

IX

CONVERSION OF GREECE AND OF THE GREEK KINGDOMS INTO ROMAN PROVINCES

(323-146)

Dismemberment of Alexander's Empire.—Three months after Alexander's death, his wife Roxana gave birth to Alexander Aigos. The conqueror left a natural son named Hercules; a half-brother, the imbecile Arrhideus, and two sisters, Cleopatra and Thessalonica. His imperious mother, Olympias, was still alive. After long debates Arrhideus and Alexander Aigos were both proclaimed. Antipater was placed over the European forces, Craterus was made a sort of guardian to Arrhideus, and Perdikkas became a general prime minister. Continual convulsions during twenty-four years resulted from this divided authority, and cost the lives of all the members of the royal family and of a majority of the generals. The empire was rent asunder along the lines of its ancient nationalities. Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, and Macedon were reconstructed after the decisive battle of Ipsus, where Antigonus made a last effort to restore unity (301).

Kingdoms of Syria (201-64) and Egypt (301-30).—Seleucus Nicator, one of the victors of Ipsus, founded the dynasty of the Seleucidae, to whom he gave for capitals Seleucia and Antioch and for empire all the countries comprised between the Indus and the Ægean Sea. His son could not prevent the Gauls from settling in Galatia. Antiochus II, despite his surname of the God, saw two kingdoms rise in his eastern provinces, that of the Bactrians, which did not last, and that of the Parthians, which renewed the Persian monarchy. Antiochus III the Great (224-187) ventured to attack the Romans, who vanquished him at Thermopylæ (191) and Magnesia (190), wrested from him Asia on this side of the Tarsus, and reduced Syria itself to a Roman province (64).

Egypt saw better days under the first of the Lagidae, all

of whom bore the name of Ptolemy. It was then a powerful state, the centre of the world's commerce, the asylum of letters and science, with a magnificent library at Alexandria. But the clever kings were speedily succeeded by debauched, cruel, incapable sovereigns, and after them by foreign intervention.

Thus Ptolemy Soter (301) added to his kingdom Cyrenaica, Cyprus, Cœle-Syria, and Phœnicia. Philadelphus (285) developed the navy and maintained two successful wars, one against his brother Magas, governor of Cyrene, and the other against the king of Syria, who was unable to conquer Egypt. Euergetes (247) penetrated in Asia as far as Bactriana and in Africa to the interior of Ethiopia, while his lieutenants subjugated the coasts of Arabia Felix to secure the trade-route to India. Philopator (222) began the decline, which Epiphanes (205) hastened by placing himself under the tutelage of the Romans, who thenceforth constantly intermeddled in Egyptian affairs till the days of Cæsar and Cleopatra. The latter was a dangerous siren, to whom Antony sacrificed his honor, his fortune, and his life. Octavius resisted her, and the queen, threatened with adorning a Roman triumph, died from the poison of an asp. Egypt became a Roman province (30), as the kingdom of Pergamos in Asia Minor had done (129) by virtue of the testament of its last king.

Kingdom of Macedon (301-146). Cynocephalæ and Pydna.

—Macedon did not exist so long, but fell with greater honor, for her last two kings dared withstand Rome, who had become through her triumph over Carthage the greatest military power in the world. The descendants of Antigonos, who was vanquished at Ipsus, had secured for themselves the throne of Macedon, and like Philip and Alexander tried to obtain the supreme power over Greece. During the second Punic War, the Romans by the conquest of Illyricum gained a footing on the Greek peninsula. Philip of Macedon tried to drive them into the sea, and made with Hannibal (215) a treaty which was to assure him the possession of Greece; but a defeat on the banks of the Aoüs forced him to beat a rapid retreat to his kingdom. The Roman senate, taking advantage of the enmities which his ambition had aroused, announced itself the protector of the nations threatened by him. He had the impudence to provoke Rome, now rid of Hannibal. The reply was prompt and

terrible. The legions crushed at Cynocephalæ the phalanx, which had conquered Greece and Asia (197). His son Perseus was no more fortunate at Pydna (168). In 146 Macedon was effaced from the list of nations and the kingdom of Alexander was henceforth nothing but a Roman province.

Death of Demosthenes (322). The Achæan League (251-146).—While the successors of Alexander were disputing the fragments of his purple robe in Asia, Greece made an effort to recover her liberty. Demosthenes, who had remained the soul of the national party, and Athens, who hoped to be able to break once more the dominion of the stranger, stirred up the Lanian war. It began well but ended in disaster. Demosthenes was banished and took poison (322). On the base of the statue which, later on, his fellow-countrymen erected to his memory, these words were inscribed: "If thy power had equalled thy eloquence, Greece would not to-day be captive." Phocion perished five years later by the order of the Macedonians. However, the Greek cities profiting by the disorders in Macedon regained their liberty; but the foreign rule when it withdrew left behind, like an impure deposit, tyrants in every town. Supported by mercenaries, these men terrorized over the citizens and extorted from their cowardice the gold which served to rivet their bonds. One man, Aratus, undertook to overthrow these detestable rulers. First he reconstituted the ancient federation of the twelve Achæan cities. Then he delivered Sicyon (251), Corinth, Megara, Trezene, Argos, Mantinea, Epidaurus, and Megalopolis from their tyrants, and made alliance with the Ætolian league in order to raise a barrier against the ambition of Macedon. To extend his patriotic work to central Greece, he aided in the deliverance of Athens and Orchomenus. A few efforts more and the Achæan league would have embraced the whole of Hellas.

Unfortunately, Sparta revived with a spasm of reform. Cleomenes made all property common, reestablished the public meals and reconstituted with foreigners a new Spartan people which immediately contended with the Achæans, and disputed their preponderance in the Peloponnesus. Aratus was constrained to implore assistance from the Macedonians, who defeated Cleomenes at Sellasia (221). This defeat crushed new Sparta, but placed the Achæans in dependence upon Macedon, who made everything bend before

her. The Romans becoming disquieted at this reviving strength prepared to intervene so as to destroy it. The violent deeds of Philip and the murder of Aratus gave them numerous allies, and the Ætolians helped win the battle of Cynocephalæ. Victorious Rome took nothing for herself, but divided everything in order to weaken all. She destroyed the leagues in Thessaly and central Greece by declaring that every city should be free. The Greeks applauded, not without perceiving that this liberty would lead them to servitude. Philopœmen of Megalopolis, the worthy successor of Aratus, at the head of the Achæan league tried to delay the moment of inevitable ruin. Lacedæmon, which had fallen into the hands of the tyrants, was a hotbed of intrigue. Philopœmen slew with his own hand in battle the tyrant Machanidas, and forced his successor Nabis to raise the siege of Messene. Entering Sparta as a victor, he united it to the Achæan league. It was not the policy of Rome that the whole Peloponnesus should form a single state. Her envoys urged Messene to revolt. Philopœmen in an expedition against her fell from his horse, was captured and condemned to drink hemlock (183).

During the war against Perseus, the Achæans secretly but fervently desired his success, and for this Rome called them to account after the victory of Pydna. A thousand of their best citizens were deported to Italy (168). Released seventeen years afterwards, they brought back to their country an imprudent hatred of Rome. When the senate announced that Corinth, Sparta, and Argos must cease to form part of the league, the Achæans flew to arms and fought the last battle for liberty (146) at Leucopetra, near Corinth. Corinth was burned by Mummius, Greece reduced to a province, and this people, who had held so great a place in the world, were lost in the ocean of the Roman power.

X

SUMMARY OF GREEK HISTORY

Services Rendered by the Greeks to General Civilization.
—Epicharmes, the creator of Greek comedy, said twenty-four centuries ago: "All blessings are bought from the gods by labor." What the poet said, Greece proved. By dint of an activity, of which no other people had until then ever furnished an example, did the Greeks succeed in taking so high a rank among the nations. They covered the coasts of the Mediterranean with flourishing cities. They raised a poor and petty country to mastery of the world by arms and commerce, but, above all, by civilization.

Among the sciences by establishing the methods or processes they also created mathematics, geometry, mechanics, and astronomy, which Egypt and Chaldaea had only outlined. They laid the foundations of botany and medicine.

In the sciences indeed we have advanced much farther than they by following the path of patient investigation and pure reasoning which Hippocrates, Archimedes, and Aristotle opened up, but in letters, arts, and philosophy the Greeks have remained the eternal masters. The Romans and the moderns have been only their pupils.

They carried to perfection the epic poem with Homer; the elegy with Simonides; the ode with Pindar; tragedy with Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, who succeeded in making it grandly religious, patriotic and moral; comedy with Aristophanes and Menander; history with Herodotus and Thucydides; forensic and legal eloquence with Demosthenes, Æschines, Isocrates, and Lysias.

In the arts the world still follows their impulse and imitates their models. While varying their three orders, we copy their architecture. Their mutilated statues are the pride of our museums. Our decorative arts draw inspiration from the graceful designs of their vases or from the ornaments of their temples and tombs. The moderns have

created only one new art, music, and developed one ancient art, painting.

In philosophy, as they had no holy books and consequently no body of fixed doctrines, no sacerdotal class jealously guarding for itself both dogma and learning, no social aristocracy limiting the field of thought, they allowed the utmost freedom to the mind. Thus they created moral and political philosophy in entire independence. They made it the domain of all and assigned as its only aim the quest of truth. Thereby they threw open to the human intellect an immense horizon. That which feeling only vaguely attained, reason proceeded to grasp, and with unequalled power. What have twenty centuries added to the philosophical discoveries of the Hellenes?

In short, such was the fruitfulness of their prolific nature, that on the very ruins of Greek society sprang forth that elevated moral doctrine of stoicism which, combined with and modified by the Christian spirit, is still capable of developing great characters.

The East, earlier than the Hellenes, gave birth to sages, but the people below them were only herds, docile to the voice of the master. In Greece, humanity became conscious of itself. There man assumed full possession of the faculties planted in him by the Creator, and of the sentiment of his own personal dignity. Slavery, preserved in the cities by the politicians and justified in books by the philosophers, was a relic of that past from which the emancipation of the freest nations is always slow.

Defects of the Political and Religious Spirit among the Greeks.—Still, this picture has its shadows. Admirable political theorists, with Aristotle at their head, they were able to organize nothing but cities. The idea of a great state was unwelcome to them. Never, except partially and for a brief space during the Persian wars, or too late at the time of the Achæan league, did they consent to join their forces and destinies in fraternal union. Thus they lost their independence on that day when the half-barbaric, half-Hellenic, wholly military Macedonian monarchy was formed at their gates. To Rome their subjugation was still more easy.

The Greek religion, so favorable to art and poetry, was less so to virtue. By representing the gods, personifications of natural forces, as enslaved by the most shameful

passions, committing theft, incest, and adultery, breathing hatred and revenge, it obscured the idea of uprightness, and rendered evil legitimate by the example of those who should have been the incarnation of good. Then when human reason contradicted the divine legends, Greek polytheism at last found itself in that fatal condition wherein religion and the moral code are opposed to each other. The latter attacked the former and won the battle. The gods fell from Olympus. Grass grew in the courtyards of the temples. This would have been a gain, if the de-throned deities had been replaced by such a virile system of instruction as would enlighten and purify human reason. That virile instruction was found here and there on the lips of the poets and philosophers, but the masses did not listen. Delivered to the grovelling superstitions in which among the weak the great beliefs end, Greek religion was without defence when assailed by the Asiatic corruption introduced by the conquests of Alexander. Gold depraved alike men and institutions. The mercenaries of the Seleucidae and of the Ptolemies, men without a country inasmuch as without liberty, lost together with their manly virtues the generous self-devotion which had made them so great at Marathon and Thermopylae, and the self-respect and reverence for the true and the beautiful which had formed so many good citizens and created so many masterpieces. Greece from time to time did still produce some superior men, but only as a long-time fertile but exhausted soil yields at intervals a scanty fruit.

HISTORY OF THE ROMANS

I

ROME. THE ANCIENT ROMAN CONSTITUTION

(753-366)

The Royal Period (753-510).—The fertile plains of Latium and Etruria meet under the Sabine mountains on the banks of the Tiber, the largest stream of the Italian peninsula. At some distance from its junction with the Anio, this river flows between nine hills, two of which, Janiculus and Vaticanus, dominate the right bank, while the other seven distinguish the left. It was there that Rome arose.

Legend, which explains every beginning and delights in the marvellous, recognizes seven kings of Rome: Romulus, the son of Mars, nursed by a she-wolf, the founder upon the Palatine of the present city; Numa, the religious king, whom the nymph Egeria inspired; Tullus Hostilius, who overthrew Alba Longa after the combat between the Horatii and Curiatii; Ancus Martius, the founder of Ostia; Tarquinius Priseus, who perhaps owed his crown to an Etruscan conquest of Rome; Servius Tullius, the legislator; and lastly Tarquinius Superbus, the abominable tyrant whom the Romans expelled.

History, more sedate, has many doubts concerning this royal period of which the only glimpse is afforded by charming tales. Nevertheless it credits the foundation upon the Palatine of Roma Quadrata, a city whose walls have recently been discovered. This city exercised its robust youth against its Latin, Sabine and Etruscan neighbors, and grew so rapidly that Servius was obliged to erect those extensive walls which sufficed during the whole period