

worthy of the applause even of an enemy, was dragged round the walls of the city at the wheels of Alexander's chariot. "The king," says Curtius, "gloried that, in this instance, he imitated the example of his progenitor Achilles, in the vengeance he took on the dead body of Hector."

Darius had sent a second embassy to Alexander, while he was engaged in the siege of Tyre. The Persian now assumed a humbler tone. He offered ten thousand talents for the ransom of his mother and his queen, and he agreed to give Alexander his daughter Statira in marriage, with all the Asiatic provinces to the westward of the Euphrates for her portion. When these terms were made known to the Macedonian officers, Parmenio could not help remarking, that, were he Alexander, he would not hesitate a moment to accept of them: "And I," replied the king, "might think so too, were I Parmenio."

The views of Alexander were now directed to the conquest of Egypt. In a council of war which he held after the taking of Tyre, he laid open to his officers the plan of policy which directed his measures, both in the making himself master of the whole coast of Phœnicia and of Egypt—measures which appear at first sight to be deviations from his principal object, the reduction of the Persian empire. He wisely judged that the main obstacle to the accomplishment of this end was the naval force of the Persians and the command they had both of the Phœnician and Egyptian sea-coasts, along with the isle of Cyprus, whence they could at all times, from a variety of quarters, make attacks upon Greece and Macedonia. Of the allegiance of the Greeks Alexander had no assurance. The Spartans were openly hostile to his sovereignty. In these circumstances, it was obviously his wisest plan to secure, in the first place, the dominion of the sea; when this was once attained, the conquest of Persia, already half achieved, appeared an object which might be accomplished with ease.

In prosecution of these views, Alexander, after leaving a strong garrison in Gaza, directed his course to Egypt. The whole country submitted without opposition. At Memphis, he made a solemn sacrifice to the Egyptian gods, acknowledging their affinity to the deities of Greece; a stroke of wise policy which had a great effect in conciliating the allegiance of the people to their new sovereign. In the same views he planned and founded a great city at the mouth of the Nile, to which he gave his own name; a situation so happily chosen, and with such advantages of nature, that within the space of twenty years, Alexandria rose to great wealth and consequence, and has ever since maintained its rank among the first commercial sea-ports both in ancient and in modern times. Above twenty other cities bearing the name of Alexandria were reared in the course of Alexander's various expeditions. It is such works as these which justly entitle the Macedonian to the epithet of *Great*. By the cities which he built, by rearing in the

midst of deserts those nurseries of population and of industry, he repaired the waste and havoc of his conquests. Without those monuments of his real glory, posterity might have agreed in bestowing on him an epithet synonymous to that by which he is yet known among the bramins of India—the *mighty Murderer*.

The next enterprise of Alexander, although it has furnished opposite constructions, was probably the fruit of the same extended policy which regulated all the designs of this extraordinary man. In a beautiful and fertile spot in the interior of Lybia, surrounded on all sides by immense deserts, stood the temple of Jupiter Ammon, whose oracle had the same authority and fame among the African and Asiatic nations that the temple of Delphos enjoyed in Greece. Alexander had always encouraged a popular superstitious belief, which he found eminently subservient to his schemes of ambition, that he owed his own birth to an intrigue of Jupiter with his mother Olympias. The wiser part of his subjects, no doubt, treated this fiction with the ridicule it deserved; but it seemed an object of moment to give it force and credit with the multitude, and in particular with the barbarous nations against whom his enterprises were directed. Nothing seemed so proper to this end as the voice of the Lybian oracle, the testimony of Jupiter himself, acknowledging the king for his genuine offspring. The difficulties of the enterprise, in conducting a great army through an hundred leagues of sandy desert, weighed nothing in the scale with such an object. He secretly procured every necessary information regarding his route, and even employed guides without the knowledge of his army, that he might appear solely conducted by the aid of heaven to the meritorious and pious object of his journey. Two dragons, according to Ptolemy, or two ravens, as Aristobulus related, were the sole directors of his course. The oracle was prudently instructed and prepared for his reception, and the enterprise (of course) ended to his wish, in a direct and solemn acknowledgment of his heavenly descent.

Returning from his African expedition, Alexander now traversed Assyria, and, passing the Tigris and Euphrates without opposition, came up with the Persian monarch at the head of 700,000 men, near to the village of Arbela. Before assembling this immense army, Darius had again earnestly solicited for peace. He offered to Alexander, along with his daughter, a still greater cession of territory, and the sum of 10,000 talents: but the ambition of the Macedonian was unbounded, and he rejected all terms but those of implicit submission. The Macedonian army did not exceed 40,000 men. It was towards the close of day when they came in sight of the prodigious host of the Persians, which extended over an immense plain to the utmost distance that the eye could reach. Even some of Alexander's bravest officers were appalled with this sight, and Parmenio counselled him, as his wisest plan, to attack them in the night, when the inequality of numbers

might be the less seen and felt on both sides. But Alexander, with more sagacity, conjectured that the Persians would prepare themselves against such an attack, and that it was a better policy to wait till the day-break, when they would find their enemy exhausted with the fatigue of watching during the night under arms, while his own troops, with proper attention to their necessary refreshment, would encounter them with vigor and alacrity.

The issue corresponded with this sagacious foresight. The attack was made at day-break with an ardor and impetuosity on the part of the Greeks, which, in the first onset, threw the foremost ranks of the Persian army back in confusion upon the main body, and completely restrained and rendered ineffectual its operations. Disorder, once begun, was propagated like an electrical shock through the whole mass, and the decisive victory at Arbela was purchased even with less effort than had attended the contest at Issus, or that on the banks of the Granicus. The numbers of the Persians that fell at Arbela are estimated by Arrian at 300,000, while the loss of the Macedonians did not exceed 1200.

Darius now fled from province to province, while the whole country submitted to the conqueror. In this situation, the ill-fated monarch, a fugitive, abandoned by his troops and closely pursued by Alexander, was finally betrayed by Bessus, one of his own satraps. He dismissed a body of Greeks who were his guards, and who, from personal attachment, followed him through all his disasters, lest the preference shown to foreign soldiers might offend his native subjects. In this deserted situation, he was surprised and assassinated by Bessus. Polystratus, a Macedonian, received his last words, which were an expression of gratitude to Alexander for the humane treatment he had bestowed on his mother, his wife, and his children. There is a chasm in the narrative of Quintus Curtius at that passage which relates the death of Darius, and it has been supplied by some one of his editors upon the authority of Plutarch. The inserted passage is singularly beautiful, and altogether worthy of the pen of an ancient classic. It informs us that Polystratus having gone aside to a fountain to quench his thirst, saw hard by a mean wagon, in which lay a wounded man, to appearance in the agonies of death. There was no attendant near. On approaching, he perceived that it was the king of the Persians, who lay stretched upon a skin, covered with wounds. When Polystratus came near, he opened his eyes, and feebly asked of him a draught of water, which when he had received, "Whoever thou art," said he, "who hast done me this office of humanity, it is the last of my misfortunes that I can offer thee no return. But Alexander will requite thee for it; and may the gods reward him for that generous compassion which, though an enemy, he has shown to me and to my unfortunate kindred. Take," said he, "this hand as the pledge of my gratitude." So saying, he grasped the hand of Polystratus, and immediately

expired.* Such was the end of Darius Codomannus: *Quid hujus conditione inconstantius aut mutabilis, qui nuper inter felices felicissimus, mox inter miseros miserimus!* Of this prince it may be truly said that he merited a better fate. The tender and humane affections formed a strong ingredient in his nature. When we consider him stripped of his dominions, his crown and life sacrificed to the insatiable ambition of an unprovoked invader—to forgive was much; but an emotion of gratitude to that enemy, expressed with his latest breath, indicated a generosity of soul which is scarcely to be paralleled.

Alexander was now master of the Persian empire. He passed from Babylon to Susa, and thence to Persepolis. But the immense riches, of which his army now made their spoil, corrupted and relaxed the military discipline. The Macedonians assumed the Asiatic manners; and Alexander himself gave way without restraint to every species of debauchery and intemperance. In the madness of intoxication, he set fire to the royal palace of Persepolis, at the instigation of the courtesan Thais, who boasted that a woman had better avenged the injuries the Persians had done the Greeks than all their generals. Daily instances of the most unbounded vanity, and even of cruelty and ingratitude, disgraced the conqueror of the East. Without those fresh supplies of troops which from time to time arrived from Macedonia, the shameful corruption of manners which pervaded his army could not have failed to animate even those dissolute and indolent Asiatics to a recovery of their freedom by exterminating their invaders.

But ambition, the most powerful antidote against the contagion of luxury, was the darling passion of Alexander. Amidst all the enervating pleasures of Persepolis, the Macedonian was meditating new enterprises and more extensive conquests. The son of Jupiter could do nothing less than follow the footsteps of his brothers Hercules and Bacchus. He now projected the conquest of India, firmly persuaded that the gods had decreed him the sovereignty of the whole habitable world. The fame of his victories had preceded him in his course, and he penetrated without much opposition to the banks of the Indus, receiving in his progress the submission of most of the native princes, who deprecated his hostility, and sought to gain his favor by large subsidies and presents. One of these, however, named Porus, a prince of great spirit and magnanimity, disdained to submit to the invader, and maintained a contest for his independence which did equal honor to his personal courage and conduct as a general. Porus encountered the Macedonians with a large and well-disciplined army; but the event was unsuccessful, and in a decisive engagement on the banks of the Hydaspes, the Indians were defeated

* Q. Curtius, in fine, lib. v. c. 13.

with the loss of 20,000 foot and 3000 horse. The captive prince being brought into the presence of his conqueror, Alexander generously praised him for the courage and ability he had displayed, and concluded by asking him in what manner he wished and expected to be treated. "As a king," said Porus. Struck with the magnanimity of this answer, Alexander declared he should not be frustrated of his wishes; for from that moment he should regard him as a sovereign prince, and think himself honored by his friendship and alliance. As a proof of his amity, he added to the kingdom of Porus some of the adjoining provinces, from which he had expelled the princes who had been his ancient enemies.

The Macedonian, as the monuments of his Indian conquests, built two large cities, to one of which he gave the name of Nicæa, and to the other of Bucephalia; the latter in honor of his famous horse Bucephalus, who died there. He now advanced into the interior of India, passing the rivers Hyphasis and Acesine, eastern branches of the Indus; and his accustomed good fortune constantly attending him, he would have pursued his course to the Eastern Ocean, had the spirits of his army kept pace with his ambition. But those barbarous nations, though unable to resist his progress, were not subdued. It was impossible to retain the territory he had overrun; and his troops, foreseeing no end to their labors, positively refused to proceed. With a sensible mortification to his pride, he was forced to return to the Indus, after rearing, as monuments of his conquests, twelve altars upon the eastern banks of the Hyphasis, of enormous height, on which he inscribed his own name, with those of his father Ammon and his brothers Hercules and Apollo. He is said also to have traced a camp in the same place of three times the necessary extent, surrounding it with a strong rampart and fosse: and to have built in it enormous stables for horses, with the mangers of a most extraordinary height. He is, in like manner, said to have caused suits of armor to be buried in the earth, of size far exceeding the human proportions, with bedsteads, and all other utensils on a similar gigantic scale; follies which would, indeed, exceed all belief, did they not rest on the authority of authors, whose testimony appears hardly liable to suspicion.

Alexander now determined to turn his disappointment to the best avail by exploring the countries washed by the Indus in its course to the ocean. In this view a numerous armament of ships was partly built and partly collected on the different branches of that great river, and the command of it given to Nearchus, a native of Crete, a man of talents and genius, in whom Alexander found an able and enterprising coadjutor. On board of this fleet the king himself embarked, with a large part of his troops, while the rest followed by land along the course of the river; the fleet and army thus aiding each other's progress. In this expedition, which was of several months' duration, the Greeks encountered

considerable opposition from the warlike tribes of Indians through whose territories they forced their way.

Having at length reached the ocean, at the sight of which Alexander is reported to have shed tears, as finding here an impassable limit to his conquests, he directed Nearchus to proceed along the Indian shore to the Persian Gulf, while he determined to march with the army towards Persepolis and Babylon, through the desert plains of Gedrosia, and the more cultivated country of Caramania. Both plans were accomplished. Nearchus, after a voyage of seven months, arrived in the Euphrates, while Alexander, within the same time, amidst incredible fatigues and perils, and with the loss of three-fourths of his army, reached the frontier of Persia. On his arrival at Susa, where he was received with the honors due to the sovereign of the empire and the conqueror of the eastern world, he married Statira, the daughter of Darius, and at the same time celebrated the nuptials of eighty of his chief officers with a like number of Persian ladies of distinguished rank, on each of whom he bestowed a suitable dowry. The public joy, on occasion of these splendid festivals, was increased by the arrival of Nearchus at Susa, the report of his successful expedition, and the detail of those discoveries which were the fruit of his voyage.*

We have hitherto contemplated the character of Alexander chiefly in a favorable point of view. It must not, however, be disguised that this character, ingenuous upon the whole, and worthy of admiration, was stained and deformed by extraordinary vices and defects. Of his inordinate vanity we have already seen some striking proofs. Of his sanguinary disposition we have likewise had examples in the barbarous treatment of some of his vanquished enemies; but it remains to be told that, in the unbridled rage and frenzy of his passions, he was guilty of the most shocking cruelty, combined with ingratitude to some of his best friends. Philotas, a worthy favorite of Alexander, the only remaining son of his oldest and ablest general Parmenio, had received some vague information of a treasonable design against the life of Alexander, but delayed to mention it, probably from giving no credit

*The journal of Nearchus's voyage, preserved to us by Arrian, and found in his book upon Indian Affairs, from the twentieth to the forty-first chapter inclusively, is a most instructive and curious document. It has been translated and illustrated by an ample and learned commentary by Dr. Vincent. The accounts which we find in Arrian and in Strabo, of the state of manners and the condition of society in India at the time of Alexander's expedition, correspond with surprising accuracy to the present condition and manners of the native Hindoos. The singular division of the whole mass of the people into *castes*, distinguished by their occupations and modes of life, and separated from each other by impassable barriers, prevailed at that early period as at present; and the progress of science and knowledge in many of the useful and elegant arts gives every presumptive evidence of a state of civilization extending to the most remote antiquity.

to the informer. On the report reaching his ears from a different quarter, Alexander, who was told at the same time that Philotas had been informed of the design and refused to communicate it, immediately conceived the unworthy suspicion that his silence arose from his own concern in the conspiracy. On no other grounds Philotas was put to the torture, and, in the agony of pain, uttering something that bore the appearance of confessing his offence, which was nothing more than a venial piece of negligence, he was, by the command of Alexander, stoned to death. But this was not enough. The aged Parmenio, whom the king concluded to be either an accomplice in the crime of his son, or at least to be incapable of ever forgiving his punishment, was, by the same command, assassinated in his tent. Clitus, a general of great ability, and to whom Alexander owed his life in the battle of the Granicus, stood deservedly, on these accounts, in high favor and esteem with his sovereign, who particularly prized the ingenuous simplicity of his manners, and the honest freedom with which he was accustomed to utter his opinions or propose his counsels. Amidst the mirth of a banquet, while the sycophant courtiers, in extolling to the skies the achievements of their prince, were drawing a depreciating comparison between the merits of Philip and of his son, this brave Macedonian had, with honest indignation, reproved their meanness, and warmly supported the fame of his ancient master. Alexander, in a transport of rage, seized a javelin from one of the guards, and hurling it at the breast of Clitus, struck him dead upon the spot. The atrocity of the deed was instantly felt by the king, and, in the agony of remorse, he would have turned the weapon against his own bosom, had not the attendants forcibly prevented him. What can we think of the infamous servility of the attendant courtiers, who, to compose the troubled spirits of their sovereign, could pass a solemn decree that the murder of Clitus was a justifiable action?

Yet, with the most wonderful inconsistency of character, the same man whose vanity and arrogance could prompt to such outrageous and criminal excesses, appears to have been possessed of a moderation of mind that utterly disdained the gross flatteries with which his courtiers continually strove to corrupt him. While sailing down the Hydaspes, Aristobulus, a mean sycophant, who had composed a narration of the king's battles, was reading to him for his amusement the account of the Indian expedition, in which the writer had exaggerated in many circumstances palpably beyond the truth. Alexander seized the book, and threw it with indignation into the river, telling the author that he merited the same treatment, for having absurdly endeavored to magnify by fiction, those deeds which needed no embellishment to attract the admiration of mankind.

Arrived at Ecbatana, Alexander celebrated his entry into the

ancient capital of Media with magnificent games and festivals, in which every refinement of luxury was contrived that could flatter the senses or feed the voluptuous passions. Whole days and nights were consumed in riot and debauchery, in which the meanest soldier vied with his prince in the most unrestrained indulgence. Amidst these tumultuous pleasures, the death of Hephæstion, whom Alexander loved with sincere affection, threw him into a paroxysm of despair. He commanded the physicians who attended him to be put to death; he accused the gods as conspiring with them to deprive him of a life more dear to him than his own; he ordered a public mourning, and that the sacred fires should be extinguished through all Asia; an omen which both his friends and enemies regarded as of the blackest import.

The Chaldean priests of Babylon had appropriated to their own use the riches and revenue of the temple of Belus, which was the ornament of that city, and a great object of superstitious veneration. Alexander had expressed a purpose of reforming this abuse, and the Chaldeans, to avert his design, had published a prediction that his entry into Babylon would be fatal to the conqueror of the East. Alexander probably saw through this artifice and despised it. He entered Babylon in triumph, and was so delighted with the splendor of that great city, that he declared his purpose of making it the capital of his empire. He there received ambassadors from various regions of the earth, congratulating him on his conquests, and soliciting his friendship and alliance: but mark the force of superstition even in the greatest minds. The Chaldean prophecy, in spite of reason, depressed his spirits to such a degree as to force him to drown reflection by every species of riot and debauchery. The consequence was an inflammatory fever, which, after a few days' continuance, put an end to his life, in the thirty-third year of his age.

It is not easy to form to ourselves a precise and just idea of the character of Alexander the Great. While some authors have attributed to him the most extensive as well as the soundest plans of policy, there are others who have rated him no higher than as a fortunate madman. Truth is generally to be found between opposite extremes. We cannot, consistently with reason, say, with M. Montesquieu, that that general trusted nothing to chance who, with an army of only thirty-five thousand men, the sum of seventy talents, and a single month's provisions, set out upon the conquest of Asia. Neither can we, with the same author, ascribe it to a sagacious policy that he assumed the Persian garb, imitated the manners of that people, affected all the ostentatious splendor of an Asiatic monarch, and corrupted the simple and virtuous habits of his Macedonian troops by every excess of luxury and debauchery. But if we cannot, in these particulars, join in the encomium bestowed on the profound policy of Alexander, much less can we subscribe to the opinion of the French satirist, that