HISTORY OF THE GREEKS

I

PRIMITIVE TIMES

Ancient Peoples: the Pelasgi and Hellenes. — Greece is a very small country. It occupies the extremity of one of the three peninsulas which terminate Europe on the south. Its territory, inclusive of the islands, does not equal that of Portugal or of the State of Maine; but its shores are so indented that its coast line exceeds that of the whole Spanish peninsula. On the north it is attached to the prolonged mass of the eastern Alps, which form one of the walls of the Danube valley. On the south at three points it projects into the Mediterranean. The sea separates it on the west from Italy and on the east from Asia.

As far as one can pierce the obscurity of those remote ages, apparently the first inhabitants of Greece were the Pelasgi and the Iaones, or Ionians, members of the great Aryan race.

The Pelasgi covered with their tribes Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, and planted in those countries the first seeds of civilization. In their monuments they have left imperishable proofs of their activity and power, but they themselves have disappeared, and no trustworthy tradition concerning them exists. At Mycenæ, Tiryns, and Argos the remains of structures, called cyclopean and attributed to them, are still seen.

By the unaided efforts of her aborigines Greece was emerging from a savage condition, when, according to traditions now abandoned, but rendered lifelike by legend and poetry, colonies arrived from the more civilized countries of Asia and Africa, who brought with them knowledge of the useful arts and a purer religion. Thus the Egyptian

Cecrops, disembarking in Attica, is said to have collected the inhabitants into twelve small towns, of which Athens became later on the capital, and to have taught them to cultivate the olive, to extract its oil, and to till the ground. To draw closer the bonds of this new society, he is said to have instituted the laws of marriage and the tribunal of the Areopagus, whose just decisions prevented injurious quarrels.

What Cecrops did in Attica, Cadmus is reported to have done in Bœotia, whither he brought the Phœnician alphabet, and where he built the Cadmeum around which Thebes sprang up. At Argos Danaus introduced some of the Egyptian arts. The Phrygian Pelops settled in Elis, whence his progeny spread over almost the whole peninsula, which, as the Peloponnesus, preserves his name. Though only legends, these traditions hand down the memory of the ancient relations between Greece and the opposite coasts.

For Greece the most important event of this far-distant age was the invasion of the Hellenes. From the north of Greece, their first halting-place, they scattered all over the country, and effaced the Pelasgi by absorbing them.

Heroic Times. The Trojan War. — The Hellenes were divided into four tribes: the Ionians and Dorians, who at first remained in obscurity, and the Æolians and Achæans, who were prominent during the heroic period. History had not yet begun. Tradition was content with legends, which describe heroes travelling over Greece to deliver her from the scourge of brigands, oppressors, and ferocious beasts. They passed their lives in combating every form of evil, and received national gratitude and the title and honors of demi-gods, but were slaves to their own passions and abused their strength. Such men were Hercules and Theseus. Also popular songs celebrated the adventurous voyage of the Argonauts to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece; the exploits of the Seven Chiefs, who besieged Thebes, defiled by the crimes of Œdipus and the quarrels of the Epigoni, his sons; the wise Minos, and many other heroes of those fabulous days, whose tragic adventures poetry and art have consecrated.

The Trojan War, which for the first time brought Greece into immediate conflict with Asia, is, if considered in its general features, a historic fact. Troy was the capital of a powerful kingdom in the northwest of Asia Minor and

the last relic of the Pelasgic power. The hostility of race was increased by a deadly injury. Paris, one of the sons of King Priam, was smitten by the beauty of Helen, wife of Menelaus, king of Sparta, who had shown him hospitality. He carried her off, and thus enraged all Greece, which took the part of the outraged husband. An immense fleet, led by his brother, Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, landed a numerous army on the shores of the Troad. No decisive engagement took place for ten years. Troy, defended by Hector, the son of Priam, seemed likely to maintain a prolonged resistance, even after her chieftain had fallen under the blows of Achilles. The Greeks, then called the Achæans, employed stratagem. Pretending to withdraw, they left behind as an offering to the gods a mammoth wooden horse, which the Trojans carried inside their walls. The bravest of the Greeks were hidden in its flanks. Thus Troy fell. Hecuba, wife of Priam, and her daughters were carried into slavery. Priam was slain at the foot of the altar. Those of the Achæan princes who had not already fallen, like Patroclus, Ajax, and Achilles, set out for their own country. Some of them perished on the way. Some, like Ulysses, were long held back by contrary winds. Still others, like Agamemnon, found their throne and marriage-bed occupied by usurpers, whose victims they became. Many others, like Diomedes and Idomeneus, were forced to seek a new home in distant regions. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* relate with incomparable charm these old legends in which the popular imagination delighted.

The Dorian Invasion (1104 B.C.). **Greek Colonies and Institutions.** — The eighty years which followed the capture of Troy were filled with domestic quarrels, which overthrew the ancient royal families and caused the power to pass to new hands. The Dorians, led by the Heraclidæ, or descendants of Hercules, invaded the Peloponnesus, surprised defenceless Laconia, drove the Æolians from Messenia and the Achæans from Argos, took possession of Corinth and Megara, and later on marched against Athens, whither the fugitives had retreated. An oracle promised victory to that party whose king should perish first. Codrus, king of Athens, entered the hostile camp in disguise and caused himself to be slain. Thereupon the Dorians immediately withdrew. On account of the troubled times many inhabitants emigrated. On the coast of Asia Minor at Smyrna, Phocæa,

Ephesus, and Miletus, of Africa at Cyrene, of Sicily at Messina and Syracuse, and of Italy at Tarentum, Naples, and Sybaris, something like a new Greece was formed, which for a long time was richer and more beautiful than the mother country. In the Asiatic colonies, at the point of contact with Eastern society, was first established that civilization of which Athens afterward became the resplendent centre.

Despite its dispersion on so many shores and its division into so many states, the great Hellenic family preserved its national unity. This was brought about by community of language and religion, by the renown of certain oracles, and of Delphi in particular, whither people flocked from all parts of the Greek world, and by general institutions such as the Amphyctionic Councils and the Public Games. At the most celebrated of the Amphyctionic Councils, convened at Thermopylæ and Delphi, the deputies of a dozen peoples discussed common interests, and punished attacks upon the national religion or honor. The Olympian Games, where victory was passionately disputed, occurred every four years. They furnished the basis for chronology because, beginning with the year 776 B.C., the name of Corœbus, who won the prize of the stadium, was inscribed on the public register of the Elians, and it became customary to take the date of his victory as the starting-point in marking events.

II

CUSTOMS AND RELIGION OF THE GREEKS

Spirit of Liberty in Customs and Institutions. — In that mountainous land, where nature renders life a struggle, and which the free waters surround, has always breathed the spirit of independence, even in its most ancient traditions.

The kings were only military chieftains. When rendering justice, they were aided by the old men. Their revenues were voluntary gifts and a larger share of the booty and of the sacrifices. There is no trace of that servile adoration which Eastern monarchs received. There was no separate clergy and no holy book like the Bible, the Vedas, or the Avesta. Consecrated doctrines were lacking, and imagination was unrestrained. Every head of a family was the priest of his own home.

The aristocracy did not form a caste. The nobles were the strongest, the most agile, the bravest. Because they possessed those qualities, they were considered sons of the gods. Between them and the people there existed no impassable barrier, and no one lived idly on the renown of his ancestors. Each man made his own place, at first by force and later on by intelligence. What a distance from the East, with its absolute rule of deities or of kings and priests, their representatives! Here man commands! All must be movement, passion, boundless desires, audacious efforts. Prometheus has broken his chains and stolen fire from heaven in the form of life and thought!

Below the nobles, who constituted the king's council and held the line of the war-chariots in battle, was the body of freemen who, in the middle of the public square, formed the assembly around the circle of polished stones where the leaders sat with the prince. Though they took as yet no part in the deliberations, they heard all important questions discussed, and by their approving or hostile murmurs influenced the decision. Thus from most distant times Greece had the custom of public assemblies. The necessity

of convincing before commanding stimulated the mind of the people. The condition of the slave was mild. He was the family servant. When the aged herdsman Eumæus recognized his master's son, he kissed him on the brow and eyes, and the dying Alcestis offered her hand to her women as she bade them her last farewell.

The family was better constituted than among any oriental nation, the Jews alone excepted. Polygamy was prohibited. If Greek women were still bought, more than one already possessed the severe dignity of the Roman matron. They exercised care over domestic affairs. The daughters of kings drew water at the fountain like the fair Nausicaa, and Andromache fed the horses of Hector.

The Greek had no liking for tedious repasts or coarse pleasures or drunkenness. Immediately after a frugal meal he wished for games, exercise, dances, bards to chant the glory of the heroes. A stranger at his door was received without indiscreet curiosity, "for the guest is the messenger of Zeus." His wrath was terrible. On the field of battle he did not spare the fallen enemy. Still he might be appeased by gifts and entreaties, "those halting but tireless daughters of great Zeus, who follow after wrong to heal the wounds it has made, and who know how to touch the hearts of the valiant." Each warrior, feeling the need of friends, had a brother-in-arms, and self-sacrifice was the first law of those indissoluble friendships. Ten years after his return to Lacedæmon Menelaus still shut himself up in his palace to mourn for the friends whom he had lost under the walls of Troy.

Later on two unpleasant traits were naturally developed in Greek character: venality, because the Greeks were poor and the East had gold in profusion; duplicity, because they were surrounded by barbarians and must resist force by cunning.

We must furthermore remark that, though the amiable and charming qualities we have mentioned caused among this people many instances of individual greatness through courage, poetry, art, and thought, yet they did not result in the durable greatness of the nation. Political sagacity, which knows how to conciliate conflicting interests and found great states, was not included among the gifts which this privileged race received or acquired.

Religion. — Their religion was, at first, only the naturalism brought by them from Asia which had been their cradle. At the side of the legends of the heroes and gods, we find the adoration of forests, mountains, winds, and rivers. Agamemnon invokes the latter as great divinities, and to one of them Achilles consecrated his hair. This nature worship outlived paganism. In modern Greece people may still be met who believe in spirits of the waters. Nature assumes imaginary and changing forms. When looked at through mental darkness, these speedily become, in the eyes of faith, realities which anthropomorphism seizes upon and converts into personal gods. Idealized physical forces seem to be spiritual beings, and these spiritual beings acquire a body. "God made man in his own image," says Genesis. The Greeks made their gods in the image of man. The conception is the same at bottom, and yet the difference is great, for the point of departure is, on the one hand, the infinite perfections of the Supreme Being, and on the other, the finiteness of humanity. Hence the scandals of Olympus, together with its grandeurs, and the unsavory history of those gods, who were subject to all human passions, wrath, hatred, violence, and even human woes. "Servitude," exclaims a poet, "why, Demeter endured it! The smith of Lemnos, and Poseidon, and Apollo of the silver bow, and Ares the terrible endured it also!" In the combats before Troy many are wounded. "Their blood flows," says Homer, "but a blood that resembles dew, a sort of divine vapor."

When the theodicy of later times had defined with precision the functions of the immortals, those who counted the greatest number of worshippers were the twelve great gods of Olympus. Their chief, the enfeebled representative of the ancient idea of a Supreme Cause, was Zeus, who still shook the universe with his frown. But there were many other divinities, since Greek polytheism, by raising to divine rank the phenomena of nature, the passions of men, good things and evil, was led to multiply the gods incessantly.

These gods, not always respectable, were, nevertheless, considered the vigilant guardians of justice. The Furies, inexorable ministers of their vengeance, attached themselves to the guilty, whether living or dead. Their hair interwoven with serpents, one hand armed with a scourge of vipers and the other brandishing a torch, they filled the soul with terror and the heart with torture. This deifica-

tion of remorse was all the more necessary as a moral sanction because this religion was as uncertain of the future life as was ancient Judaism. No doubt punishment awaited the criminal in the infernal regions, and the just were rewarded, but how empty the rewards! In the Elysian Fields, amid groves of fruit and flowers in a perpetual summer the souls of the blessed continued to enjoy the pleasures which they had loved on earth. Minos still sat in judgment as in his island of Crete; Nestor recounted his exploits; Tiresias uttered oracles, and Orion hunted the wild beasts which he had formerly slain on the mountains, all regretting their life the while. "Console me not for my death," said the shade of Achilles. "I would rather till the soil for some poor husbandman than reign here." Moreover this immortality is promised only to heroes. As for the masses, they can count only on the good and the ill of this present life which the gods deal out to them. There is a kinship between the members of the city as of the family. The sons will be punished or rewarded even unto the third generation for the faults and virtues of their fathers; peoples likewise for those of their kings, and kings for their peoples. Such is the blessing and the warning of Abraham; a precious belief in default of a more energetic spring of action, and one which Hesiod sets forth in magnificent verses.

The gods could be appeased by offerings and prayers. At the door of the temple stood the priest, sprinkling lustral water upon the hands and heads of the worshippers. The sacrifice, always celebrated in the open air, was a sacred banquet, a sort of religious communion between the god, the priests, and the devotees. In the centre of the temple rose the statue of the god, surrounded by the statues of deities or heroes whom he condescended to admit within his sanctuary. On the walls offerings and votive gifts were suspended in gratitude for some marvellous cure or unexpected deliverance. Relics of the heroes were preserved. At Olympia the shoulder of Pelops by contact healed certain maladies. At Tegæa the bones of Orestes rendered that city victorious as long as it possessed them. The statues of the gods exerted special influences; one cured colds, another the gout. The image of Hercules at Erythræ restored sight to a blind man. Often the images exuded perspiration, moved their arms and eyes, and rattled their

weapons. At Andros, annually on the festival of Bacchus, water was changed into wine. The temples possessed property which did not belong to the priests, and, like churches in the Middle Ages, many enjoyed the right of asylum. Private persons or cities could be excluded from the sacrifices. Whole nations, placed under the ban of excommunication, were exterminated, like the Albigenses in France.

All peoples have tried to wrest from the future its secrets. All have had sorcerers or magicians or augurs, like the Greeks who interpreted celestial signs, dreamers who beheld the invisible, or rhapsodists, like the Pythia of Delphi, who felt the god move within and gave forth his oracles. By a strange misconception the philosophers accepted this superstition. "God," said Plato, "has bestowed divination upon man to supply his lack of intelligence," and the generals and politicians were obliged to reckon with it. However, let us note Hector's indignant protest against these pretended voices from on high, which may deceive. "The best of omens," said he, "is to defend one's country."

If the Hellenic gods did not greatly influence the moral development of their worshippers, they did much for art and poetry, and they did not fetter philosophic thought. "You will die," was the apostrophe to them of Prometheus through the mouth of Æschylus in a century of faith, "and some day these nations will hear a voice crying, 'The gods are dead!'"

III

LYCURGUS AND SOLON

Sparta before Lycurgus. — We know almost nothing concerning the history of Sparta during the two centuries which preceded Lycurgus. Only we see that the Spartans, few in number in the midst of a people who had not emigrated at the time of conquest, were obliged to remain constantly under arms, like an army encamped in a hostile country. The Dorians concentrated around Sparta, and alone constituted the state, since they alone could be present at the assemblies where the laws were enacted, and alone held public office. They had two classes of subjects: in the open town the Laconians, who possessed civil rights; in the country the Helots, or serfs attached to the soil, condemned to plough and harvest for their masters. The Spartans composed the ruling race, and were all equal to one another.

However, this equality gradually became disturbed. Powerful families arose, while others lost their lands. Hence there was disorder within the city and weakness outside. One man attempted to stop this premature decline by restoring the ancient customs. This man was Lycurgus.

Lycurgus: His Political Ideas. — The widow of his brother, King Polydectes, offered him her hand and the Spartan throne if he would put his nephew Charilaus to death. He refused, but the nobles, irritated by his wise administration during the minority of the young prince, forced him into exile. He travelled for a long time, studying the laws of other nations, and returned to Lacedæmon with Homer's poems after an absence of eighteen years. With her religious authority the Pythia of Delphi supported the reforms which he proposed, and which the Spartans, weary of their dissensions, welcomed with favor. His laws maintained the relation already established between the dominant Spartans and the subject Laconians. They regulated the rights of the two kings, Sparta being a dual monarchy; of the

senate, composed of twenty-eight members of at least sixty years of age; of the general assembly, which could adopt or reject propositions presented by the senate and kings; and lastly of the Ephory, a body of magistrates appointed annually, perhaps instituted by Lycurgus, but whose great power dates from a later period. By hereditary right the two kings were the high priests of the nation, commanded the army, and were to enforce the decrees formulated by the senate and freely accepted by the popular assembly.

Civil Laws. — His civil laws aimed at the establishment of equality among the citizens. To effect this, he divided the land into 39,000 plots, — 30,000 for the Laconians and 9,000 for the Spartans. This division was attended with great difficulties, and led to a riot, in which Lycurgus was wounded; nevertheless, it succeeded. The 9,000 lots of the Spartans comprised the greater part of Laconia, and naturally included the most fertile lands, whose value the Helots were to increase. Forbidding the alienation to strangers of any of these lots, Lycurgus erected them into a sort of permanent military fiefs. War constantly diminished the number of the Spartans, so that they numbered only a thousand in the time of Aristotle. Consequently great wealth accumulated in the hands of a few families. The Laconians, on the contrary, could ally themselves with foreigners, so their number increased; but their possessions relatively decreased, and the time came when there was only a small number of rich people and below them a multitude of poor. Hence arose revolutions which disturbed the last days of Sparta.

To maintain equality, Lycurgus prohibited luxury and the use of gold or silver money, and instituted public repasts, where the strictest frugality always reigned. At the same time, he forbade to the Spartans commerce, arts, or letters, and prescribed for all the citizens the same exercises, setting forth as the single aim of their whole life to provide and train robust defenders for the country. The same principle guided the education of the children, who belonged far more to the state than to their parents. The child born deformed was put to death. The rest, by means of violent exercises, which were imposed also on the girls, acquired strength and suppleness, and all were inspired with sentiments of respect for old age and the law, and of contempt for pain and death.

The Messenian Wars. — Delivered from dissensions by this rigorous legislation, Sparta completed the conquest of Laconia, and began that of the Peloponnesus. She first turned her arms against the Messenians, a Doric tribe settled west of the Taygetus mountains. There were two wars; the one lasted twenty years (743–723), the other seventeen (685–668). The hero of the first was the fierce Aristodemus, who immolated his daughter in obedience to an oracle, and killed himself, that he might not witness the humiliation of his people after the capture of Ithome, which he had defended for ten years. In the second, Aristomenes performed marvels. Not only did he vanquish the Spartans, but he made his way by night into their city and hung up a trophy in one of their temples. In vain did the poet Tyrtæus stimulate the courage of the Lacedæmonians. Aristomenes, after being made prisoner, and cast alive into the deep pit called Ceadas, escaped, and recommenced his daring career. When betrayed by his ally, the king of the Arcadians, and defeated in a great battle, he retired to Mount Ira and there held out for eleven years. At last he was forced to yield, but preferred exile to servitude. Many Messenians emigrated and founded Messina in Sicily. Those who remained in Messenia shared the fate of the Helots.

This conquest was followed by wars against the cities of Tegea and Argos, but neither was completely subdued. The Spartans, in the sixth century before our era, were considered the leading people of Greece, and were in fact the most formidable.

Athens until the Time of Solon. The Archonship. — After the death of Codrus, Athens abolished the monarchy and appointed archons. Their office until 752 was for life, then for ten years, after 683 for only one year, and finally was shared by nine magistrates. This divided authority could not check the excesses of the aristocracy or the projects of the ambitious. The stern code of Draco, which punished every offence with death, was rejected, and troubles continued.

Solon. — In 594 the task of reforming the laws and the constitution was intrusted to Solon, then famous for his poetry. He began by making the payment of debt easier, and by releasing all debtors, but he refused to allow the partition of land which the poor demanded. His aim was

to abolish an oppressive aristocracy, without, however, establishing what would be called to-day a radical democracy. He divided the people into four classes, according to property. To belong to the first class, one must possess an income of 500 medimni, about eighty-five dollars; for the second class, 400; for the third, 300. Those who had a smaller income were the fourth class, or Thetes. Only members of the first three classes were eligible to public office, but all might attend the public assemblies and sit in the tribunals. The nine archons, the supreme magistrates of the state, could not discharge military duties. The senate consisted of 400 members, chosen by lot from the first three classes, and subjected to severe tests. Every proposition, made to the public assembly, must be first discussed by it. The people confirmed the laws, nominated to office, deliberated on state affairs, and filled the courts in order to try great lawsuits. The Areopagus, composed of former archons, was the supreme tribunal for capital causes. It superintended morals and magistrates, and could even annul the decisions of the people. Thus this constitution was a clever mixture of aristocracy and democracy, where the management of public affairs was reserved to the enlightened citizens. In his civil laws Solon encouraged labor, and never, like Lycurgus, sacrificed the man to the citizen, or the moral code to politics.

The Pisistratidæ. Clisthenes. Themistocles. — After promulgating his laws, the Athenian legislator departed to consult the wisdom of the ancient Eastern nations. When he returned in 565, he found that Athens had given itself a master. The parties, which he had thought to stifle, had reappeared. From these fresh struggles had sprung the tyranny of Pisistratus, who, without abolishing the constitution, managed, as the favorite of the people and the leader of the democracy, to exercise in the city an influence which annulled that of the magistrates. His mild tyranny, however, was friendly to letters and arts. In 560, by pretending that an attempt had been made upon his life, he succeeded in having guards appointed for his protection. Twice exiled, he was twice recalled, and retained power until his death. He had honored, if not legitimized, his usurpation by a skilful and prosperous administration.

His two sons, Hipparchus and Hippias, succeeded (528), and governed together; but when Hipparchus fell, in 514,

under the dagger of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, Hippias became a cruel tyrant. The powerful family of the Alcmeonidæ, who had fled from Athens, thought the occasion favorable to overthrow the last of the Pisistratidæ. They bribed the Pythia of Delphi, who induced the Spartans to support them. Aided by a Dorian army, they did in fact return to Athens, and compel Hippias to flee to the Persians (510). The city, thus delivered, fell at once into intestine quarrels. Clisthenes and Isagoras, leaders of the people and of the aristocrats, banished each other in turn. The former finally carried the day, in spite of the succor furnished his rival by the Spartans. To reward the people who had supported him, he made the constitution more democratic, and established ostracism, a custom which consisted in exiling, as dangerous to the city, any citizen whose name was inscribed on at least 6000 voting shells. Athens, the mistress of Eubœa, the Thracian Chersonese, and the island of Lemnos, which Miltiades had conquered, was already a maritime power. To increase her strength, Themistocles built 200 vessels with the income of the silver mines of Larium. This fleet was destined to save Athens and Greece.

IV

THE PERSIAN WARS

Revolt of the Asiatic Greeks from the Persians (500). — Darius had undertaken his expedition against the Scythians, and had conquered Thrace, without the Greeks paying any heed to this formidable aggressor, who must inevitably be tempted to lay his hand upon their country also. The Asiatic Greeks, who were subject to Persia, struck a blow for liberty. Miletus, a colony of Athens, was the centre of the movement. It asked of the mother city the aid which Sparta had refused to give. Athens furnished vessels and a body of troops, which contributed to the capture and burning of Sardis. A defeat, sustained in their return from this expedition, disgusted the Athenians with the war, the burden of which then fell upon the Ionians, who were crushed in a naval battle. After Miletus was taken, and all the Greek cities of Asia were again subdued, a Persian army commanded by Mardonius crossed to Europe to chastise the allies of the rebels. The Persian fleet was destroyed by a tempest near Mount Athos, and the Thracians inflicted heavy losses upon the land forces, so Mardonius returned to Asia.

First Persian War. Marathon and Miltiades (490). — A second expedition, under the command of Datis and Artaphernes, guided by the tyrant Hippias, set out by sea through the Cyclades, which it subdued, and disembarked 100,000 Persians at Marathon. There 10,000 Athenians and 1000 Platæans, under the command of Miltiades, by their heroic courage saved not only their country, but the liberty and the civilization of the world. Hippias fell upon the field of battle. The Persian fleet, after a vain attempt to surprise Athens, sailed away in shame to Asia. Miltiades, the hero of that grand day, was commissioned to subdue the Cyclades, but he failed before Paros. Being accused of treason, he was condemned to a fine, which he could not pay, and died in prison of his wounds. Then Themistocles became the most influential man at Athens. He realized that the Per-

sians would renew their attempt. Taking advantage of an insurrection in Egypt, which forced Darius to postpone his revenge, he devoted all the resources of Athens to increasing the fleet.

Second Persian War. Salamis (480). — Xerxes succeeded Darius. After he had reduced Egypt once more to submission, he agitated his immense empire to make a resistless invasion of Greece with a million men and more than 1200 ships. On arriving from Susa at Abydos he threw a bridge across the Dardanelles. To punish Athos, as he said, he had a canal dug, which relieved his fleet of the necessity of sailing round that dangerous promontory. Thrace, Macedon, and Thessaly were deluged with troops, and submitted. He encountered resistance only at the Pass of Thermopylæ. King Leonidas, who held it with 300 Spartans and a few Thespians, thwarted all his efforts, but a traitor showed the Persians a path by which they could outflank the heroic band. They still refused to retreat, and in the very camp of Xerxes sought a glorious death. After Thermopylæ had been forced, the Greek fleet could no longer remain off Artemisium, at the north of Eubœa, where it had anchored at first. It withdrew to Salamis, leaving Attica and central Greece defenceless. Xerxes entered Athens, which he burned. He believed the war was finished, but all Athens was on board her ships. Themistocles employed a stratagem to keep the Greeks together at a favorable point, and excited Xerxes to end all by a naval battle. From the throne erected for him on the shore the great king beheld the defeat and destruction of his fleet at the battle of Salamis. Six months after crossing the Hellespont as a conqueror, he repassed it as a fugitive.

Platæa (479). — He had, however, left Mardonius in Greece with 300,000 men. A hundred thousand Greeks collected at Platæa under the orders of Pausanias, king of Sparta. Of the barbarian host only a detachment escaped, which had retreated before the battle. On the same day the Greek fleet won a complete victory at Mycale on the Asiatic coast. Thus the European continent was purged from the barbarians, and the sea was free. Athens launched out upon it.

Continuance of the War by Athens. — To Athens belongs the chief honor in resisting the Persian invasion. Alone she had conquered at Marathon with Miltiades. At Salamis her Themistocles had again assured the victory by forcing the allies to conquer in spite of themselves. The glory of Mycale belonged almost wholly to her, and she had shared that of Platæa. Sparta could cite only the immortal but futile self-sacrifice of Leonidas. The treachery of King Pausanias, whom the ephors had sent to Thrace to expel the Persian garrisons, and who treated secretly with Xerxes, completely disgusted Lacedæmon with this war. Athens, thus left alone at the head of the allies, boldly accepted the rôle of antagonist to the great king. She herself assumed the offensive. Soon, asking vessels and money from her allies instead of soldiers, she continued the struggle in the name of Greece, but on her own account and for her own advantage. She subdued Amphipolis and a part of Thrace, whither she sent 10,000 colonists, and undertook to free the Asiatic Greeks. Cimon in one day gained two victories, one by land and one by sea, near the banks of the Eurymedon (466). Thereby he secured for Athens the empire of the seas, and, taking possession of the Thracian Chersonese, he wrested from the Persians the key to Europe.

Last Victories of the Greeks. Cimon. — Artaxerxes Longimanus ascended the throne in 465, and beheld the shame of his empire still further increased. Another rebellion in Egypt threatened the Persian monarchy with dismemberment. The Athenians hastened to aid the rebels, who held out for seven years. The banishment of Cimon, who was ostracized, and the rivalry of Sparta and Athens, which led to the first war between the two republics and their allies, gave a little respite to the Persians. But Cimon was recalled, and reconciled Athens and Sparta. Immediately he began hostilities against the common enemy. One victory near Cyprus, and another on the coast of Asia, gloriously terminated both his military career and the Persian wars. The great king, threatened even in his own dominions, signed a humiliating treaty, which restored liberty to the Asiatic Greeks (448). His fleet was prohibited from entering the Ægean Sea, and his armies from approaching within three days' march of its coasts. Cimon died in his triumph.