

By the orders of their sovereign, the shattered remains of the Persian fleet sailed directly for the Hellespont, while the army, by rapid marches, took the same route by Bœotia and Thessaly; marking their course by universal desolation: for this immense host, after consuming the natural produce of the country, were reduced, as Herodotus informs us, to eat the grass of the fields, and to strip the trees of their bark and leaves. The same writer mentions, that Xerxes himself never took off his clothes to go to rest, till he reached Abdera, in Thrace. Having provided, however, for his personal safety, he saved, as he imagined, his honor, in this inglorious enterprise, by carrying to Persia a few statues and rich plunder from Athens, and leaving 300,000 men under Mardonius to accomplish the conquest of Greece in the next campaign.

The victory of Salamis, the first great naval engagement of the Greeks, convinced them of the importance of a fleet for the national defence; and from that time their marine, particularly that of Athens, became an object of serious attention.

Mardonius, notwithstanding his immense force, seemed to have greater hopes from the power of Persian gold than Persian valor. He attempted to corrupt the Athenians by offering them the command of all Greece, if they would desert the confederacy of the united states. Aristides was then archon: he answered, that while the sun held its course in the firmament, the Persians had nothing to expect from the Athenians but mortal and eternal enmity. So much did he here speak the sense of his countrymen, that a single citizen having moved in the public assembly that the Persian deputies should be allowed to explain their proposals, was instantly stoned to death.

Mardonius, now determined to wreak his vengeance on Athens, prepared to assault the city with the whole of his force. The women, the aged, and the infants retired, a second time, to the neighboring islands; and the Persians, without resistance, burnt and levelled the city with the ground. But the Athenians soon had an ample revenge.

The Spartans sent to their aid, and for the national defence, 5,000 citizens, each attended by seven Helots; in all, 40,000 men. The Tegeans, and others of the confederate states, contributed according to their powers; and the united army amounted, according to the best accounts, to 65,000, when they met the Persians under Mardonius, in the field of Plataea. This day's

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is singular that the most minute and accurate account of this celebrated sea-fight is to be found in the tragedy of the *Persæ*, by Æschylus; a composition equally valuable as a noble effort of poetic genius, and as an historical record. As Æschylus was himself present in this engagement, and thousands of his readers were eye-witnesses of the facts, his accuracy is beyond all impeachment.

conflict was a counterpart to the naval victory of Salamis. The Persians were totally defeated: Mardonius was killed in the fight. The slaughter was incredible, as out of an army of 300,000 men, only 40,000 are said to have saved themselves by flight. The Persian camp, exhibiting all the wealth and apparatus of luxury, was a rich and welcome plunder to the conquerors. To complete the triumph of the Greeks, their fleet, upon the same day, gained a victory over that of the Persians at Mycale.

From that day, the ambitious schemes of Xerxes were at an end. He had hitherto remained at Sardis, in Lydia, to be nearer the scene of his operations in Greece. On receiving intelligence that all was lost, he wreaked his revenge on all the temples of the Grecian divinities which adorned the cities of Asia; and returning to his capital of Susa, sought to drown in effeminate pleasures the remembrance of his shame; but his inglorious life was destined soon after to be ended by assassination.

At no time was the national character of the Greeks higher than at the period of which we now treat. A common interest had annihilated, for the time, the jealousies of the rival states, and given them union as a nation. At the Olympic games, all the people of Greece rose up to salute Themistocles. The only contention between the greater republics, was a noble emulation of surpassing each other in patriotic exertions for the general defence of their country against the common foe. But this feeling seemed, in reality, to be an unnatural restraint against the predominant and customary spirit of these republics; for no sooner was the national danger, the sole motive of their union, at an end, than the former jealousies and divisions recommenced.

After the expulsion of the Persians, the Athenians now prepared with alacrity to rebuild their ruined city, and to strengthen it by additional fortifications. This design the Spartans could not regard with a tranquil mind: and they had even the folly to send a formal embassy to remonstrate against the measure; urging the weak pretence, that the national interest required that there should be no fortified city out of Peloponnesus, lest the enemy, in the event of another invasion, should make it a place of strength. The real motive of this extraordinary remonstrance was abundantly apparent. They regarded the plan of rebuilding and enlarging Athens as an alarming symptom of their rival's ambition to establish a predominant power. They were aware that Athens, by means of her fleet, could annoy at pleasure, and thus keep in subjection, a great proportion of the inferior states. Their republic, so formidable on land, could never, with her iron money, have equipped a fleet to vie with that of Athens, far less to resist a foreign invasion such as they had lately experienced. Conscious of the superiority already obtained by Athens, Sparta beheld with uneasiness every symptom of her aggrandizement; she had no other means of retaining her

own consequence among the states of Greece, than the diminishing that of her rival.

It was not likely that the remonstrance from Sparta should deter the Athenians from the wise and patriotic purpose of rebuilding and strengthening their native city. They sent Themistocles to Sparta to explain the reasons which influenced them in that design, and proceeded in the meantime to carry it vigorously into execution: men, women, slaves, and even children, joined their efforts; and in a very short space of time, Athens rose from her ruins with a great accession of strength and splendor. The harbor of the Piræus, under the direction of Themistocles, then chief archon, was enlarged and fortified, so as to form the completest naval arsenal that yet belonged to any of the nations of antiquity.

The Persians still continued to maintain a formidable armament upon the sea, and the operations of the Greeks were now exerted to clear the Ægean and Mediterranean of their hostile squadrons. The united fleet of Greece was commanded by Aristides and Pausanias; the latter, a man of high birth and authority—uncle to one of the Spartan kings, and regent during his nephew's minority, but himself infamous for betraying his country. He had privately despatched letters to Xerxes, offering to facilitate to him the conquest of Greece; and demanding his daughter in marriage, as a reward of this signal service. Fortunately his letters were intercepted. The traitor fled for protection to the temple of Minerva, a sanctuary from which it was judged impossible to force him. His mother showed an example of virtue truly Lacedæmonian. She walked to the gate of the temple, and laying down a stone before the threshold, silently retired; the signal was understood and venerated; the Ephori gave immediate orders for building a wall around the temple, and within its precincts the traitor was starved to death.

Pausanias was succeeded in the command of the fleet by Cimon, the son of Miltiades, and pupil of Aristides. When the chief command of the war was given to Athens, a new system was established with regard to the contributions of the confederate states, trusting no longer to contingent and occasional supplies or free gifts. The subsidies to be levied from each were to be exacted in proportion to its means, and the revenue of its territory; and a common treasury was appointed to be kept in the Isle of Delos. The high character of Aristides was exemplified in the important and honorable trust with which he was invested by the common consent of the nation. It appears that not only the custody of the national supplies, but the power of fixing their proportions, was conferred on this illustrious man; nor was there ever a complaint or murmur heard against the equity with which this high but invidious function was administered. The best testimony of his virtue was the strict frugality of his life, and the honorable poverty in which he died. The public which defrayed his funeral

charges, and provided for the support of his children, thus decorated his name with the noblest memorial of uncorrupted integrity.

Themistocles was then at Argos. His credit at Athens had become formidable; an ostracism had been demanded, and he was banished by the influence of a faction of his enemies. He had fallen under the suspicion of participating in the treason of Pausanias; and circumstances, though not conclusive, afford some presumptions of his guilt. It is said that the papers of Pausanias, containing a detail of the proposed scheme for betraying Greece to Persia, were found in his possession. Certain it is that measures were taken for a public impeachment before the council of the Amphictyons, when Themistocles, unwilling to risk the consequences of a trial while a strong party of the public were his enemies, hastily withdrew from Greece. He fled first for protection to Admetus, king of the Messenians; but the Greeks threatening a war against his protector, he thought it prudent to seek a more secure asylum, and betook himself to the court of Persia, where he was received with extraordinary marks of distinction and regard. It is said that the Persian monarch vented this keen sarcasm against the Athenians, that he regarded them as his best friends, in sending him the ablest man of their country; and that he sincerely wished they would persevere in the same policy of banishing from their territories all the good and wise. Themistocles was loaded with honors, but did not long survive to enjoy them. Remorse, it is affirmed, had taken possession of his mind, which all the magnificence and luxury of the East could not dispel or overpower; and he is said to have swallowed poison. The Greek historians, philosophers, and poets, all join in bearing honorable testimony to the splendid talents and the eminent services of Themistocles. Ambition, it is true, was his ruling passion; but the ambition of a truly noble mind seeks the glory and the greatness of its country, as essential to the fulfilment of its own desires; and if in reality the designs of Themistocles were criminal, which has never been fully proved, it is probable that the mean jealousies of his political enemies, and the ingratitude of his parent state, drove him reluctantly to measures at which his better nature revolted. His last request was that his bones should be carried to Greece, and buried in his native soil.

Xerxes, whom we have remarked to have died by assassination, was succeeded by his third son, Artaxerxes, surnamed *Longimanus*; who, in the absence of his eldest brother, having put to death the other, usurped the Persian throne. The war was still carried on with Greece. Cimon, the son of Miltiades, whose valor and abilities compensated to Athens and to Greece the loss of Themistocles, after expelling the Persians from Thrace and from many of their possessions in the lesser Asia, attacked and totally destroyed their fleet near the mouth of the river Eurymedon; and landing his troops, gained a signal victory over their army, on the same day.

The consequences of this victory were certainly important, if they produced a complete cessation of hostilities on the part of Persia against Greece, for a considerable length of time. It has, indeed, been asserted by some of the latest of the ancient writers, that a treaty of peace was now concluded, upon these honorable terms for Greece, that all the Greek cities of Asia should regain their independence, and that no Persian ship should dare to come in sight of the Grecian coasts; but this important assertion rests upon no sufficient authority; and that the war was soon after renewed with great animosity, is a fact undisputed.

A dreadful earthquake happening at Lacedæmon, which demolished almost every dwelling in the city, and destroyed about 20,000 of the citizens, the Helotes, taking advantage of the disorder from that calamity, rebelled, and joined themselves to the Messenians, with whom the state was then at war. Sparta, at this crisis, solicited aid from Athens; and, to the shame of that commonwealth, it was debated in the public assembly whether the request should be complied with. Ephialtes, the orator, urging that the two states were natural enemies, and that the prosperity of the one depended on the abasement of the other, gave his advice to abandon Sparta to her calamities. Cimon nobly and powerfully combated this unworthy sentiment, and his counsel prevailed. He was entrusted with the charge of the expedition to assist the Lacedæmonians; and he was successful in putting an end to the rebellion.

Cimon owed his consideration with his countrymen not only to the splendor of his military talents evinced by his great and glorious successes, but to the remembrance of his father's virtues and services, and above all, to a generosity of character which delighted equally in acts of private bounty and public munificence. Any of these distinguished merits were sufficient at Athens to sow the seeds of distrust and jealousy; but where all concurred, they furnished a certain and infallible preparative of the humiliation of their possessor. He had a rival too in the public favor, who sought his downfall as the means of his own elevation. This was Pericles, a young man of a noble family, of splendid powers, and great versatility of character; who knew how to veil his designs of ambition with the most consummate artifice. While he affected the utmost moderation, declining all public employments or offices, his conduct seemed to be actuated by no other motive than an amiable diffidence of his own powers, which, however, he took care to display whenever occasion offered, in animated and eloquent speeches which breathed the most ardent and virtuous patriotism. His mind was highly cultivated by the study of literature and the sciences; and the affability of his manners fascinated all with whom he conversed. It was not difficult for a man of this character to gain high popularity at Athens; and joining himself to the party which opposed the measures of Cimon, and seizing a

favorable opportunity when the popular mind was wound up to their purposes, that virtuous patriot fell a sacrifice, and was banished by the sentence of the ostracism.

The good understanding between Sparta and Athens could not be of long continuance. Their mutual jealousies broke out afresh, and soon terminated in an open war between the two republics; and most of the minor states of Greece took a part in the quarrel. Had these aimed at absolute freedom, it had perhaps been their best policy to have stood aloof, and suffered those domineering states to harass and weaken each other. But their own smallness and insignificance were a bar to any plan of republican independence. The danger from the Persians the common enemy, was felt by all; and the smaller states had no chance to escape ruin, but through their allegiance to the greater.

In the course of this war between Athens and Sparta, Cimon, though in exile, eager to serve his country, came to the Athenian army with a hundred of his friends who had voluntarily gone with him to banishment. But the Athenians rejected his proffered service, and forced him to retire. His generous friends, forming themselves into a separate band, desperately precipitated themselves upon the army of the Lacedæmonians, and were all cut off. This incident had a powerful effect in dispelling the popular prejudices against this illustrious character. The people of Athens were now convinced that they had been unjust and cruel to one of their best patriots. Pericles was aware of this change of sentiment, and perceiving that his own popularity might suffer by a fruitless opposition, took the merit to himself of being the first proposer of a public decree for Cimon's recall from banishment. Pericles knew likewise that his rival's talents and his own sought a different field of exertion. While Cimon's ability as a general and naval commander would give him sufficient employment at a distance, he himself could rule the republic at home with uncontrolled authority.

Cimon accordingly returned to his country, after an exile of five years; before the end of which period Athens and Sparta had renewed their alliance; and he sailed at the head of an armament of 200 ships of war against the Persians, then in the vicinity of Cyprus, with a fleet of 300 sail. The squadron of the Greeks attacked and totally destroyed them. Cimon afterwards landed in Cilicia, and completed his triumph by a signal victory over Megabyzes, the Persian general, at the head of a great army. Cimon now undertook and completed the reduction of Cyprus; but while besieging its capital, and in the very moment of victory, this heroic man, wasted by disease and fatigue, died, to the general loss of Athens and of Greece. The army, at his special request when expiring, concealed his death, and proceeded with vigor in their operations till the object of the enterprise was gloriously accomplished, and Cyprus added to the dominion of Athens.

The naval and military power of Persia was completely broken by these repeated defeats; and all further hostile operations against their formidable enemy were abandoned for a considerable length of time. The military glory of the Greeks seems at this period to have been at its highest elevation. They had maintained a long and successful war, and at length established an undisputed superiority over the greatest and most flourishing of the contemporary empires of antiquity. The causes of this superiority are sufficiently apparent. Greece undoubtedly owed many of her triumphs to those illustrious men who had the command of her fleets and armies; to Miltiades, to Aristides, to Themistocles, and to Cimon. But the noblest exertions of individuals would have availed little, without that spirit of union which bound together her separate states in defence of their common liberties. Greece was only formidable while united. The Persian empire infinitely superior in power, and inexhaustible in resources, derived from the force of a despot an involuntary and reluctant species of association, very different from an union arising from the spirit of patriotism. The armies of the Persians, immense in their numbers, were like the heavy and inanimate limbs of a vast and ill-organized body. They yielded a sluggish obedience to the will of the head, but were totally incapable of any spirited and vigorous exertion.

But a season of rest from the annoyance of a foreign foe was ever fatal to the prosperity and to the real glory of the Greeks. Their bond of union was no longer in force. The petty jealousies and quarrels of the different states broke out afresh, with an acrimony increased from their temporary suspension.

Athens, which during the war had firmly attached to her alliance a great many of the smaller states, who, in return for protection, cheerfully contributed their supplies for carrying it on, was equally desirous of maintaining the same ascendant in a season of peace, and thus gradually sought to extinguish the original independence of the smaller states, and perpetuate their vassalage. But these were jealous of their freedom, and utterly scorned to become the slaves or tributaries of that ambitious republic. Unable, however, to withstand her power, they had no other means of withdrawing themselves from her dominion, than by courting an alliance with her rival Lacedæmon: for to show that they could at pleasure join themselves to either of these rival states, was, as they flattered themselves, a demonstration that they were not dependent on either. The smaller republics were therefore continually fluctuating between the scales of Athens and Lacedæmon; a circumstance which fomented the rivalry of the latter states, and embittered their animosities; while it increased the national dissensions, and ultimately induced that general weakness which paved the way for the reduction and slavery of Greece.

From this period, too, the martial and the patriotic spirit began

alike to decline in the Athenian republic. An acquaintance with Asia, and the importation of a part of her wealth, had introduced an imitation of her manners, and a taste for her luxuries. But the Athenian luxury was widely different from that of the Persians. With the latter it was only unmeaning splendor and gross sensuality; with the former it took its direction from taste and genius: and while it insensibly corrupted the severer virtues, it is not to be denied that it led to the most elegant and refined enjoyments of life. The age of Pericles was the era of a change in the national spirit of the Athenians: a taste for the *fine arts*, which had hitherto lain dormant from the circumstance of the national danger engrossing all the feelings and passions of men, began, now that this danger had ceased, to break forth with surprising lustre. The sciences, which are strictly allied to the arts, and which always find their chief encouragement from ease and luxury, rose at the same time to a great pitch of eminence.

The age of Pericles is not the era of the highest national glory of the Greeks, if we understand that term in its best and proudest signification; but it is at least the era of their highest internal splendor. Under this striking change, which is evidently preparatory to their downfall, we shall proceed to consider them.

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## CHAPTER II.

Administration of Pericles—Peloponnesian War—Siege of Platæa—Alcibiades—Lysander—The Thirty Tyrants—Thrasybulus—Death of Socrates—Retreat of the Ten Thousand—War with Persia terminated by the Peace of Antalcidas.

THE death of Cimon left Pericles for some time an unrivalled ascendancy in the republic of Athens; but as the more his power increased, he used the less art to disguise his ambitious spirit, a faction was gradually formed to oppose him, at the head of which was Thucydides, the brother-in-law of Cimon, a man no less eminent for his wisdom and abilities than estimable for his integrity. He had powerful talents as an orator, which he nobly exerted in the cause of virtue and the true interest of his country; but he was deficient in those arts of address in which his rival Pericles so eminently excelled. While Pericles amused the people with shows, or gratified them with festivals, and while he dissipated the