

which he is represented with horns, like those of a ram. In the book of the Maccabees it is called the *era of the kingdom of the Greeks*.

Antigonus, however, persisted in his schemes of ambition. He sent his son, Demetrius, with a fleet against Ptolemy, which was victorious in an engagement with that of the Egyptians. It was on this occasion that Antigonus and Demetrius assumed to themselves the title of kings, in which they were imitated by all the other governors. A league was now formed against Antigonus and Demetrius, by Ptolemy and Seleucus, in which they were joined by Cassander, the son of Antipater, and Lysimachus; the former, governor of Macedonia, and the latter of Thrace. The battle of Ipsus, in Phrygia, decided the contest. Antigonus was killed, Demetrius fled with the shattered remains of his army, and the conquerors made a partition of their dominions. Ptolemy, in addition to Egypt and Lybia, had Arabia, Cœlosyria, and Palestine; and Cassander had Macedonia and Greece. The share of Lysimachus was Thrace, Bithynia, and some other provinces beyond the Hellespont. Seleucus had all the rest of Asia, to the river Indus. This last kingdom, the most powerful and splendid of the whole, was called the kingdom of Syria; of which the capital, Antioch, was built by Seleucus, and was the residence of the line of monarchs descended from him.

CHAPTER V.

Flourishing state of Egypt under the Ptolemies—Greece after the death of Alexander—Achaian league—Revolution at Lacedæmon—Ambitious designs of Philip II. of Macedon draw on him the vengeance of the Romans—Their aid solicited by the Ætolians—Macedon conquered—Greece becomes a Roman province.

WE have remarked, that under the first Ptolemy, surnamed Soter, the kingdom of Egypt was extremely flourishing. This prince, a true patriot and wise politician, considered the happiness of his people as the first object of government. A lover himself of the arts and sciences, they attained, during his reign, to a degree of splendor which rivalled their state in the most illuminated days of Greece. It is remarkable that Greece, which owed her first dawning of literature and the arts to the Egyptians, should

now contribute to polish and instruct her ancient masters. Ptolemy Soter founded the famous library of Alexandria,* that immense treasury of literature, which, in the time of his son Ptolemy Philadelphus,† contained above 100,000 volumes. It was still enlarged by the succeeding monarchs of the same race, till it amounted, at length, as Strabo informs us, to 700,000 volumes; a collection quite prodigious, when we consider the comparative labor and expense of amassing books before the invention of printing, and since that era. This immense library was burnt to ashes in the war which Julius Cæsar waged with the inhabitants of Alexandria. Adjoining to this was a smaller library, which escaped the conflagration at that time, and which became, in the course of ages, very considerable; but, as if fate had opposed the progress and continuance of Egyptian literature, this second library of Alexandria was burnt, about 800 years afterwards, when the Saracens took possession of Egypt. The books were taken out by order of the Caliph Omar, and used, for six months, in supplying the fires of the public baths. "If these books," said Omar, "contain nothing but what is in the Alcoran, they are of no use; if they contain any thing not in it, they are of no consequence to salvation; and if any thing contrary to it, they are damnable, and ought not to be suffered."

Ptolemy Philadelphus, the son of Soter, inherited the talents and many of the good qualities of his father, though stained with considerable blemishes; it was by the orders of this prince, who wished to understand the laws and the history of the Jews, and enrich his library with a copy of the Books of Moses, that that translation called the *Septuagint*, as being the work of seventy-two interpreters, was made from the Hebrew into Greek.‡ Egypt

* Ptolemy Soter was, himself, a man of letters, and wrote a history of the wars of Alexander, which was greatly esteemed, but has not come down to posterity.

† He was so named, ironically, for having put two of his brothers to death, from a jealousy of their popularity with his subjects.

‡ These seventy-two interpreters are said to have been native Jews, six of the most learned men being chosen from each of the twelve tribes, and sent to Egypt by Eleazar, the high priest, at the request of Ptolemy, who had conciliated his good will, by releasing all the Jewish captives in Egypt. This account has been disputed upon no better ground than that a smaller number would have served the purpose as well as the larger.—See Prideaux. For four hundred years the Septuagint translation was held in such esteem by the Jews themselves, that it was read in many of the synagogues of Judæ in preference to the original. But when they saw that the Christians esteemed it equally, they then became desirous of exploding its credit; and in the second century, Aquila, an apostate Christian, was employed to make a new Greek version, in which he designedly perverted the sense of all the passages most directly applicable to our Saviour. Other translations were likewise made by Symmachus and Theodotion. The original version, by the carelessness of transcribers, also became very erroneous; so that, in the third century, Origen, in the view of forming a correct copy of the Scriptures, published first one edition in four columns (thence called the *Tetrapla*), containing the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, along with the Hebrew text; and afterwards a second edition, called *Hexapla*, in which two

continued still to flourish under the succeeding prince, Ptolemy Euergetes, who attained that glorious surname (*the Beneficent*) from his successful promotion of the prosperity and happiness of his people. In the beginning of his reign, he waged war with Antiochus of Syria, for the recovery of part of the Asiatic provinces which belonged to his hereditary kingdom; and, being successful in that enterprise, he brought home immense spoils, among which were a great number of paintings and statues, with which he enriched his capital of Alexandria. On returning by Jerusalem, Josephus informs us that he offered sacrifice in the temple to the God of Israel, in thanksgiving for the victories he had gained over his enemies. It has been supposed that the Jews, to court his favor, showed to him the Prophecies of Daniel, in which his conquests appeared to be predicted. The Alexandrian library owed a great increase of its literary treasures to this prince.

The descendants of the first Ptolemy continued to fill the throne of Egypt for two hundred and ninety-two years. In the three first of these reigns the Egyptians were probably a greater, and certainly a much happier people, than they had ever been in those remote periods which historians have mentioned with poetical exaggeration.

In the preceding brief notices of the monarchies which rose from the ruins of the empire of Alexander, we have anticipated somewhat in the order of time. We must now recall our attention to the affairs of Greece posterior to the death of that monarch; and we shall very shortly trace the outlines of her history, till she becomes a province of the now extended empire; a melancholy period, enlivened by few of those scenes or events which either animate the feelings or engage the imagination.

During the period of the conquests of Alexander, the Grecian republics remained for the most part in a state of torpid inactivity. One feeble effort for their emancipation from the Macedonian yoke was made in Peloponnesus, by the Spartans, which was speedily repressed by Antipater, who, in one battle, put an end to all resistance. Some years after, while Alexander was on his expedition to India, Harpalus, whom he had appointed governor of Babylon, having amassed, by tyranny and extortion, the immense sum of five thousand talents, apprehensive that the conqueror, on his return, would bring him to a severe reckoning, passed over into

other versions, the one found at Nicopolis, the other at Jericho, were added to the former. From a comparison of all these translations, Origen laudably endeavored to settle the text of a genuine and complete translation of the Scriptures. The best modern edition of the Septuagint is that of Dr. Grabe, published in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The Septuagint translation was in use in the time of our Saviour, and is that out of which most of the citations in the New Testament from the Old are taken. It was likewise the canonical translation used by all the Christian churches from the earliest ages.

Greece, where he employed his money in corrupting the orators of Athens and the chief men of that republic, in the view of establishing an independent power under his own authority and control. But he found, in the incorruptible virtue of Phocion, an insuperable obstacle to his designs. This venerable man acted on the same unshaken principles he had all along maintained; he could not consider Alexander as lawfully the master or sovereign of Greece; but he saw with regret that the era of Grecian liberty had long passed away, along with the virtuous manners of former times, and that a people thoroughly corrupted and degenerate were incapable of recovering their lost freedom, or maintaining it, though gained for a season. He wished, therefore, to preserve at least the peace and tranquillity of his country. But if we judge thus of the politics of Phocion, we cannot impute it for blame to his great rival, Demosthenes, that he cherished different views; and that as he had constantly opposed the ambitious designs of Philip, so he persevered in denying the sovereignty of Alexander. The enemies of Demosthenes attempted to bring his integrity under suspicion, by propagating a slanderous report, that he had accepted bribes from Harpalus, and entered into the views of that ambitious and bad man. But this accusation, which gained such credit at the time as to procure the banishment of Demosthenes, has, upon the most scrupulous inquiry, being deemed a calumny. The principal agent of Harpalus being put to the torture, to force a confession of the names of those Athenians who had accepted bribes from that traitor, solemnly acquitted Demosthenes of that dishonorable charge. A single hint from Alexander of his intention to revisit Greece, was sufficient to defeat the schemes of Harpalus, and to procure his expulsion from Athens.

On intelligence of Alexander's death, a wonderful change was operated on the public mind in Greece. Liberty was now the universal cry. The people of Athens expressed the most tumultuous joy, and the Ecclesia resounded with the harangues of the orators and shouts of the applauding populace. Demosthenes, though in exile, engaged several of the states to join with the Athenians, and to equip a fleet of two hundred and forty galleys. The Spartans, dispirited by their late defeat by the arms of Antipater, refused to join the league for independence. Phocion, ever prudent and circumspect, advised the confederate states to wait the opportunity of those dissensions which he foresaw must infallibly arise among the different governors. But the counsel of Demosthenes, who proposed an immediate commencement of hostilities, suited better with the ardor of their present feelings. The advice of Phocion was justified by the event. Antipater, after some severe checks from the troops of the confederate states, finally defeated them, and reduced all to submission. In punishment of the offence of Athens, he abolished the democratic government, and established in its room an aristocracy, of which he

had the absolute control. He compelled the Athenians to defray the whole expenses of the war; and, finally, demanded that they should deliver up to him Demosthenes. This illustrious man, foreseeing inevitable death, swallowed poison.

Of the tendency of the political counsels of Demosthenes, in contrast with those of Phocion, I have already expressed a general opinion. The principle which prompted the counsels of the former was certainly noble. His views were unquestionably disinterested, for he supported the cause even of decaying and hopeless liberty against successful ambition, and, amidst every attempt to seduce him from his principles, he remained to the last the avowed enemy of the enslavers of his country. The question of preference between his politics and those of Phocion comes to this short issue: whether was it most advisable for the Greeks, corrupted and degenerate as they were, to submit peaceably to that servitude which they could not avoid, and patiently to bear the yoke which they had not strength to break; or, by continual resistance, to mark, at least, a desire of their ancient freedom—an indignant spirit, which rose against their situation; and thus to give a testimony to their tyrant, that, though oppressed, they were not subdued; though compelled to submit, they were not tame and voluntary slaves. The former was, perhaps, the more prudent and the safer part; the latter, without doubt, the more honorable.

The Athenians themselves, after the death of Demosthenes, gave an ample expression of their sense of his patriotic merits, as well as of the generosity of his counsels; for it was their character, as we have seen, oftener to expiate their offences to the dead, than to do justice to the living. They erected a statue in the Prytaneum to his memory, with this inscription:—“*If thy power, O Demosthenes, had been equal to thy wisdom and abilities, the Macedonian Mars had never ruled in Greece.*” *

We have already remarked those dissensions which, after the death of Alexander, arose among the governors of the different provinces, upon the first division of the empire made by Perdiccas. The new partition made by Antipater, on his acquiring the regency, gave rise to fresh disputes, and all were soon in arms and commotion. This was certainly the crisis that the Greeks should have awaited for throwing off the Macedonian yoke; but, too impatient and eager to seize the first opening that promised success to their design, their country became the theatre of war, affected by all the revolutions of the empire, and successively the prey of every ambitious governor whose power happened to predominate. Antipater, in making a new division of the provinces, was actuated by the twofold view of strengthening his own authority and weaken

* “Εἴτερό τ' ἔσθ' ἢ γὰρ ἄνευ γνώμης Ἀχιλλεύου, εἶχε, οὐποτ' ἂν Ἑλλήνων ἤρξεν Ἀρχὴ Μακεδόνων.”

ing that of his rivals, whose firm establishment in their governments had elevated them to the rank, and caused the greater part of them to assume the title, of *kings*. His policy was therefore judicious, but death put a period to his projects. He bequeathed Macedonia and the government of Greece to Polysperchon, one of Alexander's oldest officers, in preference to his own son Cassander, who, considering this as an act of injustice, prepared to assert his hereditary right by arms. He applied, in that view, to Antigonos, and received from him the aid of a large army, which, under the command of Nicanor, invaded Greece, and, attacking the city of Athens, seized the Piræus, and put a garrison into the citadel. Polysperchon, however, retained the Athenians in allegiance to his authority, by promising them the restitution of their democratic government, in place of the aristocracy established by Antipater. The revolution was accomplished; the partisans of the former government were condemned to death, and among these the old and venerable Phocion. Ever a friend to the tranquillity of his country, he had favored the party of the aristocracy, and had on that account incurred the popular resentment, which was now extreme, against all whom they regarded as enemies to democracy. Phocion, at the age of eighty, was condemned to drink hemlock. The last request he made to his son was, that he should endeavor to forget the injustice and ingratitude which the Athenians had shown to his father.

Meantime Cassander arrived with an army to the aid of Nicanor, and to support his own claims to Macedonia and Greece. Their united forces drove Polysperchon out of Attica, and forced him to retreat to Peloponnesus. Cassander subdued the Athenians, overturned the newly established democracy, and obliged the party of the nobles to elect one of their own number to preside as a governor under his control. They chose Demetrius Phalereus, a descendant of Conon, and a man of distinguished virtue and ability. Under his administration, which was of ten years' continuance, the Athenians were truly happy. The revenues of the state were increased, the useful arts encouraged, the strictest attention paid to the administration of justice, and to the reformation of all those abuses which had arisen from their late disorders and fluctuations of government. In short, this fickle people might have enjoyed real prosperity, had they possessed a true feeling of their real interests, and known how to value the blessings of peace and good order. But this was not their character; every change was acceptable to the Athenians. They idolized their present governor, Demetrius, and erected three hundred statues to his honor. We shall presently see the emptiness of these testimonies of popular favor.

Under the regency of Polysperchon, there was an utter extinction of the family of Alexander the Great. His mother, Olympias, had retired into Epirus during the regency of Antipater; but she

was invited by Polysperchon to return to Macedonia. Scarcely was she settled there, when her ambition and cruelty projected and accomplished the death of the weak Aridaeus, the nominal successor to the empire of his brother Alexander, as well as of his queen Eurydice. By these abominable measures, she took on herself the administration of government, as the guardian of her infant grandson, the son of Alexander by Roxana. She had likewise put to death the brother of Cassander, and some principal men among the Macedonians, who had shown themselves hostile to her designs. On the plausible pretence of avenging those crimes, but in reality to serve his own ambitious ends, Cassander besieged her in the town of Pydna, and, taking the place by assault, Olympias became his prisoner, and was soon after put to death by his orders.

This great bar to his ambition being removed, Cassander kept the young prince and his mother, Roxana, in close confinement in the city of Amphipolis. But the Macedonians expressing their impatience till their native sovereign should assume the reins of government, Cassander caused both him and his mother to be privately murdered. The people expressed their resentment in murmurs; but such was the power of the usurper, that none dared openly to impeach or question his proceedings. Meantime Polysperchon, whom he had expelled from Macedonia, and who now governed in Peloponnesus, sent for Hercules, a younger son of Alexander by Barsine, from Pergamus, declaring his resolution to present him to the Macedonians, and cause his title to be acknowledged as their lawful sovereign. This new obstacle was removed by Cassander, who artfully won Polysperchon to his interest by confirming him in the government of Peloponnesus. The main condition of their treaty was, that the young Hercules and his mother should both be put to death.

There were now remaining of the family of Alexander only two sisters; Cleopatra, the widow of Alexander, king of Epirus; and Thessalonice, the wife of Cassander. Cleopatra, who had for some time resided at Sardis, in Lydia, seeing herself treated with little respect by Antigonus, the governor of that province, had betaken herself to Egypt, on the invitation of Ptolemy Soter; but she was brought back by order of Antigonus, and privately put to death. Thessalonice was afterwards murdered by one of her own sons, the second Antipater, in revenge for her having favored the claims of his brother to the succession of his paternal dominions. Thus within the compass of twenty-eight years from the death of Alexander the Great, there remained not one alive of all his family or kindred.

Antigonus, whose extensive projects we have already noticed, was perhaps the most ambitious of all those governors who shared the empire of Alexander. Not satisfied with almost the whole of the Asiatic provinces, his object was now the sovereignty of

Greece; and in that view he sent thither his son Demetrius Poliorcetes, a young man of great talents, and perfectly disposed to cooperate in all his schemes of ambition. With the command of a large army he made an attack on the Athenian territory, seized the Piræus without opposition, expelled the garrison of Demetrius Phalereus, and brought over the populace to his interest, by restoring the democratic constitution. The Athenians, happy as they had been under the government of Phalereus, could not resist the charms of revolution. The three hundred statues, which, in proof of their gratitude, they had erected to his honor, were thrown down and demolished; he was expelled the territory of the republic, and his rival Poliorcetes hailed the deliverer of Athens. The excellent Phalereus found an asylum at the court of Ptolemy Soter, in Egypt.

The life of Demetrius Poliorcetes was a perpetual series of reverses of fortune. During an interval of his absence from Athens, the city was seized by Cassander. Poliorcetes flying to its relief, rescued Attica from its invader; and the people, in the fervor of their zeal, proposed, as the highest rank of honor, to lodge their deliverer in the temple of their tutelary goddess, Minerva. After the battle of Ipsus, in which, as we formerly observed, his father Antigonus was killed, this same Poliorcetes, twice hailed the deliverer of Athens, was refused an asylum in that city when he fled thither for protection. When a change of fortune had secured the safety of his paternal dominions in Asia, he determined to avenge himself of the ungrateful Athenians. He landed in Attica with a numerous army, blocked up the harbor at the same time with his fleet, and after a long and vigorous siege, compelled the Athenians to surrender and throw themselves upon his mercy. He forgave them all past offences, and became once more their idol. Meantime a league was formed between Lysimachus, Seleucus, and Ptolemy, who divided Asia between them, and Poliorcetes was stripped of all his eastern territories. Thus reduced to the possession only of a few of the cities of Greece, he was on the point of losing even these, when the dissensions between the children of Cassander put him in possession of the crown of Macedonia. He was chosen to mediate in their differences; he found means to rid himself of the competitors, and seized the crown for himself. But destined as it would seem to a perpetual vicissitude of fortune, his new subjects of Macedonia, dissatisfied with the government of a sovereign who had no just claims to their allegiance, rebelled, and, deserting his standard, threw themselves under the rule of Pyrrhus, king of Epirus. Poliorcetes fled into Asia, where, after a variety of events of little importance to the chain of history, he surrendered himself a prisoner to Seleucus, at whose court, dispirited and careless of life, he abandoned himself to excessive debauchery, and soon after died.