

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS BETWEEN THE DEFEAT OF THE ATHENIANS AT SYRACUSE AND THE BATTLE OF ARBELA.

412 B. C. Many of the subject allies of Athens revolt from her on her disasters before Syracuse being known; the seat of war is transferred to the Hellespont and eastern side of the Ægæan.

410. The Carthaginians attempt to make conquests in Sicily.

407. Cyrus the Younger is sent by the King of Persia to take the government of all the maritime parts of Asia Minor, and with orders to help the Lacedæmonian fleet against the Athenian.

406. Agrigentum taken by the Carthaginians.

405. The last Athenian fleet destroyed by Lysander at Ægospotami. Athens closely besieged. Rise of the power of Dionysius at Syracuse.

404. Athens surrenders. End of the Peloponnesian war. The ascendancy of Sparta complete throughout Greece.

403. Thrasylbulus, aided by the Thebans and with the connivance of one of the Spartan kings, liberates Athens from the Thirty Tyrants, and restores the democracy.

401. Cyrus the Younger commences his expedition into Upper Asia to dethrone his brother Artaxerxes Mnemon. He takes with him an auxiliary force of ten thousand Greeks. He is killed in battle at Cunaxa, and the ten thousand, led by Xenophon, effect their retreat in spite of the Persian armies and the natural obstacles of their march.

399. In this and the five following years, the Lacedæmonians, under Agesilaus and other commanders, carry on war against the Persian satraps in Asia Minor.

396. Syracuse besieged by the Carthaginians, and successfully defended by Dionysius.

394. Rome makes her first great stride in the career of conquest by the capture of Veii.

393. The Athenian admiral, Conon, in conjunction with the Persian satrap Pharnabazus, defeats the Lacedæmonian fleet off Cnidus, and restores the fortifications of Athens. Several of the former allies of Sparta in Greece carry on hostilities against her.

388. The nations of Northern Europe now first appear in authentic history. The Gauls overrun great part of Italy and burn Rome. Rome recovers from the blow, but her old enemies the Æquians and Volscians are left completely crushed by the Gallic invaders.

387. The peace of Antalcidas is concluded among the Greeks by the mediation, and under the sanction, of the Persian king.

378 to 361. Fresh wars in Greece. Epaminondas raises Thebes to be the leading state of Greece, and the supremacy of Sparta is destroyed at the battle of Leuctra. Epaminondas is killed in gaining the victory of Mantinea, and the power of Thebes falls

with him. The Athenians attempt a balancing system between Sparta and Thebes.

359. Philip becomes king of Macedon.

357. The Social War breaks out in Greece, and lasts three years. Its result checks the attempt of Athens to regain her old maritime empire.

356. Alexander the Great is born.

343. Rome begins her wars with the Samnites: they extend over a period of fifty years. The end of this obstinate contest is to secure for her the dominion of Italy.

340. Fresh attempts of the Carthaginians upon Syracuse. Timoleon defeats them with great slaughter.

338. Philip defeats the confederate armies of Athens and Thebes at Chæronea, and the Macedonian supremacy over Greece is firmly established.

336. Philip is assassinated, and Alexander the Great becomes king of Macedon. He gains several victories over the northern barbarians who had attacked Macedonia, and destroys Thebes, which, in conjunction with Athens, had taken up arms against the Macedonians.

334. Alexander passes the Hellespont.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF ARBELA, B. C. 331.

Alexander deserves the glory which he has enjoyed for so many centuries and among all nations: but what if he had been beaten at Arbela, having the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the deserts in his rear, without any strong places of refuge, nine hundred leagues from Macedonia!—NAPOLEON.

Asia beheld with astonishment and awe the uninterrupted progress of a hero, the sweep of whose conquests was as wide and rapid as that of her own barbaric kings, or of the Scythian or Chaldæan hordes; but, far unlike the transient whirlwinds of Asiatic warfare, the advance of the Macedonian leader was no less deliberate than rapid; at every step the Greek power took root, and the language and the civilization of Greece were planted from the shores of the Ægæan to the banks of the Indus, from the Caspian and the great Elyrcanian plain to the cataracts of the Nile; to exist actually for nearly a thousand years, and in their effects to endure forever.—ARNOLD.

A LONG and not unimportant list might be made out of illustrious men whose characters have been vindicated during recent times from aspersions which for centuries had been thrown on them. The spirit of modern inquiry, and the tendency of modern scholarship, both of which are often said to be solely negative and destructive, have, in truth, restored to splendor, and al-

most created anew, far more than they have assailed with censure, or dismissed from consideration as unreal. The truth of many a brilliant narrative of brilliant exploits has of late years been triumphantly demonstrated, and the shallowness of the skeptical scoffs with which little minds have carped at the great minds of antiquity has been in many instances decisively exposed. The laws, the politics and the lines of action adopted or recommended by eminent men and powerful nations have been examined with keener investigation, and considered with more comprehensive judgment than formerly were brought to bear on these subjects. The result has been at least as often favorable as unfavorable to the persons and the states so scrutinized, and many an oft-repeated slander against both measures and men has thus been silenced, we may hope forever.

The veracity of Herodotus, the pure patriotism of Pericles, of Demosthenes, and of the Gracchi, the wisdom of Clisthenes and of Licinius as constitutional reformers, may be mentioned as facts which recent writers have cleared from unjust suspicion and censure. And it might be easily shown that the defensive tendency, which distinguishes the present and recent great writers of Germany, France and England, has been equally manifested in the spirit in which they have treated the heroes of thought and heroes of action who lived during what we termed the Middle Ages, and whom it was so long the fashion to sneer at or neglect.

The name of the victor of Arbela has led to these reflections; for, although the rapidity and extent of Alexander's conquests have through all ages challenged admiration and amazement, the grandeur of genius which he displayed in his schemes of commerce, civilization, and of comprehensive union and unity among nations, has, until lately, been comparatively unhonored. This long-continued depreciation was of early date. The ancient rhetoricians—a class of babblers, a school for lies and scandal, as Niebuhr justly termed them—chose, among the stock themes for their commonplaces, the character and exploits of Alexander. They had their followers in every age; and, until a very recent period, all who wished to “point a moral or adorn a tale,” about unreasoning ambition, extravagant pride, and the formidable phrensies of free will when leagued with free power, have never failed to blazon forth the so-called madman of Macedonia as one of the most glaring examples. Without doubt, many of these writers adopted with implicit credence traditional ideas, and supposed, with uninquiring philanthropy, that in blackening Alexander they were doing humanity good service. But also, without doubt, many of his assailants, like those of other great men, have been mainly instigated by “that strongest of all antipathies, the antipathy of a second-rate mind to a first-rate one,”* and by the envy which talent too often bears to genius.

* De Stael.

Arrian, who wrote his history of Alexander when Hadrian was emperor of the Roman world, and when the spirit of declamation and dogmatism was at its full height, but who was himself, unlike the dreaming pedants of the schools, a statesman and a soldier of practical and proved ability, well rebuked the malevolent aspersions which he heard continually thrown upon the memory of the conquerer of the East. He truly says: “Let the man who speaks evil of Alexander not merely bring forward those passages of Alexander's life which were really evil, but let him collect and review *all* the actions of Alexander, and then let him thoroughly consider first who and what manner of man he himself is, and what has been his own career; and then let him consider who and what manner of man Alexander was, and to what an eminence of human grandeur *he* arrived. Let him consider that Alexander was a King, and the undisputed lord of two continents, and that his name is renowned throughout the whole earth. Let the evil-speaker against Alexander bear all this in mind, and then let him reflect on his own insignificance, the pettiness of his own circumstances and affairs, and the blunders that he makes about these, paltry and trifling as they are. Let him then ask himself whether he is a fit person to censure and revile such a man as Alexander. I believe that there was in his time no nation of men, no city, nay, no single individual with whom Alexander's name had not become a familiar word. I therefore hold that such a man, who was like no ordinary mortal, was not born into the world without some special providence.”*

And one of the most distinguished soldiers and writers of our own nation, Sir Walter Raleigh, though he failed to estimate justly the full merits of Alexander, has expressed his sense of the grandeur of the part played in the world by “the great Emathian conquerer” in language that well deserves quotation.

“So much hath the spirit of some one man excelled as it hath undertaken and affected the alteration of the greatest states and commonweals, the erection of monarchies, the conquest of kingdoms and empires, guided handfuls of men against multitudes of equal bodily strength, contrived victories beyond all hope and discourse of reason, converted the fearful passions of his own followers into magnanimity, and the valor of his enemies into cowardice; such spirits have been stirred up in sundry ages of the world, and in divers parts thereof, to erect and cast down again, to establish and to destroy, and to bring all things, persons, and states to the same certain ends, which the infinite spirit of the *Universal*, piercing, moving, and governing all things, hath ordained. Certainly, the things that this king did were marvelous, and would hardly have been undertaken by anyone else: and though his father had determined to have invaded the Lesser Asia,

* Arrian lib. vii., ad finem.

it is like enough that he would have contented himself with some part thereof, and not have discovered the river of Indus, as this man did.*

A higher authority than either Arrian or Raleigh may now be referred to by those who wish to know the real merit of Alexander as a general, and how far the commonplace assertions are true that his successes were the mere results of fortunate rashness and unreasoning pugnacity. Napoleon selected Alexander as one of the seven greatest generals whose noble deeds history has handed down to us, and from the study of whose campaigns the principles of war are to be learned. The critique of the greatest conquerer of modern times on the military career of the great conquerer of the Old World is no less graphic than true.

"Alexander crossed the Dardanelles 334 B. C., with an army of about forty thousand men, of which one eighth was cavalry; he forced the passage of the Granicus in opposition to an army under Memnon, the Greek, who commanded for Darius on the coast of Asia, and he spent the whole of the year 333 in establishing his power in Asia Minor. He was seconded by the Greek colonies, who dwelt on the borders of the Black Sea and on the Mediterranean, and in Sardis, Ephesus, Tarsus, Miletus, &c. The kings of Persia left their provinces and towns to be governed according to their own particular laws. Their empire was a union of confederate states, and did not form one nation; this facilitated its conquest. As Alexander only wished for the throne of the monarch, he easily affected the change by respecting the customs, manners, and laws of the people, who experienced no change in their conditions.

"In the year 332 he met with Darius at the head of sixty thousand men, who had taken up a position near Tarsus, on the banks of the Issus, in the province of Cilicia. He defeated him, entered Syria, took Damascus, which contained all the riches of the great king, and laid siege to Tyre. This superb metropolis of the commerce of the world detained him nine months. He took Gaza, after a siege of two months; crossed the Desert in seven days; entered Pelusium and Memphis, and founded Alexandria. In less than two years, after two battles and four or five sieges, the coasts of the Black Sea, from Phasis to Byzantium, those of the Mediterranean as far as Alexandria, all Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt, had submitted to his arms.

"In 331 he repassed the Desert, encamped in Tyre, recrossed Syria, entered Damascus, passed the Euphrates and Tigris, and defeated Darius on the field of Arbela, when he was at the head of a still stronger army than that which he commanded on the Issus, and Babylon opened her gates to him. In 330 he overran Susa and took that city, Persepolis, and Parsargarda, which contained the tomb of Cyrus. In 329 he directed his course north-

* "The Historie of the World," by Sir Walter Raleigh, Knight, p. 648.

ward, entered Ecbatana, and extended his conquests to the coasts of the Caspian, punished Bessus, the cowardly assassin of Darius, penetrated into Scythia, and subdued the Scythians. In 328 he forced the passage of the Oxus, received sixteen thousand recruits from Macedonia, and reduced the neighboring people to subjection. In 327 he crossed the Indus, vanquished Porus in a pitched battle, took him prisoner, and treated him as a king. He contemplated passing the Ganges, but his army refused. He sailed down the Indus, in the year 326, with eight hundred vessels; having arrived at the ocean, he sent Nearchus with a fleet to run along the coasts of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf as far as the mouth of the Euphrates. In 325 he took sixty days in crossing from Gedrosia, entered Kermania, returned to Pasargada, Persepolis, and Susa, and married Statira, the daughter of Darius. In 324 he marched once more to the north, passed Ecbatana, and terminated his career at Babylon.*

The enduring importance of Alexander's conquests is to be estimated not by the duration of his own life and empire, or even by the duration of the kingdoms which his generals after his death formed out of the fragments of that mighty dominion. In every region of the world that he traversed, Alexander planted Greek settlements and founded cities, in the populations of which the Greek element at once asserted its predominance. Among his successors, the Selucidæ and the Ptolemies imitated their great captain in blending schemes of civilization, of commercial intercourse, and of literary and scientific research with all their enterprises of military aggrandizement and with all their systems of civil administration. Such was the ascendancy of the Greek genius, so wonderfully comprehensive and assimilating was the cultivation which it introduced, that, within thirty years after Alexander crossed the Hellespont, the Greek language was spoken in every country from the shores of the Ægæan to the Indus, and also throughout Egypt—not, indeed, wholly to the extirpation of the native dialects, but it became the language of every court, of all literature, of every judicial and political function, and formed a medium of communication among the many myriads of mankind inhabiting these large portions of the Old World.† Throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, the Hellenic character that was thus imparted remained in full vigor down to the time of the Mohammedan conquests. The infinite value of this to humanity in the highest and holiest point of view has often been pointed out, and the workings of the finger of Providence have been gratefully recognized by those who have observed how the early growth and progress of Christianity were aided by that diffusion of the Greek language and civilization throughout Asia

* See Count Montholon's "Memoirs of Napoleon."

† See Arnold, *Hist. Rome*, iii., p. 406.

Minor, Syria, and Egypt, which had been caused by the Macedonian conquest of the East.

In Upper Asia, beyond the Euphrates, the direct and material influence of Greek ascendancy was more short-lived. Yet, during the existence of the Hellenic kingdoms in these regions, especially of the Greek kingdom of Bactria, the modern Bokhara, very important effects were produced on the intellectual tendencies and tastes of the inhabitants of those countries, and of the adjacent ones, by the animating contact of the Grecian spirit. Much of Hindoo science and philosophy, much of the literature of the later Persian kingdom of the Arsacidae, either originated from, or was largely modified by, Grecian influences. So, also, the learning and science of the Arabians were in a far less degree the result of original invention and genius, than the reproduction, in an altered form, of the Greek philosophy and the Greek lore, acquired by the Saracenic conquerors, together with their acquisition of the provinces which Alexander had subjugated, nearly a thousand years before the armed disciples of Mohammed commenced their career in the East. It is well known that Western Europe in the Middle Ages drew its philosophy, its arts, and its science principally from Arabian teachers. And thus we see how the intellectual influence of ancient Greece poured on the Eastern world by Alexander's victories, and then brought back to bear on Mediæval Europe by the spread of the Saracenic powers, has exerted its action on the elements of modern civilization by this powerful though indirect channel, as well as by the more obvious effects of the remnants of classic civilization which survived in Italy, Gaul, Britain, and Spain, after the irruption of the Germanic nations.*

These considerations invest the Macedonian triumphs in the East with never-dying interest, such as the most showy and sanguinary successes of mere "low ambition and the pride of kings," however they may dazzle for a moment, can never retain with posterity. Whether the old Persian empire which Cyrus founded could have survived much longer than it did, even if Darius had been victorious at Arbela, may safely be disputed. That ancient dominion, like the Turkish at the present time, labored under every cause of decay and dissolution. The satraps, like the modern pashaws, continually rebelled against the central power, and Egypt in particular was almost always in a state of insurrection against the nominal sovereign. There was no longer any effective central control, or any internal principle of unity fused through the huge mass of the empire, and binding it together. Persia was evidently about to fall; but, had it not been for Alexander's invasion of Asia, she would most probably have fallen beneath some other Oriental power, as Media and Babylon had

* See Humboldt's "Cosmos."

formerly fallen before herself, and as, in after times, the Parthian supremacy gave way to the revived ascendancy of Persia in the East, under the scepters of the Arsacidae. A revolution that merely substituted one Eastern power for another would have been utterly barren and unprofitable to mankind.

Alexander's victory at Arbela not only overthrew an Oriental dynasty, but established European rulers in its stead. It broke the monotony of the Eastern world by the impression of Western energy and superior civilization, even as England's present mission is to break up the mental and moral stagnation of India and Cathay by pouring upon and through them the impulsive current of Anglo-Saxon commerce and conquest.

Arbela, the city which has furnished its name to the decisive battle which gave Asia to Alexander, lies more than twenty miles from the actual scene of conflict. The little village, then named Guagemela, is close to the spot where the armies met, but has ceded the honor of naming the battle to its more euphonious neighbor. Gaugamela is situated in one of the wide plains that lie between the Tigris and the mountains of Kurdistan. A few undulating hillocks diversify the surface of this sandy track; but the ground is generally level, and admirably qualified for the evolutions of cavalry and also calculated to give the larger of two armies the full advantage of numerical superiority. The Persian king (who, before he came to the throne, had proved his personal valor as a soldier and his skill as a general), had wisely selected this region for the third and decisive encounter between his forces and the invader. The previous defeats of his troops, however severe they had been, were not looked on as irreparable. The Granicus had been fought by his generals rashly and without mutual concert; and, though Darius himself had commanded and been beaten at Issus, that defeat might be attributed to the disadvantageous nature of the ground, where, cooped up between the mountains, the river, and the sea, the numbers of the Persians confused and clogged alike the general's skill and the soldier's prowess, and their very strength had been made their weakness. Here, on the broad plains of Kurdistan, there was scope for Asia's largest host to array its lines, to wheel, to skirmish, to condense or expand its squadrons, to maneuver, and to charge at will. Should Alexander and his scanty band dare to plunge into that living sea of war, their destruction seemed inevitable.

Darius felt, however, the critical nature to himself as well as to his adversary of the coming encounter. He could not hope to retrieve the consequences of a third overthrow. The great cities of Mesopotamia and Upper Asia, the central provinces of the Persian empire, were certain to be at the mercy of the victor. Darius knew also the Asiatic character well enough to be aware how it yields to the *prestige* of success and the apparent career of destiny. He felt that the diadem was now to be either firmly replaced on his own

brow, or to be irrevocably transferred to the head of his European conquerer. He, therefore, during the long interval left him after the battle of Issus, while Alexander was subjugating Syria and Egypt, assiduously busied himself in selecting the best troops which his vast empire supplied, and in training his varied forces to act together with some uniformity of discipline and system.

The hardy mountaineers of Afghanistan, Bokhara, Khiva, and Thibet were then, as at present, far different to the generality of Asiatics in warlike spirit and endurance. From these districts Darius collected large bodies of admirable infantry; and the countries of the modern Kurds and Turkomans supplied, as they do now, squadrons of horsemen, hardy, skilful, bold, and trained to a life of constant activity and warfare. It is not uninteresting to notice that the ancestors of our own late enemies, the Sikhs, served as allies of Darius against the Macedonians. They are spoken of in Arrian as Indians who dwelt near Bactria. They were attached to the troops of that satrapy, and their cavalry was one of the most formidable forces in the whole Persian army.

Besides these picked troops, contingents also came in from the numerous other provinces that yet obeyed the Great King. Altogether, the horse are said to have been forty thousand, the scythe-bearing chariots two hundred, and the armed elephants fifteen in number. The amount of the infantry is uncertain; but the knowledge which both ancient and modern times supply of the usual character of Oriental armies, and of their populations of camp-followers, may warrant us in believing that many myriads were prepared to fight, or to encumber those who fought for the last Darius.

The position of the Persian king near Mesopotamia was chosen with great military skill. It was certain that Alexander, on his return from Egypt, must march northward along the Syrian coast before he attacked the central provinces of the Persian empire. A direct eastward march from the lower part of Palestine across the great Syrian Desert was then, as ever, utterly impracticable. Marching eastward from Syria Alexander would, on crossing the Euphrates, arrive at the vast Mesopotamian plains. The wealthy capitals of the empire, Babylon, Susa, and Persepolis, would then lie to the south; and if he marched down through Mesopotamia to attack them, Darius might reasonably hope to follow the Macedonians with his immense force of cavalry, and, without even risking a pitched battle, to harass and finally overwhelm them. We may remember that three centuries afterward a Roman army under Crassus was thus actually destroyed by the Oriental archers and horsemen in these very plains,* and that the ancestors of the Parthians who thus vanquished the Roman legions served by thousands under King Darius. If, on the

* See Mitford.

contrary, Alexander should defer his march against Babylon, and first seek an encounter with the Persian army, the country on each side of the Tigris in this latitude was highly advantageous for such an army as Darius commanded, and he had close in his rear the mountainous districts of Northern Media, where he himself had in early life been satrap, where he had acquired reputation as a soldier and a general, and where he justly expected to find loyalty to his person, and a safe refuge in case of defeat.*

His great antagonist came on across the Euphrates against him, at the head of an army which Arrian, copying from the journals of Macedonian officers, states to have consisted of forty thousand foot and seven thousand horse. In studying the campaigns of Alexander, we possess the peculiar advantage of deriving our information from two of Alexander's generals of division, who bore an important part in all his enterprises. Aristobulus and Ptolemy (who afterward became king of Egypt) kept regular journals of the military events which they witnessed, and these journals were in the possession of Arrian when he drew up his history of Alexander's expedition. The high character of Arrian for integrity makes us confident that he used them fairly, and his comments on the occasional discrepancies between the two Macedonian narratives prove that he used them sensibly. He frequently quotes the very words of his authorities; and his history thus acquires a charm such as very few ancient or modern military narratives possess. The anecdotes and expressions which he records we fairly believe to be genuine, and not to be the coinage of a rhetorician, like those in Curtius. In fact, in reading Arrian, we read General Aristobulus and General Ptolemy on the campaigns of the Macedonians, and it is like reading General Jomini or General Foy on the campaigns of the French.

The estimate which we find in Arrian of the strength of Alexander's army seems reasonable enough, when we take into account both the losses which he had sustained and the re-enforcements which he had received since he left Europe. Indeed, to Englishmen, who know with what mere handfuls of men our own generals have, at Plassy, at Assaye, at Meeanee, and other Indian battles, routed large hosts of Asiatics, the disparity of numbers that we read of in the victories won by the Macedonians over the Persians presents nothing incredible. The army which Alexander now led was wholly composed of veteran troops

* Mitford's remarks on the strategy of Darius in his last campaign are very just. After having been unduly admired as an historian, Mitford is now unduly neglected. His partiality, and his deficiency in scholarship have been exposed sufficiently to make him no longer a dangerous guide as to Greek politics, while the clearness and brilliancy of his narrative, and the strong common sense of his remarks (where his party prejudices do not interfere), must always make his volumes valuable as well as entertaining.

in the highest possible state of equipment and discipline, enthusiastically devoted to their leader, and full of confidence in his military genius and his victorious destiny.

The celebrated Macedonian phalanx formed the main strength of his infantry. This force had been raised and organized by his father Philip, who, on his accession to the Macedonian throne, needed a numerous and quickly-formed army, and who, by lengthening the spear of the ordinary Greek phalanx, and increasing the depths of the files, brought the tactic of armed masses to the highest extent of which it was capable with such materials as he possessed.* He formed his men sixteen deep, and placed in their grasp the *sarissa*, as the Macedonian pike was called, which was four-and-twenty feet in length, and when couched for action, reached eighteen feet in front of the soldier; so that, as a space of about two feet was allowed between the ranks, the spears of the five files behind him projected in front of each front-rank man. The phalangite soldier was fully equipped in the defensive armor of the regular Greek infantry. And thus the phalanx presented a ponderous and bristling mass, which, as long as its order was kept compact, was sure to bear down all opposition. The defects of such an organization are obvious, and were proved in after years, when the Macedonians were opposed to the Roman legions. But it is clear that under Alexander the phalanx was not the cumbrous, unwieldy body which it was at Cynoscephalæ and Pydna. His men were veterans; and he could obtain from them an accuracy of movement and steadiness of evolution such as probably the recruits of his father would only have floundered in attempting, and such as certainly were impracticable in the phalanx when handled by his successors, especially as under them it ceased to be a standing force, and became only a militia.† Under Alexander the phalanx consisted of an aggregate of eighteen thousand men, who were divided into six brigades of three thousand each. These were again subdivided into regiments and companies; and the men were carefully trained to wheel, to face about, to take more ground, or to close up, as the emergencies of the battle required. Alexander also arrayed troops armed in a different manner in the intervals of the regiments of his phalangites, who could prevent their line from being pierced, and their companies taken in flank, when the nature of the ground prevented a close formation, and who could be withdrawn when a favorable opportunity arrived for closing up the phalanx or any of its brigades for a charge, or when it was necessary to prepare to receive cavalry.

Besides the phalanx, Alexander had a considerable force of infantry who were called Shield-bearers: they were not so heavily armed as the phalangites, or as was the case with the Greek

* See Niebuhr's "Hist. of Romæ," vol. iii., p. 466.

† See Niebuhr.

regular infantry in general, but they were equipped for close fight as well as for skirmishing, and were far superior to the ordinary irregular troops of Greek warfare. They were about six thousand strong. Besides these, he had several bodies of Greek regular infantry; and he had archers, slingers, and javelin-men, who fought also with broadsword and target, and who were principally supplied by the highlanders of Illyria and Thracia. The main strength of his cavalry consisted in two chosen regiments of cuirassiers, one Macedonian and one Thessalian, each of which was about fifteen hundred strong. They were provided with long lances and heavy swords, and horse as well as man was fully equipped with defensive armor. Other regiments of regular cavalry were less heavily armed, and there were several bodies of light horsemen, whom Alexander's conquests in Egypt and Syria had enabled him to mount superbly.

A little before the end of August, Alexander crossed the Euphrates at Thapsacus, a small corps of Persian cavalry under Mazæus retiring before him. Alexander was too prudent to march down through the Mesopotamian deserts, and continued to advance eastward with the intention of passing the Tigris, and then, if he was unable to find Darius and bring him to action, of marching southward on the left side of that river along the skirts of a mountainous district where his men would suffer less from heat and thirst, and where provisions would be more abundant.

Darius, finding that his adversary was not to be enticed into the march through Mesopotamia against his capital, determined to remain on the battle-ground, which he had chosen on the left of the Tigris; where, if his enemy met a defeat or a check, the destruction of the invaders would be certain with two such rivers as the Euphrates and the Tigris in their rear. The Persian king availed himself to the utmost of every advantage in his power. He caused a large space of ground to be carefully leveled for the operation of his scythe-armed chariots; and he deposited his military stores in the strong town of Arbela, about twenty miles in his rear. The rhetoricians of after ages have loved to describe Darius Codomanus as a second Xerxes in ostentation and imbecility; but a fair examination of his generalship in this his last campaign shows that he was worthy of bearing the same name as his great predecessor, the royal son of Hystaspes.

On learning that Darius was with a large army on the left of the Tigris, Alexander hurried forward and crossed that river without opposition. He was at first unable to procure any certain intelligence of the precise position of the enemy, and after giving his army a short interval of rest, he marched for four days down the left bank of the river. A moralist may pause upon the fact that Alexander must in this march have passed within a few miles of the ruins of Nineveh, the great city of the primeval conquerors of the human race. Neither the Macedonian king nor any of his fol-