

HISTORY OF GREECE.

PART II.

CHAPTER LXIX.

CYRUS THE YOUNGER AND THE TEN THOUSAND GREEKS.

IN my last volume, I brought down the History of Grecian affairs to the close of the Peloponnesian war, including a description of the permanent loss of imperial power, the severe temporary oppression, the enfranchisement and renewed democracy, which marked the lot of defeated Athens. The defeat of that once powerful city, accomplished by the Spartan confederacy—with large pecuniary aid from the young Persian prince Cyrus, satrap of most of the Ionian seaboard—left Sparta mistress for the time of the Grecian world. Lysander, her victorious admiral, employed his vast temporary power for the purpose of setting up, in most of the cities, Dekarchies or ruling Councils of Ten, composed of his own partisans; with a Lacedæmonian Harmost and garrison to enforce their oligarchical rule.

Spartan empire.

Before I proceed however to recount, as well as it can be made out, the unexpected calamities thus brought upon the Grecian world, with their eventual consequences—it will be convenient to introduce here the narrative of the Ten Thousand Greeks, with their march into the heart of the Persian Empire and their, still more celebrated Retreat. This incident, lying apart from the main stream of Grecian affairs, would form an item, strictly speaking, in Persian history rather than in Grecian. But its effects on the Greek mind, and upon the future course of Grecian affairs, were numerous and important; while as an illustration of Hellenic character and competence, measured against that of the contemporary Asiatics, it stands pre-eminent and full of instruction.

B.C. 401.
March of
the Ten
Thousand
Greeks.

This march from Sardis up to the neighbourhood of Babylon, conducted by Cyrus the younger and undertaken for the purpose of placing him on the Persian throne in the room of his elder brother Artaxerxes Mnemon—was commenced about March or April in the year 401 B.C. It was about six months afterwards, in the month of September or October of the same year, that the battle of Kunaxa was fought, in which, though the Greeks were victorious, Cyrus himself lost his life. They were then obliged to commence their retreat, which occupied about one year, and ultimately brought them across the Bosphorus of Thrace to Byzantium, in October or November, 400 B.C.

The death of king Darius Nothus, father both of Artaxerxes and Cyrus, occurred about the beginning of 404 B.C., a short time after the entire ruin of the

force of Athens at Ægospotami. His reign of 19 years, with that of his father Artaxerxes Longimanus which lasted nearly 40 years, fill up almost all the interval from the death of Xerxes in 465 B.C. The close of the reigns both of Xerxes and of his son Artaxerxes had indeed been marked by those phænomena of conspiracy, assassination, fratricide, and family tragedy, so common in the transmission of an Oriental sceptre. Xerxes was assassinated by the chief officer of the palace named Artabanus,— who had received from him at a banquet the order to execute his eldest son Darius, but had not fulfilled it. Artabanus, laying the blame of the assassination upon Darius, prevailed upon Artaxerxes to avenge it by slaying the latter; he then attempted the life of Artaxerxes himself, but failed, and was himself killed, after carrying on the government a few months. Artaxerxes Longimanus, after reigning about forty years, left the sceptre to his son Xerxes the second, who was slain after a few months by his brother Sogdianus; who again was put to death after seven months, by a third brother Darius Nonthus mentioned above¹.

Persian
kings—
Xerxes—
Artaxerxes
Longima-
nus.

The wars between the Persian Empire, and Athens as the head of the confederacy of Delos (477–449 B.C.), have been already related in one of my earlier volumes. But the internal history of the Persian Empire during these reigns is scarcely at all known to us; except a formidable revolt of

¹ See Diodor. xi. 69; xii. 64–71; Ktesias, Persica, c. 29–45; Aristotel. Polit. v. 14, 8. This last passage of Aristotle is not very clear. Compare Justin, x. 1.

For the chronology of these Persian kings, see a valuable Appendix in Mr. Fynes Clinton's *Fasti Hellenici*, App. 18. vol. ii. p. 313–316.

Darius
Nothus

the satrap Megabyzus obscurely noticed in the Fragments of Ktesias¹. About 414 B.C. the Egyptians revolted. Their native prince Amyrtæus maintained his independence—though probably in a part only, and not the whole, of that country²—and was succeeded by a native Egyptian dynasty for the space of sixty years. A revolt of the Medes, which took place in 408 B.C., was put down by Darius, and subsequently a like revolt of the Kadusians³. The peace concluded in 449 B.C., between Athens and the Persian empire, continued without open violation, until the ruinous catastrophe which befel the former near Syracuse, in 413 B.C. Yet there had been various communications and envoys from Sparta to the Persian court, endeavouring to procure aid from the Great King during the early years of the war: communications so confused and contradictory, that Artaxerxes (in a letter addressed to the Spartans, in 425 B.C., and carried by his envoy Artaphernes who was captured by the Athenians) complained of being unable to understand what they meant—no two Spartans telling the same story⁴. It appears that Pissuthnes, satrap

¹ Ktesias, *Persica*, c. 38–40.

² See the Appendix of Mr. Fynes Clinton, mentioned in the preceding note, p. 317.

There were some Egyptian troops in the army of Artaxerxes at the battle of Kunaxa: on the other hand, there were other Egyptians in a state of pronounced revolt. Compare two passages of Xenophon's *Anabasis*, i. 8, 9; ii. 5, 13; Diodor. xiii. 46; and the *Dissertation* of F. Ley, *Fata et Conditio Ægypti sub imperio Persarum*, p. 20–56 (Cologne, 1830).

³ Xen. *Hellen.* i. 2, 19; ii. 1, 13.

⁴ Thucyd. iv. 50. *πολλῶν γὰρ ἐλθόντων πρεσβέων οὐδένα ταῦτα λέγειν.* This incompetence, or duplicity, on the part of the Spartan envoys, helps to explain the facility with which Alkibiades duped them at

of Sardis, revolted from the Persian king, shortly after this period, and that Tissaphernes was sent by the Great King to suppress this revolt; in which having succeeded, by bribing the Grecian commander of the satrap's mercenary troops, he was rewarded by the possession of the satrapy¹. We find Tissaphernes satrap in the year 413 B.C., commencing operations, jointly with the Spartans, for detaching the Asiatic allies from Athens, after her reverses in Sicily; and employing the Spartans successfully against Amorges, the revolted son of Pissuthnes, who occupied the strong maritime town of Iasus².

The increased vigour of Persian operations against Athens, after Cyrus the younger son of Darius Nothus came down to the Ionic coast in 407 B.C., has been recounted in my preceding volume; together with the complete prostration of Athenian power, accomplished during the ensuing three years. Residing at Sardis and placed in active cooperation with Greeks, this ambitious and energetic young prince soon became penetrated with their superior military and political efficiency, as compared with the native Asiatics. For the abilities and character of Lysander, the Peloponnesian admiral, he contracted so much admiration, that, when summoned to court during the last illness of his father Darius in 405 B.C., he even confided to that officer the whole of his tribute and treasure, to be administered in furtherance of the

Cyrus the younger in Ionia—his vigorous operations against Athens.

Athens (Thuc. v. 45). See above, in this History, Vol. VII. ch. lv. p. 64.

¹ Ktesias, Persic. c. 52.

² Thucyd. viii. 28. See Vol. VII. ch. lxi. p. 535 of this History.

war¹; which during his absence was brought to a victorious close.

Youth and
 education
 of Cyrus.

Cyrus, born after the accession of his father to the throne, was not more than eighteen years of age when first sent down to Sardis (in 407 B.C.) as satrap of Lydia, Phrygia, and Kappadokia, and as commander of that Persian military division which mustered at the plain of Kastôlus: a command not including the Ionic Greeks on the seaboard, who were under the satrapy of Tissaphernes². We cannot place much confidence in the account which Xenophon gives of his education; that he had been brought up with his brother and many noble Persian youths in the royal palace—under the strictest discipline and restraint, enforcing modest habits, with the reciprocal duties of obedience and command, upon all of them, and upon him with peculiar success³. It is contradicted by all the realities which we read about the Persian court, and is a patch of Grecian rather than of Oriental sentiment, better suited to the romance of the *Cyropædia* than to the history of the *Anabasis*. But in the Persian accomplishments of horsemanship, mastery of the bow and of the javelin, bravery in the field, daring as well as endurance in hunting wild beasts, and power of drinking much wine without being intoxicated—Cyrus stood pre-eminent: and especially so when compared with his elder brother Artaxerxes, who was at least unwarlike, if not lazy and timid⁴. And although the peculiar virtue of the Hellenic

¹ Xen. Hellen. ii. 1, 14. Compare Xen. Œconom. iv. 20.

² Xen. Anab. i. 1, 2; i. 9, 7; Xen. Hellen. i. 4, 3.

³ Xen. Anab. i. 9, 3-5. Compare *Cyropædia*, i. 2, 4-6; viii. 1, 16, &c.

⁴ Plutarch, Artaxerx. c. 2-6; Xen. Anab. *ut sup.*

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citizen—competence for alternate command and obedience—formed no part of the character of Cyrus, yet it appears that Hellenic affairs and ideas became early impressed upon his mind: in-somuch that on first coming down to Sardis as satrap, he brought down with him strong interest for the Peloponnesian cause, and strenuous antipathy to that ancient enemy by whom the Persian arms had been so signally humbled and repressed. How zealously he cooperated with Lysander and the Peloponnesians in putting down Athens, has been shown in my last preceding volume¹.

An energetic and ambitious youth like Cyrus, having once learnt from personal experience to appreciate the Greeks, was not slow in divining the value of such auxiliaries as instruments of power to himself. To cooperate effectively in the war, it was necessary that he should act to a certain extent upon Grecian ideas, and conciliate the goodwill of the Ionic Greeks; so that he came to combine the imperious and unsparing despotism of a Persian prince, with something of the regularity and system belonging to a Grecian administrator. Though younger than Artaxerxes, he seems to have calculated from the first upon succeeding to the Persian crown at the death of his father. So undetermined was the law of succession in the Persian royal family, and so constant the dispute and fratricide on each vacancy of the throne, that such ambitious schemes would appear feasible to a young man of much less ardour than Cyrus. Moreover he was the favourite son of Queen Parysatis², who

His esteem
for the
Greeks—
his hopes
of the
crown.

¹ See Vol. VIII. ch. lxiv. p. 184.

² Darius had had thirteen children by Parysatis; but all except

greatly preferred him to his elder brother Artaxerxes. He was born after the accession of Darius to the throne, while Artaxerxes had been born prior to that event: and as this latter consideration had been employed seventy years earlier by Queen Atossa¹ in determining her husband Darius son of Hystaspes to declare (even during his lifetime) her son Xerxes as his intended successor, to the exclusion of an elder son by a different wife and born before his accession—so Cyrus perhaps anticipated the like effective preference to himself from the solicitations of Parysatis. Probably his hopes were farther inflamed by the fact that he bore the name of the great founder of the monarchy; whose memory every Persian revered. How completely he reckoned on becoming king, is shown by a cruel act performed about the early part of 405 B.C. It was required as a part of Persian etiquette that every man who came into the presence of the king should immerse his hands in certain pockets or large sleeves, which rendered them for the moment inapplicable to active use: but such deference was shown to no one except the king. Two first cousins of Cyrus—sons of Hieramenês (seemingly one of the satraps or high Persian dignitaries in Asia Minor) by a sister of Darius—appeared in his presence without thus concealing their hands²: upon which Cyrus ordered

Artaxerxes and Cyrus died young. Ktesias asserts that he heard this statement from Parysatis herself (Ktesias, *Persica*, c. 49).

¹ Herodot. vii. 4.

² Xen. *Hellen.* ii. 1, 8, 9; Thucyd. viii. 58.

Compare Xen. *Cyropæd.* viii. 3, 10; and Lucian, *Navigium seu Vota*, c. 30. vol. iii. p. 267, ed. Hemsterhuys with Du Soul's note.

It is remarkable that, in this passage of the *Hellenica*, either Xenophon, or the copyist, makes the mistake of calling Xerxes (instead of Artaxerxes) father of Darius. Some of the editors, without any

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them both to be put to death. The father and mother preferred bitter complaints of this atrocity to Darius; who was induced to send for Cyrus to visit him in Media, on the ground, not at all fictitious, that his own health was rapidly declining.

If Cyrus expected to succeed to the crown, it was important that he should be on the spot when his father died. He accordingly went up from Sardis to Media, along with his body guard of 300 Greeks under the Arcadian Xenias; who were so highly remunerated for this distant march, that the rate of pay was long celebrated¹. He also took with him Tissaphernes as an ostensible friend; though there seems to have been a real enmity between them. Not long after his arrival, Darius died; but without complying with the request of Parysatis that he should declare in favour of Cyrus as his successor. Accordingly Artaxerxes, being proclaimed king, went to Pasargadæ, the religious capital of the Persians, to perform the customary solemnities. Thus disappointed, Cyrus was farther accused by Tissaphernes of conspiring the death of his brother; who caused him to be seized, and was even on the point of putting him to death, when the all-powerful intercession of Parysatis saved his life². He was sent down to his former satrapy at Sardis, whither he returned with insupportable feelings of anger and wounded pride, and with a determined resolution to leave nothing untried for the purpose of dethroning authority from MSS., wish to alter the text from *Ξέρξου* to *Ἀραξέρξου*.

Death of
Darius
Nothus—
succession
of Arta-
xerxes
Mnemon.

¹ Xen. Anab. i. 4, 12.

² Xen. Anab. i. 1, 4.

his brother. This statement, given to us by Xenophon, represents doubtless the story of Cyrus and his friends, current among the Cyreian army. But if we look at the probabilities of the case, we shall be led to suspect that the charge of Tissaphernes may well have been true, and the conspiracy of the disappointed Cyrus against his brother, a reality instead of a fiction¹.

Secret preparations of Cyrus for attacking his brother.

The moment when Cyrus returned to Sardis was highly favourable to his plans and preparations. The long war had just been concluded by the capture of Athens and the extinction of her power. Many Greeks, after having acquired military tastes and habits, were now thrown out of employment: many others were driven into exile, by the establishment of the Lysandrian Dekarchies throughout all the cities at once. Hence competent recruits, for a well-paid service like that of Cyrus, were now unusually abundant. Having already a certain number of Greek mercenaries, distributed throughout the various garrisons in his satrapy, he directed the officers in command to strengthen their garrisons by as many additional Peloponnesian soldiers as they could obtain. His pretext was,—first, defence against Tissaphernes, with whom, since the denunciation by the latter, he was at open war,—next, protection of the Ionic cities on the seaboard, who had been hitherto comprised under the government of Tissaphernes, but had now revolted of their own accord, since the enmity of Cyrus against him had been declared. Miletus alone had been prevented from executing this resolution, for Tissa-

¹ So it is presented by Justin, v. 11.