

had sought to act a similar part with Pisistratus and his sons. He found, however, a powerful rival in Isagoras, who cherished the same ambitious views; and who, with the aid of Cleomenes and the Spartans, expelled Clisthenes and drove with him into banishment no less than seven hundred of the principal Athenian families. The selfish schemes of Isagoras were first manifested in an attempt to abolish the senate, or to change all its members and abridge their number. A proceeding thus violent and impolitic roused the people at once. They drove Cleomenes and his Spartans, together with Isagoras, out of Athens, and recalled Clisthenes with the whole of the exiled families.

The Lacedæmonians, indignant at this disgrace of their king and countrymen, were now wholly bent on revenge. A principal means appeared to be the re-establishment of Hippias, and for that purpose, the other states of Greece, and particularly Corinth, were urged to join in the enterprise. But Corinth loved her own liberty, and respected that of others. She refused to accede to the alliance; and the rest of the states followed her example.

Hippias, disappointed of that aid he expected from the jealousy entertained by the petty states of the predominance of Athens, now looked towards a foreign alliance. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, under whom the Persian empire was splendid and flourishing, meditated, at this juncture, the conquest of Greece. Hippias disgracefully availed himself of the views of an enemy against the general liberty of his country, and courted the assistance of Artaphernes, the Persian governor of Sardes, to re-establish him on the throne of Athens. Artaphernes eagerly embraced a proposal, which promised effectually to second the views of his sovereign; and Greece now saw herself inevitably involved in a war with Persia.

The subject of the war with Persia naturally induces a retrospective view of the origin of this monarchy; its ancient history and the government, policy, and manners of this great empire; field of inquiry on which we shall enter in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER XI.

ORIGIN OF THE PERSIAN MONARCHY—End of the first Assyrian Empire—Era of Nabonassar—Monarchy of the Medes; Dejoces, Phraortes, Cyaxares, Nabopolassar—Nabuchodonozor II.—Captivity of the Jews—Cyrus the elder—Cambyses—Darius, son of Hystaspes—Conquest of Babylon—His War against the Scythians—His conquest of India—Government, Customs, and Manners of the Persians—Education of their Princes—General Education of the Persian Youth—National Character of the Persians—Military Character—Government—Administration of Justice—Religion of the Ancient Persians—Zoroaster; Uncertainty of his History—The Second Zoroaster—Translation of the Zendavesta by Anquetil—Cosmogony of the Zendavesta—Manicheism—Practical and Moral parts of the Persian Religion—The Sadder—Change in the Manners of the Persians—State of Greece at the time of the Persian War.

HAVING pursued, in some of the preceding chapters, the general outlines of the history of Greece, from the time when the leading republics of Sparta and Athens had assumed a fixed and regular constitution, to the commencement of the Persian war, I now propose, in conformity with the plan laid down in the beginning of this work, to look back to the origin of the Persian monarchy, to delineate very briefly the early periods of its history, and to exhibit a general view of the government, genius, policy, and manners of this ancient people. Such a retrospect will serve to throw light upon their subsequent history, and familiarize us to their acquaintance when, under Darius, the son of Hystaspes, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, Darius Ochus, and Codomanus, we see the force of that splendid empire opposed to the valor and intrepidity of Greece.

It will be recollected that the first empire of the Assyrians ended under Sardanapalus, when Arbaces, governor of the Medes, and Belesis, governor of Babylon, shook off the yoke of that effeminate prince. Three monarchies arose from the ruins of that empire—that of Nineveh, or the second Assyrian empire, that of Babylon, and that of the Medes.

To Belesis succeeded Nabonassar, whose accession to the throne is the beginning of an astronomical era, called the Era of Nabonassar. It is fixed 747 years before Jesus Christ, at which time the Chaldæan astronomical observations began, which have been handed down to us by Ptolemy the geographer. The history of the kings of Babylon succeeding Nabonassar is entirely unknown. That of the monarchs of Nineveh is very little better known, unless by the ravages they committed in Palestine. We read in

Scripture of the conquests of Tiglath-pilezer, whom the impious Achaz, king of Judah, had called to his aid against the Israelites; of the conquests of his son Salmanazar, who carried Hosea and the ten tribes of Israel into captivity; of those of Sennacherib, the son of Salmanazar, who was assassinated by his two elder sons, and succeeded by his third, Esarhaddon. With these general facts we are acquainted from the Holy Scriptures,\* and we know that, under this last reign, the kingdom of Babylon was united to that of Nineveh, or the second empire of Assyria.

The monarchy of the Medes, the third of those which sprang from the ruins of the first Assyrian empire, appears to have begun later than the other two; for Dejoces, its first sovereign, mounted the throne the same year with Esarhaddon. The history of this Dejoces is extremely uncertain. He is reported to have built the city of Ecbatan, and to have bestowed much pains in polishing and civilizing his people: yet those laws which he is said to have enacted breathed strongly the spirit of despotism. It was common to the Asiatic monarchs very rarely to show themselves to their subjects. Dejoces is said to have carried the haughtiness of his deportment to an unusual height. It was death only to smile in his presence. We should be inclined to doubt many of those facts which are recorded of the capricious tyranny of some of the eastern monarchs, were they not transmitted to us by the gravest and most authentic of the ancient writers.

Dejoces left the crown of Media to his son Phraortes, who conquered the Persians, and subdued a great part of Asia; but was vanquished at length by Nabuchodonozor I., king of Assyria, made prisoner, and put to death. Cyaxares, the son and successor of Phraortes, in alliance with Nabopolassar, king of Babylon, besieged Nineveh, destroyed that splendid capital, and decided the monarchy between them.

The son of Nabopolassar was Nabuchodonozor II., a prince remarkable in those times for his extensive conquests. Necho (or Pharaoh Necho) king of Egypt, had wrested from the Assyrian monarchy the provinces of Syria and Palestine. They were recovered by Nabuchodonozor and Cyaxares, who, with a vast army of 10,000 chariots, 180,000 foot, and 120,000 horse, invaded and laid waste the country, besieged Jerusalem, and took its king, Jehoiakim, prisoner. Tyre was likewise taken after a siege of ten months. The allied princes divided their conquests; but we are ignorant of the precise shares of each sovereign. To Nabuchodonozor, or, as in Scripture he is named, Nebuchadnezzar, we must assign the dominion of Jerusalem, as it is to him that the seventy years' captivity of the Jews, predicted by Jeremiah, is

\* See the Books of Kings, Chronicles, Hosea; likewise Josephus' Hist. and Prideaux Connex.

attributed by the inspired writers. Among the Jewish captives carried by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon was the prophet Dániel, then a youth named Belteshazzar, who attained high favor with the Assyrian monarch, and was made by him ruler of the province of Babylon. From Judæa, Nebuchadnezzar pushed his conquests into Egypt, and, dethroning Pharaoh Necho, gave the government of the country to Amasis. The chronology of these events is extremely confused, and it were a vain and fruitless labor to attempt to fix with precision their orders and series. Nebuchadnezzar II. died after a reign of forty-three years, leaving a monarchy more vast than powerful—an object which offered an easy conquest to the Persians, when Cyrus, their king, raised the Persian empire, hitherto a petty and barbarous dominion, to a height superior to that of all the contemporary nations of the earth.

The name of Cyrus is extremely illustrious among ancient writers; yet nothing can be more uncertain than his history. Herodotus, Ctesias, and Xenophon, the latest of whom was not above two centuries posterior to the supposed age of Cyrus, have given accounts of him so extremely contradictory, that it is quite impossible to reconcile them. The Cyrus of Ctesias and Herodotus obtains possession of the empire of the Medes by dethroning his grandfather Astyages, and, like most extensive conquerors, is the terror and scourge of the human race. The Cyrus of Xenophon fights solely in defence of his uncle Cyaxares, the son of Astyages, and is in every respect the model of a great and virtuous prince. The Cyrus of Herodotus is killed, fighting against Tomyris, the queen of the Massagetæ, who plunges his head into a basin of blood, in revenge of her son, whom Cyrus had put to death. The Cyrus of Ctesias is killed by a wound he received in Hyrcania; and the Cyrus of Xenophon, after a glorious reign of thirty years, dies a natural death. Uncertain as are the particulars of the history of the elder Cyrus, it is generally agreed that his conquests were extensive; that he vanquished the Babylonians; defeated their ally, Cræsus, the king of Lydia, the most powerful of the contemporary sovereigns; subjected a great part of the lower Asia, and made himself master of Syria and Arabia. The policy of such conquerors, who found it impossible to preserve their conquests, was to ruin the countries which they gained by their arms. Devastation was held to be the natural right of war. Those princes had no plan in their military enterprises—chance directed their course. Nebuchadnezzar II., whom we have seen the conqueror of Judæa and Egypt, is said to have cast lots to determine to which point of the compass he should direct his progress: the lot fell towards Jerusalem; he marched on accordingly, and subdued it.

Cambyses, the son and successor of Cyrus, had neither the talents of his father, nor his virtues. He planned a military expedition into Egypt, which was signalized only by folly and extrava-

gance. His vast army speedily overpowered this feeble people, who have been successively subdued by every nation that attacked them; but the conqueror after all reaped nothing but dishonor; for his conduct was such as to bear every mark of insanity. In an inconsiderate expedition against the Æthiopians, he threw away the greater part of his army:—50,000 men, sent into the deserts of Ammon, perished through fatigue and famine. With a deliberate purpose of wantonly exasperating the Egyptians, who were disposed to the most peaceable submission, Cambyses ordered the magnificent temple of Thebes to be pillaged and burnt. At the celebration of the festival of Apis, at Memphis, he stabbed the sacred ox with his poniard, ordered the priests to be scourged, and massacred all the people who assisted at the sacrifice. He put to death his brother Smerdis, because he dreamed that he saw him seated on the throne; and when his wife and sister, Meroe, lamented the fate of her brother, he killed her with a stroke of his foot. To prove his dexterity in archery, he pierced the son of his favorite Prexaspes through the heart with an arrow.

This madman was on his return to his dominions of Persia, when he learned that the order of the magi had effected a dangerous revolution; and that, by their aid, one of their own number had assumed the character of his brother Smerdis, and had been elected king in his absence. He hastened to punish this usurpation, but died on his way, from a wound of his poniard, which struck him in the groin while mounting his horse. The false Smerdis did not long enjoy his dignity. Two grandees of the court, Darius the son of Hystaspes, and Otanes, conspired to dethrone him, and the usurper was strangled in the imperial palace. Darius had influence enough to obtain the vacant throne of Persia; though we cannot easily rely on the authority of Herodotus, that he owed his election to the neighing of his horse.

Darius the son of Hystaspes was a prince of talents and ambition: he was the first of the Persian monarchs who imposed a regular tax upon the conquered provinces of the empire, which till then had only given occasional gratuities to the sovereign. He chose, however, to conciliate the great body of his subjects to the new government, by exempting the Persians from those burdens. The Babylonians were the first of the provinces which endeavored to shake off the yoke of servitude; but their attempt cost them extremely dear. Darius encircled Babylon with his army so as to cut off all supplies from the adjacent country. The inhabitants exerted a savage resolution. All who were useless for the defence of the city, and served only to consume its provisions,—the women, the old men, and the children,—were strangled by a public decree; each head of a family being allowed to preserve one of his wives and a maid servant. At length, after a siege of twenty months, Darius won the city by a treacherous stratagem. One of his captains, mutilating his visage with hideous wounds,

fled, as if for safety, to the Babylonians, and offered his services to avenge himself against Darius, who had used him thus inhumanly. The man was trusted by the credulous Babylonians with a high command, of which he availed himself to open the gates to the Persians. With aggravated meanness and cruelty Darius impaled alive three thousand of the principal citizens.

Ambitious of extensive conquest, he now meditated a war against the Scythians, on the absurd pretext that they had ravaged a part of Asia about 130 years before. At the head of an army of 700,000 men, he set out from Susa, his capital, to wage war against a nation whom it was impossible to conquer. Detached and wandering tribes, who have scarcely attained an idea of fixed possessions, migrate with ease and celerity from one extremity of a country to the other, and are not to be subdued: while, in the mean time, the invading army, even though unopposed, is consumed of itself by famine and fatigue. The sole business of the Scythians was to retreat, driving their cattle before them, and filling up the wells in their route. The Persians, after long and excessive marches, never got more than a distant sight of the enemy, while they were perishing by thousands in a rugged and barren country. At length Darius thought it his wisest measure to retreat, having lost the greatest part of his army, and leaving behind him the sick and aged at the mercy of the barbarians.

The character of this prince was daring, active, and enterprising. The disastrous event of the Scythian war served only to stimulate him to greater and more glorious attempts. He now projected the conquest of India. The particulars of that enterprise are not preserved in history; but we know that it was successfully accomplished. India was made the twentieth province of the Persian empire. In the course of this war, Darius equipped a fleet upon the Indus, under the command of Scylax, a Greek of Caria, with orders to sail down the river and explore the countries on either side till he arrived at the ocean. Scylax obeyed his instructions, and performed, in the course of his voyage, a navigation perhaps the longest that at this time had been attempted by any nation. From the mouth of the Indus, he sailed through the *Mare Erythræum*,\* coasting, as we must presume, by the mouth of the Persian Gulf; and entering the Red Sea by the Sinus Avalates, now the Straits of Babelmandel, he disembarked in Egypt after a voyage of above 1100 leagues.

The outlines of the Persian monarchy thus shortly traced till

\* The *Mare Erythræum* is not to be confounded with the Red Sea. The latter is the *Sinus Arabicus*; the former is that part of the Indian Ocean which extends between the Straits of Babelmandel and the continent of India. It is said to have been so named from a king called Erythras.

the period of the war with Greece—the government, laws, manners, and customs of this great Asiatic empire demand our attention, as an interesting and curious subject of inquiry.

The government of Persia, from the earliest accounts we have of that nation, was an hereditary monarchy. Their princes were absolute in the most unlimited sense of the expression. Their persons were revered as sacred, and they were never approached by their subjects without the gestures of adoration. Their word, their look conferred life or death; and the displeasure of *The Great King* was equally dreaded with the wrath of the divinity. In the latter and splendid periods of their dominion, the pomp and magnificence of these monarchs, with their necessary concomitants, voluptuousness and debauchery, have been amply described by ancient authors. The revenues of whole provinces, according to Herodotus, were bestowed on the attire of their favorite concubines; and the provinces themselves took from that circumstance their popular appellations. Plato, in his *Alcibiades*, mentions a Greek ambassador who travelled a whole day through a country called the *Queen's Girdle*, and another in crossing a province which went by the name of the *Queen's Head Dress*. The regal throne was of pure gold, overshadowed by a palm-tree and vine of the same metal, with clusters of fruit composed of precious stones.

Yet amidst this wantonness of Asiatic magnificence, the care which those princes bestowed on the education of their children merited the highest praise. They were, almost as soon as born, removed from the palace, and committed to the charge of eunuchs of approved fidelity and discretion. At seven years of age they learned the exercise of riding, and went daily to the chase, to inure them betimes to fatigue and intrepidity. At the age of fourteen they were put under the care of four preceptors eminently distinguished by their wisdom and abilities. The first opened to them the doctrines of the magi; the second impressed them with a veneration for truth; the third exercised them in the habits of fortitude and magnanimity; and the fourth inculcated the most difficult of all lessons, especially to the great, the perfect command and government of their passions.

It is to be observed, that the Persians in general, above every other nation, were noted for their extreme attention to the education of youth. Before the age of five, the children were exclusively under the tuition of the mother and assistant females. After that age, they were committed to the charge of the *magi*, an order of men whose proper function was that of priests or ministers of the national religion, but who spent their lives in the pursuit of wisdom, and the practice of the strictest morality. By their precepts and their example, the Persian youth were early trained to virtue and good morals. They were taught the most sacred regard to truth, the highest veneration for their parents and superiors, the most perfect submission to the laws of their coun-

try, and respect for its magistrates. Nor was the culture of the body neglected. The youth were trained to every manly exercise; a preparative to their admission into the body of the king's guards, in which they were enrolled at the age of seventeen. The general system of education among the Persians is thus laconically described by Herodotus. "From the age of five to that of twenty, they teach their children three things alone—to manage a horse, to use the bow with dexterity, and to speak truth." From these accounts of ancient authors, we might be led to conclude, that a system of education thus public, left very little to be done on the part of the parents; yet we find in the *Zendavesta* this admirable precept to fathers: "If you desire to enjoy paradise, instruct your children in wisdom and virtue; since all their good deeds will be imputed to you."

The luxury of the Persians, which has become proverbial, must not mislead us in our ideas of their character in the early ages of that monarchy. In reality, before the time of Cyrus, the Persians were a rude and barbarous people, inhabiting a poor and narrow country of rocks and deserts. We have the concurring testimony of all the ancient authors who have written concerning them, that they were, in those early periods, a people remarkable for their temperance, and the virtuous simplicity of their manners. Herodotus records an excellent speech of one Sandanis, a Lydian, who, when his sovereign Cræsus projected the invasion of Persia, thus strongly pointed out to him the folly of his enterprise: "What will you gain," said he, "by waging war with such men as the Persians? Their clothing is skins, their food wild fruits, and their drink water. If you are conquered, you lose a cultivated country; if you conquer them, what can you take from them?—a barren region. For my part, I thank the gods, that the Persians have not yet formed the design of invading the Lydians."

The use of gold and silver for money was unknown to the Persians till the reign of Darius, the son of Cyaxares, or, as he is called in Scripture, *Darius the Mede*. The reign of this prince was, indeed, the era of their change of manners. The Medes, conquered by the Persians, became the models of their manners, as we shall see did the Greeks to the Romans. The ancient Persians were a warlike and a hardy race of men. They were all trained to the use of arms; and in time of war, every male, unless disabled by age or bodily infirmity, was obliged, on pain of death, to attend the monarch in the field. Hence those immense armies whose numbers almost exceed belief, and which were, of necessity, disorderly and unmanageable, as they never could act with the uniform operation of a well-organized body. While on service they wore complete armor, composed of loose plates of metal, fashioned in the form of the scales of fishes, which covered the whole body, arms, legs, thighs and feet. Their weapons were a bow of uncommon length, a quiver of arrows, a short sword,