

# HISTORY OF GREECE.

---

## CHAPTER XCI.

### FIRST PERIOD OF THE REIGN OF ALEXANDER THE GREAT—SIEGE AND CAPTURE OF THEBES.

MY last preceding volume ended with the assassination of Philip of Macedon, and the accession of his son Alexander the Great, then twenty years of age.

It demonstrates the altered complexion of Grecian history, that we are now obliged to seek for marking events in the succession to the Macedonian crown, or in the ordinances of Macedonian kings. In fact, the Hellenic world has ceased to be autonomous. In Sicily, indeed, the free and constitutional march, revived by Timoleon, is still destined to continue for a few years longer; but all the Grecian cities south of Mount Olympus have descended into dependents of Macedonia. Such dependence, established as a fact by the battle of Chæroneia and by the subsequent victorious march of Philip over Peloponnesus, was acknowledged in form by the vote of the Grecian

State of Greece at Alexander's accession—dependence on the Macedonian kings.

synod at Corinth. While even the Athenians had been compelled to concur in submission, Sparta alone, braving all consequences, continued inflexible in her refusal. The adherence of Thebes was not trusted to the word of the Thebans, but ensured by the Macedonian garrison established in her citadel, called the Kadmeia. Each Hellenic city, small and great,—maritime, inland, and insular—(with the single exception of Sparta), was thus enrolled as a separate unit in the list of subject-allies attached to the imperial headship of Philip.

Unwilling  
 subjection  
 of the  
 Greeks—  
 influence of  
 Grecian  
 intelligence  
 on Mace-  
 donia.

Under these circumstances, the history of conquered Greece loses its separate course, and becomes merged in that of conquering Macedonia. Nevertheless, there are particular reasons which constrain the historian of Greece to carry on the two together for a few years longer. First, conquered Greece exercised a powerful action on her conqueror—“*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit.*” The Macedonians, though speaking a language of their own, had neither language for communicating with others, nor literature, nor philosophy, except Grecian and derived from Greeks. Philip, while causing himself to be chosen chief of Hellas, was himself not only partially hellenised, but an eager candidate for Hellenic admiration. He demanded the headship under the declared pretence of satisfying the old antipathy against Persia. Next, the conquests of Alexander, though essentially Macedonian, operated indirectly as the initiatory step of a series of events, diffusing Hellenic language (with some tinge of Hellenic literature) over a large breadth of Asia,—opening that territory to the better observation,

CHAP. XCI.] GREEKS—UNWILLING SUBJECTS TO MACEDONIA. 3

in some degree even to the superintendence, of intelligent Greeks—and thus producing consequences important in many ways to the history of mankind. Lastly, the generation of free Greeks upon whom the battle of Chæroneia fell, were not disposed to lie quiet if any opportunity occurred for shaking off their Macedonian masters. The present volume will record the unavailing efforts made for this purpose, in which Demosthenes and most of the other leaders perished.

Alexander (born in July 356 B.C.), like his father Philip, was not a Greek, but a Macedonian and Epirot, partially imbued with Grecian sentiment and intelligence. It is true that his ancestors, some centuries before, had been emigrants from Argos; but the kings of Macedonia had long lost all trace of any such peculiarity as might originally have distinguished them from their subjects. The basis of Philip's character was Macedonian, not Greek: it was the self-will of a barbarian prince, not the *ingenium civile*, or sense of reciprocal obligation and right in society with others, which marked more or less even the most powerful members of a Grecian city, whether oligarchical or democratical. If this was true of Philip, it was still more true of Alexander, who inherited the violent temperament and headstrong will of his furious Epirotic mother Olympias.

Basis of Alexander's character—not Hellenic.

A kinsman of Olympias, named Leonidas, and an Akarnanian named Lysimachus, are mentioned as the chief tutors to whom Alexander's childhood was entrusted<sup>1</sup>. Of course the Iliad of Homer was

Boyhood and education of Alexander.

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, Alexand. c. 5, 6.

among the first things which he learnt as a boy. Throughout most of his life, he retained a passionate interest in this poem, a copy of which, said to have been corrected by Aristotle, he carried with him in his military campaigns. We are not told, nor is it probable, that he felt any similar attachment for the less warlike *Odyssey*. Even as a child, he learnt to identify himself in sympathy with Achilles,—his ancestor by the mother's side, according to the *Æakid* pedigree. The tutor *Lysimachus* won his heart by calling himself *Phœnix*—*Alexander*, *Achilles*—and *Philip*, by the name of *Peleus*. Of *Alexander's* boyish poetical recitations, one anecdote remains, both curious and of unquestionable authenticity. He was ten years old, when the Athenian legation, including both *Æschines* and *Demosthenes*, came to *Pella* to treat about peace. While *Philip* entertained them at table, in his usual agreeable and convivial manner, the boy *Alexander* recited for their amusement certain passages of poetry which he had learnt—and delivered, in response with another boy, a dialogue out of one of the Grecian dramas<sup>1</sup>.

He receives instruction from Aristotle.

At the age of thirteen, *Alexander* was placed under the instruction of *Aristotle*, whom *Philip* expressly invited for the purpose, and whose father *Nikomachus* had been both friend and physician of *Philip's* father *Amyntas*. What course of study *Alexander* was made to go through, we unfortunately cannot state. He enjoyed the teaching of *Aristotle* for at least three years, and we are told that he devoted himself to it with ardour, con-

<sup>1</sup> *Æschines* cont. *Timarch.* p. 167.

tracting a strong attachment to his preceptor. His powers of addressing an audience, though not so well attested as those of his father, were always found sufficient for his purpose: moreover, he retained, even in the midst of his fatiguing Asiatic campaigns, an interest in Greek literature and poetry.

At what precise moment, during the lifetime of his father, Alexander first took part in active service, we do not know. It is said that once, when quite a youth, he received some Persian envoys during the absence of his father; and that he surprised them by the maturity of his demeanour, as well as by the political bearing and pertinence of his questions<sup>1</sup>. Though only sixteen years of age, in 340 B.C. he was left at home as regent while Philip was engaged in the sieges of Byzantium and Perinthus. He put down a revolt of the neighbouring Thracian tribe called Mædi, took one of their towns, and founded it anew under the title of Alexandria; the earliest town which bore that name, afterwards applied to so many other towns planted by him. In the march of Philip into Greece (338 B.C.), Alexander took part, commanded one of the wings at the battle of Chæroneia, and is said to have first gained the advantage on his side over the Theban sacred band<sup>2</sup>.

Early political action and maturity of Alexander —his quarrels with his father. Family discord.

Yet notwithstanding such marks of confidence and cooperation, other incidents occurred producing bitter animosity between the father and the son. By his wife Olympias, Philip had as offspring

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, Alex. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, Alex. 9. Justin says that Alexander was the companion of his father during part of the war in Thrace (ix. 1).

Alexander and Kleopatra : by a Thessalian mistress named Philinna, he had a son named Aridæus (afterwards called Philip Aridæus) : he had also daughters named Kynna (or Kynanê) and Thessalonikê. Olympias, a woman of sanguinary and implacable disposition, had rendered herself so odious to him, that he repudiated her, and married a new wife named Kleopatra. I have recounted in the preceding volume<sup>1</sup> the indignation felt by Alexander at this proceeding, and the violent altercation which occurred during the conviviality of the marriage banquet ; where Philip actually snatched his sword, threatened his son's life, and was only prevented from executing the threat by falling down through intoxication. After this quarrel, Alexander retired from Macedonia, conducting his mother to her brother Alexander king of Epirus. A son was born to Philip by Kleopatra. Her brother or uncle Attalus acquired high favour. Her kinsmen and partisans generally were also promoted, while Ptolemy, Nearchus, and other persons attached to Alexander, were banished<sup>2</sup>.

Uncertainty of Alexander's position during the last year of Philip.

The prospects of Alexander were thus full of uncertainty and peril, up to the very day of Philip's assassination. The succession to the Macedonian crown, though transmitted in the same family, was by no means assured as to individual members ; moreover, in the regal house of Macedonia<sup>3</sup> (as

<sup>1</sup> Vol. XI. Ch. xc. p. 78.      <sup>2</sup> Plutarch, Alex. 10. Arrian, iii. 6, 8.

<sup>3</sup> See the third chapter of Plutarch's life of Demetrius Poliorêtês ; which presents a vivid description of the feelings prevalent between members of regal families in those ages. Demetrius, coming home from the chase with his hunting javelins in his hand, goes up to his father Antigonus, salutes him, and sits down by his side without disarming.

among the kings called Diadochi, who acquired dominion after the death of Alexander the Great), violent feuds and standing mistrust between father, sons, and brethren, were ordinary phænomena, to which the family of the Antigonids formed an honourable exception. Between Alexander and Olympias on the one side, and Kleopatra with her son and Attalus on the other, a murderous contest was sure to arise. Kleopatra was at this time in the ascendent; Olympias was violent and mischievous; and Philip was only forty-seven years of age. Hence the future threatened nothing but aggravated dissension and difficulties for Alexander. Moreover his strong will and imperious temper, eminently suitable for supreme command, disqualified him from playing a subordinate part, even to his own father. The prudence of Philip, when

This is extolled as an unparalleled proof of the confidence and affection subsisting between the father and the son. In the families of all the other Diadochi (says Plutarch) murders of sons, mothers, and wives, were frequent—murders of brothers were even common, assumed to be precautions necessary for security. Οὕτως ἄρα πάντη δυσκωνοίνητον ἡ ἀρχὴ καὶ μεστὸν ἀπιστίας καὶ δυσνοίας, ὥστε ἀγάλλεσθαι τὸν μέγιστον τῶν Ἀλεξάνδρου διαδόχων καὶ πρεσβύτατον, ὅτι μὴ φοβείται τὸν υἱόν, ἀλλὰ προσίεται τὴν λόγην ἔχοντα τοῦ σώματος πλήσιον. Οὐ μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ μόνος, ὡς εἰπεῖν, ὁ οἶκος οὗτος ἐπὶ πλείστας διαδοχὰς τῶν τοιούτων κακῶν ἐκαθάρευσε, μᾶλλον δὲ εἰς μόνος τῶν ἀπ' Ἀντιγόνου Φίλιππος ἀνέλειν υἱόν. Αἱ δὲ ἄλλαι σχεδὸν ἀπάσαι διαδοχαὶ πολλῶν μὲν ἔχουσι παίδων, πολλῶν δὲ μητέρων φόνους καὶ γυναικῶν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀδελφὸς ἀναιρεῖν, ὥσπερ οἱ γεωμέτραι τὰ αἰτήματα λαμβάνουσι, οὕτω συνηχωρεῖτο κοινόν τι νομιζόμενον αἴτημα καὶ βασιλικὸν ὑπὲρ ἀσφαλείας.

Compare Tacitus, *Histor.* v. 8, about the family feuds of the kings of Judæa; and Xenoph. *Hieron.* iii. 8.

In noticing the Antigonid family as a favourable exception, we must confine our assertion to the first century of that family. The bloody tragedy of Perseus and Demetrius shortly preceded the ruin of the empire.

about to depart on his Asiatic expedition, induced him to attempt to heal these family dissensions by giving his daughter Kleopatra in marriage to her uncle Alexander of Epirus, brother of Olympias. It was during the splendid marriage festival, then celebrated at Ægæ, that he was assassinated—Olympias, Kleopatra, and Alexander, being all present, while Attalus was in Asia, commanding the Macedonian division sent forward in advance, jointly with Parmenio. Had Philip escaped this catastrophe, he would doubtless have carried on the war in Asia Minor with quite as much energy and skill as it was afterwards prosecuted by Alexander: though we may doubt whether the father would have stretched out to those ulterior undertakings which, gigantic and far-reaching as they were, fell short of the insatiable ambition of the son. But successful as Philip might have been in Asia, he would hardly have escaped gloomy family feuds; with Alexander as a mutinous son, under the instigations of Olympias,—and with Kleopatra on the other side, feeling that her own safety depended upon the removal of regal or quasi-regal competitors.

Impression produced by the sudden death of Philip.

From such formidable perils, visible in the distance, if not immediately impending, the sword of Pausanias guaranteed both Alexander and the Macedonian kingdom. But at the moment when the blow was struck, and when the Lynkestian Alexander, one of those privy to it, ran to forestall resistance and place the crown on the head of Alexander the Great<sup>1</sup>—no one knew what to expect from the young prince thus suddenly exalted at

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, i. 25, 2; Justin, xi. 2. See Vol. XI. p. 714.



the age of twenty years. The sudden death of Philip in the fulness of glory and ambitious hopes, must have produced the strongest impression, first upon the festive crowd assembled,—next throughout Macedonia,—lastly, upon the foreigners whom he had reduced to dependence, from the Danube to the borders of Pæonia. All these dependencies were held only by the fear of Macedonian force. It remained to be proved whether the youthful son of Philip was capable of putting down opposition and upholding the powerful organisation created by his father. Moreover Perdikkas, the elder brother and predecessor of Philip, had left a son named Amyntas, now at least twenty-four years of age, to whom many looked as the proper successor<sup>1</sup>.

But Alexander, present and proclaimed at once by his friends, showed himself both in word and deed, perfectly competent to the emergency. He mustered, caressed, and conciliated, the divisions of the Macedonian army and the chief officers. His addresses were judicious and energetic, engaging that the dignity of the kingdom should be maintained unimpaired<sup>2</sup>, and that even the Asiatic projects already proclaimed should be prosecuted with as much vigour as if Philip still lived.

Accession of Alexander—his energy and judgment.

It was one of the first measures of Alexander to celebrate with magnificent solemnities the funeral of his deceased father. While the preparations for it were going on, he instituted researches to find

Accomplices of Pausanias are slain by Alexander—Amyntas and others are slain by him also.

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, *De Rebus post Alexandrum*, *Fragm. ap. Photium*, *cod. 92*, p. 220; Plutarch, *De Fortunâ Alex. Magn.* p. 327. *πάσα δὲ ἕπουλος ἦν ἡ Μακεδονία* (after the death of Philip) *πρὸς Ἀμύνταν ἀποβλέπουσα καὶ τοὺς Ἀερόπου παῖδας.*

<sup>2</sup> Diod. xvii. 2.

out and punish the accomplices of Pausanias. Of these indeed, the most illustrious person mentioned to us—Olympias—was not only protected by her position from punishment, but retained great ascendancy over her son to the end of his life. Three other persons are mentioned by name as accomplices—brothers and persons of good family from the district of Upper Macedonia called Lynkêstis—Alexander, Heromenes, and Arrhabæus, sons of Aëropus. The two latter were put to death, but the first of the three was spared, and even promoted to important charges, as a reward for his useful forwardness in instantly saluting Alexander king<sup>1</sup>. Others also, we know not how many, were executed; and Alexander seems to have imagined that there still remained some undetected<sup>2</sup>. The Persian king boasted in public letters<sup>3</sup>, with how much truth we cannot say, that he too had been among the instigators of Pausanias.

Among the persons slain about this time by Alexander, we may number his first-cousin and brother-in-law Amyntas—son of Perdikkas (the elder brother of the deceased Philip): Amyntas was a boy when his father Perdikkas died. Though having a preferable claim to the succession, according to usage, he had been put aside by his uncle Philip, on the ground of his age and of the strenuous efforts required on commencing a new reign. Philip had

<sup>1</sup> Arrian, i. 25, 2; Curtius, vii. 1, 6. Alexander son of Aëropus was son-in-law of Antipater. The case of this Alexander—and of Olympias—afforded a certain basis to those who said (Curtius, vi. 43) that Alexander had dealt favourably with the accomplices of Pausanias.

<sup>2</sup> Plutarch, *Alexand.* 10-27; Diodor. xvii. 51; Justin, xi. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Arrian, ii. 14, 10.