

struggle began at the Cadmea* with the Lacedæmonians, he took his stand among the foremost.

Of his merits and his life enough will have been said, if I add but this one remark, of which none can deny the truth; that Thebes, as well before Epaminondas was born, as after his death, was always subject to some foreign power,† but that, as long as he held the reigns of government, it was the head of all Greece. Hence it may be understood, that one man was of more efficacy than the whole people.

XVI. PELOPIDAS.

Phœbidas seizes on the citadel of Thebes; Pelopidas banished, I.—Pelopidas, with twelve followers, effects a return to Thebes, II.—He delivers his country from the Lacedæmonians, expelling their garrison, III.—His acts in conjunction with Epaminondas, IV.—His contest with Alexander of Pheræ; his death, V.

I. PELOPIDAS, of Thebes, is better known to those acquainted with history than to the multitude. As to his merits, I am in doubt how I shall speak of them; for I fear that, if I begin to give a full account of his actions, I may seem, not to be relating his life, but to be writing a history, or that, if I touch only on his principal exploits, it may not clearly appear to those ignorant of Grecian literature how great a man he was. I will therefore, as far as I can, meet both difficulties, and provide against the satiety, as well as for the imperfect knowledge, of my readers.

Phœbidas, the Lacedæmonian, when he was leading an army to Olynthus,‡ and marching through the territory of Thebes,§ possessed himself (at the instigation of a few of the Thebans,

* *Apud Cadmeam.*] The citadel of Thebes, said to have been founded by Cadmus.

† *Alieno paruisse imperio.*] By these words it is not signified that Thebes was actually subject to any other power, but that it always held a secondary place.

‡ Phœbidas was sent to assist Amyntas, king of Macedonia, who was going to besiege Olynthus with the aid of his allies the Lacedæmonians, because its inhabitants had refused to make satisfaction to him. See Diod. Sic. xv. 19.—*Fischer.*

§ *Per Thebas.*] This is evidently the sense.

who. the better to withstand the opposite faction, favoured the interest of the Lacedæmonians,) of the citadel of Thebes, which is called the Cadmea,* and this he did of his own private determination, not from any public resolution of his countrymen. For this act the Lacedæmonians removed him from his command of the army, and fined him a sum of money, but did not show the more inclination, on that account, to restore the citadel to the Thebans, because, as enmity had arisen between them, they thought it better that they should be under a check than left at liberty; for, after the Peloponnesian war was ended, and Athens subdued, they supposed that the contest must be between them and the Thebans, and that they were the only people who would venture to make head against them. With this belief they committed the chief posts to their own friends, while they partly put to death, and partly banished, the leading men of the opposite party; and amongst them Pelopidas, of whom we have begun to write, was expelled from his country.

II. Almost all these exiles had betaken themselves to Athens, not that they might live in idleness, but that, whatever opportunity chance should first offer, they might avail themselves of it to regain their country † As soon, therefore, as it seemed time for action, they, in concert with those who held similar views at Thebes, fixed on a day for cutting off their enemies and delivering their country, and made choice of that very day on which the chief magistrates were accustomed to meet at a banquet together. Great exploits have been often achieved with no very numerous forces, but assuredly never before was so great a power overthrown from so small a beginning. For, out of those who had been banished, twelve young men (there not being in all more than a hundred who were willing to encounter so great a danger,) agreed to attempt the enterprise; and by this small number the power of the Lacedæmonians was overcome; for these youths made war on that occasion, not more upon the faction of their adversaries than upon the Spartans, who were lords of Greece, and whose

* See Epaminondas, c. 10.

† *Ut quemque ex proximis uicam fore obtulisset, eo patriam recuperare nitentur.*] "Opportunity" seems to be the sense of *locus* in this passage, as in Hamilc. c. 1, *locus nocendi*. *Quemque* is for *quemcumque*, as Van Staveren remarks.

imperious domination, shaken by this commencement, was humbled not long after in the battle of Leuctra.

These twelve, then, whose leader was Pelopidas, quitting Athens in the day-time, with a view to reach Thebes when the sky was obscured by evening, set out with hunting dogs, carrying nets in their hands, and in the dress of countrymen, in order that they might accomplish their journey with less suspicion. Having arrived at the very time that they had desired, they proceeded to the house of Charon, by whom the hour and day* had been fixed.

III. Here I would observe in passing, although the remark be unconnected with the subject before us,† how great mischief excessive confidence is wont to produce; for it soon came to the ears of the Theban magistrates that some of the exiles had entered the city, but this intelligence, being intent upon their wine and luxuries, they so utterly disregarded, that they did not take the trouble even to inquire about so important a matter. Another circumstance was added, too, which may show their folly in a more remarkable light. A letter was brought from Athens by Archias the hierophant,‡ to Archias, who then held the chief post at Thebes, in which a full account had been written concerning the expedition of the exiles. This letter being delivered to Archias as he was reclining at the banquet, he, thrusting it under the bolster, sealed as it was, said, "I put off serious matters till to-morrow." But those revellers, when the night was far advanced, and they were overcome with wine, were all put to death by the exiles under the command of Pelopidas. Their object being thus effected, and the common people being summoned to take arms and secure their liberty, not only those who were in the city, but also others from all parts out of the country, flocked together to join them; they then expelled the garrison of the Lacedæmonians from the citadel, and delivered their country from thralldom. The

* *Tempus et dies.*] Charon had not only settled the day, but the time of the day.—*Bos.*

† *Sejunctum ab re positá.*] By *res*, "the subject," we must understand the life of Pelopidas. Yet no apology was necessary for introducing the remark, as it is extremely applicable to the enterprise which Nepos is relating.

‡ *Hierophante.*] A *hierophantes* was one who understood and could interpret religious mysteries. Archias was high-priest of the Eleusinian rites of Ceres.

promoters of the seizure of the Cadmea they partly put to death, and partly sent into exile.

IV. During this period of turbulence, Epaminondas, as we have already observed, remained quiet, so long as the struggle was between fellow-citizens, in his own house. The glory of delivering Thebes, therefore, belongs wholly to Pelopidas; almost all his other honours were gained in conjunction with Epaminondas. In the battle of Leuctra, where Epaminondas was commander-in-chief, Pelopidas was leader of a select body of troops, which were the first to bear down the phalanx of the Spartans. He was present with him, too, in all his dangers. When he attacked Sparta, he commanded one wing of the army; and, in order that Messene might be sooner restored,* he went ambassador to Persia. He was, indeed, the second of the two great personages at Thebes, but second only in such a way that he approached very near to Epaminondas.

V. Yet he had to struggle with adverse fortune. He lived in exile, as we have shown, in the early part of his life; and, when he sought to bring Thessaly under the power of the Thebans, and thought that he was sufficiently protected by the law of embassies, which used to be held sacred by all nations, he was seized, together with Ismenias, by Alexander, tyrant of Phœæ, and thrown into prison. Epaminondas, making war upon Alexander, restored him to liberty. But after this occurrence, he could never be reconciled in feeling to him by whom he had been unjustly treated. He therefore persuaded the Thebans to go to the relief of Thessaly, and to expel its tyrants. The chief command in the expedition being given to him, and he having gone thither with an army, he did not hesitate to come to a battle the moment he saw the enemy. In the encounter, as soon as he perceived Alexander, he spurred on his horse, in a fever of rage, to attack th and, separating too far from his men, was killed by a shower of darts. This happened when victory was in his favour, for the troops of the tyrant had already given way. Such being the event, all the cities of Thessaly honoured Pelopidas, after his death, with golden crowns and brazen statues, and presented his children with a large portion of land.

* See Epaminondas, c. 8.

XVII. AGESILAUS.

Agesilaus elected king of Sparta, his brother's son being set aside, I.—His expedition to Asia; his strict observance of his truce with Tissaphernes, II.—He lays waste Phrygia; winters at Ephesus; deceives Tissaphernes, III.—Is recalled to defend his country; defeats the Thebans at Coronea; his clemency, IV.—His success in the Corinthian war; spares Corinth, V.—Refuses to go to the battle at Leuctra; saves Sparta by a stratagem, VI.—Replenishes the treasury of his country, VII.—His personal appearance and mode of life; his death at the harbour of Menelaus, VIII.

AGESILAUS the Lacedæmonian has been praised not only by other writers, but, above all, by Xenophon, the disciple of Socrates, for he treated Xenophon as an intimate friend.

In his early days he had a dispute with Leotychides, his brother's son, about the throne; for it was a custom handed down among the Lacedæmonians from their ancestors, that they should always have two kings, in name rather than power, of the two families of Procles and Eurysthenes, who were the first kings of Sparta, of the progeny of Hercules. It was not lawful for a king to be made out of one of these families instead of the other; each of the two, therefore, maintained its order of succession. Regard was had, in the first place, to the eldest of the sons of him who died while on the throne; but if he had left no male issue, the choice then fell on him who was next of kin. King Agis, the brother of Agesilaus, had recently died, and had left a son named Leotychides, whom, during his life, he had not acknowledged, but, at his death, had declared to be his. Leotychides contended for the royal dignity with his uncle Agesilaus, but did not obtain what he sought, for Agesilaus was preferred through the interest of Lysander, a man, as we have already stated, of a factious character, and at that time of great influence.

II. Agesilaus, as soon as he got possession of the throne, solicited the Lacedæmonians to send an army into Asia, and make war upon the king of Persia, assuring them that it was better to fight in Asia than in Europe; for a rumour had gone abroad that Artaxerxes was equipping a fleet, and raising land forces, to send into Greece. Permission being granted him, he exerted so much expedition, that he arrived in Asia with his troops before the king's satraps knew that he had set out; hence it happened that he surprised them all unprepared, and

expecting nothing of the kind. But as soon as Tissaphernes, who had the chief authority among the royal satraps, heard of his arrival, he begged a truce of the Spartan, on pretence that he would try to effect an agreement between the Lacedæmonians and the king, but in reality to gain time for collecting troops; and he obtained a truce for three months. Each of them, however, took an oath to observe the truce without fraud; to which engagement Agesilaus adhered with the greatest honour; but Tissaphernes, on the other hand, did nothing but make preparations for war. Though Agesilaus became aware of his proceedings, he still kept his oath, and said that "he was a great gainer by doing so, for Tissaphernes, by his perjury, both alienated men from his interest, and made the gods angry with him; while he, by being faithful to his obligation, produced confidence among his troops, as they felt that the power of the gods was on their side, and that men were rendered greater friends to them, because they were accustomed to favour those whom they saw keeping faith."

III. When the period of the truce was expired, the barbarian, not doubting that as he had many residences in Caria, and as that province was then thought by far the richest in Asia, the enemy would direct their attacks on that quarter especially, assembled his whole force on that side. But Agesilaus turned into Phrygia, and laid waste the country before Tissaphernes could make a movement in any direction. After enriching his men with abundance of plunder, he led back his army to Ephesus to winter, and erecting forges for arms there, made preparations for war with great industry. That his soldiers might be armed with greater care, too, and equipped with more display, he proposed rewards, with which those were to be presented whose efforts to that end should be remarkably distinguished. He pursued the same course with regard to different kinds of exercises, so as to honour with valuable gifts those who excelled others in them. By this means he succeeded in getting an army most admirably accoutred and trained.

When he thought it time to draw his troops out of winter quarters, he saw that if he openly declared in what direction he was going to march, the enemy would not give credit to his statement, but would occupy other parts with their forces, not doubting that he would do something quite different from

what he said. Agesilaus, accordingly, giving out that he would march for Sardis. Tissaphernes felt convinced that Caria must again be defended. When his expectation deceived him in the matter, and he found himself outwitted by his adversary's shrewdness, he hastened to protect his dependants, but too late, for, when he arrived, Agesilaus had taken many places, and secured abundance of spoil.

The Lacedæmonian king, seeing that the enemy were superior to him in cavalry, never gave them an opportunity of attacking him in the plains, but engaged them in those parts in which infantry would be of greater service. As often as he came to a battle, therefore, he routed forces of the enemy far more numerous than his own; and he so conducted himself in Asia that he was in the judgment of every one accounted superior to his opponent.

IV. While he was thinking of marching into Persia, and attacking the king himself, a messenger came to him from home, by order of the Ephori, to acquaint him that the Athenians and Bœotians had declared war against the Lacedæmonians, and that he should therefore not delay to return. In this juncture is dutifulness to his country is not less to be admired than his merit in war, for though he was at the head of a victorious army, and felt assured, to the utmost, of becoming master of the kingdom of Persia, he obeyed the orders of the absent magistrates with as much respect as if he had been a private person in the *comitium** at Sparta. Would that our generals had followed his example! But let us proceed with our subject. Agesilaus preferred an honourable name to the most powerful empire, and thought it much more glorious to obey the laws of his country than to subdue Asia in war. With these feelings, therefore, he led his forces over the Hellespont, and employed such expedition, that he accomplished in thirty days a journey which Xerxes had taken a year to perform.† When he was not very far from the Peloponnesus, the Athenians and Bœotians, and others in

* *In comitio.*] A Latin word used by the author for the Greek, which would be ἐφορειον, the court of the Ephori.

† *Quod iter Xerxes anno vertente confecerat.*] *Anno vertente*, sc. æc, "a year turning itself or revolving," i e. in the course of a year, in a full year. In the *Life of Themistocles*, however, c. 5, Xerxes is said to have made the journey in six months.

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