greek historian, writing of one of these miserable conflicts, declares, "this war was the saving of Greece." For all that the statement is strictly true.

Athens and Ægina, separated from each other by some fifteen miles of sea, had been at feud almost from time immemorial. Commercial jealousy, and the petty causes of offence which are sure to occur between neighbours, are sufficient to account for this enmity, but legend had preserved or invented some special way of explaining it.

It is needless to follow the course of the war. It will suffice to say that Athens, though probably the stronger state, had not been able to gain any substantial advantage over its adversary. It was the genius of Themistocles, who seems to have had a singular capacity for discerning the real bearing of events, and to have foreseen the future with an almost prophetic instinct, that suggested the means by which the war was to be brought to a successful end, and at the same time to become, as the historian remarks, the salvation of Greece.

To put the matter briefly, Themistocles persuaded his countrymen to bend all their energies to the work of making Athens a great naval power. It is not difficult to believe that he looked beyond the immediate occasion. An enemy far more formidable than Ægina threatened his native country. Persia he knew, was bound to avenge the insults which it had received,

and to retrieve its defeats. It was making gigantic preparations for this object, and the only hope of safety for Athens was to obtain command of the sea. This secured, the Athenian people might survive, even though their city, which was then, it will be remembered, unprotected by walls, might fall into the hands of the invader. Fortunately the means for constructing a powerful fleet were ready to his hand. The city possessed in the silver mines of Laurium a source of revenue which might be easily employed for this purpose. The proceeds of the mines had been frittered away in yearly doles to the citizens. Themistocles persuaded his countrymen, to devote the whole, a sum amounting to about £12,000) ?> to the building of a fleet. The immediate result was a speedy victory over Ægina; the remoter gain was the salvation of Greece.



DELPHI.
GENERAL VIEW, SHOWING THE PHAEDRIDDES ROCKS AND THE
RAVINE OF CASTALIA.

Circumstances had combined to give a long respite to the Greeks. Nearly ten years had passed since the day of Marathon, and the storm of Persian vengeance had not yet broken. Darius had been called away when his preparations were almost complete, by the revolt of Egypt; and his death

had followed, at a very short interval, the reduction of Egypt. But his son and successor had no idea of abandoning the scheme. Indeed, he was collecting from every part of his vast Empire a force so vast that the mere report of it would suffice, he thought, to banish all idea of resistance. This enormous host, gathered from every tribe between the Indus and the Bosphorus, was already on its march westward. In the Greek cities there was no unity of purpose. Some openly declared their intention to submit to the barbarians; others, with a selfishness only equalled by their folly, dreamt of saving their strength for the defence of their own walls. It was only a minority that had any idea of a combined resistance of the common foe, and even in these there was a feeling of terror which approached almost to despair.

The Athenians, feeling that they would be the first objects of attack, asked the Delphian oracle what they should do. Apollo's answer was by no means encouraging. The envoys had scarcely taken their seats within the precinct when the priestess broke forth into a strain of awful warning.

"Unhappy men why do ye tarry?
Fly, fly to the borders of earth.
From where round your towering stronghold
lies wheel-like the town of your birth!
For the head and the body are sick,
and the feet are all weary and spent,
And their cunning is gone from the hands,
and the loins are all feeble and bent.
They are perished already, so fiercely
the flame runneth on to destroy,
While, driving his Syrian chariot,
the terrible Master, whose joy
Is in battle and death, cometh nearer.
Nor think these will suffer alone;
Full many a wall shall be levelled;
not a stone shall be left on a stone!
And the flame that devours shall encircle
full many a high-pillared fane;
Alas! for their dwellers immortal,

who tremble and sweat in the pain
Of the mastering dread that is on them,
for even to-day do they see
The blood dripping down from the roof-tops,
dread token of doom that shall be;
Go and harden thy heart to the trouble
that comes, is my counsel to thee!"

The terror inspired by these words in the hearts of the envoys was indescribable. Then came a suggestion of comfort. One of the most notable citizens of Delphi counselled them not to be content with so hopeless an answer. Let them, he said, approach the god again, not as enquirers, but as suppliants, and see whether they could not wring from him some more encouraging reply.

It was commonly said that the Delphian god "medized," i.e. took the Persian side in the great struggle of Greece for freedom. And it is beyond doubt that the council of priests which dictated the answers of the oracle shared the common belief that the Persian arms were irresistible. Their great object was to secure the reputation of their god as a predictor of the truth, and they put into his mouth a forecast that seemed to them almost certainly true. At the same time they were not inaccessible to other influences, and these, we may be sure, Themistocles did not fail to use. So far the oracle had said exactly what he wished. Men reduced to despair, as they had been, would listen eagerly to any suggestion of hope, and this was now given them, and exactly in the direction in which the great statesman had been working for years. Bearing the tokens of supplication in their hands the envoys entered the shrine again: "Lord Apollo," they said, "have regard to these tokens, and give us some better answer about our fatherland; verily we will not depart otherwise from thy temple, but will stay here till we die." Thereupon the priestess delivered a second oracle. "Pallas," she said, "had vainly endeavoured to sway the heart of Zeus and save her city; but she had wrung from him one thing.

"When all things else shall perish
that are found in King Cecrops' land,

Then alone unhurt of the foeman
the walls that are wooden shall stand,
The safety of thee and thy children.
But do not thou think to abide
The host of the footmen and horsemen
as it pours like an incoming tide
Over the land of thy birth, but depart;
yet know that there cometh a day
When those from whom thou art flying
thou shalt meet in the battle array,
And Salamis, Island Divine,
many children of women shall slay."

Here certainly we can see the hand of Themistocles. The whole scheme of his policy is wrapped up in these words. The Athenians were to relinquish all idea of resisting the Persian advance by land; they were to abandon their city—what an audacious proposal, one thinks, for a statesman to make to his countrymen!—they were to trust to their ships, and to make their stand on the very place which the extraordinary genius of the man had discerned as the most favourable place for it.

Something, indeed, still remained to be done. The oracle had been obtained; it had now to be interpreted in the sense which Themistocles desired. There were some who maintained that the "wooden walls" was the ancient palisading that surrounded the Acropolis or citadel of Athens, and thus it was in the Acropolis that the last stand was to be made. When this opinion was overruled, there remained what seemed a gloomy prognostic how "Salamis should slay many sons of women." Might not this be a prophecy that Athens, risking her all upon her ships, should suffer defeat? At this point Themistocles himself intervened. "Not so," he suggested, "if the god had meant to prophesy disaster he would not have spoken of Salamis as 'divine' but 'wretched' or 'unhappy.'" The argument was convincing; and the plan of action was determined upon. The Athenians were to concentrate their

whole fighting force in their fleet; they were to make their stand behind their "wooden walls."



ATHENA PARTHENOS.
THE VARVAKEION STATUETTE.

The earlier events which followed the arrival of the Persian host may be very briefly summarized. The first line of defence was forced. The army that garrisoned the pass of Thermopylæ was compelled to retreat, leaving behind to a glorious death the famous Three Hundred from Sparta, and another Seven Hundred from the Bœotian Thespiæ, less famous but not less noble. The fleet at Artemisium in Eubœa, which had been intend to arrest the southward advance of the Persian ships, after winning two victories at considerable cost, had also fallen back. Themistocles, who was in command of the Athenian contingent, which numbered one hundred and eighty ships out of a total of about three hundred and seventy, induced the Greeks to make a halt at Salamis. It was a request

which could not be refused, for the Athenians had resolved to abandon their city and absolutely wanted the squadron for the removal of the non-combatants and of so much of their property as it was possible to save. But the difficulty was to keep the fleet there. The contingents from the Peloponnesus—and a Peloponnesian, the Spartan Eurybiades, was in supreme command—were selfishly bent on defending their own country. A wall was being built across the Isthmus with all possible speed; this, it was hoped, would stop the Persian advance by land; how the hostile fleet was to be dealt with they do not appear to have considered. Themistocles, on the other hand, felt that their departure would be the ruin of Greece. The fleet would inevitably break up, each squadron hurrying home to the defence of its own coast. Accordingly, he spared no efforts to prevent a step so disastrous. When other arguments failed, he had to recourse to a threat. "Stay here," he said to the Spartan admiral, "and you will be playing the part of a brave man, and will save Greece. But if you are determined to go, then know what we shall do. We will put our families on board, and go just as we are to Siris in Italy; that place is ours, and it has been prophesied that some day we shall colonize it. As for you, you will find out before long what it means to have lost such allies as we are."

Eurybiades could not resist this argument. He was perfectly aware that without the Athenians the Greek fleet was helpless, and he gave the order to remain. This was received with apparent obedience, but the discontent among the Peloponnesian allies was great. And when the danger drew nearer, when the army of the Persians was known to be marching towards the Isthmus, where the wall was scarcely finished, their fear got beyond all control. Another council of the admirals was held; a fierce debate followed, but it was evident to the Athenian commander that the vote would be against him, and that Salamis would be abandoned.

The peril was imminent. The safety of Greece and his own personal fortunes—which for all his patriotism he never

forgot—were at stake. Under these circumstances he took a desperate resolution, venturing on an act which only success, and scarcely success itself, could justify. He sent to the Persian king by a trusted slave of his own, Sicinnus by name, a message which was to have the effect of compelling the Greeks to remain where they were. It ran thus: "The Athenian commander sends you this without the knowledge of his allies. He wishes you well, and would gladly see you victorious rather than his countrymen. Know, therefore, that they are overpowered by fear and are meditating flight. You can therefore now accomplish the best work that you ever did, if you will hinder their escape."

Xerxes, apparently without any suspicion that this advice was not sincere, acted on the suggestion, and, moving the western wing of his fleet, cut off the retreat of the Greeks.

Themistocles first heard of the success of his advice from a political enemy. Aristides, the leader of the aristocratic party at Athens, had been banished at the instance of his great rival. But this was a time when all such feuds are forgotten. Aristides came to the Spartan admiral's ship, where the council was being held, and standing outside called for Themistocles, who at once came out to speak to him. "It matters not," said the new-comer, "whether there be much talk or little about the departure of the Peloponnesians from this place. Depart they cannot, however much they may wish it. The Persians enclose us on every side. This I have seen with my own eyes. Go and tell the news to the council."

"You bring good news," replied Themistocles. "But you must know that this is of my devising. Our allies would not fight here of their own free will, and it was necessary to make them do so, whether they would or no. Do you now go in and tell them. You they will believe, while they will think that I am telling them a feigned tale."

Aristides accordingly entered the council. "I have come," he said, "from Ægina, having with difficulty escaped

the blockading ships. You are entirely enclosed by the enemy. Make ready therefore to fight."

Many of the captains still doubted, when a new arrival put the matter beyond all question. A Tenian ship—Tenos was a little island in the Ægean—which had deserted from the Persians, came with full intelligence. The Greeks had to make a virtue of necessity, and prepared for battle.

At dawn of day Themistocles—the Athenian gift of oratory was even then, it would seem, acknowledged—addressed the assembled men-at-arms from the fleet. These were soldiers who served on board the ships, fulfilling much the same functions as our marines. Plutarch tells us that there were eighteen in each ship, so that the total number would amount to something less than seven thousand.

The speech finished, the men-at-arms embarked again, and the fleet put out from land. The Persian ships advanced to engage it, and with an aspect so formidable, it would seem, that the Greeks began to back water. They had almost touched the land, when some captain, with more presence of mind than his companions, set a bolder example. Who this was was much debated in after days. Some gave the credit to Ameinias an Athenian, and, according to Plutarch, a brother of the poet Æschylus. The Æginetans claimed it for themselves. The ship that fetched those supernatural allies, the heroes of the house of Æacus, was the first, they said, to show a courage worthy of this mission. Among the other Greeks a legend grew up that the figure of a woman was seen to hover in the air, crying in a voice that was heard from end to end of the fleet: "How long, ye foolish ones, are ye going to back water?"

The details of the battle that history has preserved are not particularly clear; but it is beyond doubt that the Athenians contributed far more than their allies to the victory. They were matched against the most formidable part of the Persian fleet—at least as far as nautical skill was concerned—the Phœnician ships, and inflicted on them a heavy loss. Next to them, (in the judgment of some, above them) ranked the men of Ægina.

And, indeed, considering the smallness of the Æginetan squadron—only thirty ships—it did more conspicuous service. They were especially active in cutting off the ships that attempted to escape from the battle. Probably they could boast a greater number of captives than any of the allies. Herodotus bears express testimony to the good order of the two squadrons, old enemies, it will be remembered, who had gained their knowledge through many bitter years of mutual loss, and now turned it against the common foe. These, we learn from the same source, did not yield without a struggle. "The Persians," he says, "surpassed themselves." They were fighting under the eye of the King himself, whose throne had been set up on a hill on the mainland, that immediately overlooked the scene of action, and whose scribes noted down for reward or punishment the names of the captains who seemed to be doing conspicuously well or ill. None in the Persian fleet did better than the Greeks from the maritime cities of Asia Minor and the islands that had submitted to the king. They were opposed to the Peloponnesian contingent and did them much damage. A ship from Samothrace is specially mentioned for the success with which it was managed. It had sunk an Athenian vessel, and was in its turn attacked and crippled by an Æginetan. But its crew who happened to be particularly expert in the use of the javelin, cleared the deck of the assailant, and then boarded and captured it. Xerxes was particularly struck with this deed, and conceived from it very high opinion of the skill, the valour, and the fidelity of his Greek subjects. A less creditable exploit performed by Artemisia, Queen of Halicarnassus, a Greek city which had fallen under Carian sway also attracted his favourable notice. She was being closely pursued by an Athenian trireme. Not seeing any hope of escape, she ordered her ship to be steered against another Carian vessel, fighting like herself on the Persian side. This she sent to the bottom with all on board. The Athenian pursuer, making sure that he had been chasing either one of his own side, or a deserter from the Persians, abandoned the pursuit, and the Queen was able to get clear away from the battle. Xerxes saw what was done, and

enquired the name of the successful combatant. His attendants were sure that the victorious ship was Artemisia's, for they recognized her ensign, but it occurred to none to doubt that her antagonist was a Greek. "My men bear themselves like women, my women like men," was the king's comment.

Whatever successes may have been won by individual ships in the Persian fleet, the result on the whole was a disastrous defeat. As a fleet it had almost ceased to exist. The loss in ships and men was enormous, all the greater because very few of the crews were able to swim. The victory was completed by the destruction of the force which had been landed on the little island of Psittaleia, lying between Salamis and the coast of Athens. It had been intended that these troops should help any of their own men and kill any of the Greeks who might drift thither in disabled ships. Aristides landed some heavy-armed Athenian troops on the island, and slew its occupants to a man. None of the disasters of the day affected Xerxes more profoundly. Many Persian nobles, among them three nephews of his own, perished at that fatal spot.

Athens had saved herself and Greece by her "wooden walls."

CHAPTER VII

BOW AGAINST SPEAR

The disastrous defeat in the Bay of Salamis did not put an end to the Persian hope of success. The king indeed was bent on returning home. With this wish the advice of his most influential counsellors coincided. Queen Artemisia, anxious herself to be relieved from further service, urged him to depart and she was supported by Mardonius, the King's uncle. This man had always been the most vehement advocate of the war; he felt himself responsible for its disasters; his only chance of safety for himself was to remain behind and make another effort to conquer Greece. Xerxes was to fly and so preserve his invaluable life for the country; he, Mardonius, would accomplish the end for which the forces of the empire had been gathered.

Three hundred thousand men, the picked troops of the army, Persians, Medes, Sacæ, Bactrians, and Indians, were left with Mardonius. They passed the winter in the friendly country of Thessaly. Before he moved his troops in the spring, the Persian general consulted the oracles of Northern Greece. What answers he received is not known. And he attempted to win over the power which had hitherto thwarted his master's purposes. A friendly prince, Alexander, king of Macedonia, was sent to offer terms to Athens. The proposal was met with a dignified refusal. "So long as the sun shall move in his accustomed way, so long will we stand against Xerxes," was the reply of the Athenian statesmen. The messenger was warned not to come again on the same errand. "Tempt us not to unfriendly acts; thou art a friend and guest; we would not willingly harm thee."

Sparta, aware of what Mardonius was doing, sent envoys to urge their allies to be steadfast in the cause of Greece. The reply was, that they need not fear; so long as there

was an Athenian alive, no truce would be made with Xerxes. At the same time an earnest request was made that an army from the Peloponnesus should march in the early spring into Bœotia, and save Athens from a second destruction. Whether this help was promised, we are not told; it was certainly not given. With characteristic selfishness, the Peloponnesians, once assured that Athens would remain faithful, thought of nothing but their own safety, and laboured to complete the fortifications of the Isthmus.

It was late in the spring—May or, possibly, June—before Mardonius left his quarters in Thessaly, and marched into Bœotia. The Athenians again left their city, and the Persian general fixed his head-quarters in the Acropolis. He made a fresh attempt to win over these obstinate foes. The envoy met with a firm refusal. He was allowed to depart unhurt, but a senator, who ventured to suggest a consideration of the proposal, was stoned to death by his colleagues and the people, his wife and children meeting with the same fate at the hands of the Athenian women.

Another urgent demand for help was now addressed to Sparta. The Ephors continued to procrastinate, even in the face of the threat that Athens, if persistently deserted, must make terms for itself. For ten days an answer was postponed. On the eleventh the envoys presented a peremptory ultimatum, "Help us, or we secure our own safety." The Ephors replied, "An army is already on its march, and is even now beyond our borders." This statement they confirmed with an oath. And, indeed, their fears had at last been roused. An influential citizen of the Arcadian town of Tegea had warned them that the Isthmian wall would be useless if Athens was to put her fleet at the service of the invader. Then a sudden resolution was taken, and an effort not unworthy of the occasion was made, and made with astonishing speed. Sparta, always like a camp, was now, it is probable, prepared for instant action. An army of five thousand Spartans, each attended by seven armed Helots, and an equal number of Perioeci, each with one Helot, were

actually on their march northward while the Ephors were speaking.

The Argives, always jealous rivals of Sparta, had promised Mardonius to arrest the march of their neighbours whenever it should take place. But this imposing force overawed them—and, indeed, never before or after was such an army brought together by the state. All that the Argives could do was to despatch their swiftest runner to the Persian general with tidings of what had happened. Mardonius evacuated Athens, not forgetting to complete the work of destruction before he departed, marched through the passes of Mount Parnes, and took up his position on the left bank of the river Asopus. On the other side of the stream he constructed a fortified camp of more than a square mile in extent. Behind this again he had a place of refuge in the strongly-fortified city of Thebes. To all appearance the chances of war were strongly in his favour. His army numbered more than three hundred thousand men, various contingents from Macedonia and northern tribes having joined in the course of the winter. Still the general feeling was anything but sanguine.

Herodotus illustrates this by a curious story which he heard, he declares, from an eye-witness, Menander of Orchomenus. It runs thus: The chief magistrate of Thebes invited to a great banquet fifty of the principal citizens together with fifty officers of the army, so disposing his guests that each couch accommodated a Persian and a Greek. "My neighbour," said Menander, "said to me, 'Since you have eaten at the same table and drunk of the same cup, hear the thing of which I am persuaded in my own mind; so you may best save yourself. See you these Persians that feast here, and the army which we left by the river? Out of them all in but a few days there shall survive but a very few!' This he spake with tears. Then I: 'Why tell you it not to Mardonius?' He replied: 'What God hath decreed none can avert. As for what I have said, no man will believe it. Verily of all things the most hateful is to know, and therewithal to have no power of doing aught!'"

Meanwhile the Greek army was gathering its strength. The force from Laconia numbered fifty thousand (ten thousand heavy-armed, and forty thousand light-armed). From the rest of the Peloponnese came about fourteen thousand, the most numerous contingent being the Corinthian, in which there were five thousand heavy-armed; Megara sent three thousand, and the Athenian heavy-armed numbered eight thousand. The total force was nearly one hundred and ten thousand, and it was under the command of the Spartan Pausanias. Crossing the ridge of the Cithæron, the Greeks came in view of the Persians, who were drawn up on the plain below. So formidable an appearance did the enemy present that Pausanias kept his army on the higher ground. Mardonius immediately assumed the offensive, sending his cavalry under Masistius to harass their movements. In cavalry the Greek army was absolutely deficient, nor could their archers contend on equal terms with the Persian bowmen. The Megarian contingent was particularly hard pressed, nor would any of the Greeks volunteer to go to their help. At last three hundred Athenians came forward and took up the task. The skirmish was decided by the fate of the Persian leader, Masistius. As he was charging at the head of his troop, his horse was struck by an arrow, reared, and threw him to the ground. Before he could rise the Athenians had rushed forward and seized him. Even then it was not easy to kill him, so impenetrable was his armour. At last an Athenian spear was driven into one of his eyes. A fierce struggle for his body followed it. The Persians recovered it for a time; then they lost it again. Finally it remained in Greek hands. There it was an object of the most lively curiosity, so splendid was the armour in which it was clad, so handsome the face and so magnificent the proportions of the dead man. In the Persian camp the loss of so renowned a leader caused the deepest grief. "The wailing for the dead could be heard," says the historian, "throughout the land of Bœotia."

This success encouraged Pausanias to leave the high ground, and to take up his position on the plain. The line was arranged according to the traditional order of precedence. The

most honourable post, the right wing, was assigned, as a matter of course, to the Spartans; for the second in dignity, the left, there was a contest between Athens and Tegea. The Spartans, acting as arbiters, adjudged it to Athens. The remainder of the Greek forces occupied the centre, the Tegeans being next to the Spartans, and the Corinthians next again to them.

The new Greek position was by no means convenient. The whole army had to draw its supplies of water from a single spring near the right wing, for the Persian slingers and archers hindered access to the river Asopus. At the same time the Persian cavalry cut off the convoys that brought supplies from the Peloponnesus, while the soothsayers declared that the omens were unfavourable to a forward movement.

What would have been the result if Mardonius had followed the policy of delay, urged upon him by his Theban allies, while he continued to use his superiority in cavalry to annoy his adversaries, it is impossible to say. Happily his impatience was too strong for him, and he determined to attack. Alexander of Macedon, anxious to secure friends on both sides, warned the Greeks of what was to happen, and Pausanias, in view of it, proposed to the Athenians that they should change places with the Spartan troops. As the two armies were now arranged, the Spartans faced the Persians, the Athenians the Greek allies of Xerxes. This Pausanias proposed to change. "We," he said to the Athenians, "have never had to do with the Persian troops, whereas you conquered them at Marathon. Do you therefore take our place, and we will deal with the hostile Greeks, adversaries to whom we are accustomed." The proposal was accepted, and the movement was begun. It did not, however, escape the notice of Mardonius, and as he made a corresponding change in his own line, the old order was resumed.

Meanwhile the second position became untenable. The Persian skirmishers made even the single spring on which the army depended impossible of access and it became necessary to move. It was resolved to take up a third position on a so-

called "island" made by two branches of the Oeroe, a small stream that ran westward into the Corinthian Gulf. Difficulties and disagreements that might easily have ended in disaster arose when the time came for executing this movement. The Greeks of the centre, distressed and alarmed by the incessant attacks of the Persian cavalry, which had become bolder since the manœuvre attempted by the Spartans, disobeyed orders, and marched, not to the island, but to the town of Plataea, where they found a safer position. Disobedience of another kind hampered the Spartans; the leader of one of the divisions flatly refused to move. "You are flying from the enemy," he said, "and this is a thing that the true Spartan can never do." Threats and persuasions were lost upon him; go he would not, not even if he and his division were left to fight the barbarians alone. At daybreak, while the dispute was still raging, an Athenian messenger rode up to ask whether the Spartans intended to carry out the proposed plan. Pausanias pointed to the refractory captain as the cause of the delay, and bade the messenger carry back to his chief the story of the untimely obstinacy which was endangering the common safety. Amompharetus—this was the dissentient captain's name—still refused to yield. Taking up a small boulder from the ground he cast it down at the feet of Pausanias with the words, "I give my vote for staying here." At last Pausanias made up his mind to move, leaving the obstinate officer to act as he pleased. He had not been gone long before Amompharetus followed him.

But valuable time had been lost, while the hopes of the Persians, who fancied that the Greeks had lost courage, rose high. They followed the seemingly retreating Spartans in hot haste, and overtook them just as they were joined by the division of Amompharetus. So hot was the attack that Pausanias sent messengers to the Athenians, asking for help. But these were by this time engaged with the Greek allies of Xerxes, and could for the present do no more than hold their own.

For a time the battle seemed to go against the Spartans and Tegeans; these latter, alone of all the Greeks of the centre, had kept their place. The Persians made a breastwork of their wicker shields, and poured from behind it an incessant stream of arrows, strongly propelled by their gigantic bows, upon the line of the Greeks. These for the time could do nothing but endure. The victims gave no favourable signs, and without these Pausanias did not venture to move. It was not till, wearied of this disastrous delay, he turned to the neighbouring shrine of Heré and implored the goddess to help him, that the omens changed, and the welcome order to charge was given. The Tegeans, less patient or less superstitious, had already advanced, and the two armies closed in a furious struggle. But the time for the bow was over; the triumph of the spear was come. In vain did the Persians fling themselves with desperate courage on the foe, actually grappling with them in close embrace. The Greeks were practised soldiers and athletes, and they were protected, as far as the most vital parts were concerned, by armour. No valour could avail against such odds, and the battle was soon decided. The Persians fled in headlong confusion to their camp, hotly pursued by their adversaries, who, now that the victory was practically won, were joined by some of the other Greek contingents.

The Athenians meanwhile had had a harder task, matched as they were with the Greek allies of Mardonius. Foremost among these were the Thebans, a race whose stubborn courage changed more than once the course of Greek history. Others were probably less resolute, the Phocians especially, whose fidelity to a cause which they had espoused under compulsion, had already been doubted. After a stout resistance the Greek allies of Mardonius retired, but in good order, and the Athenians were free to join their allies in the attack upon the camp. In this no progress had been made, so unskilled were the Spartans in all fighting not carried on in the open field. The Athenians brought with them some knowledge of siege operations, and it was not long before the camp was stormed. A frightful massacre followed, the conquerors slaying

without mercy till their arms were weary. Mardonius and his bodyguard of a thousand Immortals had perished earlier in the day; before nightfall the huge Persian host had practically ceased to exist. It was said that only three thousand were left alive. It must be remembered, however, that one of the subordinate commanders, Artabanus by name, had separated his own force of sixty thousand from the enemy before the battle commenced. He hurried with them northwards, as speedily as possible, and was able to reach Asia in safety. Of the Greeks one hundred and fifty-nine fell, the losses being thus divided, of the Lacedæmonians nine-one, of the Tegeans sixteen, of the Athenians fifty-two. The other Greeks had practically no share in the battle though, several cities bribed the Plataeans, who were constituted guardians of the field, to allow them to erect monumental barrows.

Plutarch, it is true, says that the total loss of the Greeks was one thousand three hundred and sixty. To make up this number we must add those that fell in the movements before the battle, and six hundred Megarians, who were cut off by the Theban cavalry and, as Herodotus says, "perished without honour." This makes a total of seven hundred and fifty-nine. The difference between this and Plutarch's figure, (six hundred) may, perhaps, be accounted for by reckoning in the Helots or light-armed troops who accompanied the Spartan and Periœci. Of these there were forty thousand on the field. Herodotus gives the *Spartan* loss only.

CHAPTER VIII

SPOILT BY PROSPERITY

It cannot be said that Pausanias displayed any special skill in his strategy at Plataea. From first to last it was a soldiers' battle, won by the superior force and more effective arms and armour of the Greeks. But it brought, as such battles often do, an enormous access of reputation to the general in command. And this was increased rather than diminished by the way in which he bore the hour of victory. He behaved with chivalrous courtesy to a Greek woman who was found in the Persian camp. She had been carried off from her home, which was in the island of Cos, by the Persians, and she besought Pausanias to rescue her from a dishonourable captivity. "I am always ready," he answered, "to hear the prayer of a suppliant, much more when the suppliant is the daughter of my old friend, Hegetorides of Cos." To an adviser who suggested, that he should impale the dead body of Mardonius by way of revenging the indignities to which Xerxes had subjected the corpse of Leonidas, he replied that such advice was more suited to barbarians than to Greeks; as for Leonidas and the Three Hundred, they had had an ampler and more noble vengeance in the thousands of Persians who had fallen on the field of battle. "Never come to me again," he added, "with such counsel, and think yourself fortunate that even now you have not suffered for it what you deserve." On the evening of the battle he is said to have given his colleagues in command a practical illustration of what seemed to him the lesson of the event. "Xerxes had left his war-tent with Mardonius when he fled from Greece," this is the fashion in which Herodotus tells the story, "and when Mardonius saw it, with its adornments of gold and silver and its hangings of divers colours, he gave commandment to the bakers and the cooks that they should prepare for him a banquet, such as they had been wont to serve

up to Mardonius. So they made ready, as was commanded. And when Pausanias saw the couches of gold and silver fairly furnished, and tables of gold and silver, and all the splendid furniture of the feast, he was astonished at the good things that he beheld. Then, by way of jest, he bade his own servants prepare a meal in Spartan fashion, and because there was a notable difference between the one furnishing and the other, he sent for the leaders of the Greeks. When the men were assembled, Pausanias, pointing to the setting forth of the two meals, said, 'Men of Greece, it is for this purpose I sent for you, to show you the folly of these Persians, who having such things at their command, came to rob us whose possessions are so poverty-stricken.'

All this was in true Spartan fashion. But nothing is more manifest in Greek history than that the Spartan training did not, as a rule, enable its pupils to resist the temptations of prosperity. Frugal and self-restrained at home, they were too often notorious for their luxury and self-indulgence abroad. So it was with Pausanias. The spoils of the Persian army amounted, as may be supposed, to a very large treasure, in spite of the numerous peculations of the Helots, who had been set to collect it. A tenth was set apart for the Delphian Apollo; offerings were made to the other gods; every soldier who had taken part in the battle had his share. But the portion reserved for Pausanias was very large; "ten specimens of every kind of thing," says Herodotus. This sudden wealth did much to spoil him.

The corrupting process was not, indeed, manifest at once. An opportunity of still further enriching himself soon offered itself, and his integrity seems to have excited surprise. The first act of the victorious Greeks was to punish the traitorous conduct of the Thebans. Thebes had exerted itself energetically to advance the Persian cause. Other states had yielded to superior force, and had at the worst been guilty of want of courage, but Thebes had done its very best to bring about the subjugation of Greece. Pausanias now demanded that

the political leaders who were responsible for this misconduct should be surrendered to him for punishment. The demand was refused, and he proceeded to lay siege to the city and to ravage its territory. The accused persons then offered to give themselves up. One of them, indeed, escaped, but the others were surrendered. They counted, Herodotus tells us, on being regularly tried, and were confident that they would be able to secure an acquittal by bribing their judges. Spartan corruption was already notorious in Greece, and the accused men doubtless relied on purchasing the good will of Pausanias, who would, of course, be president of the court. This expectation the Spartan chief disappointed. He treated his prisoners as men manifestly guilty, whom it would be a waste of time to try, took them to the Isthmus, and there promptly executed them.

The battle of Platæa was fought in the month of September. That year nothing more was done, but the next spring Pausanias sailed with the fleet of the confederates to Cyprus. After conquering the greater part of the island, he made his way to Byzantium, a Greek colony which had fallen into the hands of the Persians. The Persian garrison made an obstinate resistance, but, in the end, the town was taken. And now the poison began to work in the mind of the Spartan chief. He had already given offence to his countrymen by the vainglorious inscription which he had caused to be inscribed on the offering made out of the spoils of Platæa to the Delphian Apollo. This ran as follows: "Pausanias, leader of the Greeks, having destroyed the army of the Medes, offers this memorial to Phœbus." The authorities of Sparta commanded that these words should be erased, and that a list of the states which took part in the battle of Platæa should be substituted for it. He now conceived the idea of making himself supreme in Greece by help of the Persian king. The first step was to send to Xerxes some Persian prisoners of importance who had been captured in Byzantium. His colleagues in command were given to understand that these men had escaped. He then sent a confidential agent, one Gongylus, a citizen of Eretria, with a letter which ran as follows: "Pausanias, chief of Sparta, sends

thee these prisoners of war desiring to do thee a pleasure. I have it in my mind, if it seems good to thee also, to marry thy daughter, and to make Sparta and the rest of Greece subject to thee. And this I count myself able to do, by taking counsel with thee. If, therefore, any of these things please thee, send down to the sea some trusty man, through whom we may do business hereafter." That the letter is not an exact transcript of Pausanias's communication is clear from the fact that the dialect used is Attic. Otherwise it has a very natural look, especially in the changes from the third person to the first, a very likely thing to be done by a person unaccustomed to writing.

Xerxes was greatly pleased, it would seem, at the suggestion. He sent Artabazus, who had held high command in the army left in Greece, with instructions to take over the Satrapy which included the north-western coasts of Asia Minor. Artabazus was the bearer of a letter which Thucydides has preserved. "Thus saith King Xerxes to Pausanias. As for the men whom thou didst save over the sea in Byzantium, the benefit is laid up in our house recorded for ever; as for thy words, I am pleased with them, let not night or day stay thee that thou shouldst fail to do the things that thou promisest, and be not hindered for any spending of gold or silver or for lack of men, if such thou shouldst need. Fear not to do with Artabazus, a trusty man, whom I send to thee, all that concerns both thy business and mine, so that all profit and honour may come to both of us."

The Spartan's head was fairly turned by this communication from the great King. The simple frugal life in which he had been trained from childhood ceased to content him. He adopted the gorgeous Persian dress; Indian and Egyptian bodyguards accompanied him in his progresses through Thrace. His table was served in the very same oriental fashion with which he had pointed the moral of contentment for his colleagues at Platæa. His demeanour became haughty and insolent to all with whom he came in contact, while he

began to affect the seclusion which was commonly practised by oriental rulers. Crimes, far worse than these follies, were laid to his charge. The Spartan authorities at home promptly recalled him. He obeyed the summons, but went out again in a private capacity. His conduct again gave rise to the same suspicions. The Athenians forcibly expelled him from Byzantium. Instead of returning home he took up his residence on the Troad, and continued his old intrigues. The Spartans sent a herald after him with a positive injunction that he was to accompany the messenger. In default he would be declared a public enemy. Anxious not to push the matter to extremities, he returned, hoping, not, we are compelled to believe without good reason, that by a judicious use of money he could secure acquittal. On his arrival he was thrown into prison. Obtaining his release, he challenged his accusers to put him on his trial. The authorities had no absolute proofs, and they were unwilling, in default of these, to proceed against a man of much personal distinction, who was also acting as regent for his nephew, the young son of Leonidas. Then some Helots with whose loyalty he had tampered informed against him. He had promised them their freedom, they said, if they would help him to overturn the existing constitution of Sparta. But even this testimony did not suffice. To be available against a man of such a position, the proof must be beyond all question. At last such proof was found. Pausanias had employed a certain Argibius to act as his messenger to Artabazus. Argibius had observed that none of those who had been employed before him in this service had returned. He broke the seal of the letter, read it, and discovered an injunction that the messenger was to be put to death. He carried the letter to the Ephors. These magistrates were at last convinced. They laid a plot to get Pausanias to convict himself out of his own mouth. The messenger was instructed to seek sanctuary at the Temple of Poseidon on the promontory of Tanarum. The magistrates thought it probable that Pausanias would seek an interview with him, as the fact of his having taken sanctuary was compromising to himself. Accordingly they contrived a shelter

for themselves from which they might hear any conversation that took place. What they expected happened. Pausanias hurried to the Temple, and asked his servant the reason for his conduct. The man reproached him with the instructions given in the letter, reminded him that he had always done his part in the negotiations with the king prudently and complained that he had been condemned to the same fate which had overtaken his predecessor. Pausanias, in answer, confessed the wrong that he had done, begged for forgiveness, pledged his word not to harm him, if he would leave the sanctuary, and entreated him to do his errand with all speed, and not retard the negotiations. The magistrates could no longer doubt. They resolved to arrest Pausanias as soon as he had returned to Sparta. But before the arrest was effected, the guilty man detected on the face of one of the magistrates the errand on which he had come. Another of them indicated by a significant nod that he should take refuge in the Temple of Athené of the Brazen House, the sacred enclosure of which was close at hand. Pausanias just managed to escape his pursuers, but this did but prolong his life for a few days. He had taken refuge in a small chapel attached to the Temple. The magistrates took off the roof and the doors and built him up. When he was on the point of dying of hunger, they carried him out; a few moments afterwards he expired. Their first intention was to cast his corpse into the pit reserved for the bodies of criminals. On second thoughts they gave it decent burial near the Temple. One tragic addition to the story represents that the traitor's aged mother laid the first brick when he was built up. She came and went in silence. She was a Spartan, but she could not wholly forget that she was a mother.

CHAPTER IX

TRAITOR OR PATRIOT?

I have already spoken of the extraordinary, it might almost be said, preternatural sagacity of Themistocles. I have also said in reference to the message which he sent to the Persian king before the battle of Salamis, that in the midst of his patriotism he never forgot his personal fortunes. It is difficult indeed, when we consider the events of his later career, to avoid the conclusion that his private interests counted far more with him than suits the highest type of a statesman, more than they did, for instance, with Aristides or with Cimon. Various anecdotes that tend this way are told of him in reference to the operations of the war. When the first stand was made against the advancing Persians, it was arranged that the army stationed at Thermopylæ should be supported by the fleet taking up a position at Artemisium, a promontory in the north of Eubœa. The inhabitants of this island reckoned, in consequence, of having at least time to remove their families from the scene of danger, and also to secure the moveable portion of their property. But the Greek commanders were so terrified by the sight of the Persian fleet, which lay at anchor within view on the opposite coast, and by the general sense of the invader's superiority in force, that they resolved to retreat. The islanders, thus abandoned, were in despair. They appealed to the commanders of the fleet, but in vain. Then they sought an interview with Themistocles, and offered him thirty talents, if he could so arrange that the fleet should remain at Artemisium for at least a few days. Themistocles took the money, purchased the adherence of the Spartan commander by a bribe of five talents, and that of the Corinthian by a bribe of three. The remainder, more than two-thirds of the whole, he kept for himself.

After the victory of Salamis, his conduct was still more unscrupulous. States that had given up their submission to the Persian king might expect to suffer for it. Themistocles, "always seeking for gain," according to Herodotus, saw and used the opportunity of aggrandizing his private fortunes. He used his influence with the allied Greeks to spare or deal leniently with cities which purchased his favour, and to use severity to those which refused to do so. In one case at least, that of Carystus, an Eubœon town which had been compelled to submit to Persians, he was unable or unwilling to fulfill his bargain. He took the bribe but allowed its territory to be plundered.



THEMISTOCLES.
FROM A BUST IN THE VATICAN.

The proceedings of Themistocles at Sparta, after the final repulse of the Persians, were less blameworthy, because they were not suggested by personal interest, but they were such as a high-minded Statesman would not have stooped to.

The Athenians began, as soon as possible after their return to their country, to rebuild their city, and to surround it with larger and stronger fortifications than it had before possessed. The Spartans, prompted partly by their perpetual jealousy, partly by the remonstrances of their allies, begged them to desist. Their own city was, by their deliberate choice, unwall'd, and they would gladly have had all their rivals in the same condition. The reason which they put forward for their request was of a different kind. It would be injurious, they alleged, to the common interests of Greece, if the Persians, in any further invasion, should find a walled city outside the Peloponnese to occupy. Thebes had been such a city, and had therefore been injurious to the Greek cause. The Athenians ought not to think of supplying the enemy with a second advantage of the same kind. The Athenians, at the suggestion of Themistocles, gave no direct answer to these representations; they would send envoys to Sparta who should be qualified to express their opinion. Of those envoys Themistocles was one. His colleagues, one of whom was Aristides, were long in arriving—so it had been arranged—and Themistocles declined to act in their absence. While they lingered the whole population of Athens laboured incessantly at the walls. Nothing was spared, private houses and public buildings being alike destroyed to furnish materials.

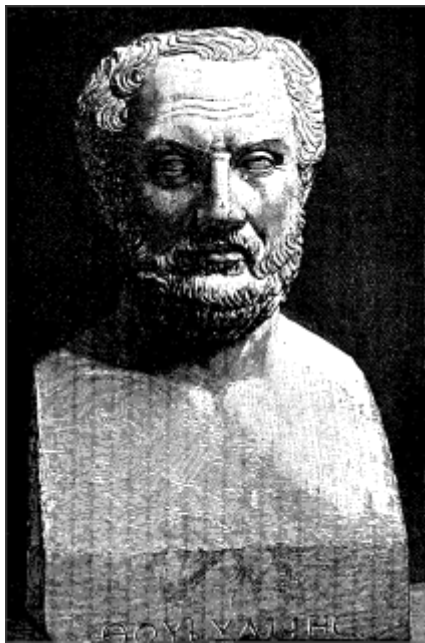
The walls had risen to half their planned height, when news of what was going on was brought to Sparta, probably by some jealous neighbour of Athens. The authorities taxed Themistocles with deceiving them. He promptly denied the charge; he affirmed that the news was false, that nothing was being done in the matter of the building of the walls. "Send envoys to see for themselves," he said to the Ephors. The Spartans naturally believed an assertion made with such confidence. They had, too, a profound and, it must be said, a well-earned respect for Themistocles, and were not unconscious of the greatness of the service which he had rendered to them and to the whole of Greece. The envoys were sent, and with them went private instructions from

Themistocles to the Athenian government to keep them in safe custody, or, anyhow, to hinder them from communicating with anyone. Meanwhile Themistocles's two colleagues arrived, bringing with them authoritative news that the walls were now sufficiently high for purposes of defence. Themistocles then came forward and boldly avowed the truth. The Athenians, he said, had lately proved how well able they were to judge on matters that concerned their own duty and the common welfare of Greece. The Spartans made no reply; they were well aware that the building might possibly have been prevented, but that once done it could not be undone. They uttered no remonstrances or reproaches, but they never forgave the man who had deceived them. They were not more favourably disposed to him by his subsequent policy, when he still further increased the strength of Athens by suggesting the building of the Long Walls, the fortifications which connected the city with the great harbour of the Peiræus.

For a time the Spartans were content to leave him to enjoy his popularity undisturbed. But they had intimate relations with an influential party in Athens which was always on the watch to bring about the degradation of a powerful rival, nor did the conduct of Themistocles himself fail to afford them opportunities of attack. The people, always jealous of the personal ascendancy even of the most esteemed citizens, took offence at the boasts which the great statesman was said to utter about his signal services to his country, and at various other indications of self-esteem, among them the erection of a chapel near his house dedicated to Athené of Good Counsel. Then there were charges of corruption brought against him by persons from the allied cities. It was affirmed that he had accepted bribes to pronounce sentences often unjust, banishing and even executing citizens on allegations of Medism which had been made by personal enemies. Not many years after the repulse of the Persians—the precise date is not known—these feelings found expression in a formal accusation. He was arraigned before the Assembly. His political opponents did their best to bring about his condemnation, and the Spartans, it

is said, were liberal with their bribes. But the memory of his great services to Athens was still strong. His own appeal to them carried an irresistible weight; and he was acquitted.

In 471 the enemies of Themistocles succeeded in bringing about; not his condemnation, but his ostracism, the singular process by which a jealous democracy expressed its opinion that this or that citizen was growing too powerful to be endured with safety to the state. He retired from Athens to Argos.



THUCYDIDES.

Six years afterwards came the discovery of the treason of Pausanias, described in my last chapter. The Lacedæmonian authorities discovered among the documents which came into their hands what they considered to be proofs of the complicity of Themistocles. The language of Thucydides, born, it will be remembered, in 471, and so not far removed from the time, seems to imply that these proofs were genuine. The historian

Ephorus, about five generations later, says that Pausanias solicited the aid of Themistocles, but that the latter took no part in the affair, though he concealed his knowledge of it. The two accounts are not inconsistent. At the same time there is nothing in the character of Themistocles to make us feel, as we feel about Aristides or Cimon, that he could not possibly have tampered with treasonable schemes. However this may be, the Spartans demanded that Themistocles should be put on his trial before a congress of Greek states, and the two powers forthwith despatched messengers to arrest him. Warned, it is probable, that Argos would not venture to protect him, he fled to Corcyra, a city to which in the days of his prosperity he had done some kindness. The people of Corcyra were willing enough to show their gratitude, but could not engage to protect him against a combination of the Greek states. They passed him to the Mainland, where he was now outside the borders of Greece. The messengers still pursued him, and he was so hard pressed that he was compelled to take refuge in the dwelling of Admetus, king of the Molossians. Admetus had in former days received some affront from Themistocles, probably in connection with some suit against an Athenian citizen, and was not likely to be friendly to him. Fortunately for the fugitive, the king happened to be away from home. His wife received Themistocles kindly, and instructed him to sit at the hearth with her child in his arms. This was the attitude of a suppliant, and would appeal in the strongest way to both the conscience and the compassion of Admetus. And the appeal was successful. Admetus promised his protection, and actually refused to give him up when the emissaries from Athens and Sparta arrived at his court and demanded the fugitive. But Themistocles was not content to spend the rest of his days at the court of a half-barbarous king. He had more ambitious schemes in his head. Admetus, at his request, furnished him with guides who conducted him across the hills to a Macedonian seaport. Finding there a merchant-vessel about to sail for the coast of Asia Minor he took his passage in it. No one had recognized him, and he did not give his name. A storm

drove the vessel out of its course to the island of Naxos. Under ordinary circumstances the captain would have gladly seized the opportunity of obtaining rest and refreshment. But to stop at Naxos would have been ruin to Themistocles, for the place was then besieged by an Athenian fleet. Themistocles acted with characteristic courage and ingenuity, and with as little scruple as usual about speaking the truth. He discovered his name to the captain, promised him a great reward if he succeeded in escaping, but threatened to accuse him of having been an accomplice, should he be captured. The captain consented not to approach, and, after beating about off the island for a day and a night, carried his passenger safely to Ephesus.

Artaxerxes, the son of Xerxes, had been on the Persian throne a few months when Themistocles arrived. He received the news with pleasure, according to some accounts with even extravagant expressions of joy. The letter in which the fugitive announced his arrival was abrupt and even haughty, but it seems not to have given offence to the king. It ran thus: "*I, Themistocles, am come to thee, I who did to thy house more damage than any man in Greece, so long as I was compelled to defend myself against thy father, but who also did him great service, when it was possible so to do without danger to myself, and his escape was imperilled. There is yet therefore owing to me reward from thee. And now the Greeks have banished me on account of my liking for thee, nevertheless I can yet do thee good service. Suffer me to tarry a year, after that I will come and set forth my purpose by word of mouth.*"

During the year Themistocles set himself to learn the Persian language; at the end of the time he visited the court, and laid before the king a scheme for the conquest of Greece. The king on the other hand treated him with munificent generosity. He gave him a Persian wife, and the revenues of three districts for his support. Magnesia, where he lived, was supposed to supply him with bread, Myus with other provisions, and Lampsacus with wine. The amount of the first

contribution was fifty talents, that of the others we do not know.

Themistocles seems to have lived at Magnesia for some fifteen or sixteen years. During that time he had done nothing, probably had attempted to do nothing towards carrying out the promise which he had made to Artaxerxes. According to Thucydides he died from natural causes; the historian, however, mentions a tradition that he poisoned himself because he felt himself unable to carry out his intentions. The people of Magnesia erected a splendid monument in his honour, but it was said that his friends removed his remains, and buried them secretly in Attic soil.

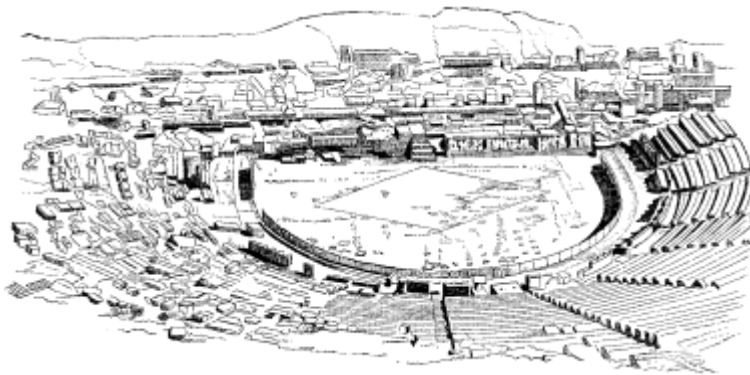
It may be said with great probability that Themistocles never intended to do serious injury to Athens or to Greece. He was, indeed, shrewd enough to see that no such injury was possible. So far he may be acquitted of treason; but that he was one of the most unscrupulous of politicians cannot be doubted. Proofs of this have already been given in this chapter, another is to be found in the amount of his property, when this was confiscated after his flight from Argos. He had contrived to carry off much, and his friends had saved for him as much more; nevertheless what was seized realized eighty, or, according to one account, a hundred talents. And he had begun life, we are told, with a patrimony of three!

CHAPTER X

IN THE THEATRE AT ATHENS

Democles to Chromius of Ætna, greeting.

So far, most excellent Chromius, I have performed the commissions entrusted to me with success. You must know that Poseidon favoured us with calm seas for our voyage, and that the Twin Brethren sent us a following wind from the very start to the end of our sailing. Nevertheless it was by the happiest chance that we escaped a most formidable danger. You must know that the venerable Thymbron, our sailing master—who practises the art of navigation in much the same fashion, I imagine, as it was practised by Tiphys—positively refused to pass through the Sicilian strait. He believes most firmly in Scylla with her dogs and the fatal whirlpool of Charybdis, though no sea-faring man since the days of Ulysses has seen either the one or the other. Verily, he had nearly thrust us into the jaws of a far more formidable monster than ever was the daughter of Nisus. Scarcely had we rounded Cape Lilybæum, when we espied a ship which Thymbron at once declared to be a Carthaginian.



THEATRE OF DIONYSUS.
HYMETTUS IN THE DISTANCE.

It was a fifty-oar, with a big fore-and-aft sail, and as we could plainly see, for we were not more than eight hundred paces away, crowded with men. "We are lost," cried our supercargo. "Not so," said old Thymbron, "I have not sailed these seas, man and boy, for seventy years, without learning something," and he put the ship's head straight for the land. It seemed a mighty dangerous thing to do, for the sea was breaking everywhere on rocks, either just hidden under the water or shaving a foot or so above. "Have a care," cried the supercargo, "or you will run us aground;" and he seized the old man's arm. "Away, you fool!" shouted the old man, "I know what I am about, and, anyhow, it is better to be drowned than to be burnt alive in honour of Melkarth, or whatever villainous deity those barbarians are pleased to worship." Before long we saw what Thymbron was after. There was a deep pool approached by a narrow channel which the old man knew, and we in it, safe, we could see, from pursuit. The Carthaginian tried to follow us, but it had not gone a hundred paces before the captain, whom we could see standing with a plumb-line in the bows, gave the signal to back. They had a narrow escape of striking, and he was clearly not minded to run any more risk. Then they tried to reach us with their slings, but the bullets fell far short, and they were only wasting their time.

They did not stop long, for the wind was coming on to blow from the East, and the lee-shore was dangerous. Before sunset we saw the last of them. Old Thymbron was triumphant, besides getting twenty gold pieces which the passengers collected for him.

We reached the Corinthian Gulf without any more adventures, and landing at Crissa, which we found to be little better than a heap of ruins, made the best of our way to Delphi. After I had performed the customary sacrifice, presenting at the

same time the gifts with which you entrusted me, a voice came from the shrine uttering these words:

"Thine is the glory of battle and of
storm-footed steeds; but beware
Of the day when the brood of the lion
shall come yet again to his lair."

The next day using the mediation of Democrates my host, who desired me to give you assurances of his friendship, I approached the god privately and received another answer, which I think it better to reserve for your own ear. From Delphi I journeyed to Thebes, having the advantage of joining a strong company of Theban citizens who were on their way homeward. The people who dwell in these parts—Phocians they call them—have a somewhat evil reputation, being said to rob those that travel to and fro from the shrine of Apollo. I saw nothing of them, but the road, overhung in many places with frightful mountains, is but too well suited to such doings.

Among my fellow-travellers was a kinsman of the poet Pindarus. By his help and introduction I was able to transact more easily the business on which I came. I should not, however, in any case have found much difficulty, for the poet greatly admires things Sicilian. To tell the truth, he is but ill suited with his surroundings of Thebes. The state, as you know, followed the worse side in the Persian war, and was brought thereby into no little discredit, which is shared even by those who, as was the case with Pindarus, had no part in the evil doing. Thus it has come to pass that though he loves his country he loves not his countrymen, and still less is he loved by them. Hence it pleases him to look abroad for those whom he may lawfully honour and the further removed these are, the safer his praise. He has, I am told, been fined by his fellow-citizens for speaking well of his neighbours the Athenians. But of us Sicilians there is no jealousy, as there is no knowledge. Indeed, it affronts me to find that most men are in ignorance concerning us, as though we were barbarians. But to my business. The poet willingly consents to write an Epinikion for

the occasion described. He was well pleased with the remuneration, of which I paid him at your desire a fifth part, i.e. ten gold pieces, by way of earnest. "All men," said he with a smile, "have not such faith in my performance; and from some it is hard to obtain the reward even for that which has been finished."

And now, your affairs, most worshipful Chromius being, I trust, satisfactorily completed, I have something more to write which you will read, I am sure not without interest.

It had been my purpose to return home without delay from Thebes, having arranged to meet the ship which brought me hither at Corinth, where the supercargo had business to transact. But Pindarus strongly dissuaded me from carrying out this intention. "Nay," said he, when I told him what I was about to do, "to depart from this land without seeing Athens is a thing not to be thought of. Athens is the very flower of Greece, containing in itself all that is most noble and beautiful. It is the very home of the Muses, of whom we that dwell in other cities cultivate, according to our powers, this one or that, but they the whole quire. And, indeed, you are fortunate in coming at this time, for they are about to keep a great feast; and their city, always beautiful, will put on for the occasion a special splendour!" And then he told me a certain history which I will put into the best words that I can command. It ran thus:

Theseus, king of the Athenians, having gone down to the regions of the dead in company with Peirithoüs, his friend, sought to carry from thence Queen Proserpine. Then these two, being overtaken on their return, were condemned to a perpetual imprisonment. After a while Heracles descending to this same place, saw the two. Of Peirithoüs he took no account, but he thought it shame that Theseus, having done so great things on earth, should so suffer. Having, therefore, obtained his freedom he brought him back to earth, so that he again reigned in Athens. But in no long time, the people not liking his rule—and, indeed, it may be well believed that they who might come back from the dead would seldom find welcome—Theseus was

constrained to flee from Attica and to take refuge in the island of Scyros. There he was treacherously slain by king Lycomedes.

So ran the story.

Some seven years since the Athenians were commanded by an oracle to bring back the bones of Theseus. This they were hindered from doing by various causes, but now, Cimon having captured the island, they were about to do. This I heard from Pindarus, who, at the same time, advised me not to neglect the occasion.

Truly I can say that he advised me well; a more noble sight I have never looked upon. Athens, having been made aware by a swift-sailing pinnace that the sacred ship would enter the harbour at sunrise on the morrow, crowded down thither to welcome it. By the kindness of your friend Andocides, who desired me to present his salutations to you, I had a most convenient place for the spectacle, being promoted for the time to the rank of "a distinguished stranger."

The sun was just showing itself out of the sea when the sacred ship—they call it the *Salaminia*, in remembrance of the great battle—entered the harbour. It was equipped and adorned in a way altogether worthy of its mission. The sails, intended I should say, for ornament rather than for use, were of purple; the figure-head, representing the patron goddess of the city, was of more than human size, and richly gilded; the officers and men were clad in holiday apparel of white, the steersman being conspicuous in his scarlet cloak. As for the oars, of which there were nearly four-score on either side, they were dipped into the water and rose again with absolute regularity. The rowers were chosen, I am told, with special care from the most respectable class of sea-faring men. Their pay is one drachma by the day.

So soon as the ship had been made fast to the quay and the gangway lowered, one of the magistrates of the city, by title the King Archon, for the Athenians, though they have long

since driven away their kings, yet keep this name for the officer performing certain sacred duties, came forward and made a set oration. In this he welcomed the hero—returning, as he said, to his city—recounted the benefits which he had done to it in former times, and besought him to regard it with favour in the days to come. This done, a silver chest, containing the bones of the hero, carried by poles put through rings, was brought on shore, and set on an ox waggon, of a shape curiously ancient, and of the very model, they say, first made by Triptolemus. It was drawn by four milk-white heifers. Behind it followed the priests of the various temples in the city, headed by the King Archon; after them, in the chief place of honour came Cimon himself. A man of nobler aspect I never saw. He was of a commanding stature, being four cubits and a span in height, his face ruddy and of a most benevolent look, his hair black and long, so that it curled about his shoulders. The magistrates followed him, according to their rank, and behind them again came an immense multitude of citizens and aliens. The chest was deposited, with many ceremonies which it is needless to describe at length, in a temple, newly built for the purpose, and called by the name of the hero. Not only is this dedicated to his honour, but it also serves a purpose which agrees most suitably with his character, as having been one who destroyed oppressors and delivered them that were oppressed. Here will slaves, flying from masters that use them cruelly, and freemen of a mean condition, flying from powerful persons whom they may have cause to fear, find a refuge.

In the evening I was by special favour of Andocides invited to a great banquet held in the Town Hall. Here citizens who have done great service to the state have free entertainment. Among these I saw many notable persons, captains that had led ranks at Marathon or commanded ships at Salamis, and others. Ambassadors also were present from Sparta and other places, and envoys from the islands which are in alliance with Athens.



SOPHOCLES.

FROM THE MARBLE STATUE IN THE LATERAN GALLERY.

On the day following I saw and heard that which delighted me more than all that has met my eyes and ears since I left Ætna. You must know that among the many honours paid to Theseus, thus restored, as is said, to his country, was a dramatic contest. At this three writers of tragedies competed; Chærilus, a man who continues to write even in extreme old age, for he is approaching his hundredth year, Æschylus, of whom it is needless to speak, so well are you acquainted with his genius, and Sophocles, a young man who now contended for the prize for the first time. On that and on the following day, there were exhibited nine plays in all. For myself I must confess that I was so overpowered by what I saw and heard that I could not sit out the whole. I was exhausted rather than wearied. To keep the mind on the stretch for so long a time was a labour greater than bodily exertion. But to the Athenians it

seemed to be no labour at all. Even the women—for not a few women were present—sat out the performance from beginning to end seemingly unwearied, and were as eager and as keen in their attention at the last as at the first. To tell how great was this keenness passes all my powers of describing. Did an actor make so much as an awkward gesture or mispronounce a word even by a letter, there went up a roar of disapproval—many times, I must confess, I did not perceive the cause, which was explained to me by my companion—nor was the audience less vehement in its approval. Verily these Athenians are, as it were, a nation of schoolmasters.

One of the tragedies that I saw I will venture to describe to you as far as my abilities will suffice. It was entitled "Prometheus Chained." The scene when the curtain was lowered showed us a ravine in the Caucasus, to the precipitous side of which Strength and Force have brought the Fire-God Hephæstus, to carry out their purpose. Strength bids the divine craftsman begin his task—his companion, I should say, is silent throughout, looking with a stern, unpitying face. The god confesses his duty but owns that it is sorely against his will to do it, for he knows that it is a long and dreary punishment to which he is consigning the prisoner "Here," he says—

"Man's voice thou shalt not hear nor see his face;
Here day by day the blazing sun shall scorch
Thy fair skin's beauty; here thy heart shall long
For starry-kirtled night to hide the day,
And for the day returning to dispel
The morning's chilling frost."

"The deliverer," he goes on to say, "is yet unborn, and Zeus it not apt to change his purpose, for

"Power newly won is ever stern of mood."

This pitiful mood Strength will not away with, nor does he respect the plea of kinship which Hephæstus puts forth. It may be hard to put it aside, but it is harder to incur the wrath of Zeus.

"O much detested craft of skilful hand!"

the Fire-God exclaims, and so proceeds to his task, compassing the prisoner's limbs with chains and driving the rivet through his breast. All the while Strength urges him on, bidding him do his work so strongly that all the captive's art cannot undo it. When all is done the ruthless minister of Zeus turns away with a taunting farewell.

"Here nurse thy swelling pride; here stealing gifts
That dower the gods give them to mortal men,
To men that cannot help thee in thy woe,
Fore-thinker falsely called, who needest sore
Fore-thought to free thee from these artful chains!"

All this time the Titan has remained silent. Neither taunts nor violence have availed to wring a single word from him. Now, when he finds himself alone he breaks out:

"Oh! firmament of heaven! Oh! swift-winged winds!
Oh! river-fountains and the laugh of waves
Beyond all number; and Thou, Mother Earth,
And Thou, all-seeing Sun, behold the woes
I suffer, I, a god, of gods oppressed."

As he continues to lament his lot, though not without the comfort, such as it is, of knowing how it will end, a sound strikes his ear. "What is this light whirr of wings?" he asks himself,

"I see in all that comes new cause of fear."

Scarcely has he spoken when the new-comers appear. They are the Ocean-nymphs, who have come, putting aside their maiden bashfulness, from their father's halls, to show the pity that they feel for his woes. This pity and an equal anger against the power that oppresses him, they express in indignant words, and they entreat the prisoner to tell his story. Prometheus consents. There had been war in heaven, and he, seeing that the older gods were bent on compassing their own ruin, had ranged himself on the side of Zeus, and so brought about his victory. But Zeus had been ungrateful, a thing not to be wondered at—

"This is the vice of kingship that it keeps

Mistrust of friends."

You should have heard, worshipful Chromius, the roar of applause which went up from the whole theatre when these words were uttered. Would they have been as well received, think you, in Syracuse? That I know not, but it is certain that they would never have been spoken. He went on to say that, setting his new kingdom in order, Zeus had taken no thought of man, had even designed to destroy the race. Prometheus only had interposed between him and the unhappy ones. He had given them gifts which made life worth having, the gift of hope, blinding them to the future, the gift of fire, by which all the arts are made possible.

Before the Titan had finished his story, another character appears upon the scene. This is Oceanus, father of the nymphs, who comes in a chariot drawn by a winged gryphon. Friendship and ties of kindred have brought him, he says, and he desires to give the sufferer all the help he can. The help is prudent advice. Let Prometheus submit himself to Zeus. This advice the Titan rejects. He had known beforehand what to expect, for he had seen others suffering from the wrath of Zeus, Atlas, and Typhon—Typhon on whom the weight of Ætna had been placed. But he will not suffer wholly unavenged, for from his prison-house

"In times to come great streams of fire shall burst
The fruitful fair Sicilia's golden plains
With angry jaws devouring"—

a prophecy of which none knew the terrible fulfilment better than we citizens of Ætna.

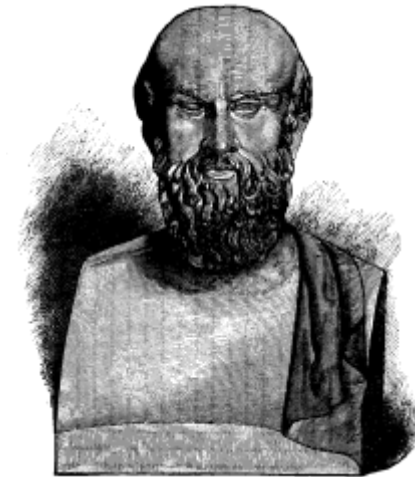
Oceanus, finding his advice rejected, departs, and Prometheus describes to the listening nymphs what he had done for men. It was he who had taught them how to live as reasonable creatures, to change the caves and holes of the earth, in which they had found shelter, for houses of brick and wood. He had shown them certain signs of the coming of the

seasons, making them know the rising and setting of the stars. Number, he had taught them and memory, which is the mother of knowledge. He had tamed the horse for them, to the great use and ornament of life, and he had shown them how to traverse the sea in ships, healing arts also and the gift of prophecy.

The next figure that appeared upon the stage was another victim of Zeus, Io the daughter of Inachus. She comes in the shape of a heifer with the face of a woman, for into this similitude she has been changed by the jealous wrath of Heré. Behind her follows close the spectre of Argus, and a monstrous gadfly was seen to have fastened on her flanks. As the creature came in with "skippings unseemly," as the poet himself puts it, many of the spectators laughed, for these Athenians have an unconquerable passion for jesting and mirth, so that they do not spare even sacred things. This, it seemed to me, somewhat marred the success of the play; nor was that which followed wholly suitable to the audience, if, indeed, I may presume to judge of such things. For the Titan told her in many words of the strange places and things which she would see in her wanderings, and these, I could perceive, somewhat wearied the listeners. Their mood, indeed, changes very speedily, and they show their disliking as readily as they show their pleasure. In truth, the whole drama is somewhat wanting in action, a defect which counts for much with the majority. Nothing, indeed, could be nobler and of a higher dignity than the conclusion which, lest my long writing should weary you, I will now describe.

Io having departed, Prometheus declares in no uncertain words that Zeus himself will be hurled down from his throne. Thereupon comes Hermes the messenger, demanding of him that he should reveal the secret of how these things should come to pass. The Titan will not yield one jot, no, not to threats of storm and earthquake and of the eagle that will be sent to devour his living flesh. He is obstinately silent, and the nymphs show themselves as constant as he; they choose rather to share

his fate than to save themselves by departing. And so, while the mountains seemed to reel and totter all around, and the lightnings flashed, and the thunder roared, coming nearer and nearer, the curtain rose, the last thing that we saw being the figure of the chained Prometheus standing erect and undismayed in the midst of all the growing terrors of the hour.



AESCHYLUS.

FROM A BUST IN THE CAPITOLINE MUSEUM AT ROME.

It will not, it may be, surprise you, after what I have said, that Æschylus did not win the first prize. In truth, while his tragedies—for there were two others performed at the same time—did not attract the vulgar, they did not wholly please the more serious. "He says strange things, methinks," I heard one grave senator say to another. "Are we to think that the older gods were better than the new?" The prize, accordingly, was given to this young Sophocles of whom I have spoken. The old poet is, I hear, so displeased with his countrymen that he purposes to leave Athens for ever. May I suggest to you, most excellent Chromius, that to invite him to Ætna would be a most wise and reasonable act? He has already visited our island, and in a conversation which I had with him this morning, spake of it and its inhabitants with much kindness and pleasing recollection. Our new city could not have a greater ornament.

CHAPTER XI

A MODEL ARISTOCRAT

The career of the victor of Marathon ended in disaster and disgrace. Presuming on his unbounded popularity, he asked from the Public Assembly the sole conduct of an expedition, which he pledged himself to use to the great advantage of the State. No one was to know whither it was to go, or what it was to do. Everything was to be left to his unfettered discretion. A considerable force was raised, and put under his orders. He sailed with it to the Island of Paros. Whether he hoped to exact a ransom which would enrich the public treasury or, as was afterwards alleged, to avenge some private wrong, we do not know. Anyhow, the attempt failed. The Parians refused to pay the hundred talents demanded of them. Ultimately Miltiades had to return, unsuccessful and broken-down in health by a dangerous injury to one of his thighs. He was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to pay a fine of fifty talents. Whether, in default of payment, he was thrown into prison, is not certain. He did not long survive his disgrace.

The career of his son Cimon, the "model Aristocrat," had, therefore, an ill-omened beginning. He inherited his father's liabilities and, according to one, account, was thrown into prison till he paid the fine. The money was furnished, we are told, by Callias, an Athenian noble, who married Cimon's sister Elpinice. Why Cimon, who appears to have been wealthy, did not pay it himself, it is not easy to say.

His first public appearance was on the eve of the abandonment of Athens, by its inhabitants. All the able-bodied population made the fleet their home—the non-combatants had already been put in safety—and Cimon headed a company of wealthy citizens, whose assessment to the State entitled them to serve as horse-soldiers, when they came to hang up in the temple of Athené their useless bridles. After the defeat of the

Persians, Cimon commanded, in combination with Aristides, the Athenian contingents to the allied Greek forces, which for several years carried on hostilities against Persia. The irreproachable conduct and demeanour of the two commanders, so strongly contrasting with the rapacity, profligacy, and arrogance of the Spartan Pausanias, did much to strengthen Athenian influence. Cimon's first exploit was the capture of Eion, a stronghold on the coast of Thrace, after a desperate resistance by the Persian Governor Boges. This took place probably about 473; in 469 occurred the incident described in the last chapter, the conquest of Scyros and the "translation" of the remains of Theseus; in 465 Cimon won a great victory near the mouth of the river Eurymedas. A Persian fleet, mainly consisting of Phœnician ships, was attacked by the allied Greeks and entirely destroyed. Cimon then landed his troops, and attacked and stormed the enemy's camp. This done, he set sail to meet an expected reinforcement of eighty Phœnician ships, encountered them near the island of Cyprus, and sank them all. An immense amount of spoil was obtained, and Cimon returned to Athens in triumph.

It was probably at this time that the poet Ion, an Athenian citizen though born in Chios, made the acquaintance of the model aristocrat, and recorded his impressions in his "Memoirs." The work itself has unfortunately been lost, but Plutarch, who had it before him when writing his "Lives," has preserved some interesting extracts from it. It is from Ion that we get the interesting sketch of Cimon's personal appearance. He describes the great man's manners as genial and pleasant, giving, as proof, that he was willing to play and sing for entertainment of the company—it was at supper that Ion made his acquaintance. This was contrasted by the guests with the more austere manners of Themistocles, who did not possess, or certainly would not exhibit, these accomplishments. He had busied himself, not with these graceful arts, but with making Athens richer and more powerful, a piece of self-assertion which, it is easy to imagine, his acquaintance would resent. The conversation naturally turning on Cimon's military

exploits, he related an incident which did more credit, he thought, to his perspicacity, than anything else in his career. A vast quantity of booty having fallen into the hands of the allied Greeks at the capture of Sestos and Byzantium, the question of the division arose. It consisted of prisoners and property. The latter, as being of a value that could be promptly realized, seemed, to most of the claimants, the more desirable. Cimon earned the good opinion of the allies by cheerfully conceding it to them. In it short time, however, it became evident that his choice had been a wise one, quite apart from its conciliating effect. Relations and friends of the prisoners thronged to the camp in the hope of ransoming them, and the sums thus paid far exceeded the value of the property. It is probably Ion who preserved other traits in Cimon's character and way of life. His hereditary wealth had, of course, been largely increased by his share of the prize-money earned in a long series of successful struggles with the Persians. These riches he used with the most profuse liberality. His gardens were thrown open to the public. Everyone was at liberty to help himself at his pleasure to the fruits grown in them. His own table was furnished in the most frugal way, but he kept open house, according to one account, for all citizens who might choose to avail themselves of his hospitality, more probably for members of his own tribe, or, it may be, township. When he walked through the city a retinue of young Athenians attended him, who were instructed to exchange their cloaks with any poorly-clad citizen of mature years, whom they might happen to meet. Others carried bags of coin with which they relieved the wants of the poor, putting the money, we are told, unostentatiously into their hands. Probably this bounty was not altogether without an ulterior object. The famous Gorgias was not far wrong when he said of Cimon that he gained money in order to use it, and used it in order to gain power. Personal aggrandizement was not his aim, but he was a keen politician. He had, it is probable, much to do with the ostracism of Themistocles. In the matter of the Areopagus, the Supreme Court, as it may be roughly called, he took the unpopular side, stoutly defending its prerogatives against the

attacks of the democratic party. In foreign policy he was decidedly a friend of Sparta. His idea was to divide the headship of Greece between his own country and its great rival. When the Helots revolted (B.C. 464) and threatened the very existence of Sparta, Cimon strongly pleaded that the request for help which this city addressed to Athens should be granted. "Do not," he said—it is Ion who has preserved his words—"suffer, Hellas to be lamed of one leg, and Athens to draw without her yoke-fellow." The appeal was successful, and a contingent was sent. Unhappily the Spartans, possibly because they had on their consciences a secret treaty adverse to Athens, conceived suspicion of their allies, refused to accept their services, and sent them home in disgrace. All Athens was furious at the affront; Cimon was considered, even by his friends, to have gone beyond due limits of prudence, and lost, in consequence, something of his popularity. We are not, therefore, surprised to find that in 457 he suffered the fate of his great rival Themistocles, and was ostracized.

A few weeks after his banishment, the hostile feeling, which had been growing in intensity for some time, between Athens and Sparta, broke out into open war. A Spartan army which had been sent on an expedition into northern Greece, took up a position at Tanagra, near the Bœotian border. It was believed that its purpose was to assist the oligarchical party in Athens to overthrow their democratic rivals. Nor is it unlikely that some of Cimon's less discreet or high-principled followers, enraged at the fall of their chief, were willing to look for foreign help. This was not Cimon's feeling. He begged to be allowed to serve, exile though he was, with the troops sent out to attack the Spartans. The request was refused. He turned to his friends and begged them to vindicate his patriotism. A hundred of them carried his armour into the thickest of the fight, and fell round it to the last man.

Before the five years of his ostracism were over, Cimon was recalled, on the motion of Pericles himself, who had now become the leader of the democratic party. This was in 453. In

450 Cimon took a part in bringing about a five years' truce with Sparta. The next year he led a powerful expedition numbering no less than two hundred ships, to Cyprus. There he died, whether of a wound received in the siege of a Cyprian town, or of disease, is not known. After his death the Athenians won a signal victory over the combined Cilician and Phœnician fleets, followed within a day or two by a great success on land. The conquerors liked to believe that they received the inspiration of an irresistible courage from the fact that they were carrying home for its funeral honours the embalmed remains of their great commander. The end of Cimon's life may be said to mark the culminating point of Athenian power. And it was the great merit of Cimon that Athenian greatness did not mean the depression of other Greek states. He realized, more perhaps than any other Greek statesman, the unity of the Hellenic race.



PERICLES.
FROM A BUST IN THE VATICAN.

CHAPTER XII

A STATESMAN AND HIS FRIENDS

Pericles is the most striking, though not, perhaps, the most admirable figure in Greek history. The date of his birth is not known, but it was certainly early in the fifth century, and may be conjecturally assigned to the year 495. It was somewhere about 469 that he took part for the first time in public affairs; the occasion is unknown, but he died in the autumn of 429, and his political life lasted, we are told, for forty years.

As I am not writing a history of Greece, or even a biography of Pericles, I need not narrate the events of the earlier part of this period. It will suffice to say that the assassination of Ephialtes in 453, left him the acknowledged head of the democratic party. Ephialtes had not a tenth part of his genius, but he was a man of more popular manners and better suited than his high-born colleague to play the part of a democratic leader, and had he lived he might have continued to hold the first place in public esteem. On the other hand the death of Cimon in 449, while it threw the leadership of the aristocratic party into feebler hands, left Pericles beyond all question the most distinguished person in Athens. This rank he continued to hold for the last twenty years of his life. His popularity varied; sometimes it was all that he could do to hold his own against his enemies; but he never ceased for a moment to be the greatest man in the country.

It was not long before his statesmanship was severely tried. The supremacy which Athens had established over Bœotia was destroyed by the disastrous defeat of Coronea. A few months afterwards Eubœa revolted, and without Eubœa as a granary Athens could hardly exist; Megara expelled the Athenian garrison, and to crown all, the Spartans, under the command of their king Pleistoanax, invaded Attica. Pericles, who had been sent to reduce Eubœa, hurried back to Athens.

His return was followed by the retreat of the Spartan army. There is very little doubt that the king or his adviser was persuaded of the necessity for this movement by a bribe. It is recorded that when Pericles came to pass his accounts he refused to explain how he had expended a certain sum. He had devoted it, he said, to a "necessary purpose," and the people, among whom the bribery was probably an open secret, accepted the statement. The danger past, he returned to Eubœa, reduced the whole island to submission in a very short time, and settled its future relations to Athens on terms highly advantageous to the ruling state.

Early in 449 peace was concluded with Sparta, and Pericles had leisure to devote himself to domestic politics. He began by doing on a large scale what Cimon had sought to do by private munificence—he won the hearts of the poorer citizens. For many, provision was made by allotments of land in Eubœa and elsewhere; many more, about five thousand in all, derived a regular income from serving on juries. Various courts of law had taken over most of the jurisdiction of the Areopagus, and the jurymen that sat in them were now paid. A vast system of public works was also carried out. Pericles devoted the surplus income that came in from the Confederacy of Delos to the adornment of the city. Athens assumed an appearance of splendour such as no other town in Greece could rival; the expenditure set a large amount of money in circulation, while the strangers who thronged to it brought no small contribution of wealth. Even the pleasures of the people were provided for. The drama was the favourite amusement of Athens; the expenses of the theatre were defrayed out of the charge made for tickets of admission, but that none might be debarred from this pleasure by poverty, every citizen was entitled to an allowance sufficient for the purchase of a ticket. In 443 the aristocrats made an effort to overthrow their great adversary. An ostracism was proposed and accepted; but the result was a disastrous disappointment. It was their own leader who had to go into exile.

Peace at home naturally led to enterprise abroad. Pericles found occupation for the adventurous spirits at Athens, and for those who for various reasons desired a fresh start in a new country, in the foundation of the Italian colony of Thurii. Of this I shall speak in a subsequent chapter. Wilder schemes of adventure—and there were dreams of conquest in Africa and Sicily—he steadily discouraged. In 439 a formidable attempt on the part of Samos to assert its independence was crushed. Samos was the most powerful member, after Athens, of the Delian Confederacy, and its complete subjugation greatly strengthened the position of the Imperial city. The operation was conducted throughout, and, it would seem, most skilfully conducted, by Pericles. Scarcely less important was the foundation during the years 437-435 of colonies on the northern coast of the Ægean. This Sea had now become, to adapt a phrase in modern politics, an "Athenian Lake." A footing was also obtained on the western coast of Mainland Greece. The Acarnanians, a half-barbarous tribe, but possessing excellent military qualities, became allies of Athens.

All this time, however, there was a steady growth at home of hostility towards the great statesman. The aristocrats had never forgiven him; the extreme faction among the democrats were not satisfied with his rate of advance. A coalition, implying, of course, no real sympathy beyond a common dislike of the object of their attack, was formed between the two. But the attack was not levelled against the man himself; his position was too assured to give any prospect of success: it was directed against his friends.

Foremost among the artists whose genius Pericles had employed to embellish his native city was the sculptor Pheidias. Among his works was the magnificent statue of the Virgin Athené set up in the newly-built temple of the Parthenon. It was thirty-eight feet high, and was of wood, overlaid with gold and ivory. Pheidias was now accused of having embezzled some of these precious substances. On this

charge, however, he was able to give a triumphant refutation. At the suggestion of Pericles he had so arranged the covering materials that they could be easily removed. This was now done; they were weighed, and found to exactly agree with the amount of materials handed over to the sculptor. But his enemies had another resource. Among the figures on the shield of the goddess were found portraits of the artist and of his patron. This was made the ground of a charge of impiety; the sculptor was thrown in prison, where he was found dead—by what means was never known—before the day of trial came.

Another object of attack was the philosopher Anaxagoras. Anaxagoras was an Ionian Greek who had come to Athens in his youth, and had been admitted into the intimate friendship of Pericles. The philosophy of Anaxagoras, as we have it described to us by the ancients, is not unlike what we should now call Theism. He believed all things to have been brought into order out of Chaos by a principle which he called Mind or Intelligence. For the Olympian assembly of gods and the powers who in the popular belief was supposed to preside over the processes of nature, he found no place, though he did not deny their existence. The sun, for instance, in his view, was not the chariot of a God, driven day by day to illuminate the world, but a fiery body, sent, in the beginning, on its course by the operation of a creative intelligence, and continuing duly to follow it. This teaching was construed into atheism by conservative religionists at Athens. One of them, Diopithes by name, proposed that those who denied the existence of the gods and brought forward new theories about the nature of the heavenly bodies should be impeached before the Assembly. Whether he mentioned Anaxagoras by name, we do not know. But the resolution was at once applied to him and he was indicted. He contrived, however, to escape the fate of Pheidias, for though condemned, and imprisoned, he was not long afterwards released, and died in old age at Lampsacus. An unintelligible charge of "Medism" was afterwards brought against him, and he was found guilty in his absence.

A third blow was aimed at Pericles, which must have troubled him still more. He had lived unhappily with his wife, and their marriage had been dissolved by mutual consent. After this separation he lived with Aspasia of Miletus. She was of a rank which made a legal marriage impossible, but the affection between the two was constant and unbroken. She was a woman of great beauty, remarkable ability, and a culture then very seldom found in her sex. She was accused of impiety and of making gain by odious means. Pericles himself appeared to plead her cause. For once he departed from his attitude of dignified reserve, and employed the pathetic appeals, the entreaties, and even the tears which, though permitted by ancient manners to an advocate, seemed scarcely to consist with his character. The judges, moved by an exhibition so unwonted, acquitted the accused.



ASPASIA.
FROM A BUST FOUND NEAR CIVITA-VECCHIA.

But now the great statesman's policy was to be put on its trial. He had done his utmost to make Athens an imperial power; and this claim of hers, to rule over cities that by nature—this was the common Greek belief—were independent, was sharply resisted by the rest of Greece. The protest came in the shape of the Peloponnesian war. The causes that brought it about had been long at work; the immediate occasion was the interference of Athens in the affairs of certain colonies belonging to Corinth; the first outbreak will be related hereafter.

Whether the war could have been postponed by concession on the part of Athens, it is impossible to say. But Pericles was against all concession. He was confident in the power of Athens to hold her own, and he probably thought that she was as well prepared to do so then, as she ever would be again. Nor were his calculations mistaken. If he had lived to guide Athenian policy, or if the spirit of his counsels had animated his successors, Athens might well have come out of the great war stronger than she was when she entered it.

Pericles's own life ended in gloom. A great disaster, for which no human foresight could have made an allowance, fell on his country, and he was one of those who suffered most from it. His elder son Xanthippus fell a victim to this disease; and the second son, Paralus, a youth of considerable promise, followed him. At the funeral the father's firmness gave way. When he placed the garland round the head of the dead he burst into tears. The people were touched by the sight. Earlier in the year the reaction against his policy had been so strong that for the first time for twenty years he had not been elected to the post of general, and had been even fined fifty talents. Now the tide turned again. His son by Aspasia was made legitimate and enrolled in his father's tribe.

In the autumn of the same year Pericles died. Whatever his faults he had at least shown a splendid disinterestedness, for it was found, after his death, that he had not added a single drachma to the inheritance received from his father.

CHAPTER XIII

THE GREAT PLAGUE OF ATHENS

At the end of the first year of the Peloponnesian war the Athenians were fairly entitled to boast that the balance of advantage was not against them. Nothing conclusive, indeed, had been accomplished on either side; but Athens had gained more successes than her adversaries, and had inflicted at least as much loss as she had suffered. The confident expectation of Sparta and her allies, on the other hand, had been utterly disappointed. The general belief, though some better informed or more sagacious observers had dissented, had been that a single campaign would be enough to bring the Athenians to their knees. They would not endure, it was thought, to see their country ravaged. The horror of the spectacle would either drive them into risking a battle, in which defeat was inevitable, or make them sue for peace. Attica was invaded and ravaged for forty days, but the Athenians, though their patience was tried to the uttermost, remained resolutely within their walls. The next year the same tactics were repeated, except that the Peloponnesian army entered Attica earlier in the year. But if they had failed at the first trial they were not likely to succeed on the second. But now the enemies of Athens were assisted by an ally as terrible as it was unexpected. A great plague broke out. Commencing, it was said, in Nubia, it had ravaged Egypt, and from thence had been carried to the ports which had business relations with that country. It found the inhabitants of Athens predisposed to suffer grievously from its ravages. The whole population of Attica was crowded within the city walls. It is difficult to form even an approximate estimate of the numbers, but these must have been very large. Three constituent parts have to be reckoned, the Athenians proper, the resident aliens, and the slaves. Supposing this last to be double the first and second taken together, we may, perhaps, venture

on an estimate of six hundred thousand. The available space may, perhaps, be reckoned at four or five square miles. That the crowding was excessive we know from some direct statements and many allusions. The poorer classes were obliged to content themselves with such miserable shelters as hastily constructed cabins and even tubs which were placed under the shelter of the walls. Even consecrated spaces which an immemorial tradition had forbidden to be occupied were made use of under the stress of necessity. The sanitary appliances for this dense multitude were, of course, miserably inefficient; and the water supply deficient, and, it can hardly be doubted, contaminated. It was a common belief at the time that the Peloponnesians poisoned the wells. Such fancies always spring up in times of pestilence. It is not necessary to have recourse to them. It would be only too easy for the wells to be poisoned without the malicious intervention of an enemy. Thucydides gives a full account of this terrible calamity.

"The year had previously been remarkably free from illness; now every disorder terminated in this. Others, who were in perfect health, were suddenly attacked by this ailment. First, came violent heat in the head, and redness and inflammation of the eyes. The throat and tongue assumed a bloody tinge, and the breath became unnaturally fetid. The next symptoms were sneezing and hoarseness, and after this the pain descended to the chest, and was accompanied by a violent cough. Sometimes the disease settled in the stomach and caused violent vomiting. In many cases, however, there was much ineffectual retching, attended by spasmodic pain, lasting much longer in some cases than in others. Externally the body was not very hot, neither was there much pallor. On the contrary, the skin was red or livid, and covered with small pimples or sores. The internal heat, however, was so violent that the patient could not bear clothing or linen of even the lightest kind to be laid upon him. His chief desire seemed to be to throw himself into cold water. Those that were not carefully watched did so, plunging into cisterns in the agony of their unquenchable thirst, a thirst which was equally troublesome,

whether they drank much or little. The body did not fall away as much as might have been expected. As long as the fever lasted it held out wonderfully. Most cases terminated fatally, either on the seventh or the ninth day, while there was some strength still left. Escaping that, the patient was afflicted by a violent diarrhœa. Many died from the weakness this caused. Generally it was to be noted that the disease began in the head and passed through the whole body. Not a few of those who escaped with their lives suffered in their extremities, losing fingers or toes; in some the eyesight was destroyed. Others, on recovering, had a total loss of memory, and did not know their friends or even themselves. One notable thing seemed to distinguish this disease from others with which mankind are attacked. The birds and beasts that prey on human bodies, in this case did not come near the corpses of those who perished of the plague, though many lay unburied, or they died from feeding on them. There was, indeed, a marked disappearance of birds of prey. The effect on the dogs, which, as domestic animals, are more easily observed, was still more manifest.

"Whether the sick were neglected or most carefully treated, the result seemed to be much the same. No constitution was fortified against attack, the most careful attention to diet was of no avail. Of all the symptoms that accompanied the disease, the most painful was the extreme depression that settled upon those who felt themselves attacked by it. They abandoned themselves to despair, and made no attempt to bear up against it. The new-comers who had crowded into the city, suffered most. Living, as they did, not in houses, but in stifling cabins, and that in the very height of the summer, they died in crowds. They might be seen lying one on another in the death agony, while half dying creatures, in their longing for water, rolled about the fountains. The sacred enclosures were full of corpses, for in the general despair, all laws, sacred and profane, were disregarded. The custom of burial was observed no longer, the dead being disposed of in the readiest way possible. Some would place the corpse of a relation on funeral piles that

had been prepared for others, and so set fire to them, or they would do the same while the pile was actually burning.

"Lawlessness increased terribly. Poor men came suddenly into the possession of property, and determined to enjoy what had come to them so speedily, and might pass out of their hands as soon. Of honour there was little thought; who could tell whether he might not be cut off before he could grasp it. Only the pleasure of the moment seemed to be worth caring for. As for the fear of the gods, or the laws of men, they were of no avail. The godly and the ungodly were seen to perish alike, and it seemed unlikely that a man would live to answer for his offences."

The writer of this account tells us that he was himself attacked by the disease. His account of the symptoms leaves little doubt that it was something of the typhus kind. We do not know the amount of the mortality caused by this terrible visitation. Probably the number was not accurately ascertained even at the time. That it was frightfully large we may take for certain. Out of a force of four thousand heavy-armed troops, under the command of Hagnon, which vainly attempted to take Potidæa, as many as fifteen hundred died. The infection is said to have been communicated to the force already in Thrace by the new arrivals from the city.

We are equally in the dark as to the nature and means of the treatment employed by the physicians of the time. There is a story that the famous Hippocrates was called in by the Athenians, and that he ordered large bonfires to be lighted in the streets and squares of the city. One author gives the prescription of the medicine which he is said to have administered, but the whole narrative is probably fictitious.

CHAPTER XIV

A COLONY

Hierocles at Thurii to Charidemus at Athens.

Know, my dearest Charidemus, that I am safely arrived at this place, but not without having encountered many dangers. It were too audacious to compare myself in any respect to Ulysses, yet I might say that Athené, who doubtless has a care for all true sons of her own city, has preserved me from the wrath of Poseidon. Certainly the God of the Sea, whom yet I have not consciously offended, seemed to do all that he could to destroy me. In the first place, as we were rounding Cape Malea, there came on a mist so thick that we could see, not indeed as far as a man can cast a stone, as Homer hath it, but as far, rather, as he can hurl a discus of the very heaviest. Old Bacis, who knows the place, and, indeed, all places on our coasts, as well as he knows the way from the wine jar to his mouth, was utterly perplexed. He had never seen such a thing, he said, in all the sixty years of his sea-faring. Twice our keel grazed the rocks underneath; twice did we find ourselves within two or three fathoms of the cliff. Had we not crept as slowly on as a tortoise, we had most certainly perished. The shipmaster was furious, for, feeding his passengers on contract, he makes more profit the quicker the voyage, and seemed more content that they, and he too, should be drowned than that he should open another jar of wine and cask of biscuit; but Bacis would have it so. Then the next day, the fog having cleared off, there sprang up a fine wind from the South, raising waves like mountains. The ship was deluged with water, which we bailed out, all of us with all our might, the said shipmaster excepted, for he, half-dead with sickness and fear, basely kept under. "Can you see land?" the fellow kept crying to Bacis. "The gods forbid!" the old man answered, "when the wind blows in this fashion, give me the open sea."

Our last and worst danger was of another kind. 'Twas from a Carthaginian pirate ship, which we espied as we rounded Cape Malea. It was lying under shelter of the rocks on the west side, and had we not been taking a larger compass than is usual, must have caught us. As it was we had about five furlongs start, and even so escaped most narrowly. The scoundrels crowded on all the sail that they could, whereas old Bacis would not suffer a stitch more of canvas to be spread than he considered to be suitable for such weather, the wind being gusty and uncertain. The shipmaster tore his hair in his rage and fear, and I myself, who had sooner have been drowned than spend the rest of my days in an African leadmine, began to doubt. The pursuers came almost within a bow-shot. Indeed, a spent arrow fell at the old pilot's feet. I doubted whether he saw it, so intently was he looking seaward. I followed his eyes, and saw that he was watching the coming up of a squall. It seemed like a black patch moving over the sea. I noted—it is strange how clearly one sees these things at such times—how white the crests of the waves showed against it. The next moment it had struck our pursuers and capsized them. We, too, reeled under it, our leeward gunwale being within a finger's breadth of the water, but recovered ourselves. After that we had a speedy and prosperous voyage.

The history of this city of Thurii has been not unlike to the voyage which I have now described. It also has passed through serious dangers, and happily escaping them, is like to have peace and prosperity henceforth. First, we are well quit of the Sybarites. There are those who, whatever their experiences, can never either learn or forget anything, and these Sybarites were of this kind. It can scarcely be believed with what arrogance and folly they behaved themselves. Because they were descended from the inhabitants of the old city, they must keep to themselves, forsooth, all honours and privileges in the new. 'Twould be in any case an intolerable pretension; how much more so when we consider what manner of people these inhabitants of the old city are related to have been! The strangest stories are told of their ways of living, as for instance,

that no noisy craft or industry, as of smiths or cobblers, were permitted in their city, lest haply their slumbers should be disturbed, nor was it lawful to keep a cock. Their streets were covered over lest haply they should be scorched by the sun, and they were wont to take three days to accomplish a single day's journey. They bestowed the highest honours of the state on those that furnished the most costly and luxurious entertainments, and at their public festivals they crowned the cooks that had invented a new dish. Well, to return to my story, the children and grandchildren of the men that had so distinguished themselves would have monopolized everything, priesthoods, magistracies and the like. And the women, as is the way with them, were even more arrogant than the men, forbidding, for instance, well-born Athenian maidens to walk in the procession of their own goddess. Something the other citizens would have willingly conceded to them, but their claims were beyond all endurance. In the end the matter was decided by arms, a pitched battle being fought in the street. The Sybarites were defeated, and driven out of the city, and settling themselves in a strong fortress hard by, were there set upon by the barbarians, and for the most part, slain. This cause of troubles being removed, another soon followed it; you will readily understand that the Crotonians, though they ventured not to resist the power of Athens, were ill pleased to see an old rival restored. But they also are now at peace with us, friendship being now easily made, when these same haughty Sybarites had been expelled from the city. Thurii, therefore, is now, as I have said, at rest. That it will always so remain I would not willingly affirm. Such is not the way in human affairs, and there are special causes from which trouble may arise hereafter. Never was there a city in with was so strange a mixture of men! Arcadians, Bœotians, men of Elis, dwellers in the Islands, and many others are to be found. We Athenians are but a few in a multitude. Nevertheless we shall be undisturbed in our pre-eminence, so long as Athens shall prosper. So much then for our affairs. And now for other matters. Know in the first place, that Herodotus is yet alive, but, I write it with much

grief, feeble and sickly. Old he is not, not having reached his sixtieth year, but worn-out before his time, having suffered much in his travels, as I have learnt from him in many talks which I have had with him since I came to this place. And, indeed, he has travelled distances well nigh incredible, certainly such as no other man has achieved. You know how our cousin Timanthes was wont to boast of a journey to Susa and back when he went on an embassy to the Great King, and, indeed, there were not many men in Athens who had done as much. But this journey to Susa is one only, and that neither the longest or the most adventurous, of the travels of Herodotus. Among us again it is a notable thing even to set foot in Egypt, but he has traversed it in its length and breadth, and even penetrated to its border in the South, where it touches on the land of the Æthiopians. As for the other countries and cities which he has visited, they are almost past telling. There is scarcely a Greek city which he does not know, whether at home or abroad, and with the nearer barbarians, as those of Thrace and Macedonia, he has no small acquaintance. The Lesser Asia is well known to him from East to West and from North to South.

It must be confessed that for all these labours, and for the great sums of money which he has expended upon them he has as yet had but a small recompense, or, I might almost say, no recompense at all. Consider, for instance, what has befallen him in his own native city of Halicarnassus. It might have been expected that his fellow-countrymen would have been proud of a citizen so distinguished, all the more because, apart from his reputation as a traveller, he did them excellent service in the matter of the Tyrant Lygdamis. As all men know, the Halicarnasseans would scarcely have rid themselves of this oppressor but for the sagacious counsels of Herodotus. And how have they requited him? So far from paying him due honour, they made his life unbearable—this I have from the life of the man himself. And the way they did this was by ridicule of his tales of travel. His name passed among his countrymen into a very by-word for that which is foolish and

incredible. Hence it is that he emigrated to this place, where he meets with less annoyance, it is true, but only because he is less known. So far as the Thuriotes have any acquaintance with him, they all, some five or six only excepted, think of him as a teller of idle tales.

"And you yourself," this I imagine to be the question which you will now put to me, "what think you of these said tales?" Let me answer first that men do not sufficiently distinguish between the various ways which he has of telling his tales. Of some, he says expressly that he does not believe them. 'Tis a common phrase with him, "So they talk, but to me, for one, it seems a thing incredible." There are others about which he pronounces no judgment. His readers may believe them or not, as they will; he does but tell again what has been told to him. Others, again, he relates of his own knowledge. Of these I will affirm so much and no more, that he has put down nothing but what he himself verily believes to be true. This much, however, must be conceded, that he is of a credulous temper, willing to accept the marvellous, and so especially liable to be deceived. Do you not remember what he writes of the temple of the Tyrian Hercules, how that he saw in it two pillars, one of fine gold, the other of emerald, which latter shone at night with a particular lustre? Of the bigness of these said pillars he does not inform us, but we may suppose that they are some cubits, say six or seven, in height. Now of the pillar of gold I need say nothing. Probably 'tis of some baser metal gilded, but that the priests affirmed it to be pure gold may readily be imagined. Nor can one distinguish between a thing of gold and a thing gilded, not being allowed either to examine a part or to weigh the whole. As for the emerald it is altogether beyond belief. An emerald is a precious stone, varying, indeed, in bigness, but not passing in size beyond certain limits. None have been ever heard of larger than the fruit of the nut-tree. 'Tis of the same order of things as the amethyst, the topaz, the chrysoprase, the pearl, though this last is affirmed by some to come from a certain shell-fish. What then was this pillar of emerald? Of glass, surely, and hollow, so

that the priests, putting a lamp within, caused the nightly splendour of which our friend speaks. Not seldom, indeed, has he been deceived by those from whom he sought information—so, at least, it seems to me. The priests in Egypt, for example, told him many things of which, to say the least, there is no proof, and but little probability. Add to this a frequent cause of error, in this, that all things said on either side had to pass through the lips of an interpreter. It is well known how much a narrative is changed when it is told for a second time, though in all good faith. How much greater the change when this change is increased by diversities of language!

Nor must it be forgotten that things that seem incredible may yet be true. Our friend says that there are parts of Egypt in which it never rains, so that the falling of a few drops was considered a portent of evil, which, indeed, came to pass when the country was conquered by Cambyses and the Persians. This seems a marvellous thing to us, as it would seem a marvellous thing to these same Egyptians should one tell them that in Greece, at certain seasons of the year, water becomes solid so that a man may walk upon it.

Do you not remember, my Charidemus, the strange thing which our friend relates about the King, who caused to be brought before him certain Indians and Greeks. To the Greeks he said: "What would persuade you to devour the bodies of your fathers when they are dead?" At this the men cried out in horror, as well they might. Then he said to the Indians: "What think you of burying your fathers when they die?" But the burying seemed to them as detestable a practice as did devouring to the others. Yet who would have believed, without certain proof, that there are men who practice customs so strange? And there is, I verily believe, yet greater variety in nature than in the customs of men, so that nothing should seem incredible in the one or impossible in the other.

There are other notable persons in the city. Foremost among them, at least in his own esteem, is the Spartan Cleandridas. With us at Athens he is, as you know, in but ill

repute, for though he did us a service, 'twas not for love but for gold. Of the Thurians he has deserved better, for he led their army, with much skill and judgment, according to all accounts, in the war that they carried on with Tarentum. He affects, I am told, luxurious ways beyond all the dwellers in the city. I understand that this is commonly the case with the Spartans, so soon as they get out of the reach of their strict discipline.

I admire more a young countryman of ours, Lysias by name, who has a great reputation for eloquence in this city, not ill-deserved, as far as I can judge, who have heard, as you know, the great Pericles himself. He teaches others to practise the art in which he himself excels, and it is my purpose when I receive the next instalment of my property to enrol myself among his pupils. At present I cannot by any means spare the ten minæ which is his customary fee.

More remarkable than any is the philosopher Empedocles, of Acragas in Sicily, who has done the colony the honour of paying it a visit. "Philosopher" do I call him? He would scarcely be content with the word. According to his own account, as there is nothing which he does not know, so there is nothing which he cannot do. If any region is plagued with epidemic diseases, as are many countries, for instance, with ague and fever, he can make them healthy; he can bring down rain when the land is suffering from drought; he can bring back the sun into the heavens when the harvests are suffering from superabundance of rain; he can cure diseases both of body and mind, and has remedies against old age and death; he can foretell the future and recover things that have been forgotten in the past. Such are his claims—I have heard them from his own mouth, as well as read them in the book of "Purifications" which he has written. You will doubtless ask me, "What think you of these things yourself?" Let me answer that I neither believe nor disbelieve. That the man has a marvellous presence, and a tongue so sweet and so persuasive that, at least while he is speaking, it is impossible to doubt, that he has wrought many marvellous cures, has foreseen things to come,

or, at the least, guessed them with marvellous accuracy, that he has received signal honours from cities which he has benefited by his counsels—all these things are beyond question. More I cannot say.

I have had some interesting talk with a young stranger from one of the Italian towns. He was on his way to Sicily to buy corn, his people suffering, he told me, greatly from a scarcity of food. He had been shipwrecked, and after various adventures—a capture by robbers among them—had made his way to this place. There was this bond of union between us, I found, that his great-grandfather had taken part, some eighty years before, in the expelling of tyrants from his city—"Roma," he called it—even as did mine from our own Athens. But they do not seem to have had so much prosperity since that time as the gods have granted to us. Rather they have become weaker by the change, the more so as these tyrants were of the powerful Etruscan race, which thus became a most dangerous enemy. One of the strongest and most populous cities of these Etruscans is, he told me, no more than ten miles from their gates. This seems to me almost intolerable; it is as if we had an enemy always at Eleusis. Then again they are troubled by fierce dissensions between the nobles and the common people. These latter are not only shut out from their due share in the government of the state, but are weighed down by an almost intolerable weight of debt. Unhappily for them, they have never had a Solon among them, as wise as he was bold. I doubt whether a city threatened both within and without by so many dangers, can long survive. My young friend, however, who is a noble, but of the more liberal sort, has very large hopes for the future of his country. Anyhow, it is at too great distance to be a formidable rival to Thurii. I must confess that I am not so easy in mind about some of our nearer neighbours, the Lucanians, for instance, who already begin to threaten some of the smaller Greek cities in this region. I must cease, for the messenger who is to carry this to Athens waits. Farewell.

CHAPTER XV

THE HOLY ISLAND

"Never saw I so fair a mortal, man or woman," says the shipwrecked Ulysses to the Phæacian maiden Nausicaa, "and but once only as goodly a thing; 'twas in Delos, the young sapling of a palm-tree that sprang up by the altar of Apollo." This takes us back very far; how far we cannot say, but probably, if we are to accept the opinion of the majority of scholars, beyond 1000 B.C. Anyhow we may be certain that long before the dawn of history Delos was a well-known place. An island so insignificant in size—it is little more than five miles in circumference—must have had something special to make it famous, for the poet to mention it in this way, the hero taking it for granted that Nausicaa, a native, it must be remembered, of an island on the other side of Greece, knows the place of which he is speaking. What this special attraction was we learn from the Homeric hymn to Apollo. The hymn is called "Homeric," and was, indeed, believed by the ancients to be of the same date as the great poems. Modern criticism, however, has detected traces of a later origin. Its date is uncertain, but it may be conjecturally ascribed to the middle of the seventh century B.C. In this Hymn we read as follows:

"There are met together the long-robed sons of Ionia with their children and their chaste wives; there in honour of Apollo they wrestle and dance and sing. Whoso shall see them will say: 'Deathless surely they are and Death comes not near them,' so much of beauty would he behold on every side, so full of delight would he be to look upon the men, and the fair-girdled women, and the swift ships, and the riches of every kind. And near them are the maidens of Delos, priestesses of the Archer-God, who celebrate in song Apollo and Artemis and Leto their mother, and the glory of the famous men and the

famous women of old, charming with their hymn the hearts of mortal men."

Delos, in fact, was the meeting-place of the Ionian tribes, one of the great branches of the Hellenic race. An immemorial tradition had placed there the birth-place of Apollo and his sister Artemis, and the temple of Apollo, who seems to have had more than his share of the worshippers' homage, became the centre of attraction. A Greek was accustomed to combine pleasure with his religious duties, and the festival was made more attractive by athletic and artistic contests. Again, neither religion nor amusement distracted his attention from commerce. Delos was singularly well placed to be a trade centre; it lay in the line of the great trade routes, whether ending in Italy to the West, or in Egypt and Syria eastwards. Both causes acted together to make it a rich and popular place.

Then came the change, the first of the many vicissitudes of fortune through which the island has passed. The great Ionian cities on the mainland of Asia Minor fell into the hands of their neighbours on the East, becoming tributaries first to the Lydian and afterwards to the Persian Kings. The festival was dropped; we do not know the precise date of its discontinuance, but, it must have been at some time in the course of the sixth century B.C. Something, however, of its old sanctity still clung to the island. When the Persian generals, Datis and Artaphernes were on their way to Greece in 490, the inhabitants of Delos, fearful of the fate which had overtaken others islanders, fled from their homes. They took refuge in Tenos, which, lying as it did outside the direct route to Athens, would, they hoped, be overlooked by the Persians. Datis sent a herald to them with a conciliatory and reassuring message. It was to this effect:

"Why have ye thus fled, ye holy men? Why think ye so ill of me? Surely I had been sufficiently wise, even without the king's command to spare the land which was the birth-place of the two gods, to spare both the land and them that dwell therein. Come ye back therefore to your homes, and inhabit again your island."

Anxious, it is possible, to atone for any slight, he offered the huge, the almost incredible amount of three hundred talents of frankincense on the altar of the temple of Apollo.

This was in 490, the Persian army being on its way to Attica, where it was to fight the disastrous battle of Marathon. Fourteen years afterwards Delos became, in virtue of its central position, a place of the greatest importance. The defeat of the Persians at Salamis in 480, and at Plataea and Mycale 479, had relieved Greece of immediate fear of invasion, but there were many reasons for continuing hostilities. The invaders had behaved with the greatest barbarity, sparing nothing, sacred or profane, and had thus laid up against themselves a store of wrongs which it would take a generation to expiate. Then again, many Greek communities were still subject to their tyranny. Finally, the danger of invasion, though removed for a time, might revive. As long as Greece consisted of a number of independent states, jealous of each other, and bound together by no common sentiment, so long a powerful enemy would be dangerous to them. The enemy had found traitors among them already, and he would certainly find them again. To oppose him successfully it would be necessary to form a confederation. For some time after the victories of 479 the Greek forces were under Spartan command. But the misconduct of Pausanias and the general incapacity of the Spartans for rule put an end to this arrangement. Athens naturally succeeded to the place thus vacated; and Athens at once set about forming what may be called an Anti-Persian league. Both the sacred associations and the position of Delos, pointed it out as the head-quarters of the alliance, and Athens, which had not yet exchanged its generous patriotism for selfish ambition, willingly assented. An assessment towards the common object—operations against the Persian foe—was made on the members of the alliance. The total amount of the money payment was large, as much as £106,000, and there were also contingents of ships of war. We do not know the details of this assessment, but we are informed

that it was made by Aristides, and that it gave then and afterwards universal satisfaction.

It is no part of my plan to relate the history of the Delian confederacy. The materials for such a history, indeed, are very scanty. We know that Naxos revolted about ten years after its formation, and Thasos very shortly afterwards. Both islands were subdued, chiefly, of course, by the power of Athens. The natural result was the aggrandizement of the victorious city. Little by little her relations to her allies were changed. One after another, they were compelled or consented to commute the contingent of warships for an increased money contribution. Before thirty years had passed all the allies, with two exceptions, had become tributaries, content to fulfil their obligations by a money payment, these two being Chios and Lesbos. Meanwhile the first object of the confederation had been receding into the distance. The Persians had almost ceased to be formidable to Greece; any dangers which threatened the country in that direction were only made serious by the unprincipled competition which the leading Greek states carried on against each other. Athens began to use the fleet for her own purposes, for expanding her dominion and pushing her own commerce. Nothing could be a more significant mark of this change, than the fact that the treasury was transferred from Delos to Athens. This transfer took place in the year 454 B.C. Though the island must be supposed to have lost something of its dignity by this change, its splendour and we may say its prosperity, were, it may be said, increased. These were at their height during the twenty years that intervened between 454 and the commencement of the Peloponnesian war in 432. Athens had reached her culminating point of wealth and power, and she delighted to make the embassies sent to the Sacred Island more and more magnificent. One occasion of this kind was long remembered for the splendour which distinguished it. The leader of the embassy was Nicias, son of Niceratus, the chief of the aristocratic party in Athens, and one of the wealthiest men in the country. Commonly the effect of the spectacle was marred by the unmanageable crowd that had assembled to

witness the landing of the embassy. Nicias remedied this, by disembarking the previous day on the island of Rheneia, which is separated from Delos by a strait about half a mile in breadth. He had brought with him, from Athens, in separate pieces, a bridge which was to be thrown across the channel. These were put together in the course of the night. The next day the procession, a numerous body consisting of some of the principal citizens of Athens, with musicians splendidly attired, and choruses of youths and maidens clad in white, made its way at a slow and measured pace across the bridge, itself a handsome structure adorned with gilding and tapestry.

With the Peloponnesian war naturally commenced a decline in the fortunes of Delos. The resources of Athens were taken up, and more than taken up, with warlike expenditure, and the cost of the embassies had to be seriously curtailed. Then her attitude towards her dependencies was greatly changed. She became a grudging and oppressive ruler. In 426 the Athenians undertook a complete purification of the island. All remains of the dead were removed, and an ordinance was made for the future, that, as far as could be prevented, no birth or death was to take place upon the island. Four years later all the native inhabitants were removed and settled on the mainland. A part of them, however, were permitted to return after the conclusion of the peace of Nicias, the Athenians attributing their disasters to the wrath of Apollo at the ill-treatment of his *protégés*.

After the fall of Athens in 404, when the dependencies of Athens had their freedom restored to them, the Delians became independent. Their independence however, did not last long. Athens recovered possession of the island when the Spartans' supremacy in Greece ceased to exist. Nor did she lose it when Philip of Macedon became practically the ruler of Greece. This, as has been well remarked, she would hardly have been permitted to do, if the island had been of any great value. The fact is that the first three quarters of the fourth century B.C. were a period of great depression in the history of

Delos. The inscriptions from which our knowledge of this history is mainly derived, have very little to tell us. The Athenian embassy, if it was not entirely discontinued had little pomp or splendour about it. Offerings from other states, from princes Greek or Oriental, were no longer sent. The names of Philip and Alexander are conspicuously absent.

Then came another change, brought about by the death of Alexander.

The Generals, who sought to divide among themselves the inheritance of the great Conqueror's empire, proclaimed the independence of the Greek states, in the hope of gaining popularity and prestige, and Delos was thus enabled again to escape from the dominion of Athens. She did more; she became a political power, making herself, on the strength of her ancient name and sacred associations, the centre of an Ægean confederacy. It could not be said that the island became absolutely independent; that it could hardly be, possessing as it did no resources of its own, and commanding no naval or military strength. Nevertheless Delos was a power; the rival monarchies which had divided among themselves the empire of Alexander in turns courted, and, when occasion demanded, protected her, made use of her religious prestige, and availed themselves of her central position for the purposes of commerce.

The first power, however, to enter into friendly relations with the Sacred Island was not one of the monarchies set up by Alexander's generals, but the Republic of Rhodes. Rhodes, gifted with a magnificent climate—it was the island of the Sun-god and never, it was said, missed for a whole day the sight of his face—and a fertile soil, had been wealthy from the earliest times. But it owed its greatness, at least in a large measure, to the political foresight of its people. Towards the end of the fifth century its three cities, putting aside, with an abnegation rare in Greek history, their passion for independence, combined to make one powerful metropolis to which the name of the island was given. For the next eighty

years Rhodes sided, as policy seemed to dictate, with one or other of the powers that contended for mastery in the Ægean, with Athens, with Sparta, with Thebes, even with the Carian princes of Halicarnassus. It had to submit to Alexander, and to receive a Macedonian garrison. This it expelled after the conqueror's death, and it resisted all efforts to subdue it. The repulse of Demetrius, surnamed Poliorcetes or besieger of cities, after a siege which lasted for a whole year, was particularly famous. This was the power then that first supported—it is possible that it may even have suggested the confederacy of—Delos. The inscriptions found in the island, which are, indeed, the chief authorities for its history, record magnificent presents sent by the Rhodian Republic to the Temple of Apollo, and honours bestowed by the Delians in return on eminent Rhodian citizens. Rhodes had been on friendly terms with the Greek kings of Egypt. We find, for instance, that among the conditions on which Demetrius raised the siege, was the stipulation that the Rhodians should help him in any enterprise that he might undertake, except against Egypt. It was Egypt that succeeded to Rhodes in the patronage of Delos. Delos was even more essential to the trade of Egypt, lying, as the latter country does, far away in the south-east of the Mediterranean, than it had been to Rhodes. The Ptolemies, accordingly, were liberal in their gifts to the Delian Apollo, while they protected the island and even collected its revenues. The Delians, on the other hand, instituted festivals which they called after their patrons' names, and erected statues in their honour. Not only royal personages, but officers of state and naval and military commanders, even such minor personages as the king's physician or the director of the Great Library were complimented in this way.

Egypt, however, did not monopolize the favour of the islanders. The rival powers of Syria and Macedonia made advances to the priesthood of Apollo, and these advances were graciously received. Delos regarded all these powers with a benevolent neutrality, opened her port to their fleets, and received their gifts with absolute impartiality. Complimentary

inscriptions, statues, and festivals were at the service of the Antiochi of Syria and the Philippi of Macedonia, and of their ministers or favourites. Towards the end of the third century, indeed, Egypt was superseded by Macedonia in the place of chief patron and protector; in the beginning of the second, Rhodes regained her old supremacy.

But now a new power appeared upon the scene. Rome, after passing successfully through the long struggle of the Second Punic War, began to push her conquests in the East. Antiochus III of Syria received a crushing defeat at Magnesia, in 190 B.C. Twenty-two years afterwards the Macedonian kingdom came to an end at the fatal battle of Pydna. Roman trade followed Roman conquest, and was not slow in perceiving the natural advantages of the place. The commercial importance of the island rapidly recovered, till in 166 B.C. it was declared a free port. This proceeding gave a vast impetus to its trade, chiefly at the expense of its old patron Rhodes, whose customs revenue sank in three years from £35,000 to scarcely £6,000. But it was the place, not the people, that enjoyed this prosperity. The Roman capitalists, selfish and unscrupulous as ever, procured, along with the decree that made the island a free port, the expulsion of the inhabitants.

Twenty years afterwards the trade of Delos was largely increased by the fall of Corinth. This great trading rival removed—indeed, it was a century before Corinth rose from her ruins—the Island enjoyed something like a monopoly of the Mediterranean trade. The exports of the East, spices and fruits, gems and ivory, besides works of Greek art, filled her markets. When in 133 Asia became a Roman province, this commerce was enormously increased, for Asia, which Tacitus describes as still rich after it had suffered two centuries of spoliation, was then wealthy beyond description. No branch of trade, it is probable, was more lucrative than the slave market, in which, it is said, as many as ten thousand were sometimes sold in the course of a single day. The Roman capitalists, as time went on, shared with other nations, doubtless for

satisfactory considerations, the vast business which found a centre in the island. As early as 150 B.C. the merchants of Tyre had a corporation there under the protection of Hercules; while Jews, Syrians, and Egyptians had factories of their own. It was a meeting place, we may say, for the trade of the civilized world.

The end to this prosperity came in the first half of the first century B.C. In the year 87, Arsaces, one of the generals of Mithridates, king of Pontus, sacked the island. The pirates, whose ravages in the Mediterranean were hardly checked till Pompey's masterly strategy cleared them out of it, completed the ruin thus begun. At the beginning of the Christian era the island was almost deserted. To-day, it affords pasture to a few sheep, and is inhabited, for a part at least of the year, by the shepherds who tend them.

A few years ago there seemed to be a chance that commerce, which is ever changing its routes, might give it back something of its old prosperity. When steam-ships first began to traverse the Mediterranean, and it was necessary to find a stopping-place for them, the rival claims of Delos and Syra (the ancient Syros) were considered. Syra was chosen, and the place, which was then almost uninhabited, now numbers nearly fifty thousand inhabitants.

I shall now attempt to give some account of the appearance of the Sacred Island as it appeared to a visitor, say in the earlier half of the second century before our era. Approaching, let us suppose, from the west, he enters the Sacred Harbour, and sees before him a terrace fronting the sea. Behind the terrace is the Temple of Apollo, and behind the Temple, again, rises the famous hill of Cynthus, celebrated in all praises and prayers addressed to the twin children of Latona. The slopes of the hill are covered with buildings, sacred and secular, whose white marble walls stand out against the green foliage of the Sacred Wood. He lands on the left or north side of the harbour, and passing through a stately portico finds himself in an open space adorned with statues. On his left

hand is the Commercial, on his right the Sacred City. Determining first to visit the latter he passes under a stately gate, formed of Doric columns, which the city of Athens had given to Apollo in the days of its supremacy. A road leads up to the Temple of the chief Delian god. It is lined on either side with statues, some of them being among the finest products of Greek art. The Temple itself is a small building, measuring only a hundred and four feet by forty-four. But it is of the finest Parian marble and exquisitely proportioned. This also the Delians owe to the munificence of the Athenians, who built it when they recovered their hold of the island, early in the fourth century. It is in the Doric style, but its columns are not fluted. On the left or north of Apollo's shrine is the chapel of his mother, and on the north of this again, that of Aphrodite. In a partial semicircle round the shrine are the Treasuries, crowded with the offerings of the munificent piety of Greater Greece. The enclosure and shrine of Artemis lie more to the west. The whole of the consecrated shore is surrounded by a finely-finished granite wall. It abounds with statues, altars, halls, and colonnades, the "Portico of Philip," king of Macedonia (220-179), being conspicuous among these last for magnitude and beauty; while the most striking, if not the most beautiful of the statues is the Colossus presented by the island of Naxos. If the traveller desires to find a lodging he can be accommodated in one of the hostelrys which line almost the whole of the enclosing wall. The hospitality of the priests is supposed to be gratuitous, but he is expected to make some proportionate offering.

The wonders and beauties of the Sacred City having been viewed, the visitor turns his steps to the commercial quarter. This indeed lies on both sides of the consecrated enclosure, but its most stately buildings are to be found on the north side of the island, conspicuous among them being what, to use a modern phrase, we may call the Roman factory or "Schola Romanorum;" if he has a friend among the resident merchants, he will probably find that he has a residence on the western slope of Mount Cynthus.

This is a sketch of what the labours of archæological explorers have discovered among the ruins of Delos. All the treasures of the island have disappeared. Nothing of consequence in either gold or silver has been found, and not a single specimen of the precious Delian bronze in which the great sculptor Myron was accustomed to work. Only fragments of the statues remain. For centuries, indeed, the place was used as a quarry. The Knights of St. John fortified Malta with marble from its ruins; the church of Tenos was built from Delian materials, Greek houses and Turkish courts were constructed out of the inexhaustible store. But the plan of the buildings can be traced, and in some cases the elevation restored. But the most precious survival of all is the magnificent collection of inscriptions. These number more than fifteen hundred, and furnish us with a record, such as literature proper does not attempt to give, of the "Sacred Island" and its people.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FATE OF PLATAEA

There is something peculiarly pathetic in the story of Plataea, of its steadfast fidelity to Athens, and of its unhappy fate. Of course this fidelity was not a mere matter of sentiment. The smaller community had, or supposed itself to have, good reasons for throwing in its lot with its powerful neighbour. It profoundly disliked Thebes, the city which claimed its allegiance, but had no means of asserting its freedom, except by claiming the protection of Athens. The benefits which earned its gratitude were of a substantial kind, but the way in which the gratitude was shown can scarcely fail to affect us with both admiration and pity.

Plataea (the word has also a plural form "Plataeæ") was situated at the foot of the northern slopes of Mount Cithæron, near a branch of the river Asopus, by which its territory was

separated from that of Thebes. The name appears in the Homeric catalogue of the Bœotian cities. It was claimed by Thebes as a colony; the Plataeans themselves traced back their origin to a time more remote than the foundation of what called itself their mother city. While Thebes was built by the Phœnician Cadmus they claimed as their founder Plataea, daughter of the river God Asopus. Causes of quarrel about which we possess no special information arose between the two, and the Plataeans watched for an opportunity of bringing about a change in their relation to the sovereign city. This came shortly after the expulsion of the family of Peisistratus from Athens. The Spartan army, which under the constraint of a divine bidding, but much against the popular feeling, had assisted in this work, was on its way home, when some envoys from Plataea sought an interview with king Cleomenes. They claimed the protection of Sparta against Thebes, surrendering at the same time both their city and their territory. Cleomenes declined the offer on behalf of his countrymen. Sparta, he said, was too remote from Plataea to give help as speedily as it might be wanted. They had better go and seek protection from Athens which was nearer and would give more effectual protection. The advice was good enough, but it was not meant in a friendly spirit, as far at least as Athens was concerned. The Spartan king was shrewd enough to see that an alliance with a Bœotian town, little more than five miles distant from Thebes, would give rise to perpetual quarrels, and would be a source of weakness rather than of strength; and this, indeed, was the result. To the Plataeans, however, the advice was most welcome. They sent envoys to Athens, who, taking the opportunity of a public sacrifice, seated themselves as suppliants at the altar, surrendered their city and territory, and implored protection against Thebes. The appeal was successful, and when Thebes, resenting the defection of a dependent, sent a force to restore her authority, Athens marched to assist her new ally. The Corinthians offered their mediation, and the case was referred to their arbitration. Their decision was that the Thebans had no right to compel the Bœotian cities to remain in

the league. The defeated party refused to abide by this judgment, which, indeed, was fatal to their position, and attacked the Athenians. They were defeated and were punished by the loss of some of their territory.

Nineteen years after the conclusion of the alliance (if we accept the date suggested below) Plataea rendered substantial help to Athens at the critical moment when she had to defend herself from the Persian invaders. The chance that in 479 made the Plataean territory the scene of the final defeat of the Persian army, turned out greatly to the advantage of the city. It was rebuilt at the expense of the allies; a special grant of eighty talents was made to it, which was expended in the erection of a temple to Athené, and its citizens were charged with the duty of maintaining the burial places of the Greeks who had fallen in the battle, of paying them funeral honour, and of celebrating, every fifth year, the festival of Freedom. In return for their services the allied Greeks guaranteed the independence and individuality of the city and of its surrounding territory. The Plataeans continued to discharge their duties as custodians of the battle-field with sufficient regularity, though Herodotus charges them with having allowed for a consideration, cities which had really taken no part in the battle, to erect fictitious tombs. The victory was really won, as will be seen from Chapter VII, by the Spartans, Athenians and Arcadians.

The breaking out of the Peloponnesian war, had, as might have been expected, a fatal influence on the fortunes of Plataea. The town was, indeed, the scene of the first blow that was struck in this long and disastrous struggle. The occasion was remarkably characteristic of Greek life. Plataea, like almost all Greek towns, was divided between two factions, the aristocrats, who desired to re-enter the Bœotian League, under the supremacy of Thebes, and at the same time to establish their own supremacy, and the democrats who were in favour of maintaining the Athenian alliance. The former plotted with their friends at Thebes a *coup d'état*. The result was that one

night about the end of March in the year 431—hostilities between Athens and Sparta being imminent but not yet commenced—a body of three hundred Theban heavy-armed, under the command of two chiefs of the Bœotian League, surprised the city. The gates were opened to them by their allies, and they took up a position in the market-place of the city. It had been arranged that a large force should follow from Thebes the next day. The traitorous Platæans urged on their Theban friends, the vigorous policy of seizing the chiefs of the opposite party. The Thebans, feeling some scruples against following this advice, contented themselves with proclaiming, that anyone who wished to see Plataea return to her ancient membership in the Bœotian League, should join their ranks. The first impulse of the democrats was to make terms.

When, however, they found that the force which had occupied the city was but small, they resolved to attack it. The Thebans were taken at a disadvantage; they did not know the localities; they had been exposed all night to a drenching rain. They made, however, some resistance, and forming themselves in military order, repelled for a time their assailants. But the attack was repeated again and again, while the women threw tiles from the roofs. Then they attempted flight, but flight was difficult. The gate by which they had entered had been shut, a Platæan having jammed the place from which the bolt had been broken with the bar of a javelin. A few escaped by jumping down from the wall, many being killed in the attempt, others escaped by an unguarded gate, a woman supplying them with a hatchet with which to cut through the bolt, but the main body was compelled to capitulate.

Meanwhile the reinforcements from Thebes had been delayed by the rain which had so swollen the Asopus that it could scarcely be forded. Before they could arrive, their countrymen within the walls had been captured.

Of what followed we have two accounts. The Thebans declared that they received from the Platæans the assurance that if they would abstain from doing any harm to persons or

property which might fall into their hands, the prisoners should be delivered up to them unharmed. The Platæans, on the other hand, denied that they gave any such engagement. All that they promised to do was to keep the fate of their captives in suspense till negotiations should have been opened.

This promise, unfortunately, they did not keep. They had sent a messenger to Athens, as soon as they became aware of the surprise of their city; and they had sent a second with an account of the capture of the Theban troops. Pericles at once grasped the situation, its possibilities and its dangers. He immediately despatched a herald who was to bid the Platæans take no steps about their prisoners, till they should have consulted their allies. Unhappily the injunction came too late. Carried away by resentment at a treacherous and unprovoked attack, the Platæans slaughtered their prisoners, one hundred and eighty in number. It was a cruel act though not transgressing any article in the Greek code of war, if any such code existed, and accounted for by a great provocation; and it was a fatal mistake. The prisoners would have been most valuable as hostages, for many of them belonged to the governing class in Thebes; to put them to death was at once to free the hands of their countrymen and to give them an inexpiable offence.

For two years the Platæans were left unmolested. The Thebans had not sufficient strength of their own to exact the revenge for which they longed, and their Peloponnesian allies were unwilling to act. The army could, it was thought, be more profitably employed, that is, in ravaging the territory of Athens, and there was probably some reluctance to attack a town that was protected by a common guarantee. In the third year of the war, however, when it had been determined not to repeat the invasion of Attica, the importunity of the Thebans prevailed, and Archidamus the Spartan king, at the head of the united Peloponnesian force, entered the Platæan territory, and began to lay it waste. A herald from the town, from which, of course, this proceeding had been watched, came forth, and addressed

him: "Archidamus and ye men of Lacedæmon, ye are doing that which is unworthy both of you and of your fathers. Pausanias the son of Cleombrotus, having freed Greece from the Persians, assigned to the Plataeans this city and territory to hold in their own right, so that none might injure them; and all the Greeks promised that if any should so do they would protect us, yet ye are come with these Thebans, who are our worst enemies, to enslave us."

To this appeal Archidamus replied: "We also are endeavouring to set free the Greeks from their oppressors, who are now not the Persians but the Athenians. In this endeavour ye ought by right to join, and to this we now invite you. But if ye cannot act thus, at the least remain quiet, and be friends to both, helping neither in matters that pertain to war."

This invitation to neutrality had already been made to the Plataeans, and declined. The refusal was now repeated, two reasons being given, first, that they could not act without the consent of the Athenians, in whose charge they had put their wives and children; second, that if they should bind themselves to receive both parties as friends, there was reason to dread another treacherous attack from the Thebans.

The Spartan king replied with a liberal proposal which does the highest credit to his justice and desire for peace. "Hand over," he said, "your city and all that is in it to us; take an account of all your property, and then go wherever you please. When the war is over we will restore everything to you. Meanwhile we will use it in trust for you, and make you an annual allowance sufficient for your needs."

These terms were so attractive that a majority of the Plataeans were disposed to accept. This, however, they could not do, without first obtaining the consent of the Athenians. A truce was obtained from Archidamus, and a messenger was sent to lay the facts before the authorities at Athens.

If the Athenians had been magnanimous, they would have consented to their old allies securing for themselves terms

so favourable. But the temptation to refuse was too strong for them. Plataea, they knew, would hold out with steadfast determination, and so holding out, would divert the whole Peloponnesian force from any attack on Attica. This diversion would give them a breathing space, and would be otherwise of great advantage. Accordingly they answered the Plataeans in some such terms as these: "Men of Plataea, we have never yet from the very beginning of our alliance, suffered you to be wrong, nor will we now suffer it. To the best of our power will we help you; do you therefore keep the oaths which your fathers swore to us and keep the alliance between us."

These were idle words, and the Athenians could hardly have failed to know that they were. They had never ventured to face the Peloponnesian army in the field, nor were they likely to venture now; and without so venturing they could give no efficient help. In making this promise they could have had nothing but the vaguest hope of some favourable chance occurring. As it turned out during the whole of the siege—and it lasted almost a year—they made no attempt to relieve the blockaded town.

The Plataeans accepted the instructions of their ally with touching loyalty and confidence. Their herald proclaimed from the walls to the Spartan king, that they refused to accept his terms. Archidamus replied by a solemn invocation of the gods and heroes who were believed to inhabit the Plataean territory. He called them to bear witness to what had happened: that the Plataeans had broken the oaths which were common to them and to Greece, and that they had refused the reasonable terms which had been offered; he implored the protecting power to punish the wrong doers, to help those who were contending for the cause of righteousness and justice.

The siege that followed is one of the most remarkable that have been recorded in history. Had not the narrative been told by one of the most exact of historians, a contemporary who must have heard the story from some of those who were

actors in the scene, it might well have been pronounced incredible, at least in some of its details.

The Platæans had, as has been said above, sent away their families. The garrison numbered four hundred and eighty, of whom eighty were Athenians. The only non-combatants in the town were one hundred and ten women slaves, who acted as cooks.

The Peloponnesians began by constructing, out of the fruit-trees which they cut down in the neighbouring gardens and farms, a palisade, which enclosed the town. Their next proceeding was to make a mound of timber and earth against part of the town-wall, their object being to form a slope by which it might easily be scaled. The forests of Mount Cithæron furnished abundance of timber, which, together with quantities of stones and earth, was piled up in heaps, kept together by supports, attached to the wall. The army carried on this work for more than two weeks, labouring day and night in shifts which relieved each other. At the end of this time the mound was very nearly on a level with the top of the town-wall. The answering move of the Platæans was to erect on the part of the wall that was threatened by this attack, a superstructure of wood, strengthened by bricks behind it. The front was protected from fire by hides raw and dressed. The besiegers proceeded to raise the mound to the height of the additional defence; this was met by the Platæans excavating a hole in their own wall, and carrying away the earth from the lower part of the mound, thus causing it to fall in below as fast as it was raised above. The Peloponnesians filled up the excavated places with stiff clay, enclosed in wattled reeds, which could not be easily removed, the besieged mined the ground still lower down, so that the mound continued to sink underneath as fast as it was added to from above. At the same time, in anticipation of a time when their counterwork should cease to protect them, they built a new portion of town-wall, carrying it inwards from the extremities of the part against which the mound had been piled.

Battering rams were brought to bear against the fortifications, old and new, the latter being specially endangered by them. The besieged contrived to neutralize their effect. The heads of some they pulled out of the straight line by ropes, which they let down over them; others they broke off by heavy beams, which they let down upon them. Fire, of course, was tried. Combustibles, in large quantities, were thrown into the space between the mound and the concave wall, and also, as far as they could reach, into the city itself. A huge conflagration was raised, and for a time Plataea was in danger of being burnt to the ground. If the wind had continued to blow as strongly and from the same quarter as it did when the attempt was made, the result must have been fatal. But it either shifted or fell; according to one account, an opportune thunderstorm extinguished the flames.

The difficulties in this account are obvious. We may suppose, indeed, that the besieged found plenty of materials in the vacant portions of the town. Plataea had evidently shrunk greatly during the sixty odd years which had intervened between the day of Marathon, when they had sent a thousand warriors to join the Athenian army, and the siege, when their able-bodied men numbered but a few over four hundred. And now the departure of all the non-combatant population must have left available for the construction of new defences a large quantity of bricks, stone, and timber. But how could the strength of less than five hundred men have held out against the exertions of an enemy, which must have exceeded them twenty or thirty times at the very least? Why did not the Lacedæmonians attempt a direct assault? How could the great circuit of the walls have been defended by so scanty forces, occupied as these were, at the same time, by works so laborious?

The result of all these operations and counter operations was, that the besiegers abandoned all hope of taking the town either by assault or mine, and settled down to the tedious task of reducing it by blockade.

Two distinct walls were constructed, sixteen feet apart. The space between the two was covered and filled up for the reception of the besieging force, which consisted of Bœotian and Peloponnesian troops in equal parts. Two ditches were also excavated—the earth dug out furnished, in fact, the material out of which the bricks were made—one of them inside, the other outside the walls, and severally intended to prevent the exit of the enemy, or the entry of a relieving force. These lines of circumvallation were completed about the middle of September. In three months' time the object aimed at was accomplished. Famine had become so severe in the town that it was impossible to hold out any longer. Under these circumstances, the general in command proposed an attempt to escape, and was strongly backed by the prophet Theænetus, who may be described as the religious adviser of the garrison. This had been reduced by this time to four hundred and twenty-four men. A plan was concerted, but at the last moment, half of this number, overwhelmed by the difficulties in the way of its execution, renounced the attempt.

It has been said that the town was enclosed with a double wall, or rather two walls made into one by a covering. Each of these two was furnished with battlements, and at each tenth battlement there was a roofed tower, taking up the whole breadth of the wall structure, but with a passage in the centre. It was the custom of the besiegers to patrol the whole length of the walls at night, but the sentries sometimes used to retire under the shelter of the towers when the weather was wet or stormy. Such a night the Plataeans chose for their attempt. It was nearly mid-winter; there was furious wind, carrying with it rain and sleet, and no moon. They carried with them ladders of a length calculated to the height of the investing wall (ascertained by repeated counting of the layers of bricks), and were lightly armed, some with shields and spears, others with breastplates, javelins, and bows and arrows. One foot only was shod, the other being naked, to give it a firmer hold on the muddy ground. They moved with the wind in their faces, so that any sound they might make might be carried away, and

were careful not to be so close together as to let their arms clash. They crossed the inner ditch without being discovered. This done, some of them climbed the wall, took possession of two of the towers, the guards in which they surprised and slew without arousing their comrades, and so secured a place over which the whole body might pass. Almost all had mounted on the wall when one of them disturbed a tile, and so betrayed what was going on to the besiegers. An alarm was raised, and the garrison hurried up to the top of the wall, but did not know the precise spot to which they ought to turn. At the same time the remainder of the besieged made a diversion by a feigned sally on the opposite side of the town. Fire signals were raised to give notice at Thebes that help was wanted. But here also the besieged caused some perplexity by raising signals of their own.

Meanwhile the escaping Plataeans had climbed the wall, crossed it, descended on the other side, and even crossed the outer ditch, though this they found covered with a thin coat of ice, unusually full of water. Reaching the other side, they drew themselves up in line, and kept in check with showers of arrows and javelins the only body of the enemy which found itself in a position to attack. This was a body of three hundred, which had been specially set apart for emergencies. It is probable that they had at first set off in a wrong direction; anyhow, when they came up they found the escape almost accomplished. There remained on the wall only those who had first mounted it, and had secured and held the towers, while their comrades were coming. The three hundred besiegers held torches in their hands, and so offered a fair mark to the Plataeans. Confused by the missiles sent among them, and not seeing their adversaries, they remained stationary, giving time for the rest of the Plataeans to join their comrades. Before they could recover themselves, the fugitives had disappeared in the darkness. They put their pursuers on a wrong scent by taking at first the road to Thebes; after pursuing this for something less than a mile, they turned off to the east, and taking a compass, made their way unharmed to Athens. One man was unlucky

enough to be captured, three or four lost heart and turned back, the whole number that escaped was two hundred and twelve. Those who turned back reported to their countrymen in the town that their comrades had perished in the attempt. These accordingly sent a herald to beg their bodies for burial; it was from the answer which he received that they learnt for the first time, not, we may be sure, without feelings of regret for their own want of decision, the success of the enterprise.

For some six or seven months more the town continued to hold out. Then, the stock of provisions being entirely exhausted, it capitulated. The besiegers could, of course, have easily taken it by storm—indeed the garrison even in its full strength could hardly have resisted an assault—but the Spartan government gave strict orders that this should not be done. Their motive was this, that when peace came to be concluded, as it probably would, on the condition that towns and territory taken by either side should be restored, Plataea would not come under this description. A town voluntarily surrendered would not be considered to have been "taken." The distinction seems to us exceedingly sophistical, in view of such surrender being compelled by pressure of famine, but it was recognized by public opinion at the time.

The Thebans had now the opportunity of exacting their long-deferred vengeance. The prisoners were arraigned before five Spartan judges, who sat to try their cause. What followed, however, cannot be described as a trial. The prisoners were simply asked—such seems to have been the course arranged between the Lacedaemonians and the Thebans—"Have you during the present war rendered any service to the Lacedaemonians or their allies?" Such a question really prejudged the case. The only answer that was possible implied a condemnation of the accused. The prisoners begged that they might be allowed to plead their cause; and this request was granted, in spite of the opposition of their implacable enemies from Thebes. Two speakers were appointed on behalf of the whole body, and a speech which probably represents the

substance of what they said has been preserved by Thucydides. They began by protesting against such a mockery of a trial, and appealed to the better feelings of their Spartan judges, as bound to try their cause on broader grounds. They told again the story of Theban oppression, and of their resort, suggested by the Spartans themselves, to the help and protection of Athens, of their patriotic conduct during the Persian War, so strongly contrasting with the treasonable compliance of Thebes, and of the unprovoked attack made on them by their neighbours, which had been the cause of all their troubles.

The speech made some impression, it would appear, on the judges, and the Thebans claimed the right to reply. They dwelt on the fact that Plataea had deserted the Boeotian confederacy to throw in her lot with a foreign city, defended their action in the matter of the attack, which had been suggested, they said, by some of the most patriotic citizens of Plataea, recalled the cruel breach of faith by which their countrymen had been put to death, and finally reminded the Spartans that Thebes was an important member of the Peloponnesian alliance, and was entitled to the gratitude of its chief.

The verdict was such as was expected, we may say, arranged. Each prisoner was separately asked the question put to the whole body. When he answered, as he could not but answer, in the negative, he was led off to execution. Two hundred Plataeans thus perished, and twenty-five Athenians shared their fate. The survivors were hospitably treated at Athens and granted certain rights of citizenship. About seven years afterwards the town of Scione on the coast of Macedonia was handed over to them.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FATAL EXPEDITION

PART I—THE FIRST CAMPAIGN

It would be for the historian, not for a writer who aims at nothing more than to present a few picturesque scenes from Greek story, to describe at length the causes which resulted in the disastrous expedition of the Athenians to Sicily. Athens had recovered from the disasters that had overtaken her in the early years of the Peloponnesian War, and was, to say the least, as strong as she had ever been. It was natural that she should look about for fresh fields for her superabundant activities, fresh occasions for aggrandizement. Ambition cloaked itself, as usual, under plausible pretexts. There were kinsmen of the Ionian stock, the inhabitants of Leontini, whom it was only right to protect from the oppression of their Dorian neighbours at Syracuse. There was the possible danger, which it was merely prudence to anticipate, of a great Dorian League, in which the wealthy and populous cities of Sicily would give a preponderating power to the enemies of Athens. These and other similar arguments were urged by the war party, and by none more emphatically than by Alcibiades. Nicias, the representative of the propertied and conservative classes, strongly advocated abstention from Sicilian affairs, and a general avoidance of all entanglements abroad. Outvoted in the Assembly, he conceived the idea of alarming the people by the magnitude of his demands, and estimated the necessary number of ships and men at a figure so high as would, he thought, terrify the supporters of the expedition. This hope was disappointed. His estimates were received with enthusiasm, and Nicias found himself committed to a scheme which engaged the whole available strength of the city. He and Alcibiades were made joint commanders, a third general,

Lamachus, who had a high reputation for courage, being associated with them.

It was about Midsummer in the year 415 B.C. when the great armament set out. There were one hundred ships of war, sixty of them being fitted for action, while forty were to be used as transports for troops. The number of citizen heavy-armed soldiers was two thousand two hundred, one thousand five hundred of these being taken from the select roll, and representing the very flower of Athenian manhood. The remaining seven hundred were of the poorer class, whose accoutrement was supplied by the State. These served, for the most part, as marines. The number was swelled to nearly five thousand by contingents from Mantinea and Argos, troops who seem to have been mercenaries rather than allies.

This was an imposing force, but the effect was increased by the splendour with which it had been equipped. The ships of war were furnished by private citizens of the wealthier class, who were specially taxed for this purpose. Commonly content, we may suppose, with satisfying legal requirements, they now vied with each other in the costliness of their preparations, hiring the most efficient rowers at their private expense, and covering the vessels themselves with the richest ornaments. The sight attracted, not only the whole population of the city, which flocked to the harbour in numbers which reminded aged spectators of the migration to Salamis sixty-five years before, but strangers from all parts of Greece.

The farewells ended—and in these there must have mingled, with all the pride and hope of the day, some whispers of misgiving—a trumpet was blown to give the signal for silence. A herald stood forth, and uttered a prayer for success. In this all the crews and the multitude on shore joined with one voice. Then all sang the Pæan together, and the Pæan ended, libations were poured out from goblets of gold and silver. These ceremonies completed, the fleet started, the swift galleys racing as far as Ægina.

The first point to be reached was Corcyra, where the meeting-place for the contingents from allied and subject states had been fixed. The strength of the armament was materially increased by these additions. There were now five thousand one hundred heavy-armed, one thousand five hundred and eighty light-armed troops (one hundred and twenty of these being exiles belonging to the democratic party of Megara, and seven hundred slingers from Rhodes). The cavalry could hardly have numbered more than twenty or thirty, for a single transport sufficed for them. The fleet was increased by thirty-seven ships. Five hundred vessels, laden with stores, implements of war, and artisans of various kinds, accompanied the expedition; these vessels were hired by the state; a number, not stated, chartered by private adventurers, still further increased the vast array.

From Corcyra the fleet crossed to the promontory, of Iapyx in Apulia, the most easterly point of Italy. The Greek cities on the coast, even Thurii, though owing its foundation in a great measure to Athens, showed no friendly temper. They not only shut their gates against the new-comers, but refused to allow them to purchase provisions. At some places the fleet was not allowed to water. Rhegium, an Ionian colony, allowed the accommodation of a market and a convenient place for an encampment, but was not hospitable enough to open its gates.

At Rhegium the Athenians made a stay of considerable length. They wanted to clean the bottoms of their ships—a ship could not move at full speed unless this was done—and they had also some important business to transact. Among the inducements that had been used to persuade the Assembly to vote the expedition was a promise of a large sum of money from the town of Egesta towards the pay of the fleet. The Egestæans, who were of an Italian stock, had quarrelled with their Greek neighbours of Selinus, had been worsted in the war which followed, and hoped to repair their losses by the help of Athens. It was now found that they had practised a gross deception. Jars, that had been described as full of coin, were

found to contain nothing but base metal or stones with a thin layer of precious metals at top. The rich gold and silver plate with which the Athenian envoys had been greatly impressed—for envoys had actually been sent to examine into the resources of the town—had been carried, it was discovered, from house to house. In fact, the thirty talents of silver which the Egestæan ambassadors had brought as an earnest of a much larger sum to follow, were found to be all that could be expected from this source.



ALCIBIADES.

FROM A BUST IN THE CHIARAMONTI MUSEUM IN THE VATICAN.

This appointment gave Nicias the opportunity for which he had been looking. "Sail to Egesta," he said to his colleagues, "demand their promised contribution; when they fail, as fail they must, to produce it, make as good terms as possible for

them with Selinus, and then return home without running any more risk, or spending any more money."

Alcibiades was opposed to this timorous policy, as he called it. His advice was to make alliance with the other Greek cities in Sicily—all of them jealous of Syracuse—and with the native inhabitants of the interior. Having secured all available help, they should then, he thought, proceed to attack Syracuse and Selinus.

Lamachus advocated a bolder course—to attack Syracuse at once, before their preparations for defence were complete. If his advice had been taken, the expedition might, it is quite possible, have had a different result. He was overruled, and finding that he could not have his own way, gave in his adhesion to the plan of Alcibiades.

The latter at once set about carrying his scheme into execution. He presented himself at Messana in the hope of bringing the city over. He was admitted within the walls and allowed to address the assembly, but could not persuade the people to follow his advice. From Messana he went to Naxos, escorted by an imposing fleet. Naxos gave in its adhesion. At Catana, the next place visited, he was refused admittance. The next thing was to make a formal demand on Syracuse to restore their town to the people of Leontini. This was done by a herald from the deck of a ship, one of a squadron of ten which entered the Great Harbour of Syracuse for the purpose, and at the same time to make observations on the sea-defences of the city.

From Syracuse the generals returned to Catana. Here a lucky accident gave them what had been before refused. While Alcibiades was addressing the assembly, some Athenian soldiers broke open a gate which happened to be insufficiently guarded, and made their way into the market-place. Their presence was a practical argument to which no answer was possible. The opposition were quite satisfied with making their escape from the town, and Catana became an ally of Athens.

A few days after, a fatal blow—for such it proved to be—was dealt to the undertaking. For causes which must be sought by the reader elsewhere, Alcibiades was recalled. Afraid to return to Athens, he fled to Sparta, and did his utmost to harm his country. It is possible, even probable, that he made a great mistake when he opposed the bold policy of Lamachus; but he made no mistakes when he ranged himself among the enemies of his country. His policy was supremely able and supremely mischievous.

Soon after his departure a small success was achieved in the capture of the little town of Hikkara, inhabited by one of the native tribes. The prisoners were sold or ransomed for one hundred and twenty talents. The money doubtless was useful, but it may have cost the captors dearly if this act alienated the native tribes.

Three months had now passed since the arrival of the armament in Sicily, and next to nothing had been done. The soldiers were growing weary and dispirited; the Syracusans, on the other hand, who had at first been terrified by the magnitude of the invading force, were daily gaining confidence, and were even beginning to despise the enemy. Are you going to stay here as peaceful settlers?" their troopers would ask, as they rode up to the Athenian lines, "or are you going to restore the Leontines?" Nicias, compelled to take some action by the dissatisfaction of his own men, conceived an ingenious plan, by which he could turn the careless temper of the Syracusans to his own advantage, and was lucky enough to find a man who was admirably qualified to help in carrying it out. This was a native of Catana, really an Athenian partisan, but one who concealed his views so carefully that he was liked and trusted by the other side. This man made his way into Syracuse, and gave to the authorities some information which seemed to make a successful *coup* of easy accomplishment. (It is curious to see how the grossest treachery is accepted as a matter of course in a political partisan. An aristocrat was always supposed to be ready to betray his country if he could damage

the Athenians thereby, a democrat to do the same, if he could serve them.) The man declared that many of the Athenian soldiers were in the habit of passing the night within the walls of Catana. It would be easy therefore to take them at a disadvantage by delivering a vigorous attack at day-break. The Syracusan party in Catana would assist by closing the gates, attacking the Athenians, and setting fire to the ships. The Syracusan generals eagerly caught at the chance, and making a levy en masse, marched to a spot about eight miles from Catana. Nicias put his whole available force on shipboard the very same day, and reaching the Great Harbour, which, it should be explained, lay to the south of Syracuse, at daybreak, landed his force without opposition. The spot chosen was the southern bank of the river Anapus. His left wing was protected by a steep hill crowned by a temple of Olympian Zeus and named the Olympieion, his right by the sea, his rear by the houses, walls, etc., of a little hamlet and by a fence which he hastily constructed; a bridge, which crossed the Anapus at a little distance from the sea, was broken down. His ships were guarded by a palisade. The Syracusans, discovering that they had been deceived, hurried back with all speed, and, wearied though they were by their long march, offered battle. This, Nicias declined for the time. The next morning, however, he left his camp and moved to meet the Syracusan army, which was now, it seems, on the south side of the Anapus. He disposed his troops in two lines, each eight deep, the second being held in reserve. The right wing was occupied by the mercenaries from Argos and Mantinea; the Athenians were in the centre; the other allies on the right. The Syracusan army was probably far more numerous, for it contained the whole of the able-bodied population, and had been reinforced by allies from Selinus, Gela, and Camarina. It was especially strong in its cavalry, which numbered twelve hundred. But it was ill-disciplined and unaccustomed to concerted movements. On this occasion the troops were fatigued, and many, availing themselves of the license taken by citizen soldiers, had gone to their own houses for rest and refreshment.

Nicias led on his troops to the attack at a brisk pace, a movement which had decided the issue of the day at Marathon, and was again to prove successful. The Syracusans though taken by surprise and unprepared—so vigorous an initiative on the part of the Athenians was wholly unexpected—made a stout resistance. It was not till a sudden storm of rain, accompanied by thunder and lightning, discouraged them—the unpractised Syracusans regarded it as an unfavourable portent, the veteran Athenians as a common incident of the season—that they began to give way. The Argives and Mantineans were the first to drive back the troops opposed to them, and the Athenians soon followed their example. The whole line now broke into a retreat. But the Athenians did not venture on a pursuit, which, indeed, was impossible in the face of the powerful cavalry force of the Syracusans. They contented themselves with encamping on the field of battle. The Syracusans were so little discomfited by their defeat that they posted a strong guard in the Olympieion, where there was a very rich treasury. Nicias, whether from caution or from a religious scruple—and he was scrupulous to a degree—did not attempt to plunder the shrine. The next day he gave back to the enemy their dead (numbering two hundred and fifty) and paid the last honours to his own, of whom there were fifty.

No further operations were attempted. The same day the Athenians returned to Catana. Afterwards they went to Naxos, where they had determined to spend the winter. A Sicilian winter would not, indeed, seem a bad season for campaigning to a soldier of the present day, very likely he would prefer it to the sultry summer. But the practice of suspending active operations during the cold season was too firmly established to be disturbed. And it must be remembered that a Greek army was so ill provided with many necessities of life that continuous campaigning was scarcely possible. Nicias utilized the time by sending home for a force of cavalry—without which it would be impossible, he said, to prosecute hostilities—and for a further supply of money. The Syracusans, on the other hand, built a new wall, which would materially

increase the difficulties of the invading force when it should attempt to invest the city. Beginning at the Great Harbour on the south, it reached northward to the sea north of the town. Their including the whole of the city, made it necessary for a besieger to make his circumvallating wall of much larger dimensions. The deserted town of Megara to the north of the city was also fortified, as was the Olympieion, already mentioned, on the south. All spots in the Great Harbour and elsewhere where landing was easy were protected by stakes. It is clear that on the whole the position of affairs, nine months after the opening of the campaign, had become less favourable to the invading force.

But the most powerful factor in the situation has yet to be mentioned. Neither the inaction of the Athenian generals, nor the energy of the Syracusans, contributed so much to bring about the final result as did the influence of Alcibiades. He had taken refuge in Sparta, and he was now doing his utmost to counteract the efforts of his country. He was in the secret of her plans; he was aware of her weaknesses; he had the means of detecting the intrigues which her partisans in various cities, Sicilian and others, were contriving. All this knowledge he used with the utmost cleverness, and without a vestige of scruple.

PART II—THE SECOND CAMPAIGN (414)

Very early in the spring the Athenian forces were in motion. Their operations were of little importance, but they kept the troops in activity and so far were useful. In March two hundred and fifty cavalry arrived from Athens—they were to be horsed in Sicily—and thirty mounted archers. Three hundred and more troops of the same arm were raised among the Sicilian allies. Nicias consequently could now muster more than six hundred cavalry, and he lost no more time in setting seriously about the work of investing Syracuse.

The Syracusans had done something during the winter to increase the difficulty of his work; they now took another step in the same direction. North-west of the city was a tract of high ground, called Epipolæ (the word may be translated by the English "Overton"). This they attempted to occupy. But it was too late. The Athenians had cast their eyes on the spot, and they were beforehand with their antagonists. They had actually reached the coveted ground, approaching it from the north, when a chosen force of six hundred Syracusans came hurrying up from the meadows of the Anapus, where the city forces were being reviewed. The new-comers were in disorder and out of breath—they had just accomplished a march of three miles at the double—and were easily routed with the loss of their leader and half their number. The Athenians built a fort at Labdalon, the highest point of the cliffs of Epipolæ on the north. This they followed up by building another redoubt, at the top of the slope which descended towards the city. This was to serve as a store for munitions of war and for a meeting point for the two lines of circumvallation, one of which was to touch the Great Harbour, the other the Outer Sea. This done they set about building the walls themselves, and carried on this work with a speed which struck terror into the Syracusans. An attempt of the latter to check the work by a general attack had to be abandoned. The infantry refused to meet the Athenians heavy-armed, and had to be led back into the city. The cavalry was, for a time, more successful, and interfered seriously with the work. But they, too, were worsted in an encounter with a detachment of Athenian infantry, supported by the whole of the mounted force.

The next effort of the besieged was to build a counter-wall, which would cut off the Athenian line at a point between the second redoubt and the Great Harbour. This also failed. The Athenians took the opportunity of a time—the hour of the mid-day meal—when the new erection was indifferently guarded. (The citizen soldiers, it will be observed, were again found wanting in vigilance and energy.) A detachment was told off to attack it, while the main body of the army supported the

movement by threatening the city. The manœuvre was completely successful. The assailants got possession of the work and entirely destroyed it, carrying off the materials for their own lines.

The same attempt was repeated still further south, in the low ground that bordered the Great Harbour. But an accident turned what was in other respects a considerable victory, into a deplorable disaster. The battle had been won, but in the ardour of pursuit some Athenian troops got into trouble. Lamachus came to their assistance, at the head of a body of archers and of the Argive infantry. With characteristic courage he pressed on in advance of his men, was cut off from the main body and slain. His death left Nicias in sole command.

While this was going on, some of the Syracusan fugitives had rallied and made an attack on the Athenian lines, near the second redoubt. By a happy chance Nicias, who was suffering from illness, was there in person. Some mischief was done; but the assault was checked by the general's presence of mind. He ordered a huge quantity of timber, which had been collected on the spot, to be fired. The enemy could not approach for a time, and before another attack could be delivered, strong reinforcements came up. The same day the Athenian fleet entered the Great Harbour, and the Syracusans retired within their city walls. They made no more attempts to interfere with the circumvallation; their utmost hope was to hold out in the City.

The prospects of the Athenians, on the other hand, were bright in the extreme. They had shown again and again a decisive superiority in the field. On the sea there had not been even an attempt at resistance. Their lines were within a measurable distance of completion. That done, the capture of Syracuse was only a matter of time. These prospects of success brought them new friends and allies. The native tribes were now almost united in their support of him. The Greek cities of Italy, with one or two exceptions, among which Tarentum, a Spartan colony, was conspicuous, furnished his army with an

abundance of supplies. Three vessels of war from some town on the coast of Etruria, offered their services. This time, which may be fixed as June, 414, was the culminating point of the Athenian fortunes. After this everything began to change for the worse.

Alcibiades had urged at Sparta the necessity of appointing a Spartan officer to command the Syracusan forces, and Gylippus had been named to the post. This officer had been busy since the winter, in getting together a force for the relief of Syracuse, but had met with but little success. Corinth, the enemy of Athens in politics and her rival in trade, was most energetic in supporting him, and even Corinth did very little. He was still waiting when news of the Athenian victory, in which Lamachus had fallen, reached Mainland Greece. The news was exaggerated. Syracuse, so the report ran, was now completely invested, and could not be saved. Gylippus, however, resolved to start. Though Syracuse might be lost, it was still possible to save the Dorian Greeks of Italy, who would be the next object of Athenian ambition. He set sail with four ships, two furnished by Sparta, two from Corinth. A squadron of fifteen more was to follow as speedily as possible. He reached Tarentum in safety, attempted in vain to bring over Thurii to his cause, and after visiting some other Greek cities on the coast, was driven back to Tarentum by bad weather.

Nicias had, of course, been informed by Athenian partisans in Thurii of the arrival of Gylippus, but took no steps in consequence, looking upon him as an insignificant adventurer. But when he heard of the Spartan's presence at Locri, a town much nearer to Sicily, he thought it time to act, and sent out a squadron of four ships to intercept the new-comer. It was too late. Gylippus had already landed in the island. In a few days he was at the head of a considerable force. He took seven hundred men from his ships. Himera, the town where he landed, furnished him with some troops. Other Sicilians, attracted by his reputation as a Spartan and by his character as an adventurous leader, joined his standard. He had

altogether about three thousand men. The investing lines had not yet reached completion, though they were within a short distance of it. But even without them Gylippus might have been easily prevented from making his way into the city. He had to cross Epipolæ, and the approach to this high ground could be conveniently made by one road only, which the besiegers could easily have secured. With incredible supineness, Nicias allowed this formidable adversary to collect his army, to march nearly across the island, and to make his way into the city without any attempt to hinder him. The blockading ships were equally remiss. They failed to intercept either the single ship which brought the Corinthian admiral Gongylus, or the squadron of twelve ships which soon afterwards followed.

Gylippus was met by a Syracusan force as he approached the city over Epipolæ. Without entering the city, he turned and offered battle to Nicias. It is true that with a soldier's eye he noted the irregularity of the citizen soldiers, and retired to a more protected situation, but Nicias did not venture to follow him, and the result of the day was to make a most important change in the situation of the combatants. The Spartan general had expressed this fact with emphasis on the day when, immediately on his arrival, he had sent a herald to Nicias with the offer of a five days' truce, if he would evacuate the island within that time.

Another effort, successful this time, was made to build a cross wall, cutting off the lines of investment. At first, indeed, Gylippus, who had chosen his ground badly, where he could not use either cavalry or his light troops, was defeated. In a second encounter he gained a decided victory. The Athenians were driven within their lines; the cross wall was completed. From that moment the capture of Syracuse by land was impossible.

With this the operations of the second campaign were practically concluded. The Athenian army held its ground without difficulty; for it was still strong, and it was well posted,

but it could not assume the offensive. The fleet was sadly depreciated in quality. Many of the rowers, most of whom were slaves, had deserted; the crews generally were weakened by desertion. And there had been, of course, the wear and tear of a year and a half's campaigning. Nicias told the truth to his countrymen in a letter of which Thucydides has preserved what is probably a verbatim copy. I shall now give a summary of it.

"What has happened in the past, men of Athens, I have described in many letters; but now I would have you know how things stand with us. After we had defeated the Syracusans in many battles, and had built the walls within which we now lie, Gylippus the Spartan came against us, bringing an army which he had gathered in the Peloponnesus and in certain cities of Sicily. In the first battle he was beaten by us, in the second we were driven from the field by help of his cavalry and dart-throwers. And now we have ceased to work at our lines of investment, for the enemy are superior in numbers; many also of our men are taken up in guarding our walls; also the enemy have carried a wall past us, and unless we can take this by a superior force, we shall not be able to invest the city. Rather, we who thought to besiege are ourselves besieged.

"Even now they are gathering together a yet larger army, wherewith to storm our walls, while they also attack us by sea. Let no one think it strange that I say 'by sea.' At first, indeed, our fleet was in excellent condition; the ships were sound, and the crews complete; now, because they have been long at sea, the ships are leaky and the crews are decayed. The ships we have not been able to draw up on the shore and careen, for the fleet of the enemy practises daily in our sight and can attack us at their pleasure. As for our crews, many of the seamen, while fetching wood, or foraging, or watering at a distance, have been cut off by the horsemen; our slaves have deserted, our enemies being as well off as ourselves; the foreigners whom we have pressed into our service have gone back to their cities, while they who joined us, persuaded by the high pay and thinking that they should grow rich rather than

fight, now that they see our adversaries to be as strong as ourselves, either go over to the enemy, or leave us in some other way. Some have bribed the captains to take slaves from Hykkara in their places. You know that a crew is at its best but for a short time, and that there are but few who will get a ship under weigh, or row in time. I cannot stop these misdoings, nor can I find recruits. Our allies are of no avail. And if the Syracusans gain one thing more, and prevail upon the Italus cities, which have provisioned us, to send us food no longer, verily they will conquer us without so much as fighting, for we shall be starved out.

"I might have written to you more agreeable things, but not more useful, as you ought to know the true state of affairs before you deliberate upon them. Your temper is always to demand statements that please at the time, and afterwards to be angry if the result is other than what you wish. Therefore I have judged it best to tell the truth.

"For the purpose for which you sent us hither neither the army nor the generals were inadequate. But the circumstances are changed. All Sicily is banded against us, and an army is coming from the Peloponnesus. You must either recall your troops, or send another armament as large to reinforce them, both men and ships. And send someone to be general in my place, for I am suffering from a grievous disease, which forbids my remaining at my post. This consideration I may claim at your hands, for while I had health and strength I expended them in your service. And whatever you do, do it without delay in the very beginning of spring."

Thucydides does not tell of the temper with which this letter was received at Athens. That it caused a bitter disappointment we cannot doubt; but the people did not go back from their resolution. When they had staked so much they would stake still more. The request of Nicias, that he should be relieved of his command, was refused, but colleagues were appointed to share this responsibility. Two of these were officers on the spot, two were at Athens. One of the latter

sailed at mid-winter, with ten ships and a considerable sum of money. He was to reassure his countrymen with the promise that liberal help would be sent.

PART III—THE THIRD CAMPAIGN

Both sides were busy during the winter, preparing for the final struggle. Early in the spring operations were commenced by the Syracusans, who were now confident enough to assume the offensive. At the suggestion of Gylippus, who was strongly backed by some influential Syracusans, an attack by sea was resolved upon. The Athenians, it was thought, would be dismayed by being thus challenged on what they considered to be their own element. Eighty ships, accordingly, were manned, thirty-five of them sailing from the Great Harbour, and forty-five from the other. The Athenians hastily manned sixty to meet them, dividing them in similar proportions. The hostile fleet met at the mouth of the Great Harbour. At first the Syracusans more than held their own in the fierce struggle that ensued, actually forcing their way through the Athenian line. After this their want of practice in naval tactics told fatally against them. They lost all order, and even got entangled with each other.

In the end the Athenians sank eleven ships, capturing the crews of three and killing most of the others. Three of their own ships were sunk.

But this success was more than counterbalanced by a disaster on land. Nicias had erected three forts on Plemmyrium, the southern headland of the Great Harbour. It was against these, more than against the fleet, that Gylippus directed the blow that he meant to strike that day. He had marched out with the whole available force of the city the night before, taking the route over Epipolæ and making a wide compass which brought him out in the rear of the Plemmyrium forts. The Athenian generals, who must have been very badly served by their intelligence department, had no notion of what was going on.

The garrison of the forts were equally off their guard. Many of them actually left their posts to watch the fight that was going in the Great Harbour. The largest fort was carried after a short struggle, the other two were evacuated by their garrisons when the first fell. Nothing contributed more, says Thucydides, to the disastrous end of the Sicilian expedition than the capture of these forts. Apart from the number of the killed and prisoners, and this was considerable, there was the loss of a large quantity of stores, among them the masts and other equipments of forty ships of war. Thenceforward, also, the provisioning of the army became more and more difficult. The Syracusans did not, indeed, hold the command of the sea, but they disputed it. Nothing could be brought into the Great Harbour—and it was by this way that all the provisions came—without a battle, and a battle now was far less likely to end in an Athenian victory than it had been in the first or even the second campaign.

This fact was, we may be sure, not unobserved by the Sicilian cities, and it decided the action of some that had hitherto stood aloof from the contest. A force of between two and three thousand men was raised, and set out for Syracuse. Nicias, however, was less sanguine than he had been when Gylippus was doing the same thing in the previous campaign. He induced his native allies to lay an ambush. The allied troops fell into it and suffered the loss of about two fifths of their number.

This was a gleam of light in the Athenian prospects. Another, was the approach of Demosthenes with his reinforcements. Gylippus determined to strike a blow before the new forces arrived. An experienced Corinthian seaman had suggested an alteration in the structure of the ships of war, which would give them a greater ramming power. The beak was to be made shorter and stronger and to be put lower in the water. This alteration would not have served any useful purpose but for the circumstances under which the fighting would be carried on. The Athenian captain relied on the skill with which they manœuvred their ships. They never met an

antagonist beak to beak, but rammed it somewhere on the side. This, however, could not be done except where there was room to move freely, and such room the Athenians could not command. They were reduced, in short, to a trial of sheer strength, and in strength this change of structure put them at a disadvantage. Now were they able to meet the danger by a corresponding change in their own ships. They had neither sufficient materials nor the opportunity of making use of what they had.

Thus prepared, the fleet sailed out of the docks, while at the same time the land forces threatened the Athenian lines. On the first day little was done, though whatever advantage there was rested with the Syracusans. It would have been prudent if the Athenians had declined any further engagement, at least till the expected reinforcements had arrived, and this, indeed, was the counsel of Nicias. He was overruled by his colleagues, and when, after an interval of a day, the Syracusan fleet reappeared, the Athenian fleet moved out to meet them. During the morning little was done, and as the enemy withdrew at noon, the Athenians supposed that the fighting for the day was over, and separated to take their meal as usual, on shore. While they were so engaged, the enemy's fleet reappeared, and they hastily manned their own ships. More indecisive skirmishing followed, till the Athenian captains were provoked into assuming the offensive. This was what their antagonists had been expecting. The heavier metal and superior ramming powers of the Syracusan ships were brought into play, and the Athenian fleet suffered severely. Nicias, who, supine as he certainly was, was nevertheless a man of resources, had anchored a number of merchant-men in front of the station of his ships of war, and had furnished them with an apparatus, for letting down a heavy weight on any enemy that might attempt to pass between them. The Athenian ships were thus protected in their retreat. Two of the victorious fleet that attempted to follow them were sunk. Seven ships, however, were sunk and many more disabled.

The besieged were now preparing for a general attack, which would complete, it was hoped, the destruction of the invaders, when once again the destruction was changed. Demosthenes entered the Great Harbour with a force little, if at all, inferior to that which had appeared before Syracuse, at the beginning of the first campaign. He had seventy-three ships of war, five thousand heavy-armed, and a multitude of light troops. The Syracusans were struck with astonishment and dismay. It seemed as if they would have to do all their work again.

Demosthenes, on the other hand, was but ill pleased with what he found—an army sadly reduced in number, suffering in health, and dispirited. He saw that immediate action was absolutely necessary. Before his own strength was impaired, and before the enemy had recovered from the depression caused by his arrival, a general attack must be made. If this was successful, Syracuse might even yet be taken; if it failed, there was nothing left but to return home, before further losses had been incurred.

His first thought was to take the Syracusan works by storm. He made an effort and failed. The defence was too vigorous. The alternative was to turn them, and this he proceeded to attempt. He chose a moon-light night, for it was necessary that the movement should be a surprise, and arrived, without exciting the attentions of the enemy, at the highest point of Epipolæ. The fort that protected the extremity of the cross wall built by the Syracusans, fell into his hands, a Syracusan regiment that hastened up to the rescue was driven back; even the main body, when it hurried out under the personal command of Gylippus, was compelled to retreat. The conquerors began to pull down the cross wall, an operation of extreme importance. If they had contented themselves with this, all might have been well. But the excitement of the success carried both the generals and their troops away. They pursued the flying Syracusans in such haste as to fall into disorder. In this state they encountered a solid force of Bœotian

infantry, which had taken no part in the battle. The Bœotian troops were of the very best quality. In all the course of Greek history they were but once only ably led, but they showed several times of what quality they were. And now they turned the fortunes of the day. The victorious Athenians were, in their turn, beaten. The usual consequences of an unsuccessful night-attack followed. Friends and foes could not be distinguished. The watchwords became known, and ceased to be of any use. The Dorian allies of the Athenians, many of them new-comers and personally unknown to their fellow-soldiers, were, in particular, mistaken for foes. Their war-cry or pæan was the same as the Syracusans, and so became a special cause of confusion, striking terror into the Athenians, who fancied, when they heard it, that they had enemies in their midst and in their rear. There was soon a general flight. The narrow road that led from Epipolæ to the Athenian camp was so crowded with fugitives as to become impassable. Many of the terror-stricken soldiers tried to climb down the cliffs, and perished in the attempt. Others who contrived to get safely to the bottom, lost their way, especially the new-comers, and were cut down by the cavalry. The loss of the army was between two and three thousand men.

Demosthenes now urged immediate departure. It was clearly impossible, he said, to capture Syracuse. The best thing that could be done was to save as much of the armament as possible. All were greatly wanted at home, where Attica had been again invaded and ravaged by a Peloponnesian force. Retreat, too, for the present was possible. The new ships, brought by Demosthenes, had restored their naval superiority. Nicias vehemently opposed the proposition. Whatever his arguments were, his real motive is plain. He was simply afraid to return to Athens, when he had such an utter failure to confess. Two of his colleagues (the two associated with him in the command before the arrival of the reinforcements) voted with him, and Demosthenes had to yield.

Failing absolute retreat, Demosthenes urged departure from the position occupied in the Great Harbour to Catana or Thapsus. Nicias again opposed, and was again supported in his decision by a majority of votes. The Athenians remained where they were, doing nothing, but gradually losing both strength and hope.

About a month later, Gylippus, who had been absent, recruiting new troops and finding more allies, returned with a considerable force. The sight seems to have convinced even Nicias that retreat was now the only possible course, or, anyhow, overcame his opposition. Orders were privately circulated through the camp, that the armament was to depart when a certain signal should be given. Everything was prepared, the ships were loaded, the men were ready to depart, when an unexpected cause led to a fresh delay. On the night proceeding the appointed day, the moon was eclipsed. It has been said that the superstitious temper of Nicias is responsible for this fatal postponement, for fatal it certainly was. This is not fair. Nicias did but express the general feeling of the army, which actually demanded the delay. The prophets declared that the departure must be postponed for a whole lunar month.

The intentions, so strangely baffled, did not escape, we may be sure, the knowledge of the Syracusans. They took it for what it actually was, a confession of defeat, and were made proportionately confident. A few days afterwards Gylippus made a combined demonstration with his fleet and army. The fleet, though inferior in number—seventy-six against eighty-six—won a complete victory. The centre division was broken through, and the left driven ashore in the Bay of Daskon, a recess in the Great Harbour. The commander, one of the board of five generals, was slain.

Something like absolute destruction of the armament was averted, or rather postponed, only by an incautious movement on the part of Gylippus. He hurried down with some companies, to prevent the escape of the crews from the stranded ships. But his march was so disorderly that some

Etrusean auxiliaries who were guarding the extreme right of the Athenian position fell upon his men as they passed, and drove them with some loss into the marshes that skirted the left bank of the Anapus. Other Syracusan troops came to their help, and the Etruseans were also reinforced from the Athenian lines. The victory rested at last with the latter. They did not inflict much loss on the enemy, but they saved the ships and the crews.

The Syracusans would not have been content with anything short of the absolute annihilation of the Athenian force. To bring about this result, they proceeded to close the mouth of the Great Harbour, a space of about a mile, the inner city of Syracuse being one end of the line, the promontory of Plemmyrium the other. All kinds of vessels, ships of war, merchantmen, and fishing boats, were strongly bound together by iron chains, while they were kept in their place by anchors. The work was accomplished without any attempt at interruption, as far as we know, on the part of the Athenians.

The generals had now to choose between two possible chances of escape. Should they endeavour to break through the line of ships, or should they try an overland march, in the hope of reaching the country of the friendly tribes of the interior? Not a few were in favour of the second course. The army had held its own better than the fleet, and a start at least might be made without opposition. On the other hand, if they could only regain the mastery of the sea, their escape was practically assured; the fleet had only to make for home, carrying all the survivors of the expedition with it. An army, almost without provisions, and encumbered by a multitude of non-combatants, would be almost as helpless after its escape, as before it. The generals accordingly resolved to try what the ships could do. They abandoned the greater part of the investing lines, so as to reduce, as far as possible, the force needed for guarding them, and put every available man on shipboard to serve, either as rower or combatant, while they did the best that their stores permitted to increase the efficiency of their ships. One hundred

and ten, in the end, were manned and equipped. Before the crews embarked, Nicias addressed them. He explained the arrangements which had been made, the unusual number of combatants which had been crowded on to the decks, and the grappling irons which were to be freely used as soon as they came to close quarters with the enemy. No appeals were made to the old Athenian reputation for seamanship. The battle to be fought was to be a land-battle on the water. The hope of victory depended upon the resolution of the boarding parties, to make good their footing on the decks of the enemies' ships. To the allies in the first, privileged, as he said, to share the glories of Athens, to the Athenians in the second, heirs as they were of a great empire, now seriously imperilled, Nicias addressed an urgent appeal. Victory would retrieve everything; defeat meant destruction, both for themselves and their country.

The address concluded, the crews embarked. But Nicias had yet something to say to the captains. He addressed them one by one, and urged them by every argument, personal or general, that he could think of, to do their duty.

The Syracusan fleet numbered seventy-six only, but it was well equipped, well manned, and confident. And the whole of it, it must be remembered, was free to assume the offensive. The Athenians had to break the blockading line; their antagonists could assail them as and where they pleased, while they were making the attempt. For a short time the effort to break through seemed as if it might succeed. It would, doubtless, have succeeded, had there been nothing else to do. But the Athenians had to defend themselves from attack from behind, and before long the struggle was transferred from the blockading line, to the area of the Great Harbour. The whole of this was the scene of a fierce conflict, fiercer than had ever been fought before in this war, and more crowded—nearly two hundred ships, in a space measuring only two miles by one. Of manœuvring, there was but little; even the ram was scarcely used. The battle was a long succession of chance encounters, fought as the generals had foreseen, like a battle on land. As

the hostile ships were nearing each other the javelin-men and stingers did their part; when they closed, the heavy-armed attempted to board. Evidently it was a soldiers' battle; the din and confusion made it impossible even to hear the orders that were given. Victory could but rest with the most vigorous, the freshest, the most confident side.

The spectators on shore watched the struggle with an intensity of interest never surpassed. Had it been but a mimic spectacle, it would have been a profoundly exciting sight. But those who watched knew that their own life and liberty were at stake, and showed it by their cries, running down all the scale from triumph to despair—for the fortune of the day changed from hour to hour, and varied in this place and in that—by their very gestures, involuntary expressions of quickly succeeding moods. The conflict was obstinate and long, for the vanquished did not yield till they could fight no more, but it ended in the absolute defeat of the Athenians. Fifty of their ships were disabled, of their adversaries more than half as many.

This nominal superiority suggested to Demosthenes, the most vigorous and sanguine of the Athenian commanders, that another attempt should be made the next day to break through the line of blockade. The seamen, however, had lost all heart, and flatly refused to go. The alternative was to retreat by land, and this, by common consent, it was resolved to do. It is possible that, if this movement had been executed at once, some advantage might have been gained. The army was still a formidable force, and if it could have escaped from its present position and have reached a place where defence was possible and supplies—for the commissariat was the chief difficulty—attainable, it could have obtained favourable terms. The Syracusan generals foresaw, this possibility, and were anxious at once to copy positions which would cut off retreat. But the soldiers could not be induced to move. The pressure of anxiety was now finally removed, and the people could think of nothing but enjoying themselves. A great festival happened to coincide with the day of victory, and the whole population had

abandoned itself to revelry. The generals had, therefore, recourse to the following device: Nicias, as they well knew, had friends within the city who informed him of what was going on. A message, purporting to come from them, was sent to the Athenian camp. It was to the effect that the army had better not attempt a retreat that night, for the roads were guarded. It would be better to postpone it for a day, when the watchfulness of the Syracusan force would be relaxed, while they would themselves be better prepared for the operation. It does not appear that anything, even a forged letter, was used to gain credence for this advice. Some horseman rode up to the Athenian line and shouted out the information, and Nicias, by what seems to us extraordinary simplicity or infatuation, believed it. The start was postponed, and that for two days.

When it took place, the scene, as the historian describes it, was most deplorable. That the dead were left unburied, was shocking to the conscience of a Greek; but it was a still more piteous thing that the sick and wounded had to be abandoned. These poor deserted creatures protested and prayed; they clung to departing friends or comrades or kinsfolk; some followed the army till their strength failed them. Nothing could be done to help them; the able-bodied had but the faintest hope of escaping, for it was a cumbrous body, ill suited for rapid movement, like a whole city in flight, as the historian puts it. It numbered no less than forty thousand, marching in the form of a hollow square, with the non-combatants and the baggage in the middle.

The first obstacle encountered was the river Anapus. Here they found the ford occupied by a hostile force. This, however, was driven back without much loss, and the river was crossed. Five miles only were accomplished on the first day. On the second no progress at all was made. The Athenians, indeed, advanced a little over two miles in the morning, but they had to halt to secure some provisions, and the enemy availed themselves of this delay to occupy a narrow pass in the road which, as it had become evident, they intended to take.

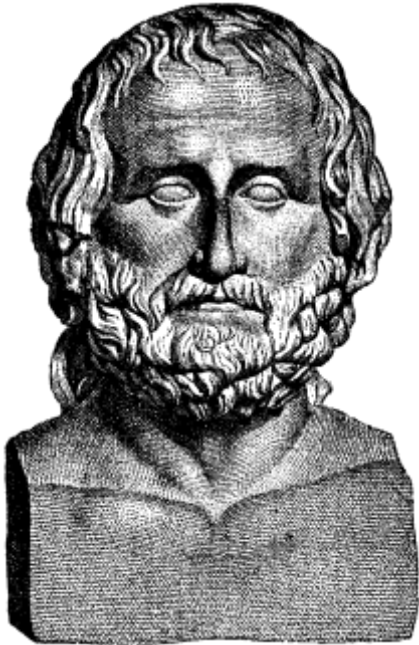
But the fugitives could not even reach this place. The attacks of the cavalry and the skirmishers were so harassing, that they returned to the camp which they had occupied the night before. The next day, the same hopeless struggle was repeated and with almost the same result. They did not, indeed, return to the camp, but the spot at which they bivouacked was but a mile in advance of it.

The generals now resolved on a change of route. Instead of forcing their way over the high ground which lay between them and the interior, they determined to turn to the southern coast. They might thus strike one or other of two river valleys, by which they might reach the interior—still, as being inhabited by friendly native tribes, the point at which they aimed.

Numerous fires being left burning to deceive the enemy, a start was made during the night. By day-break the front division, which Nicias commanded, had reached the nearer of the two river valleys. By the end of the day he had made some progress, encamping on some high ground on the further side of the second river.

The division under Demosthenes, comprising as it did the larger and less effective part of the army, was later in starting and even slower in movement, so great were the confusion and panic in its ranks. Soon overtaken by the Syracusans, it was compelled to turn and defend itself. Defence, however, in any real sense of the word, was impossible. The enemy would not come to close quarters, but overwhelmed the unhappy objects of their attack with showers of missiles. Again the division attempted to move onward. They found themselves in a large enclosure, the olive-yard of Polyzelus as it was called. Egress from this, at the further end, was blocked, while the walls were covered with slingers and javelin-men, who showered missiles on the helpless mass. Gylippus, who was in command of the pursuing force, sent a herald, promising liberty to all islanders (natives, i.e. of the islands included in the Delian confederation) who chose to

leave the Athenians. Few only responded to this appeal. He then offered their lives to all who would give up their arms. These terms were accepted. Prisoners, to the number of six thousand in all, were disarmed, and taken to Syracuse. Demosthenes was on the point of killing himself, when he was disarmed.



EURIPIDES.
FROM A BUST IN THE MUSEUM AT NAPLES.

Gylippus now followed in pursuit of the division led by Nicias, and overtook it about twelve miles from the point from which it had started. He sent a horseman to inform its commander of the surrender of Demosthenes with his division, and to summon him to follow his example. Nicias, alleging that he could not believe the news, asked leave to send a messenger, who might have it confirmed by the mouth of his colleague. The man went and returned, with the result that Nicias proposed terms of capitulation. Athens should reimburse the Syracusans for all the expenses of the war, and a certain

number of Athenian citizens should remain as hostage for payment, one man for each talent. Gylippus refused these terms. Early the next morning Nicias recommenced his march. The point at which he now aimed was the ford of the river Asinarus, some five miles further on. The ford, when he reached it, was found to be held in force by the Syracusan cavalry. Here all the discipline of the Athenians broke down. Maddened with thirst, for want of water was now added to their sufferings, they rushed into the river and were slaughtered in crowds, while they attempted to quench their thirst. Even when the water grew turbid and tainted with blood, the new-comers still crowded in and drank. Nicias could do nothing now but surrender. He gave himself up to Gylippus. He had been, during all his public life, a partisan of Sparta, and he hoped that he should receive from a Spartan general kinder treatment than the Syracusan authorities would be likely to accede to him. It was some time before the slaughter could be stopped. When it was, the survivors, about four thousand in number, were disarmed. The Athenian army had ceased to exist; even a company of three hundred which had got away in the night, was overtaken by the cavalry and compelled to surrender.

It is difficult to estimate the loss which Athens suffered by this disastrous expedition. It was such as, in the judgment of the historian, no Greek city had ever suffered before. Though no complete division of the army made good its retreat, some stragglers escaped to Catana, where they found a friendly welcome, which they were able to return by defending that city against its powerful neighbour, Syracuse. Many of the prisoners captured with Nicias, and some of those who had belonged to the division of Demosthenes, were secreted and sold for the private profit of their captors. Some of these contrived to get away; others were ransomed by their friends. The lot of those who fell into the hands of the Syracusan authorities was more unhappy. They were confined in stone quarries, of which there were several both within and without the walls of the city. Crowded together in these places, exposed to the sun by day and the cold by night—it was now autumn—

with the scanty provision of about half a pint of water and a pound of bread, they endured frightful sufferings. They died in numbers, and the dead bodies were left to rot among the surviving. It was only when the place became an intolerable nuisance, and a serious danger to health, that the survivors were removed.

Gylippus made an effort to save the captive generals. Demosthenes had inflicted on Sparta the most serious loss that it had suffered, the loss of the prisoners of Sphakteria; Nicias, as has been said, had always been Sparta's friend. Both; accordingly, though for different reasons, would have been a welcome sight in the streets of Sparta, if Gylippus had been permitted to take them thither. But he was overruled. The Syracusan Assembly passed a desire that both should be put to death. All that Gylippus could do, was to save them from the ignominy of a public execution, by enabling them to put an end to their own lives.

In this dismal story there is one redeeming feature. "Some," says Plutarch, telling the story of the Sicilian expedition in his *Life of Nicias*, "owed their safety to the poems of Euripides, whose poems were more popular among the Syracusans than among any other Greeks. Any passages from these they gladly learnt and repeated to each other. And some of the survivors of the expedition, returning to Athens, thanked Euripides for the service which his verses had done them, in earning for them the kindness of their masters."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST STRUGGLE

Whatever we may think of the character of the Athenian democracy, however great the faults we may lay to its charge—fickleness, arrogance, cruelty to its dependents—there can be no doubt as to the magnificent courage and resolution, with which it struggled on under the pressure of ruinous losses, and against overwhelming odds. The disastrous end of the expedition against Syracuse had been a heavier blow to Athens than it is easy for us to conceive. We have seen that more than two thousand citizen soldiers went with the first armament, and that the number was afterwards increased. It is probable that more than half of these never returned. Comparing these numbers with the total population of the city, which probably did not include more than twenty thousand citizens of all ages, it is not too much to say that modern history records no such disaster proportionately so great. It means the loss of two fifths of the able-bodied males. France suffered heavily during the Franco-Prussian war, but to suffer as heavily as Athens in the year 416-415 she would have had to lose absolutely two million soldiers. And yet for ten years more the gallant democracy of Athens struggled on. In 406 it seemed as if the end had come. The Peloponnesian fleet, under the command of the ablest, and we may add the noblest, man that Sparta ever produced, Brasidas, perhaps, only excepted, Callicratidas, had blockaded the last Athenian fleet in the harbour of Mitylene. Conon, its commander, had, indeed, had a narrow escape of losing his fleet altogether. It was only by the superior speed, obtained by reducing the number of his ships and transferring the best rowers into the remainder, that he had been able to get to Mitylene at all. Even then his pursuers had entered the harbour along with him, and he had been compelled to fight. Thirty out of his seventy ships had been sunk, and the

remaining forty saved only by hauling them up on shore, close to the wall. These forty ships, unable to put to sea, were, for the time, all that remained of the fleet, with which five-and-twenty years before Athens had ruled the seas.

Conon, though safe for the moment, was in the greatest straits. Mitylene was crowded with fugitives from the island, and had not been provisioned for a siege. The only hope was in speedy relief from Athens, and the first question was, how to convey the tidings. Two of the swiftest ships, manned by the best rowers in the fleet, were exercised for four days; at noon on the fifth, when the blockading force was in its least watchful temper, they made a rush from the harbour. Separating as soon as they were outside, one made for the Hellespont, the head of the other was pointed for Athens. Some of the Peloponnesian squadron started in hot pursuit, their most vigorous efforts being directed to the ship that was making for Athens. This was overhauled at sunset; the other escaped, and when well out of sight, changed its course, and carried the news to Athens.

Meanwhile another disaster had happened. A small squadron, which had been detached from the main force, attempted, with what seems to have been somewhat foolhardy courage, to relieve their blockaded comrades. The Spartan admiral fell upon them unexpectedly, as they lay at anchor, and captured ten out of the twelve ships.

At Athens, after the first feeling of consternation had passed away, the people rose to the situation. Every ship, old or new, if only it could float, was hastily made ready for service, and a levy *en masse* of the whole able-bodied population of the city was made. No class was allowed, or sought, exemption. The wealthy knights, who were not called upon to serve in any expedition in which cavalry could not be employed, hung up their bridles in the temples, as they had done before the great day of Salamis, and embarked as marines. Slaves, as well as freemen, were enlisted, and were encouraged to be faithful and brave by the promise of freedom when the danger was passed. The result of this energetic action was that one hundred and ten

ships were equipped and manned in the space of thirty days. From the Piræus the fleet sailed to Samos, where it was joined by a squadron of ten ships. Thirty more came from the other allies, swelling the total number to one hundred and fifty. Callicratidas had a total force of one hundred and seventy. Fifty of these he left to continue the blockade of Mitylene; with the rest he sailed to meet the relieving fleet. He purposed making a night attack, which would probably have greatly endangered the hasty levies opposed to him, but was prevented by a heavy downpour of rain and a thunderstorm, from putting to sea. The weather cleared at daybreak, and he sailed to meet the Athenian fleet. This was massed in close bodies, the line being made so strong that the dreaded manœuvre of the "diecplus" could not be employed. The reason given by the historian, himself an Athenian, for the adoption of these tactics is that "they were inferior in sailing power." The Lacedæmonians, he adds, "trusting to their superior seamanship," endeavoured to execute the manœuvre of which their adversaries stood in so much fear. These admissions, which are made without a word of comment, are most significant. They mark the beginning of the end. In the early days of the war the nautical superiority of the Athenians had been most marked. But times had changed. The long struggle of a quarter of a century had drained Athens of its best blood. The skillful seamen of the old time had perished in countless battles, or had grown too old for service, and their place was filled by an inefficient multitude, most of whom were wholly strange to their work. On the day of Arginusæ, however, (the White Islets), for so the battle was called, from the station occupied by the Athenian fleet, something of the old splendour of Athens, in courage and skill, was to flash out again for the last time.

The Spartan admiral was advised by one of his allies to postpone an engagement till he could meet the enemy with equal numbers. He refused. "Sparta," he said, "will not suffer for losing a single citizen," and he gave the order to advance. The battle was obstinately contested. For a time the opposing

fleets preserved the order in which they had been drawn up; then the struggle was waged by single ships, anyhow and anywhere, just as they happened to meet. The Peloponnesians lost their gallant commander. He was standing on the prow of his ship, as this was driven against an enemy, eager, it would seem, to head a boarding party. It was a strange purpose, one cannot but think, in an admiral who was responsible for the conduct of a hundred ships, but a Greek could seldom resist the delight of actual conflict. The shock of the impact made him lose his footing; he fell into the sea, and clad as he was in heavy armour, was drowned. Nine out of the small Spartan squadron of ten ships were destroyed at the same time, and sixty-eight from the rest of the fleet. If Conon at Mitylene could have known what had happened, he might have completed the victory by attacking the blockading squadron. This was saved by an ingenious device. The officer in command heard the news from the admiral's signal boat. He directed it to leave the harbour, and then to return, crowned with triumphal garlands, with its men uttering shouts of triumph. Conon was deceived and made no movement. That same night the squadron secretly left its station, and effected a junction with what remained of the defeated fleet.

The Athenian fleet lost twenty-five ships. Unfortunately, nearly all of the sailors and marines on board of them were drowned. From this came the melancholy sequel of my story.

The despatch announcing the victory brought, also the sad intelligence that the crews of the ships that had been lost had perished with them; the corpses of the slain had not been recovered for burial, the survivors had not been picked up. A squadron had, indeed, been told off for this service, but a sudden storm had prevented its execution.

The truth of the account was doubted at home, and not, as will be seen, without reason. Two of the generals were prudent enough not to return to the city; the others were arrested shortly after their arrival, on the charge of having

neglected their duty. At first, it seemed possible that their explanations might be accepted by the majority of their fellow-countrymen. A great victory had been won, and it would ill become Athens to deal harshly with those who had saved her. It is possible that, if the matter had been decided in the first Assembly, the accused might have been acquitted. But the debate had lasted long; it was so dark it would have been impossible to count the show of hands. Accordingly, the Assembly was adjourned.

Before it met again the festival of the Apaturia had come round. It was a time of family gatherings, a time, therefore, when the loss of kinsmen would be most vividly felt. Xenophon tells us that the party adverse to the generals actually hired men to personate bereaved mourners. This seems hard to believe. It may mean nothing more than that the mourners were urged to make a parade of their loss and their sorrow. Anyhow, the number of persons seen in mourning during the festival, profoundly affected the people; and when they met at the adjourned Assembly, their temper was fiercely hostile.

That there had been neglect seems beyond doubt. Xenophon repeats at length the speech of one of the accused generals. The speaker makes admissions which prove that the anger of the people was not without justification. The truth was, that the excuse about the storm was not true. The facts were as follows: When the victory had been decided, one of the generals proposed that the whole fleet should sail out in line (so as to cover as wide a space as possible) and pick up the crews of the ships that had been sunk. Another was in favour of the whole fleet proceeding in pursuit of the enemy. A third proposed a middle course. Part of the fleet was to sail in pursuit, part was to be left to rescue the survivors. This proposal was adopted, and it was here that the default had taken place. There had been a storm, it is true, but not such a storm as to prevent all action. The speaker, it must be understood, did not admit this last statement; but he revealed a

significant difference of opinion among the officers in command.

But if the people had some cause for their anger, the way in which they proceeded to vent it on the accused was blameable in the extreme. It was proposed that all the accused should be tried at once, and that the fate of all should be decided by a single vote.

This proposition was in flagrant violation of the law, which provided that every accused person should be tried separately. There were not wanting speakers who reminded the Assembly of this fact, but the majority of the voters was too excited to listen to them. Their rage had been roused to fury by the story of a man who professed to have been an eye-witness of the disaster, and to bring a message from the dead to their countrymen at home. The man, who must be ranked amongst the liars that have reached historic fame, declared that he had saved himself by clinging to an empty meal-tub, that as he kept himself up in the water, he had been surrounded by drowning men who had commissioned him, in case he should get safe to land, to tell the Athenians how they had fought for their fatherland, and how the generals had left them to drown. In vain did some of the cooler heads in the Assembly endeavour to check the fury of the people. Even the threat, commonly so effective, that the proposer of this illegal proceeding should be indicted for an unconstitutional proceeding, was made in vain. One of the accusers proposed that if those who used this threat should persist in urging it on the present occasion, they should be included in the same indictment with the incriminated generals. Some of the presiding magistrates refused to put an illegal motion to the Assembly. They were met by the same cry: "Put it or you also will be included." With one exception they yielded to the clamour. The one resolute champion of right and law who refused to give way, was Socrates. In one account Xenophon declares that he was the acting president of the day; in another he describes him as one of the magistrates. Whatever may have been the case, his opposition was

overruled. His colleagues put the motion, without waiting for his consent. It was carried by a majority, after an amendment, providing for a separate trial, had been rejected, but only by a second show of hands. The accused were put to death. So did Athens undo, by an act of fatal ingratitude, the benefit of her last victory.

CHAPTER XIX

THE EYE OF GREECE

The victory of Arginusæ was barren of all results, except, indeed, the fatal lesson that the Athenian democracy was an ill mistress to serve. Certain it is, that she found no one to serve her during the year that followed the events related in my last chapter. The fleet was not wanting in numbers. The losses at Arginusæ had been more than made up, for the total was now one hundred and eighty ships. And Conon, an able and energetic officer was in command. Still, something seems to have been wrong. The summer was wasted in vague and desultory movements. Little was done, and that little always too late. The final catastrophe came in September. The Lacedæmonian fleet, under its able commander, Lysander; had made a rapid movement northwards, and had captured and sacked the wealthy town of Lampsacus, situated on the European side of the Hellespont, and an old ally of Athens. The Athenian fleet followed him, was too late to give any help to the friendly Lampsacenes, and finally, in the hope of bringing about a general engagement, took up its position at Ægospotami (Goat's-rivers), a spot on the Asiatic shore directly opposite to Lampsacus. The position was singularly ill chosen. There was neither harbour nor anchorage; nor could any supplies be obtained for the crews nearer than at Sestos, nearly two miles distant by land and more than twice as much by sea. If the Lacedæmonian fleet could have been persuaded to give battle, all might have been well, but the wary Lysander hoped

to win his victory at a smaller cost. On the morning after their arrival, the Athenians manned their vessels and sailed across the Hellespont to Lampsacus, where the enemy lay. They found him prepared for battle, his fleet drawn up in regular array, and his land force standing on the shore, ready to give such help as might be wanted. He declined, however, to advance, and the Athenians, on their part, dared not hazard an attack. For four days these proceedings were repeated. The Athenians sailed across the Hellespont, and returned to their position, each time becoming more confident, because more contemptuous of what they considered to be Lysander's cowardice in declining battle. But the Spartan was on the watch. Every day the Athenian ships were followed by some swift galleys, who observed carefully how the crews disposed of themselves when dismissed for the day.

Another observer, not less keen and more friendly, was at hand. Alcibiades was watching events from his Thracian castle, and saw plainly enough the perilous position in which his countrymen were placed. In the course of the fifth day he rode up to the Athenian camp. "You are putting yourselves," he said, "at great disadvantage; the enemy have a convenient harbour at their command, and supplies within easy reach; your ships lie on an open beach, and your men have to fetch everything they want from a distance." This advice was contemptuously repulsed. "It is we," said one of the generals to whom he had addressed himself, "that are in command, not you." Alcibiades, believing that there was more than mere incompetence behind this extraordinary disregard of the commonest precautions, departed. He "suspected treachery," says Plutarch, and, indeed, it is difficult to assign any other cause for conduct, of which the most inexperienced civilian would have seen the danger.

For five more days the same state of things continued. The Athenians grew more and more reckless in their own neglect of precautions. Then the end came. The Athenian fleet had made its usual demonstration, and had returned to its

station at Ægospotami; the crews had dispersed to get their mid-day meal. Lysander's swift galleys, following these movements as on the previous days, hoisted the signal—a bright shield—which was to indicate that the moment for attack had come. The Peloponnesian fleet, which had been kept ready for action, moved out of the harbour of Lampsacus, crossed the Hellespont at full speed, and fell upon their defenceless enemy. Some of the ships were absolutely empty, others had but two or even one of their three banks of rowers complete; their missing seamen and marines were scattered far and wide over the country. Of the generals only one was on the alert. This was Conon. He signalled, as soon as he saw the enemy's fleet in motion, that all hands were to return to their ships. It was all that he could do, but it was too late. In his own ship and in eight others he had contrived to keep up discipline. These were ready for action; so was the *Paralus*, one of the two sacred vessels which were kept for special services. It was hopeless, of course, to attempt resistance with so small a force. The *Paralus* was despatched to Athens with the news. With the remaining eight, Conon made the best of his way to Salamis in Cyprus, where he could count on a welcome from Evagoras, a prince whose friendly feeling to Athens had been, a few years before, acknowledged by the gift of citizenship. Before starting he secured his retreat by an act of great promptitude and courage, sailing across the strait to where the stores of the Peloponnesian fleet were kept, and seizing the great sails of the ships. Of the other Athenian ships not one escaped. A few of the crews escaped to fortresses in the neighbourhood; the rest were taken prisoners. This overwhelming success was secured without the loss of a single man to the victorious armament.

The fate of the prisoners was left by Lysander to the decision of the allies. This was, that all the Athenian prisoners with the exception of one of the generals, Adeimantus by name, should be put to death. It was a merciless act, but the sufferers were only receiving the same measure which they had dealt out to others. Only a few months before, the Assembly had decreed that every prisoner of war should have his right

hand cut off. And the massacre of the crews of two Peloponnesian vessels, one from Corinth, the other from Andros, was fresh in the remembrance of the conquerors. This had been personally ordered by Philocles, one of the captive generals, and Lysander asked him what the man who had done such deeds deserved to suffer. "It is idle," replied the prisoner, with unbroken courage, "to bring charges for which you can find no proof; you are conqueror; do what you certainly would have had to suffer if you had been conquered." And he went to his death with unfaltering step, arrayed in his gayest apparel.

The Paralus reached Athens at night, probably on the fourth or fifth day after the disaster, the distance between the scene of action and Athens being something less than three hundred miles. Xenophon, probably an eye-witness of the scene, thus describes it: When the Paralus reached the city with the evil tidings, "a bitter wail of woe broke forth. From Piræus, following the line of the Long Walls, up to the heart of the city it swept and swelled, as each man to his neighbour passed on the news. On that night no man slept. There were mourning and sorrow for those that were lost, but the lamentation for the dead was mingled in even deeper sorrow for themselves, as they pictured the evils which they were about to suffer, the like of which they had themselves inflicted upon others;" and he goes on to give a dismal catalogue of the cities which Athens had shamefully ill-treated. The particulars were so well known to his readers that he mentions only the names. This is the dismal list.

1. The town of Melos in the island of the same name was captured in 416. All the adult males had been put to death and the women and children sold into slavery. This cruelty was the more atrocious, because the Athenians had not even the poor excuse that Melos had revolted. The island had never joined the Delian confederacy. It was a Dorian colony, and had remained faithful to its mother city, Sparta.

2. Histiaëa, one of the Eubœan towns, had revolted along with the rest of the island, against Athenian rule in 445.

When this was restored, the inhabitants were expelled and their land divided among Athenian settlers.

3. Scione, a town in Thrace, had been treated in the same way as Melos, the adult males slain, the women and children sold into slavery. The Athenians were enraged by the fact that the town had revolted from them to the Spartans, two days after the conclusion of a truce, and that the Spartans had refused to give it back.

4. Torone was another town in Thrace and had revolted with its neighbour Scione. In this case there was no special aggravation, and the Athenians contented themselves with selling the women and children, and taking the men as prisoners to Athens, where they were afterwards exchanged.

5. The inhabitants of Ægina were expelled from their country in 431 at the beginning of the Peloponnesian war. They were old enemies and rivals of Athens, but had given no fresh offence. They were removed because they were dangerously near to the great harbour of Athens, the Piræus—"the eye-sore of the Piræus," Pericles was wont to call Ægina.

"And many another Greek city," adds the historian, quite truthfully, no doubt, but with a bitterness heightened by the recollection of his own wrongs, for Athens had banished him. We cannot wonder that a city with such a past behind her should look forward with dread to the future. Fugitives from all the dependencies now came flocking in. Before many days were past, scarcely a town in the great Athenian confederacy remained. Many revolted; others were taken. But no more severities were exercised on the prisoners so taken. They were not even detained. Only it was strictly enjoined upon them to return at once to Athens. If taken again elsewhere they would be put to death. Lysander reckoned on the aid of famine in reducing the city, and famine would operate the more speedily the more crowded the population within the walls.

The city was closely blockaded, both by land, where the Spartan king Agis occupied the fort of Decelea, and by sea,

which was held by Pausanias with a fleet of a hundred and fifty ships. On the other hand, the Athenians prepared for a vigorous defence, blocking up all the harbours but one, and manning the walls. On the other hand, a large additional force from the Peloponnesus came to reinforce the army, which the Spartan king Agis had kept the summer through before the walls, while Lysander with a fleet of a hundred and fifty ships, blockaded the harbour.

The resolution of the besieged soon failed under the pressure of famine. Envoys were sent to king Agis with proposals to form an alliance with Sparta, every point in dispute being yielded, except that Athens was to keep its fortifications and its great harbour, the Piræus. Agis declared, that he had no power to treat; the envoys must go to Sparta. To Sparta, accordingly, they went. On reaching Laconian territory, and communicating the terms which they were instructed to offer to the Spartan authorities, they received a peremptory order to depart. If they really wanted peace, they must be the bearers of more satisfactory terms. With this answer they returned to Athens. A small minority was in favour of accepting the inevitable, but the spirit of the people was not yet broken. A senator who proposed yielding to the Lacedæmonian terms, was thrown into prison. The situation was critical. Submission was inevitable, but the counsellor who might recommend it, would run a great risk of his life. Nothing remained but to cajole the people into accepting the inevitable. A patriotic citizen might quite properly have undertaken this task; the man who actually undertook and carried it through, cannot be credited with honourable motives. That he was keen enough to see the state of the case may be conceded; this, indeed, was patent to every reflecting person. But it is doing him no injustice to say that personal ambition was the ruling motive of his conduct.

Theramenes had already made his mark as a prominent politician on the oligarchical side. In the affair of Arginusæ he had behaved with peculiar baseness. Responsible himself, as

much as any man, for the loss of the shipwrecked men—for the task of picking them up had been assigned to him, among others—he led the attack on the generals. So strong was the feeling against him that, when afterwards he was appointed to a command, the fleet refused to accept him. He now saw an opportunity of ingratiating himself with the state which would soon, he perceived, have the disposal of political power at Athens. Standing forth in the Assembly, dispirited and dismayed as it was by the failure of the embassy, he said: "Send me to Lysander, and I will find out why the Lacedæmonians insist upon destroying the walls; whether it is because they wish to enslave you, or because they simply desire a guarantee of your good faith." He was sent accordingly, but he made no attempt to fulfil his mission. He simply lingered with Lysander and the blockading fleet for three months, waiting till the pressure of famine in the city should become so intolerably hard that the besieged would be ready to accept any conditions. When this time had, as he thought, arrived, he returned to Athens and declared that Lysander had detained him, and now, after all this time had been lost, told him that he had no power to treat and that he must go to Sparta.

The treacherous messenger found his countrymen in the state which he had expected, ready to submit to anything. They chose him to go to Sparta, along with nine colleagues, with full powers to treat. The Spartan government, on their arrival, called an assembly of their allies, and submitted the question to them. Two at least of the powers were against granting any terms. Nothing but the absolute destruction of Athens would satisfy them. Many other states, Xenophon tells us, showed this feeling but none expressed it so decidedly. The Spartans put a veto on the proposal. Athens had done great service to the common race in the past. They would not, as one of them expressed it, put out one of the eyes of Greece. Little, however, beyond bare existence was conceded. The walls were to be destroyed, the Piræus harbour blocked up, and all the ships of war but twelve handed over to the conquerors. Theramenes and

his colleagues returned, and shameful as were the conditions which they brought back with them, were received with enthusiasm. Anything seemed better than the destruction which seemed imminent and which they felt to be not undeserved. A small minority still resisted, but this cheap exhibition of independence, not intended, as we may be sure, to succeed, was overruled. The fleet was handed over to the Peloponnesians; the walls were pulled down to the sound of joyous music. And the day by a singular coincidence, was the anniversary of that on which, seventy-five years before, Athens had saved Greece in the Bay of Salamis. It is possible that there may have been old men who remembered the culmination of their country's glory, and now they looked upon her fall.

CHAPTER XX

THE LION'S CUB

When in the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, Bacchus, sorely in need of a dramatic poet who will be able to produce some play of decent merit at his festivals, goes down to the Regions of the Dead, in search of what he wants. Arrived at his destination, he finds himself called upon to choose between Æschylus and Euripides. Among other tests of merit, he proposes to the candidates for his favour, that they should give their countrymen such good advice that there should be once again a prosperous Athens, exhibiting tragedies in the style in which they should be exhibited. Thereupon Æschylus delivers himself of the following:

"Rear not a lion's cub within your walls,
But having reared him, let him work his will."

We may be sure that everyone in the audience knew what was meant—the lion's cub was Alcibiades, son of Cleinias.

At the time when the play above mentioned was exhibited (the early spring of 405 B.C.) Alcibiades was for the second time in exile. His career was, in fact, practically at an end, but it is possible that if the advice which it put into the old poet's mouth had been followed, the fate of Athens might have been averted or, at least, postponed. It is, anyhow, certain that Alcibiades had never failed in anything that he undertook. An utterly selfish politician, he was yet a man of conspicuous ability. The magnitude of the injury which he did to his country when seeking to revenge himself for his first banishment is the measure of his remarkable powers.

He was connected on the mother's side with the noble house of the Alcmaeonidæ, the great Pericles being his near kinsman, and, in right of this relationship, one of his guardians

during his minority. The great statesman was probably too much occupied to take much thought for his ward, and his fellow-guardian, his brother Ariphon, was a man of little weight. This, doubtless, was one of the many adverse influences which told against the young Alcibiades. From the very beginning of his life he seems to have been spoilt. Left at the age of two without a father's care, rich, noble, singularly beautiful in person, of a haughty and ambitious temper, it would have been almost a miracle if he had grown up to be a self-controlled, law-abiding citizen.



ARISTOPHANES
FROM A BUST FOUND NEAR TUSCULUM.

Plutarch tells two characteristic stories of his boyhood. Overpowered by the superior strength of his antagonist in a

wrestling match, he caught his opponent's hand in his teeth. "What!" cried the lad, "do you bite like a woman, Alcibiades?" "No," he answered, "I bite like a lion." On another occasion he was playing dice in the street. A waggon approached, and its surly driver refused to stop. The boy's playfellows dispersed, but Alcibiades threw himself at full length before the feet of the horses. "Run over me, if you dare," he cried. At eighteen, when he attained his majority, he received from his guardians his property, largely increased, probably, during a minority of sixteen years. This must have been very shortly before the death of Pericles, which, happened in the autumn of 429. Possibly it is to this time that we are to refer an anecdote, which if it is true, indicates pretty clearly the way in which the young aristocrat regarded Athenian politics. Calling at his guardian's house, and being refused admittance because the statesman was busy with the accounts which he had to render to the people, he remarked: "It would be far better for him to busy himself in thinking how he may best avoid rendering them at all." In common with all young Athenians, he served in the army. Here, of course, he found opportunities for the display and ostentation which were part of his character. His shield was inlaid with gold and ivory, and carried the device of Zeus hurling a thunderbolt, borne, it will be remembered, by Hyperbius, one of the Theban Champions in 'Septem contra Thebas' of Æschylus. His first foreign service was in 429 B.C. before Potidæa. Here he was wounded and was for a time in great danger, but was saved by Socrates, whose favourite pupil he had been. The philosopher was strongly attracted by the grace and beauty of the young man, but seems not to have spared him plain-spoken rebukes. A strange affection grew up between them. The influence of the elder man was not, we may believe, wholly useless, though it did not suffice to keep back the younger from a career of extravagance and folly. On the other hand, we have reason for knowing that the philosopher's unpopularity was much increased by the misdoings of some of his pupils. Of these Alcibiades was the most notorious. The special service which Socrates performed at Potidæa was in a

way repaid at the disastrous defeat of Delium in 424. B.C. At this battle Alcibiades was serving on horseback, and helped to protect the retreat of his master, who was on foot.

The feelings with which Alcibiades was regarded among his fellow-citizens were, we may be sure, of a mixed kind. Some of his exploits must have extorted a half unwilling admiration. When, probably in the year of the battle of Delium, he ran seven four-horsed chariots at Olympia, and won the first, second, and fourth prizes; when it was seen that the ships of war which he had to man and equip were the best provided in the fleet, that the plays which he had to put upon the stage had more costly scenery and better music than any other, a certain popularity followed.

But the favour thus won is of a very uncertain and evanescent kind, while the enmities made by a haughty and insolent demeanour and by acts of wanton violence, are fierce and lasting. His conduct to his wife Hipparete must have alienated from him the powerful family to which she belonged. Enraged at her husband's numerous infidelities, she left his home and took refuge with her brother. Alcibiades affected unconcern, "If my wife wants a divorce," he said, "she must deposit her memorial with the magistrate in person." Hipparete proceeded to comply with the demand, which was probably legal. As she was crossing the market-place Alcibiades seized her and carried her to his home, where she remained till her death. He showed similar audacity in serving a friend, against whom an action had been brought. He went to the Temple of Demeter where the State archives were kept, asked to see the list of causes, and wetting his finger, simply wiped out the charge against his friend. We may compare it to burning a writ.

It is difficult to define the line which Alcibiades took in Athenian politics, for we can see that it was largely influenced by personal feelings. It is probable that he did not become prominent till after the death of Cleon. The most powerful personages in Athens after this event, were Hyperbolus, who claimed to be Cleon's successor, and Nicias, the leader of the

peace party. Hyperbolus endeavoured to get rid of one or two of his rivals by ostracism; but they combined together against him, and succeeded in turning his weapon against himself. For a time it seemed that Alcibiades would endeavour to oust Nicias from his position as head of the peace party. Anyhow he did his best to procure the release of the Spartan soldiers taken at Sphacteria, and to make himself generally a persona grata at Sparta. But the Spartans naturally preferred their old friends, and when the Athenians at last abated their excessive pretensions and consented to treat, refused the services of Alcibiades, and made Nicias and Laches their intermediaries. The brief peace that followed was known as the Peace of Nicias.

Alcibiades now threw himself unreservedly into the arms of the war party. He did his best to embroil his country with Sparta, and succeeded in forming' an alliance with the anti-Spartan powers in the Peloponnese, Argos, Mantinea, and Elis. His schemes were brought to nothing by the disastrous defeat which the allies suffered at Mantinea in 418. Alcibiades appears not to have been present at the battle.

The share that he took in promoting the ruinous expedition against Syracuse, and the fate by which he was himself overtaken have been already described. And now the worst nature of the man, the innate ferocity of the "lion's cub" came out. He turned all his knowledge of the Athenian plans and all his consummate abilities against his countrymen. The Spartans, always slow to act, were carried away by his energy. By his advice they actively took up the cause of the Syracusans, sent one of their ablest soldiers to help them, and renewed the occupation of Decelea which had been so damaging to Athens in the earlier part of the war. For a time he enjoyed a great popularity among his hosts.

Throwing off the luxurious habits for which he had been notorious in Athens, he affected a Spartan simplicity, frugality, and hardness of life. But a private quarrel with one of the kings, a quarrel in which the offence was given by

Alcibiades, brought his residence at Sparta to an end. He fled into Asia, and took refuge with Tissaphernes, one of the Persian satraps. His personal charm was as effectual with Tissaphernes as it had been in Athens and Sparta. A series of tortuous intrigues followed. A breach between Sparta and the Satrap was effected, but it was not so easy to get any positive help from him for Athens, in the shape either of men or of gold. Still Alcibiades traded on the influence which he was reputed to have over the Persian rulers, endeavouring to obtain the repeal of the decree of banishment passed against him three years before. With characteristic want of principle he tried both parties in turn. First, he offered to bring over Tissaphernes as the price of his own recall but imposed, the condition that the democratic government of Athens must give place to an oligarchy. The condition was accepted; the democracy for a time ceased to exist, its place being taken by the oligarchy of the Four Hundred. But these new rulers did not trust their ally; and no decree of recall was passed. Thereupon Alcibiades reversed his policy. (It must be remembered that the man's contemporaries had nothing like the complete view of his intrigues which history enables us to obtain.) The news of the political revolution at Athens was ill received by the fleet at Samos—the crews—"the sea-faring multitude" as the aristocratic Aristophanes contemptuously calls them—were always strongly democratic. They constituted themselves into an assembly, they chose new generals, and, after some hesitation, recalled Alcibiades. Thrasybulus, who was the leading spirit in the fleet, crossed over from Samos to the mainland and brought him back. An Assembly was held to receive him; he addressed it with such success that he was elected general. There was a strong desire in the fleet to sail to Athens and restore the old state of things by force. Alcibiades successfully combated it. He knew that his promises to bring over Tissaphernes to the side of Athens—for he had repeated to the fleet what he had said to the Four Hundred—were delusive, and that such a movement as was proposed would leave all that Athens possessed in the Ægean at the mercy of her enemy. His

action at this crisis probably postponed the fall of the city. Had it not been for this what happened in 404 would have happened in 411.

Alcibiades did not return to Athens: he felt himself to be more usefully employed, and it may be added, in greater safety, with the fleet. The men followed him with enthusiasm, for he showed consummate ability. His greatest achievement was the victory of Cyzicus, at which the entire Lacedæmonian fleet was taken, except the contingent from Syracuse, which was burnt by its own crews.

In the following year (409) he captured Chalcedon, and in the next year again Byzantium. His operations, in fact, were attended by an almost uniform success, and he received an unanimous welcome when in May 407, after an absence of eight years, he returned to Athens. His popularity rose to its height when, about four months afterwards, he escorted the sacred procession that annually made its way from Athens to Eleusis, there to celebrate the Mysteries of the "Mother of the Gods." For seven years the solemnity had been intermitted. The Lacedæmonian garrison at Decelea, established, it will be remembered at the suggestion of Alcibiades, constituted a danger too formidable to be encountered, and the celebrants had been transported by sea, with no small loss to the dignity of the festival. Alcibiades now raised the whole available force of the city, and took and brought back the procession in safety. The Spartan general did not choose to hazard an attack, and Alcibiades enjoyed all the honours of a triumph.

A few days afterwards he left the city, never to return.

We may be sure that below the apparent unanimity with which his return had been welcomed, there was some concealed dissatisfaction. Alcibiades had made too many enemies for this not to be the case. Probably he added to their number during his brief stay at Athens, for he had the temper in which success and popularity infallibly result in insolence. The hostile party soon found occasion for censure. He had a magnificent armament under his command, and he had

accomplished nothing; he had even suffered defeat. True, this defeat happened in his absence, and was brought about by direct disobedience to his orders, Antiochus, the second in command, having risked the engagement which he had been expressly directed to avoid. But Alcibiades cannot be wholly acquitted of blame, for Antiochus owed his appointment to him, and had been put by him over the heads of abler men. The change of feeling at home was rapid. Alcibiades was deprived of his command, and thought it more prudent not to return to the city. He left the fleet, and retired to a strongly-fortified castle which he possessed—Bisanthe, on the coast of Thrace.

Little more remains to be told. He made an effort to save the fleet, Athens' last hope, which the reckless folly of the admirals was exposing to the attack of the Spartans at Ægospotami. He had seen the danger from his Thracian retreat, and warned the officer in command. They bade him depart. "They, not he," they said, "were responsible." A few days afterwards his warnings were justified. Athens, her last force destroyed, was at the mercy of her enemies. The capture of the city in 404 was followed by the establishment of an oligarchy, subservient to Spartan influences. One of the first acts of the new government was to pass a decree for the banishment of Alcibiades (his exile had up to this time been voluntary). No greater proof could have been given that, in spite of his lack of principle, he was a citizen who could have promoted the interests of Athens. The Thirty Tyrants—such was the name given to the leaders of the new Government—were entirely under Spartan control, and to be condemned by them was in its way a proof of patriotism. Bisanthe, now that the Athenian power had disappeared, was no longer a safe residence. With characteristic courage and self-reliance, Alcibiades determined to try his fortune with the Great King himself. Another Athenian, not unlike to himself in character, had tried that course with remarkable success, and what had been achieved by Themistocles might be done again. Accordingly he left Thrace, and made his way to Pharnabazus, who would, he hoped, give him a safe conduct for his journey to the Persian

capital. Pharnabazus received him with every appearance of friendship; but his enemies were at work. The oligarchical party at Athens represented to Lysander that banishment was not enough, the new order of things would never be safe as long as Alcibiades lived. Lysander, accordingly, sent a messenger to Pharnabazus with instructions that his guest must be disposed of, and the Satrap, who no longer had two rival Greek powers to play off against each other, had no alternative but to comply. The house in which Alcibiades was sleeping was surrounded at night by a body of Persian troops and set on fire. He caught up in his left hand a cloak which he wrapped round his head, and a dagger in his right. The sight of him was sufficient to send his assailants flying. Not a man ventured to come to close quarters with him. Retreating to a distance, they showered javelins and arrows on him. He was about forty-five at the time of his death. According to another account his life was sacrificed, not to political jealousy but to private revenge. Neither account is improbable. He had done enough to make himself hated and feared by the enemies of Athens, and his private life was such as to rouse against him the most furious resentments.

A review of his career makes us feel that the epigrammatic summary put into the mouth of Æschylus was eminently true. It would have been better for the city if the "lion's cub" had never been reared in it; and yet his personal leadership was almost invariably successful. His countrymen had many reasons not to like him, and yet they did not prosper without him.

CHAPTER XXI

THE WISEST OF MEN

"When we were at Potidæa," says Alcibiades, singing the praises of Socrates to the joyous company which he found at the house of the poet Agathon, "if we were short of food—not an uncommon thing on a campaign—there was no one to compare with Socrates for the way he bore it, while at a banquet, if he was compelled to drink, which he never wanted to do, he outlasted everyone else; no one ever saw Socrates tipsy. As to the way in which he bore cold—and the cold is terrible in that country—here is an example of what he did. Once there was an exceedingly hard frost; no one went out, or if he did, wrapped himself up in the strangest fashion, and put every kind of covering on his feet, but Socrates went barefoot through the ice, with less discomfort than others felt for all their precautions to keep themselves warm."

This is followed by an anecdote which reminds one curiously enough of the raptures of some mediæval saints. "Some idea occurred to him and he stood trying to think it out. Failing to do this he would not give it up, but still stood thinking. By this time it was noon, and the men began to notice him. 'See!' said one to another, 'Socrates has something in his head, and has been standing thinking it out ever since the morning.' When it was evening, some men from Ionia, having had their meal, took out their mattresses to sleep in the cool—it was summer time—and also to see whether he would stand through the night. And he did stand till morning. Then he saluted the sun, and went his way."

Another story of endurance concludes the "Dialogues of the Banquet" from which these anecdotes are taken. One Aristodemus tells the story. "I was overcome with slumber and slept a long time, for it was the time of the year when the nights are long. At daybreak, when the cocks were beginning to

crow, I woke and found that some of the guests were asleep and that others were gone, and that Aristophanes, Agathon, and Socrates, who alone of all the company were awake, were drinking out of a great cup which they passed from left to right. Socrates was talking to the other two; but what he said I do not remember, for I had not heard the beginning, and besides, I was somewhat drowsy; but the chief point was this: he compelled them to acknowledge that the same man ought to write both tragedy and comedy. Then they too—and they had not followed him very clearly—began to nod, and first Aristophanes fell asleep, and then—when it was now broad daylight—Agathon. Thereupon Socrates rose, composed them to sleep, and went away to the Lyceum, where he washed. The rest of the day he spent as usual, and went home in the evening."

The power of enduring heat and cold, and still more the possession of a brain which defies all influences of strong drink, may not seem quite as admirable to us as they did to the contemporaries of Socrates. But he had other qualities which we may agree with them in respecting. The virtue of military courage he possessed in the highest degree. In a skirmish before Potidæa he saved the life of Alcibiades, who had been left wounded and helpless on the field. On the disastrous day of Delium he was one of a few infantry soldiers who preserved so firm an attitude during all the dangers of a retreat that the enemy did not venture to molest them.

And he had also in perfection, the rarer gift of political courage. How he bore himself in the Assembly when after the battle of Arginusæ the generals were illegally condemned, has already been described. Then he was resisting at the imminent peril of his life, an infuriated democracy. When Athens fell, and the democracy was overthrown, he offered the same resolute resistance to an unscrupulous oligarchy. The Thirty—this was the name of the governing body which the victorious Lysander had established in Athens—sent for him and four other citizens of repute, and commissioned them to fetch from

Salamis a certain Leon, a political opponent whom they had resolved to put out of the way. Socrates alone among the five, refused to obey.

A less tragical story may be told in the words in which Xenophon, a disciple of the philosopher, relates it. "The Thirty having put to death many citizens, and these not the least worthy, and having turned many to evil courses, Socrates said: 'It seems strange to me that a herdsman should make the cattle that he has in charge fewer in number and of worse condition, and yet not confess that he is a bad herdsman; and it seems yet stranger that one who ruling a city causes the citizens to be fewer and worse, does not take shame to himself and own that he is a bad ruler.' Now Critias and Callicles being among the Thirty, both hating and fearing Socrates, had caused a law to be passed, that no one should teach the art of reasoning. Therefore they sent for Socrates, and showed him the law, and commanded him not to talk with young men.

"*Socrates*. 'May I ask a question if there is anything in this law that I do not understand?'

"*Critias*. 'Certainly.'

"*Socrates*. 'I am quite ready to obey the law; but as I don't wish to transgress through ignorance. I should like to get some clear information on one point. Do you think that this art of reasoning is on the side of right or on the side of wrong that you bid me have nothing to do with it? If it is on the side of right, then it is clear that I shall have to keep from speaking right; if it is on the side of wrong, then surely I ought to try to speak right?'

"*Callicles* (in a rage). 'As you are so ignorant, Socrates, here is something for you that will be easier to understand. We tell you that you are not to talk to young men at all.'

"*Socrates*. 'To avoid all doubt, tell me exactly up to what age a man is a young man!'

"*Callicles*. 'For so long as he cannot sit on the Senate, as not having come to years of discretion. So don't converse with any man under thirty.'

"*Socrates*. 'If a man under thirty has something to sell, may I converse with him?'

"*Callicles*. 'Of course you may about such things. But your way, Socrates, is to ask questions about things that you know all about. Don't ask such questions any more.'

"*Socrates*. 'And if a young man should ask me where Callicles is or where Critias is to be found, may I speak to him?'

"*Callicles*. 'Yes, you may.'

"*Critias*. 'But keep away, I tell you, from carpenters and cobblers and smiths and such people; you must have talked them deaf by this time, I take it!'

"*Socrates*. 'And I must have nothing to say, I suppose, about matters that I have always associated with such talks, justice and piety and such like!'

"*Critias*. 'Yes, and nothing about herdsmen, or you'll find that the cattle are made fewer by one more.'

"It is clear from this," adds the writer, "that what Socrates had said about the herdsmen had been reported to them and had caused their wrath."

Socrates' external appearance is well known to us. It was as unlike as possible to the Greek ideal of beauty. His face was of the coarsest type, with snub nose and projecting forehead, resembling a Silenus far more than an Apollo. So far, then, we are able to form a tolerably clear notion of the man. He was a sturdy, courageous person, abstaining as far as possible from political life, but inflexibly honest and truthful when circumstances compelled him to act. Of his character as a teacher it is impossible to speak within any limits of space which I can command, nor, indeed, is the subject such as

belongs to the scope of this book. Nevertheless, a few details of prominent points may be given. Socrates was the son of a sculptor, and seems for the first half of his life (which extended to nearly seventy years) to have followed the same profession. A group of the Graces was shown to Pausanias when he visited Athens in the second half of the second century A.D., as the work of the philosopher. At the age of thirty-five he gave up this occupation, and thereafter devoted himself to teaching. Unlike his contemporaries, such men as Gorgias of Leontini, and Protagoras, he did not give his instructions in a school or lecture-room, he did not pretend to have any regular following of disciples, and he steadfastly refused to receive any payment for his instruction. He spent his whole day in the streets and squares of the city, talking with any passers-by who might be willing to answer his questions, and ready to answer any questions that might be put to him.

His method was eminently conversational. He did not lecture; he talked. With a playful allusion to the profession of a midwife which his mother had followed, he was accustomed to say that he helped to bring the thoughts and beliefs of others to the birth. The subjects of his discourse were of an eminently practical kind. In the speculations of physical philosophy—speculations which before his time had largely occupied the thoughts of philosophers—he took little interest. Questions concerning conduct, about justice and injustice, right and wrong, in states and in individuals, were the chief topics which he would discuss. His method may be best described by the word "cross-examination." He questioned his hearers, using commonly a somewhat circuitous route, till he compelled them to confess that their notions were confused and contradictory. His great maxim was "Know thyself." He stripped off, or rather he made those who talked with him strip off for themselves, the veils of self-deception which so commonly hide a man's real self from him. This was the meaning of his favourite doctrine, that knowledge is in closest connection with virtue. To exhort to virtue seemed to him useless, unless he could make a man look at himself in his true light, get rid of all false notions, all

self-deceptions. We may doubt, indeed, whether a man will necessarily do right because he has knowledge of what is right, and of how he is himself affected towards right, but this need not prevent us from acknowledging the substantial soundness of the Socratic method.

A method and a teaching so novel attracted, it is needless to say, much attention. Not a few strangers came to Athens with the one purpose of making themselves acquainted with it. Among the citizens there was probably no more familiar figure. But it does not follow that because he was well known he was popular: even in his pupil Xenophon's account of his extraordinary hardihood, we have a hint of something like jealousy among his comrades. His fellow-soldiers thought that he looked down upon them. Then again, though he was not a political partisan, his inflexible honesty brought him, as we have already seen, into collision with both the aristocratic and the democratic factions. It is a fact, too, that prominent persons do not conciliate favour by standing aloof in the marked way that was characteristic of Socrates, from politics. A strong partisan at least acquires the favour of his own side; a neutral is very commonly disliked or suspected by both.

A special cause of unpopularity may be found in the philosopher's connection with unpopular statesmen, notably with Alcibiades and Critias. Both had been his pupils. The latter, especially by the cruelty and injustice of his rule while he was the leading spirit of the Thirty, had made himself hated as an Athenian had never been hated before. Happily for himself he fell on the field of battle, but the memory of his deeds was treasured against all who in the popular judgment were connected with him.

It was also notorious to all who were in the habit of listening to his talk, and this description must have included pretty nearly every citizen of Athens, that Socrates was in the habit of uttering very undemocratic sentiments. He was no believer in the inborn capacity of the multitude for good government. It was his conviction—and his convictions he

never hesitated to express in the most decided way—that a man must learn how to rule, if he is to rule well, just as he must learn how to steer a ship, if he is to become a good pilot, and to make shoes if he is to be a good cobbler. The spectacle "Of those who know not ruling those who know To their own harm" was hateful to him. It is true that he might have been found, if questioned himself, to believe that a rich man or even a professional politician might be as ignorant of the true art of ruling as the most ignorant of the "Sailor mob" which so often swayed the decisions of the Athenian Assembly; but this belief had not so many opportunities of making itself evident. The application of the Socratic theory of the relation between knowledge and politics was obvious.

Curiously enough at the same time the philosopher was incurring the suspicious dislike of the party that was most opposed to democratic rule. Aristophanes represented the conservative element in Athenian thought, and to Aristophanes Socrates seemed a dangerous innovator in religion and morals. The comedy of the "Clouds," in which the poet attacks the philosopher by name, brings the two charges most distinctly against him. Socrates is represented as telling his disciples that new gods rule in the place of the old, or rather, for that is the practical upshot of it all, that there are no gods at all, and it is from the inspiration of his teaching that personified Injustice prevails in argument over Justice, her baffled and dispirited rival. The "Clouds," it is true, was put upon the stage as early as the year 427 B.C. and Socrates was not accused till 399. Nevertheless, the calumny, for it was nothing else, was working against him, and was not the least effective of the causes which brought about his condemnation. Finally there must have been a considerable number of personal enemies, made enemies by the relentless cross-examination to which this teacher subjected every one with whom he came into contact. Every self-convicted impostor, made to confess his own incapacity and ignorance, to the amusement of a listening crowd, must have treasured up angry recollections of his

exposure against the teacher who had exposed the vanity of his pretensions.

Mr. Grote also thinks, and, it must be owned, with a good deal of reason, that Socrates when brought before his judges did not wish to escape. He was an old man; his means of living were precarious; his mode of life would have become impossible in the face of the growing infirmities of age. He did, indeed, in a way exert himself to procure an acquittal; that he would have welcomed, but rather, we may be sure, for the sake of his judges than of himself. He used, it is true, no persuasion, and he condescended to no artifices, but he stated his case fairly and in such a way as must, we cannot but think, have carried conviction to the mind of an unprejudiced hearer. But when the adverse verdict was pronounced, and it was pronounced by a majority of six votes only, he may be said to have deliberately set himself to bring down upon himself the severest possible sentence.

It was the somewhat strange practice of an Athenian court, when the verdict of "guilty" had been pronounced, to require the prosecutor to assess the penalty which he considered would meet the case. The condemned was required to do the same. In the case of Socrates the prosecutor demanded the penalty of death; the prisoner, had he been anxious to escape this fate, would have mentioned something that would have satisfied, not indeed his irreconcilable enemies, but those who had voted without any very strong motive. Banishment, imprisonment, even a heavy fine, would have sufficed. Socrates did nothing of the kind. He began by saying that if he had got his proper deserts the people would have voted him a public maintenance in what we may call Government House. He went on to say that he had no money, and that therefore it was useless for him to propose a fine. Nevertheless, as his friends were urgent with him to propose something, and were willing to find the money, he would name the sum of five minas or about £20 of our money. This was a calculated affront to the court, and, as there was no alternative choice other than the penalties named, necessarily resulted in a sentence of death.

CHAPTER XXII

THE WILLING PRISONER

The trial of Socrates took place early in May. It would have been followed almost immediately by his execution but for a happy ordering of events, to which we owe what may well be called the most significant and beautiful of his utterances. On the day before that of his condemnation, the priest of Apollo had put the sacred garland on the stern of the ship which was to sail to Delos, carrying the embassy which Athens sent year by year to take part in the festival of the Delian Apollo. In the interval between the departure and the return of this vessel, commonly a period of thirty days, no condemned person could be put to death. The time was spent by the philosopher in converse with his friends, who seem to have been permitted to have free access to his cell. Two of these conversations have been recorded by Plato. It is impossible to say how far we have the actual words of Socrates. It is probable that the arguments have received considerable accessions from the mind of the reporter, but that the narrative is a fairly exact representation of the truth.

The Dialogue to which the name of Crito has been given, took place in the prison before the return of the Sacred Ship. Crito was one of the wealthiest men in Athens. He had been accustomed to contribute liberally to the master's support; he was among the friends who volunteered to find the money for the fine which Socrates proposed as the alternative punishment to death; and he had now been using his money to smooth the way for the prisoner's escape. The conversation was something to this effect.

Socrates. "Why so early, Crito? It is not morning yet?"

Crito. "No, it isn't."

Socrates. "What is the time then?"

Crito. "Just before dawn."

Socrates. "I am surprised that the jailor let you in."

Crito. "He knows me well, because I have been here so often to see you, and he has had something from me too."

Socrates. "Have you been here a long time?"

Crito. "Fairly long."

Socrates. "Why did you not wake me then?"

Crito. "Well, Socrates, to tell the truth, I should not have cared to be awake in such a plight as this. I was astonished to see how quietly you were sleeping, and it was on purpose that I forbore to wake you, for I want your time to go as pleasantly as it may. Often before have I admired the easy way in which you took things, but never so much as I do at present, so easily, so gently do you take your trouble."

Socrates. "Surely, Crito, it would be absurd for a man at my age to make any trouble about dying."

Crito. "Well, Socrates, others just as old as you, for all their age, are greatly troubled when they find themselves in such a plight as yours."

Socrates. "May be. But what made you come so early?"

Crito. "I have brought some news, not bad news for you, Socrates, I can easily understand, but to me and to your other friends as bad as could be."

Socrates. "What do you mean? Has the ship come from Delos?"

Crito. "It has not actually come, but it will come to-day. So I understand from some people who have come from Sunium and left it there. Their news means that it will come to-day, and that to-morrow will be the last day of your life."

Socrates. "Let us hope it is all for the best. God must order it as He thinks fit: still I do not think that the ship will come to-day."

Crito. "What makes you think so?"

Socrates. "I will tell you; you say I must die the day after it returns."

Crito. "So I am told by the authorities."

Socrates. "Then I think that it won't come the day that is now dawning, but on the day after. My reason is a certain dream that I have had to-night, and just a little while ago. It seems very likely that you did quite right not to wake me."

Crito. "What was the dream?"

Socrates. "I saw in my sleep a fair woman dressed in white apparel, coming up to me. She called me by my name and said, 'O Socrates, on the third day hence thou shalt win unto deep-foamed Phthias' strand.'"

Crito. "What an absurd dream, Socrates!"

Socrates. "But quite plain, I think."

Crito. "Very plain indeed. But, my dear Socrates, do listen to me and consent to save your life."

Crito then proceeds to urge various arguments upon the philosopher. People will think very badly of him and his friends if they don't save their master's life, seeing that this could be done at no very great expenditure of money, by bribing jailors and such people. Of course they would be running a certain risk in doing so; but this they were prepared for; it was only their duty to encounter it, and, after all it would be no great matter to buy the silence of the informers, as they had bought the connivance of the prison officials. Besides, there were foreigners, Simmias for instance, who was a Theban, quite ready to undertake this part of the business, and these would not be exposed to any of the danger that an Athenian citizen would incur. As for Socrates himself, he

would be doing wrong if he neglected the opportunity of saving his life. He was doing just what his enemies wished. Then he must consider his children. Was he right in leaving them desolate? A father owed a duty to those who owed their life to him. And he must decide at once. He must escape that very night. If he did not, it would be too late.

Socrates is ready with his answer to these arguments, and the sum of it was this: Is it right or is it wrong for me to make my escape if I can? By a bold image he personifies the laws of his country, and imagines them as addressing him. "What are you thinking of doing, Socrates?" they are supposed to say to him. "What complaint have you against us, that you go about to destroy us, for the man who ventures on the strength of his own private opinion to upset a solemn decision of the courts, is destroying the laws by which the state subsists? You owe to us your existence, your father, your mother; have you any fault to find with the marriage laws which brought them together?" He could but answer, "No." "Have you any," they continued, "with the laws about the rearing and education of children, to which you owe your teaching in liberal arts, and your bodily training?" These, too, he could but acknowledge to be good. "Then again, a child must not return evil for evil to father or mother, if he is struck he must not strike back, but must put up with what he has to endure. Now your country is infinitely more worthy of reverence than your parents. How much more, then, you must yield to her if she is angry with you, failing to persuade her, you must yield to her, do what she bids you, and suffer what she puts upon you; if she bids you go to battle, you must obey, and suffer wounds and even death, sooner than leave your place in the ranks. And the court of justice must be as the battle-field to you. You must submit to what your country puts upon you." This it must be allowed, is a very cogent argument; and we cannot doubt, so thoroughly is it in accord with his usual teaching, that Socrates was perfectly sincere in using it. But it is no less clear that the determination to remain and submit to his sentence was, we may even say, as much a matter of inclination as of duty. The safe and

comfortable home which Crito offered him in Thessaly, did not attract him. If he did not live in Athens he would not live anywhere. This is brought out very clearly in what the Laws are represented as saying by way of enforcing their argument.

"And you, Socrates, would be more to blame, if you were to do what we are thinking of than any other Athenian would be. For we have abundant proofs that we and this city of ours have always been very much to your mind. Surely you would not have tarried in Athens so much more than anyone else, if you had not taken more pleasure than anyone else in it. You never left the city for any festival or games except it was once to the festival of the Isthmus; you never went anywhere, except it might be on military service; for no other kind of cause were you ever absent, such as takes most men abroad; you never had a desire to see any other city than this, or make acquaintance with any other laws. We and our city were always sufficient for you. Remember, too, that at your trial you might, if you had so wished, have proposed the penalty of banishment. What you now think of doing against the will of your country, you might then have done with her consent. But you made fine professions then that you did not refuse to die, if so it must be, and that you preferred death to banishment. Of these professions you are not now ashamed, you take no account of us, but you want to do what the most worthless slave might do, you want to run away."

All this no doubt expresses the very inmost heart of Socrates. It was not only the dishonour of a life purchased at the cost of all his professions and principles that he refused to submit to, it was also the intolerable ennui of an existence that was to be passed anywhere but in the intellectual atmosphere of Athens. Mr. Grote thinks, as has been said, that no other city would have endured him so long; we may perhaps, add the converse, and say that he could have endured no other.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CUP OF HEMLOCK

In a play now almost forgotten, the "Cato" of Joseph Addison, the hero, who has been fortifying himself in his purpose of suicide by a perusal of Plato's dialogue of Phaedo, begins his great soliloquy with the words:

"It must be so; Plato, thou reasonest well!"

It is quite possible, however, that a modern reader of the Phaedo may be disappointed in this same reasoning. The arguments in favour of the Immortality of the Soul are scarcely convincing; some of the objections are but imperfectly answered. Nevertheless, it is easy to understand why the Dialogue has held its place as the greatest of all pre-Christian statements of the doctrine. But this greatness lies, not so much in the reasoning of the abstract question as in the pictures which it draws, with an unsurpassed literary force, of the practical faith of the philosopher as he stood face to face with death. It is a picture manifestly drawn from the life, and the cheerful, unfaltering confidence which it portrays, is far more convincing than any argument, even when this is reinforced by the dialectical subtlety of the reporter.

Phaedo, the disciple from whom the Dialogue takes its name, describes his feelings thus: "As for myself," he says to his friend Epicrates, who had been asking for details of the last scene, "I was affected by what I saw and heard in a quite surprising way. I could not feel the compassion that might seem natural to one who was present at the death of a dear friend. The man seemed absolutely happy, to judge from his manner and his talk, so fearless, so noble was his bearing in the face of death. I saw in him one who, if ever a man did so, was passing into the other world under divine protection and once arrived would assuredly be happy. The result was this. There

was no question of compassion, as there might have been in the presence of so great a sorrow; on the other hand, we could not feel our wonted pleasure in our philosopher's talk; for, indeed, our talk was philosophical. Our condition was the strangest possible. There was a most unusual mixture of pleasure on the one hand, and pain on the other, pain because we knew that he was soon to die. We were laughing at one time and weeping at another; no one more so than Apollodorus. You know the man and his ways.

After enumerating the disciples who had been present at the last scene, Phaedo goes on to describe what had been done, and said:

"We came that day earlier than usual, for on the day before we had heard on leaving the prison, that the ship from Delos had arrived. Accordingly, we agreed among ourselves to come as early as possible. The porter who was accustomed to open the door, told us to wait a while, and not go in till he bade us. 'The Eleven,' he said, 'are taking the chains off Socrates, and notifying to him that he is to die to-day.' Before long the man came out to us again and bade us follow him. Going into the chamber, we found Socrates just quit of his chains, and Xanthippe, with his little child in her arms, sitting by him. As soon as she saw us, she cried out, saying the sort of things that women do say, as, for instance, 'O Socrates, this is the last time that your friends will speak to you, or you to them.' Socrates looked at Crito, and said, 'Crito, let someone take this poor woman home.' Thereupon some of Crito's attendants led her away wailing and beating her breast."

After this the philosopher discussed various topics, as the close union of pleasure and pain, suggested by the sensation of relief when his fetters were removed, and his employment in prison, which had been turning Æsop's fables into verse.

He sent an ironical message to a certain Euenus, who, he said, was to follow him as quickly as possible; "for I must go," he said, "to-day; the Athenians will have it so." Before

long the conversation turned to the subject of Immortality. I shall not attempt to analyse the reasoning, but shall hasten on to the concluding scene, first giving, however, the final portion of Socrates' description of the rewards and punishments of the other world.

"When the dead are come to the place whither the divine guide conveys each separate soul, first they that have lived after a holy and noble fashion are divided from them that have lived otherwise; and they that are judged to have lived neither ill nor well, going to the river Acheron, mount the carriages there provided for them, and so are conveyed to the Great Lake. There dwelling they suffer cleansing and expiation, paying the penalty for such things as they have wrongly done, and receiving on the other hand, due reward for such things as they have done well, each according to his deserts. As for such as seem to be past all healing, by reason of the greatness of their transgressions, having committed many mid great robberies of holy things, or committed many murders against justice and law, these the attending Fate casts into the pit of Tartarus never more to come out thence. As for those who may be judged to have sinned sins, great indeed, but such as may be cleansed, as doing violence in the heat of anger to father or mother, or slaying any man in the like fashion, they must needs fall into the same pit, but having so fallen a wave carries them out of it every year, the manslaughterers by the stream of Wailing, and the parricides and matricides by the stream of Burning Fire, and when being so carried, they come over against the lake of Acheron, then they cry out aloud, calling to them whom they have slain or wronged, and beseeching them that they will suffer them to come out into the lake, and will so receive them. If they persuade them, then they come forth, and are quit of their troubles; if they persuade them not, then they are carried back into the pit and from thence again into the rivers. And this must be till they persuade them whom they have wronged, this being the penalty laid upon them by their judges. As for them that have lived with exceeding holiness, they being set free from these earthly dwelling-places, from

which they come forth as from a prison-house, pass to fair habitations above. And such of these as have duly cleansed themselves by philosophy, these live wholly without bodies for the time to come, and come to habitations yet fairer, such as it would be hard and beyond the opportunity of this present time to describe. Here, then, there is cause sufficient why we should do our best to keep fast hold in this present life of virtue and wisdom, seeing that the reward is noble and the hope great. Verily a man may have good confidence concerning his soul, who has put away from him all pleasures that concern the body as things that concern him not, but by temperance and courage and freedom and truth has made himself ready for his passage into the unseen world, that he is prepared to go when fate shall call him.

"As for me," he went on, "fate is now calling me, as they say in a play. It is time for me to go to the bath. It is well to do this before I die that the women may not have the trouble of washing me when I am dead."

"It is well, Socrates," said Cebes. "But tell us, is there anything you would have us do for your children or in any other matter?"

"I have nothing more to say," he replied, "do that for yourselves that I have bidden you, and you will do all that is best for me and mine, whether you now promise or no. But if you do it not, then whatever you may promise, you will fail in your performance." "We will do our best," said Cebes, "but how are we to bury you?"

"Bury me just as you please, that is if you can catch me, and if I do not altogether escape from you."

"Then with a quiet laugh and a look at us, he said: 'Dear friends, I cannot persuade Crito here that I who am now talking to you am Socrates. He thinks that that which he will soon see lying dead before him is Socrates, and asks, forsooth, how he is to bury me. Now, I have been long trying to convince you that when I shall have drunk the poison I shall not be with you any

more, but shall depart to some happy place. He thinks that this is all foolish talking on my part, meant to give comfort both to you and to myself. Now I want you to give to Crito just the opposite guarantee to that which he gave the court. He guaranteed that I would stay. Do you guarantee that I shall not stay when I am dead, but shall depart. So he will take the matter more easily, and when he sees my body burnt or buried may not be greatly troubled as if I had suffered some grievous loss. Do, Crito, what you think best, and what is customary in this matter.'

"Saying this he left us, going into an adjoining room where he was to take his bath. Crito followed him, bidding us remain where we were. So we remained, now talking to each other about what had been said, and thinking it over, and then conversing about our loss, for it seemed to us as if we were about to lose a father, and that we should be orphans for the rest of our days. When he had finished his bath, his children were brought to him; he had two that were quite young and one grown up. The women of his family also came. He talked to them in Crito's presence and told them what he wanted them to do. Then he sent the women and children away, and came out to us. It was now nearly sunset, for he had been a long time away. Then he came and sat down, saying but little. After this came the servant of the Eleven, and stood by his side. 'I shall not have to complain of you,' said the man, 'what I have to complain of others, that they fall into a rage, and curse me, when at the command of the magistrates I tell them that they must drink the poison. I have always found you during the time when you have been here, the very noblest and gentlest and best man of all that have ever come into this place. And now I am quite sure that you are not angry with me, but as you know who are to blame, with them. You know what I come for: cheer up, and try to bear what has to be borne as well as you can.' So speaking he burst into tears, and turned away, and went out. Socrates looked at him and said, 'You, too, must cheer up; I will do what you say!' Then turning to us, he said, 'How courteous the man is! All the time he has come and sometimes

talked with me, and has been the best of friends. And now see, how genuinely sorry he is! But come, Crito; let us do what he says; let someone bring the poison, if it has been pounded; if not, let the man pound it!' 'But,' said Crito, 'I think, Socrates, that the sun is still on the hills. and is not yet set. I know that others have put off drinking the poison till as late as possible; and after the message has been brought to them, they have dined and drunk bountifully. Anyhow, there is no hurry. There is plenty of time!' 'They are quite right,' replied Socrates, 'from their point of view; they think that by so doing they will get some advantage. But I shall be equally right in not doing so. For I think that I get no advantage by drinking the cup an hour or so later, but shall only make myself ridiculous, clinging to life. Pray, go and do as I say!' When Crito heard this he nodded to the slave that stood by him, and the slave went out, and after a while, came back bringing the attendant who had to administer the poison, which he carried ready pounded in a cup. When Socrates saw it, he said, 'Very good, my man; as you know all about these things, tell me what I ought to do.' 'Only this,' said the man, 'When you have drunk it, walk about, till you find your legs growing heavy; then lie down.' And so saying he reached out the cup to Socrates. He took it very quietly. He did not tremble, or change colour, or expression, but knitting his brow, as his habit was, said to the man, 'What do you say about the draught? Might one pour out a libation to anyone?' 'Well,' said he, 'we mix just so much as we think the proper quantity to drink.' 'I understand,' answered Socrates, 'still, I suppose one may, indeed one ought, to pray to the Gods that my change of abode from this place to that may be for good. Verily I do pray it. May it be so!' So speaking he drank off the hemlock as easily and cheerfully as a man could.

"But when we saw him drinking, and the cup empty, my tears came in a flood, yes, in spite of myself; so I covered my face and wept. Nor could Crito control himself. As for Apollodorus, he had never ceased weeping all the time, and now he burst out into such a passion of grief that we all broke down, all, that is, except Socrates. 'What are you about, my

good friends?' said he. 'This is why I sent the women away, lest they should do anything absurd; for I have always heard that a man ought to die in peace. Be quiet, I beseech you, and control yourselves.' Then for very shame we restrained our tears. He, meanwhile, had been walking about, and when he felt his legs growing heavy, he lay down on his back, for the man told him so to do. After a while the attendant who administered the poison looked at his feet and legs, and pressing one of his feet with much force, asked him if he felt anything. 'No,' said Socrates. After this the man felt his ankles, and so, going upwards, showed us how he was growing cold and stiff. Socrates himself said that when the coldness should reach his heart, then he should die. And when it reached the abdomen, he uncovered his face, for he had covered it, and said, and these were the last words that he uttered, 'Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius. See that you pay it and do not forget.' 'It shall be done,' said Crito. 'Is there anything else you have to say?' but he made no answer. A short time after the attendant uncovered his face, and we saw that the eyes were fixed. When Crito saw this, he closed the mouth and the eyes."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE ONE HERO OF THEBES

The Bœotians were proverbial, at least among their Athenian neighbours, for sensuality and stupidity. "They cultivate," says Cornelius Nepos, "strength of body rather than keenness of wit." The reproach was not wholly undeserved, though there were brilliant exceptions to the rule, in Hesiod, the earliest of the didactic poets of Greece, in the illustrious Pindar, and in Corinna, whom her contemporaries are said to have preferred even to Pindar himself. The political record of the people certainly excites no admiration. A certain stolid courage they undoubtedly possessed, but it was not always employed on the right side. In the Persian war, as we have seen, Thebes exerted herself with what we may fairly call a malignant energy against the cause of Greece. Her conduct to Plataea was again, to say the least, wanting in generosity. On the whole, Thebes may be said to have fallen below the standard, itself not very high, of rectitude and honour attained by the Greek States. The cause of this failure may probably be found, not so much in any national defect, as in the singular want of able leaders which, with one conspicuous exception, is observable throughout the whole of her history. It is this exception which is to be the subject of this chapter.

Epaminondas, son of Polymnis, was born about the year 419 B.C. He belonged to a noble house which circumstances had combined to impoverish. He early manifested a taste—very rare among his countrymen—for the study of philosophy and letters, and the circumstances of the time enabled him to cultivate it. The supremacy of Sparta, after the conclusion of the Peloponnesian War, led to a reaction in Bœotia, in favour of their Athenian neighbours. The relations between the two States became friendly, and Epaminondas was able to avail himself of facilities for learning, which at an earlier time he

could not have enjoyed. Socrates, he may well have seen and heard, though we do not hear of his having been enrolled among his disciples. That he attended the lectures of one of Socrates' most prominent followers, Cebes the Theban, we know. He learnt also from another disciple of Socrates, Spintharus of Tarentum. So admirable was his attitude as a disciple, so indefatigable was he as a listener, so averse to making any display of his own abilities, that Spintharus paid him the emphatic compliment: "I have never met with anyone who understood more or talked less."

The pursuit of philosophy did not hinder Epaminondas from acquiring the other accomplishments suited to his age. He made himself a proficient in athletic exercises. But it was observed that he specially affected such as tended to give agility to the frame. Boxing, the favourite pursuit of the Theban youth, he did not care to practise.

Epaminondas had reached the prime of life before his merit became known beyond the circle of his private friends. It is not unlikely that poverty stood in his way. It was during a great crisis in Theban history that he had for the first time an opportunity of acting a prominent part. In 388 B.C. by that disgraceful compact with Persia which is known as the Peace of Antalcidas, Sparta had obtained something like a mastery over the whole of Greece. She used her power with characteristic want of moderation. But of all her proceedings, perhaps the most insolent was the seizure of the citadel of Thebes in the year 383. A Lacedæmonian army, which was passing under permission through Bœotia, entered into an arrangement with the oligarchical party in Thebes. The oligarchs obtained possession of power, and the Spartans seized the citadel, the home government censuring and punishing the offending general, but refusing to give up their ill-gotten gains. Three years afterwards the leaders of the democratic party, who had fled for refuge to Athens, overthrew the usurping government: Epaminondas, ever scrupulous to a degree which scarcely had a parallel in Greek life, refused to

join in the plot, which involved the assassination of the oligarchical leaders. When it came to open fighting he was one of the first to take up arms. The revolution was speedily completed by the capitulation of the Spartan garrison; among the leaders of the party thus brought into power was Pelopidas, Epaminondas' most intimate friend. From that time he took an active part in the civil and military affairs of his country. It would be tedious to follow the shifting phases of these affairs and the ever changing relations of Thebes to the other chief cities of Greece. Nor, indeed, would it serve any useful purpose, as the name of Epaminondas scarcely occurs in the historians of the time. It will suffice to say that seven years after the Theban revolution we find him chosen to represent the State at a Congress of the Greek cities, and regarded with admiration by persons thoroughly well qualified to judge.

The Congress met at Sparta in the hope—so at least it was professed—of establishing a permanent peace. The principle in which negotiations were based was, that every city should be independent and that Sparta and Athens should divide the headship between them, taking the lead, i.e., when Greece was threatened by a common foe, but not pretending to dictate a policy to any of the states. All armaments were to be dissolved, all garrisons and governors put by stronger states to control the weaker were to be withdrawn. Any offender against the common peace was to be coerced; but no state was to be compelled to join in this process of justice.

All this seemed fair enough, but it was in fact a heavy blow at Thebes. There was something peculiar in the relation of Thebes to the other Bœotian cities. She claimed to be sovereign over them; they, or at least some of them, if not actually hostile, as was Plataea, refused to acknowledge anything but a leadership. This was the view which Sparta, now backed up by Athens, sought to enforce upon the Congress. Epaminondas argued the case for Thebes in an oration which would have done credit to the traditions of the best Athenian eloquence. It is needless to follow his reasoning;

we are only concerned now with the fact that he had been chosen to represent his country and that he represented it in a way that extorted the admiration of all that heard him. One peculiarly cogent argument was addressed to Sparta in particular. He argued with irresistible force that the principle for which he was contending had been accepted by the Spartan judges in the case of Plataea, and had been the foundation of the decision against that city, a decision which declared it to have broken its allegiance to Thebes. The Spartan king Agesilaus, who presided over the Congress, made no attempt at an answer, but put the simple question: "Will you take the oath for Thebes only, and leave the other Bœotian towns to take it for themselves singly?" "I will do it," was in substance the answer of Epaminondas, "if Sparta also will allow the other towns of Laconia to take the oath for themselves." Agesilaus then proposed that Thebes should be excluded from the Treaty of Peace, a motion which was carried by the Congress.

These proceedings took place in June. The Spartans, transported with a rage which even the friendly Xenophon describes as a "misguiding inspiration" of angry Heaven, resolved to take an exemplary vengeance for the affront which they conceived themselves to have received. It so happened that Cleombrotus, the other king, was at the time encamped on the Phocian border of Bœotia, with an army of Lacedæmonians and allies. Instructions were sent to him from home, approved, we are told, in the General Assembly with but one dissentient voice, to invade Bœotia. He obeyed them without delay, forced a passage by a pass which, on account of its difficulty, was but weakly guarded, and marching into the Thespian territory, pitched his camp at Leuctra.

The first impression made at Thebes was one of dismay, and the first idea to remain within the walls of the city. Epaminondas and his friend Pelopidas succeeded in infusing into their countrymen a more hopeful spirit, and in recommending a bolder course. The whole Theban force, with such of their Bœotian allies as were well affected to them,

marched out, and took up a position on rising ground immediately facing the Spartan camp. There were seven officers—*Bæotarchs* they were called—in command. Epaminondas and Pelopidas, with a colleague whose name we do not know, were for giving battle: three, terrified by the aspect of their Spartan adversaries, were for retreating behind the walls of Thebes. The seventh was absent, guarding the passes of Cithæron. When he came, he voted for the bolder policy. When this decision was taken, the courage of the Theban army rose to the occasion; even the omens, which had hitherto presaged defeat, became favourable.

And now the military genius of Epaminondas was to display itself. He adopted for the first time in the history of war a movement which has now become a commonplace of the strategic art. Hitherto the universal practice had been to set line against line, with only such differences of strength as might be due to the superior prowess of one division of the army or another. Epaminondas, in spite of the Theban inferiority in numbers, and, indeed, with the hope of neutralizing it, massed his chief forces on his left wing. Here was the "Sacred Band" as it was called, a battalion of three hundred soldiers, picked for their strength, courage, and skill in athletic exercises, and behind this a dense mass of soldiers, no less than fifty deep. With this he intended to strike an overwhelming blow.

The battle began with an engagement between the Lacedæmonian and the Theban cavalry. The latter, always as good as any force of the kind in Greece, easily vanquished their opponents. Then Epaminondas delivered his attack on the Spartan right, where Cleombrotus commanded in person. There was a fierce struggle. Such soldiers as the Spartans were not easily overborne, but even they could not long resist the personal prowess and the overwhelming force of their assailants. Cleombrotus fell early in the day; many of the superior officers of the Spartan force shared his fate; the whole wing, after a steady resistance, were driven to take refuge in their camp. Elsewhere there seems to have been but little

serious fighting. The retreat of the Spartans paralysed, as well it might, the energy and courage of the allies. The whole army retreated to its camp, where the Thebans did not venture to attack it.

Out of seven hundred Spartans four hundred fell on the field of battle, the loss among the Peloponnesian allies was one thousand, at a moderate estimate. The Theban loss was returned at three hundred.

It is difficult to estimate the effect which the result of the battle had upon Greek feeling. That Spartans could not be beaten, or, if they could not conquer, would die, was an almost universal article of belief. This faith had, it is true, received one or two hard shocks. In the course of the Peloponnesian War, a garrison of Spartans had surrendered at Sphacteria; in the Theban revolution, the force that occupied the citadel had evacuated it. These were thought to be departures from the severity of Spartan law, the law that had kept the Three Hundred at Thermopylæ. But excuses might be made for them. For the disaster at Leuctra nothing could be said. On that battlefield, for the first time in Greek history, the Spartans had been beaten in fair fight. The Soldier State never wholly recovered its prestige.

Epaminondas was determined to follow up this blow at Sparta by others that would help to enfeeble her. He brought back to their old home the remnants of the Messenian nation. Three centuries, all but a single year, had passed since after a gallant struggle it had been expelled by its Spartan neighbours, a people closely allied to it by descent. Nine generations had cherished the hope of a return; once or twice this hope had seemed about to be fulfilled. It was now accomplished by the remarkable genius of Epaminondas. Sparta lost a considerable portion of territory, and saw established on her south-western border a hostile power, embittered by ages of wrong, not only formidable in itself, but dangerous as giving a refuge to the discontented element in her own subject population.

Another step in the same direction was the foundation of the city of Megalopolis in Arcadia. The policy of Sparta had been to keep the Arcadian people disunited. She had, a few years before, actually broken up the ancient community of Mantinea into a number of villages. The Mantineans had themselves reinstated their town. And now Epaminondas united a number of other Arcadian communities in the new city.

To effect these objects he led an imposing force into the Peloponnesus. For a time Sparta itself was in danger. An unwall'd city, it had always trusted to the unrivalled valour of its inhabitants. The prestige of this valour lost, it seemed absolutely within reach of the most complete humiliation, even of destruction. Epaminondas did not persevere in his attack, though he was at one time within a very short distance of the city. His characteristic moderation induced him to hold his hand. But beyond all question, for the time at least, Thebes occupied that prominent position in the eyes of all Greece, for which Sparta and Athens had long contended.

This moderation was shown, unhappily in vain, in another instance. Epaminondas had led an army into Thessaly, where Pelopidas had fallen into the hands of local tyrants. During his absence the aristocratic party in the Bœotian town of Orchomenus conceived the wild idea of bringing about a revolution in Thebes. The plot was revealed to the Theban government, and the conspirators seized. A most cruel vengeance was executed on the unhappy town. All the males of military age were slain, and the rest of the population sold into slavery. Epaminondas returned to find that this shameful sentence had been carried into execution, and expressed his indignation in the strongest terms. This did not prevent his re-election to the highest office which the people had to bestow.

But his career was now drawing to a close. Pelopidas had fallen in Thessaly, a victim to his own desperate valour, and Epaminondas did not long survive him. Causes, which it would take too long to detail, had brought about hostility

between Thebes and part of that Arcadian people which had derived such benefits from his policy. Epaminondas felt himself compelled to intervene. He led a numerous and well-appointed army into the Peloponnese. By a rapid and well-planned movement he almost surprised Sparta. Finally, he confronted the enemy in the plain between Mantinea and Tegea, the battle that followed taking its name from the former town. The Theban contingent was on the left wing, confronting the Mantinean and Spartan troops. He adopted the same tactics that had proved so successful at Leuctra, hurling a massive body of his best troops at a point in the enemy's line, breaking it through, and so securing a first success. All went well, but for one fatal event. Epaminondas, fighting with desperate valour in front of his troops, fell, mortally wounded. The contemporary Xenophon gives no details of the manner in which he met his death. What we hear of it, we hear from a much later writer. According to this account he was carried by his impetuosity into the midst of the enemy, and after a gallant struggle received a mortal wound in his breast. His followers carried him out of the battle. The surgeons told him that to remove the spear would be followed by immediate death. He ordered it to be left where it was till the questions that he asked were answered. "Where is my shield?" was the first. He was told that it had been recovered. "It is well," he said. "Whose is the victory?" he asked a little later. He was assured that it rested with the Thebans and their allies. Satisfied as to his personal honour and the principle of his country, he ordered the spear to be drawn out and immediately expired. With him passed away the short-lived supremacy of Thebes. This simple fact is the most emphatic praise that can be given to "The One Hero of Thebes."