

Athens and Sparta amounted to 380 sail; that of the Persians to no less than 1200. The size of these ships is not certainly known;* but there is one circumstance from which a conjecture may be formed: the port of *Piræus*, at Athens, was, according to the account of ancient writers, particularly Strabo, capable of containing 400 ships; but this harbor, in the opinion of Wheeler and other modern writers, could not easily contain above fifty of our middle-sized trading vessels.†

The state of the military art at the same period forms a pretty curious object of inquiry. The war of Thebes, and that of Troy, are remarkable events in the age of which we now treat, and are, therefore, proper criteria by which we may form a judgment of the state of that art at this time in Greece. The first wars mentioned in Grecian history deserve no particular attention: they were probably little else than predatory excursions of barbarous tribes, to ravage the lands and carry off the flocks of their neighbors. The country, in those times, was open and defenceless; the towns a collection of rude huts, incapable of resisting assault, and unsecured by any regular enclosure or fortification. At the time of the siege of Thebes, the state of the country was extremely different; as we may judge from the preparations of the Argives, their dispositions to besiege the city, and the duration of the war.

Œdipus had two sons, Eteocles and Polynices, to whom jointly he bequeathed the sovereignty of Thebes. Instead of dividing the kingdom, they agreed to govern it year after year alternately. Eteocles, at the expiration of his term, refusing to resign, Polynices solicited the aid of Adrastus, king of Argus, who espoused his cause, engaged several of the princes of Greece to assist him, and marched against the Thebans with a powerful army. They retreated before the enemy, and betook themselves to their city, which Adrastus immediately took measures for assailing. This is the first siege mentioned in the Grecian history, whence we may suppose that the arts of attack, and the contrivances for defence, would be equally rude and unskilful. The only object of the besiegers was to blockade the city, to prevent the inhabitants from making sallies, and cutting off all succors from the surrounding country. For this purpose, as they knew not the art of drawing lines of circumvallation, they formed a large camp at a small distance from the city, as a security for the baggage and provisions of the army, and a retreat so fortified that they could defend themselves in it, in case of a repulse and attack on the part of the be-

* The ships of the Greeks, at the time of the war of Troy, had no keel, and only one mast, which was lowered upon the deck when the ship was in port.—Goguet, vol. ii. b. 4, c. iv.

† The largest ships mentioned by Homer are those of the Bœotians, which carried 120 men.—Il. 1. 2.

sieged. They then divided their army into different bodies, each of which had the charge of assaulting a particular gate or entry to the city. It does not appear that they ever attempted an escalade, or endeavored to effect a breach in the walls; but contented themselves with directing their efforts against the gates alone. These they endeavored to force, but were as often beat back by a sally from the besieged, and forced to retreat to their camp, where they sustain a siege in their turn. In this way, it is not surprising that the siege of a large city was protracted for years. Thebes, after a long siege, gave no hopes of surrender; both parties became tired of the war, and it was at length agreed to terminate it by a single combat between the rival brothers, Eteocles and Polynices; an issue for the quarrels of sovereign princes, which the humane reader of history will often find reason to wish had been more frequently resorted to. The brothers fought under the walls of Thebes, and were both killed.

I cannot avoid here observing, that the ancients appear to have entertained, on some points, notions of morality, which to our apprehension seem very extraordinary. The conduct of Eteocles in defrauding his brother of his alternate right of sovereignty, admits, according to our notions of justice, of no apology. It was perfidious in the highest degree. Yet the Greek poets who have treated of this story, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, all agree in condemning Polynices, whom they judge unworthy of the honors of sepulture, for having troubled the repose of his country by a war. Similar to this is the judgment of the same poets upon the character of Œdipus, who is held forth as an object of the just vengeance of the gods, and condemned for his crimes to Tartarus, because he ignorantly slew his father in a justifiable quarrel, and innocently married his mother, whom he knew not. Such, likewise, is their opinion of the criminality of Orestes, who was with difficulty acquitted by the Areopagus, and is feigned to be incessantly tormented by the Furies, for having revenged on his mother Clytemnestra and her adulterous gallant Ægisthus, the murder of his father Agamemnon. It is no apology to say, as some critics have done, that the poets chose those subjects where an innocent person is represented as the victim of heavenly vengeance, because they gave greater exercise to the emotions of terror and pity. The poets, in reality, did not allow the innocence of those persons; on the contrary, they plainly condemn them as guilty, and justify their punishment.

The death of Eteocles and Polynices did not terminate the Theban war. It was renewed by Creon, their uncle, who, after a successful battle, having refused Adrastus leave to bury the dead, that prince implored the aid of the Athenians, then governed by Theseus, who, to avenge the cause of humanity, joined his forces to those of the Argives, and compelled Creon to enter into terms of peace. Some years after, the war broke out anew on

the part of the Argives. The sons of those commanders who had fallen during the siege of Thebes determined to revenge the deaths of their fathers. This was termed the war of the *Epigonoi*, that is, the descendants or sons of the former. They were joined by the Messenians and Arcadians, Corinthians and Megareans. The particulars of this war it is needless to trace; it was of long duration. The Thebans lost a decisive battle on the banks of the river *Glissas*: they retreated into Thebes; the city was attacked, taken by storm, and entirely destroyed by the conquerors. Pausanias mentions an epic poem on the subject of this war, which some writers have ascribed to Homer. "I own," says Pausanias, "that, next to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, I have not seen a finer work." Unfortunately, it has not reached our days.

The detail of the war of Troy rests chiefly on the authority of Homer; whose work, though embellished with fiction, must not in its great outlines be refused the credit of a real history. The poet, it is true, lived, as is generally supposed, at some distance of time from the events which he relates; 168 years by the account of Herodotus; between two and three centuries in the opinion of other writers; but by the computation of Sir Isaac Newton, his birth is placed only 28 years after the taking of Troy. But allowing him to have lived at a considerable interval of time from the events which he relates, it is agreed among the ancient writers that he followed the relations of other authors, whose works, though now lost, were known to the ancients, and esteemed of sufficient authority. Several of the principal events of the Trojan war are likewise authenticated by the Arundelian marbles. The Chronicle of Paros fixes both the commencement of the siege and its termination; the former in the 13th year of Menestheus, king of Athens, and the latter in the 22d year of the same prince. The latter date corresponds to the year 1184 B. C., according to Usher's Chronology, and 904 B. C. according to Sir Isaac Newton's.

The immediate cause of the war is generally allowed to have been the rape of Helen, the wife of Menelaus, by Paris, the son of Priam, king of Troy; although prior to that motive an animosity had subsisted between the Greeks and Trojans for many generations. It is not otherwise probable, that a quarrel which interested only Menelaus and his brother Agamemnon, should have been readily espoused by all the princes of Greece. The preparations for this war are said to have occupied no less than ten years; a length of time which ought not to surprise us, when we consider that this was the first war in which the whole nation had engaged. We may therefore look upon this enterprise as a proper test to judge of the state of the military art at this period in Greece. The time of preparation was employed in uniting the forces of the different princes, and in equipping a fleet to transport them into Asia. The troops, when assembled, amounted, according to the estimate of Thucydides, to about 100,000 men. In a general

assembly of the States held at Argos, or Mycenæ, the chief command was conferred on Agamemnon, king of Mycenæ, Sicyon, and Corinth; and all the princes of Greece engaged by oath to range themselves under his banners, and to furnish their contingent of men and ships. The preparations on the part of the Trojans were equally formidable. Priam, whose territories were considerable, extending from the isle of Tenedos to Upper Phrygia, had raised all his power, and strengthened himself by the alliance of many of the princes of the lesser Asia.

The Greeks embarked at Aulis, opposite to Eubœa, and landed in Asia, at the promontory of Sigœum. Their first operation, after beating back the enemy who opposed their landing, was to form a large camp at some distance from the city. The site of Troy is generally supposed to have been at the distance of four or five miles from the shore, at the foot of that ridge of mountains which goes under the name of Ida. The camp was close upon the sea-shore for the sake of the ships, which, as usual, were drawn upon the land, and enclosed within the ramparts of the camp; one line fronting the city and the other the sea; while the tents of the troops filled the intermediate space. Each petty nation or tribe of the Greeks had its separate quarter of the camp; which was fortified externally by a high mound of earth, flanked with wooden towers. These strong intrenchments were necessary to secure the invading army from the attacks of the enemy, who acted as often as they could upon the offensive, and frequently assaulted the camp. The fortifications of Troy consisted, in like manner, as is generally believed, of nothing more than a sloping wall of earth, flanked with wooden towers. The Greeks attempted to draw no lines of circumvallation, nor were any of those engines of war employed which came afterwards into use in regular sieges. The chief object of the Greeks during the first nine years of the war was to ravage and plunder the country—thus cutting off the sources of supply—and attacking the Trojans whenever they made a sally for the purpose of foraging, or attempted to force the enemy's camp. The detail of the chief events of this war is to be found in Homer, with a copious embellishment of fiction. The spirit of the Trojans forsook them upon the death of Hector. The city was taken soon after, either by storm or by surprise; and being set on fire during the night, was burnt to the ground, not a vestige of its ruins existing at the present day. The miserable Trojans perished either in the flames or by the sword of the Greeks, and their empire and name were extinguished for ever. About 80 years after the burning of Troy, a Grecian colony settled near to its site, and the rest of the kingdom formed part of the territory of the Lydians.

Nothing can show more clearly the rudeness of the military art, at this remote period of time, than the instances of those two remarkable sieges of Thebes and of Troy. An open war was no

thing else than a series of plundering expeditions. When a city was to be attacked, the country around it was ravaged, and the inhabitants reduced, if possible, to the necessity of a surrender from the want of provisions. If its resources were considerable, while the state of the country at the same time denied supplies to the besiegers, the enterprise must have been abandoned, unless it succeeded by a stratagem, or the city was betrayed by some of its inhabitants. If at length it was won, it was never attempted to preserve the conquest by a garrison: the advantage gained was usually secured by burning the city to the ground. As these military expeditions, seldom undertaken at a great distance from home, were commonly made during the spring and summer only, the troops during the winter remained at home inactive, and were usually disbanded. In a long-continued war at a distance, as that of Troy, the winter season was spent in the camp, and there was a complete cessation of hostilities. Dictys of Crete informs us, that the Greeks during the winter exercised themselves in a variety of games, which tended to relieve the anxiety of the troops, and keep up the martial spirit. The game of chess is said to have been invented by Palamedes during this tedious siege.

With respect to the arrangement of the troops in order of battle, and the various military manœuvres then in use among the Greeks, our ideas are extremely imperfect. Homer frequently mentions an order of battle under the term *phalanx*, but he gives us no description of it. We see, indeed, in one place, that Nestor places the cavalry or the chariots in front,* the infantry in the rear, and the weakest of the troops in the centre. In another place, we find the infantry in front, and the cavalry in the rear: this shows that they adopted a variety of arrangement according to circumstances. It is quite impossible, from Homer's description, to have any distinct idea of the manœuvres of the troops during an engagement. He gives us no plan of attack: we know not whether the armies charged in one body or in separate divisions. We see no evolutions, no rational movements of the troops during the action, nor any manœuvre which shows conduct or skill on the part of the general. The chiefs or captains of the different bodies seem to have fought equally with the private soldiers, and to be interested only who should kill most men. Homer's descriptions are all of single combats, man to man; long discourses and taunting reproaches between the heroes, ending in a desperate duel, without any regard to the situation of the main army. It appears from Homer's accounts that the Greeks, in rushing on to engagement,

* When cavalry or horse are mentioned, we are not to understand that in these armies there were regular bodies of horsemen. The horses were employed only in the drawing of cars or chariots, each usually containing two men, of whom one managed the horses and the other fought.—*Goguet*, t. ii. b. v. c. iii.

preserved a deep silence, while the Trojans, like most other barbarous nations, uttered hideous shouts at the moment of attack.

How those armies were subsisted it is not easy to say. It is certain that in those times the troops had no regular pay: they served at their own charges alone. The levies were made by a general law obliging each family to furnish a soldier, under a certain penalty. The only recompense for the service of individuals was their rated share of the booty; for none were allowed to plunder for themselves: every thing was brought into a common stock, and the division was made by the chiefs, who had a larger proportion for their share.

The arms of the troops were of different kinds. Their offensive weapons were the sword slung from the shoulder, the bow and arrows, the javelin, or short missile spear, the club, the hatchet, and the sling. Their weapons of defence were an enormous shield which defended almost the whole body, made of thin metal, and covered with the hide of some animal; an helmet of brass or copper; and a cuirass and buskins, with coverings for the thighs, of the same metal. It is proper to observe that iron, though known before this period, was a rare metal, and accounted of high value. Achilles proposed a ball of iron as one of the prizes in the funeral-games which he celebrated in honor of Patroclus.* It was not used in the fabrication of weapons of war. These were formed of copper hardened by an admixture of tin; and even in much later periods the Roman swords were of the same compound metal.

On this subject, the state of the military art at this period among the Greeks, the President Goguet has, in vol. ii., book v., ch. iii., of his *Origin of Laws, &c.*, collected a great mass of curious information, to which I beg leave to refer my readers. From all that can be gathered on the subject it appears that this art was yet extremely rude. But practice, which matures all arts, very soon reduced this into a system; and the Greeks, in a very early period of their history, seem to have become greater proficient in war than any of the civilized nations.

About 80 years after the taking of Troy, began the war of the Heraclidæ. Perseus, the founder of Mycenæ, left the crown to his son Electryon. Amphitryon, the grandson of Perseus, by Alceus, married Alcmena, the daughter of Electryon, and thus founded a double title of succession to that sovereignty; but having involuntarily killed his father-in-law, he was obliged to fly his country, while the sceptre was seized by his uncle Sthenelus, the brother of Electryon. By this act of usurpation, Hercules, the son of Amphitryon and Alcmena, was excluded from the throne of Mycenæ. Eurystheus, the son and successor of Sthenelus,

* *Iliad*, l. 23.

endeavored to destroy Hercules, by exposing him to numberless perilous enterprises; and continuing afterwards his persecution against his children, made war against the Athenians, who protected them; but he was defeated and slain. This event opened the Peloponnesus to the Heraclidæ, or descendants of Hercules, who were in the train of subduing the country when they were influenced by the weakest superstition. They retreated upon the response of an oracle, which declared that their absence was the only means of relieving Greece from the ravages of a pestilence. Thyllus, the son of Hercules, deceived by some ambiguous expressions of the oracle, returned after three years, and was killed in a single combat, by which he chose to decide the fate of the contending parties. It was on his death agreed that the Heraclidæ should not for 50, or, as others say, 100 years, return to Peloponnesus.

That term being expired, Cresphontes and Aristodemus, the descendants of Hercules, by Hyllus, returned, and found Tesamenes, the son of Orestes, possessed of the kingdoms of Argos, Mycenæ, and Lacedæmon. They overcame this prince, and took possession of his states; Cresphontes seizing Mycenæ, Temenes Argos, and the two sons of Aristodemus, Eurysthenes and Procles, dividing Lacedæmon. The last is an important fact, as shall afterwards be mentioned.

These wars miserably ravaged Greece, and threw it back into barbarism. The states became once more detached and weak,—the petty chiefs exercising the most despotic control, and following the barbarous policy of maintaining constant war with their neighbors to make their own office be felt as necessary. But matters were gradually verging to a crisis; and from the insupportable tyranny of those despots, the very name of king (*tyrannos*) became at length universally odious. Thebes was the first of the states which declared for a popular government, and others soon followed her example. The following event was the immediate occasion of this revolution:

The Heraclidæ, in their war against the Athenians, had been assured of success by the oracle, provided they did not kill Codrus, then king of Athens. In their attack on the Athenian territory, they determined, if possible, to preserve the life of the sovereign; but this generous patriot, who had learned the importance of the sacrifice, resolved to devote himself for his country;—he disguised himself like a peasant, and purposely quarrelling with a soldier of the hostile army, procured the death he wished. The Heraclidæ, a second time the dupes of an oracle, retired, not daring to fight against the Fates. Medon and Nileus, the sons of Codrus, disputed the succession to the crown; but the Athenians, though justly venerating the memory of Codrus, and honoring his blood were weary of monarchy. They determined to establish a democracy; but from respect to their last prince, they conferred on his

son, Medon, the office of first magistrate, under the title of *archon*, or the commander. This is the commencement of the Athenian Republic, about 1068 B. C. Of its political structure we shall afterwards particularly treat.

It was at this time that the Greeks, weak as they were, began to form distant colonies. Perhaps we ought rather to say, that it was this very weakness, and the oppression which they suffered at home, that forced many of them to abandon their country, and to seek refuge in other lands. A wandering people who have but lately become stationary, or a nation partly composed of foreigners, ingrafting themselves on the ancient inhabitants, have not that affection for a natal soil which is so strongly felt by an indigenous people who have for a long period of time peaceably inhabited a civilized country. Recently brought under control, and impatient of oppression from the remembrance of their former freedom, the least attempt to straighten the chain which confines them, disposes them immediately to shake it off. If too weak at once to break their fetters, they withdraw themselves from their bondage, and relinquish all connection with a government to which they do not incline to submit.

Such was the case at this time with many of the Grecian states. The oppression they suffered from the tyranny of their despots, and the miseries of continual war, either with their neighbors or between their domestic factions, forced great multitudes in despair to abandon their country, and to transport themselves to the neighboring continent of Asia, which the Trojan war had laid open to them. A large body of the Æolians from Peloponnesus landed in the opposite country and founded twelve cities, of which Smyrna was the most considerable. Nileus, the son of Codrus, probably impatient of submission where he thought he had an equal title to rule, carried over into Asia a large body of the disaffected Athenians, reinforced by some Ionians from the Peloponnesus; and he, too, founded twelve cities, of which the most considerable were Ephesus, Miletus, Colophon, and Clazomene. This territory, in compliment to his associates from Peloponnesus, he termed Ionia, the name of their original country. War, therefore, and domestic oppressions, gave rise to many of the Grecian colonies, which afterwards came to be great and powerful states. Other colonies, however, had a different origin. In the more advanced and flourishing periods of the mother country, the narrow territory possessed by each of the states, and the increased population, compelled them to send off the inhabitants in quest of new settlements. Thus the Dorians sent off colonies to Italy and Sicily, which founded the cities of *Tarentum* and *Locri* in the former; and in the latter, *Syracuse* and *Agrigentum*. Colonies afterwards, of the same people, betook themselves to the islands of Crete, Rhodes, and Cos; and others passing into Asia, where many of their countrymen were already established, founded *Halicarnassus*, *Cnidus*,

and several other cities. Dr. Adam Smith, in his "Wealth of Nations," in treating this subject of the Greek colonization, has justly remarked that with regard to these new settlements, the mother city, though she considered the colony as a child at all times entitled to great favor and assistance, and owing in return much gratitude and respect, yet viewed it as an emancipated child, over whom she pretended to claim no direct authority or jurisdiction. The colony settled its own form of government, enacted its own laws, and made peace or war with its neighbors as an independent state, which had no occasion to wait for the consent or sanction of the mother city.

Those colonies which Greece sent abroad in her more advanced periods, from an excessive increase of population, were observed to make a most rapid progress, and soon become great and flourishing states. Dr. Smith has accounted for this fact with his usual sagacity; and I make no scruple to adopt his observations.

"The colony of a civilized nation which takes possession either of a waste country, or of one so thinly inhabited that the natives easily give place to the new settlers, advances more rapidly to wealth and greatness than any other human society. The colonists carry out with them a knowledge of agriculture and of other useful arts, superior to what can grow up of its own accord in the course of many centuries among savage and barbarous nations. They carry out with them, too, the habit of subordination, some notion of regular government which takes place in their own country, of the system of laws which support it, and of a regular administration of justice; and they naturally establish something of the same kind in the new settlement. But among savage and barbarous nations, the natural progress of law and government is still slower than the natural progress of arts, after law and government have been so far established as is necessary for their protection.

"The progress of many of the ancient Greek colonies towards refinement, wealth, and greatness, seems accordingly to have been extremely rapid. In the course of a century or two, several of them appear to have rivalled, and even to have surpassed, their parent states. Thus Syracuse and Agrigentum in Sicily, Tarentum and Locri in Italy, Ephesus and Miletus in Asia Minor, appear to have been at least equal to any of the cities of ancient Greece. Though posterior in their establishment, yet all the arts of refinement, philosophy, poetry, and elegance, seem to have been cultivated as early, and to have been improved as highly, in them as in any part of the mother country. The schools of the two oldest Greek philosophers, those of Thales and Pythagoras, were established, it is remarkable, not in ancient Greece, but in Miletus and Crotona, the former an Asiatic, the latter an Italian colony. All those colonies had established themselves in countries inhabited by savage and barbarous nations, who easily gave place to the new settlers. Thus they had as much land as they chose, a benign

climate, and a fertile soil; for these circumstances must have dedicated the choice of their place of establishment. They were independent of their mother country, and at liberty to conduct themselves in any way they should judge most suitable to their interest." It was no wonder they should soon become great and powerful states.

Meantime, the parent country owed, perhaps, some of its greatest political revolutions to its first colonies. The Greeks who remained at home, naturally envious of the happiness and prosperity which they saw their countrymen enjoy in their new establishments, began to aspire at the same freedom of constitution. An ardent passion for liberty soon became the ruling passion of the Greeks. Thebes and Athens, we have already remarked, were the first states which threw off the regal government, and substituted in its place the republican. Other states soon followed their example, and either entirely expelled their tyrannical governors, or so circumscribed their authority as to reduce them to the function of the principal magistrate of a democracy.*

A new road was now open to ambition; for it is the quality of the republican form of government to generate and keep alive that passion in all the members of the state: and hence, of all forms of government, it is necessarily the most turbulent. But these republics, thus newly formed, could not subsist by the ancient and very imperfect systems of laws by which they had been formerly governed; for these laws, framed in the spirit of despotism, and owing their obligation solely to the strong hand which carried them into execution, fell of necessity along with the power which framed and enforced them. The infant republics of Greece demanded, therefore, new laws; and it was necessary that some enlightened citizen should arise, who had discernment to perceive what system of laws was best adapted to the genius and character of his native state, who had abilities to compile and digest such a system, and sufficient weight and influence with his countrymen to recommend and carry it into execution. Such men were the Spartan Lycurgus and the Athenian Solon.

* The word *Tyrannos*, in a strict sense, has no reference to the abuse of power, as in the modern acceptation of the word. It means, properly, the person invested with the chief authority under any form of government, and was applied originally to the best as well as to the worst of sovereigns.