

HISTORY OF GREECE.

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE ATHENIAN MARI-
 TIME ASCENDANCY TO THE THIRTY YEARS' TRUCE
 BETWEEN ATHENS AND SPARTA.

THOUGH the issue of the Persian invasion had not broken nor even dangerously shaken the power of Persia, it had relieved the European Greeks, and the islanders of the Ægean, from all apprehension of another attack on their freedom from the same quarter. Most of the states now united with Athens would have been satisfied with this security, and had no wish to act on the offensive against the vanquished enemy. But Athens saw a vast field open to her ambition in the East; the situation of the Asiatic Greeks afforded a fair pretext for the continuance of hostilities, and many of her leading statesmen were desirous of giving this direction to the restless spirit of their countrymen.

Foremost among these was Cimon, son of Miltiades. In his youth he gave little promise of the abilities or of the character which he afterwards displayed, and seemed to have inherited the limited capacity of his grandfather, who had incurred a nickname expressive of extreme simplicity¹, rather than his father's genius. His propensity to pleasure was thought to be so strong as to divert his attention from business, and drew on him the satire of the comic poets; and in his early youth he is

¹ Ὁ Κόλλεμος.

said to have neglected the ordinary accomplishments of an Athenian gentleman. If however this was the case, he would seem, from an anecdote reported by Plutarch on the authority of a contemporary, to have supplied this deficiency at a later period.¹ But he was not gifted with the promptness and volubility which commonly distinguished his countrymen, and never shone as an orator. It was probably his consciousness of this defect that determined him to devote himself to a career which kept him mostly away from Athens, and to abandon the popular assembly to his rivals. At his father's death he seems to have succeeded to a very scanty fortune²; and he would perhaps have found it difficult to raise the penalty of 50 talents due to the treasury, if Callias, one of the wealthiest men of Athens, struck by the charms of his sister Elpinice, a woman more remarkable for her beauty and talents than for the propriety of her conduct, had not undertaken to discharge the penalty as the price of her hand. Cimon however had attracted notice, and gained reputation, by the spirit which he displayed on the occasion of leaving the city on the approach of the barbarians, when he was the foremost to hang up a bridle in the Acropolis, as a sign that he placed all his hopes in the fleet, and by the valour with which he fought at Salamis; and many friendly voices encouraged him to tread in his father's footsteps. Aristides, in particular, saw in him a capacity and disposition, that fitted him for a coadjutor to himself, and an antagonist to Themistocles, and exerted his influence in his favour; and the readiness with which the allied Greeks, when disgusted by the arrogance of Pausanias, united themselves with Athens, was owed in a great measure to Cimon's mild temper, and to his frank and gentle manners. Yet we should be inclined to question the genuineness of his generosity and good

¹ Plut. Cim. 9.

² According to Diodorus (Mai ii. p. 39.) it was Themistocles who was the author of Cimon's fortune, by recommending him as a son-in-law to a rich Athenian, who had consulted him on the choice of a husband for his daughter, and whom he advised to look out not for wealth which wanted a man, but for a man who wanted wealth.

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VICTORIES OF CIMON.

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nature, if we believed what was related by an author cited by Plutarch : that after the flight of Themistocles, Cimon procured a capital sentence against Epicrates, for having aided the wife and children of the exile in escaping from Athens, and joining him in the dominions of Admetus.

The popularity of Themistocles was already declining, while Cimon, by a series of successful enterprises, was rapidly rising in public favour and esteem. The first of these triumphs, achieved in the third year after the battle of Plataea (B. C. 476), was the conquest of Eion on the Strymon, which was held by a Persian garrison, among whom were some men of high rank, and even related to the king. They were on friendly terms with the neighbouring Thracians, and, probably with their aid, gave great annoyance to the adjacent Greek towns. Cimon, after defeating and shutting them up, pressed the place so closely, that Boges, the Persian governor, unable to hold out, and disdaining to surrender, set fire to the town, and perished in the flames, which consumed his friends, family, and treasures. This victory was on many accounts peculiarly agreeable to the Athenians, who by it were relieved from a troublesome enemy, and gained a very important position, which not only provided immediately for the wants of many, but was the first step to the establishment of one of their most valuable colonies. They conferred the freedom of their city on Meno the Pharsalian¹, who on this occasion gave them twelve talents, and himself came to their aid with 300 of his Penests mounted at his own charge. The reward they bestowed on the conqueror was considered at the time as an extraordinary mark of favour, and was celebrated in after-ages, when much slighter services were far more richly recompensed, as a proof of the cheapness of the ancient heroism. It consisted in three stone busts of Hermes, each inscribed with two or three distichs in honour of the exploit, but containing neither the name of the general, nor any

¹ Demosth. Aristocr. p. 687.

allusion to his particular merit. In the course of the same year Cimon effected another conquest, which had a value in the eyes of the people independent of the substantial advantage it afforded them. The inhabitants of the isle of Scyros, a mixt race of Pelasgians and Dolopians, had become infamous for piracy, and had incurred the ban of the Amphictyons, by a breach of hospitality in plundering some Thessalian merchants. Cimon seized this specious pretext for exterminating the people, and dividing their land among Attic colonists. He was afterwards fortunate or skilful enough to discover the relics of Theseus, who, according to an ancient tradition, had been buried in Scyros.¹ An oracle was procured, which directed the Athenians to recover the hero's remains, and to treat them with due honour. Perhaps Cimon and his party may have thought it seasonable, on political grounds, to reanimate the popular veneration for the founder of the ancient order of things. The bones were dug up, and carried with great pomp to Athens, where a temple, which became a perpetual asylum for the oppressed, was erected in honour of the hero, who had so often exerted his prowess in protecting innocence, and redressing wrong.

The next enterprises to which the Athenian arms were directed, were important as the first steps toward the establishment of a new system in the relation between Athens and her allies. The town of Carystus in Eubœa, from what causes we are not informed, provoked the hostility of the Athenians, and, though not supported by any other states in the island, made a long resistance before it was reduced to submission. Its revolt was perhaps considered as of too little importance to deserve more strenuous efforts for its suppression. But that of the rich and powerful island of Naxos, which followed, was of greater moment. It was an

¹ According to Paus. i. 17. 6. the professed object of the first expedition was to avenge the murder of Theseus, though Lycomedes had been instigated by jealousy of the honours which his subjects paid to the hero. But the bones were not brought to Athens till six or seven years after the conquest of the island, in the archonship of Aphepsion, or Apsephion, B.C. 468. See Mr. Clinton, F. H. ii. p. 34.

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indication that the Athenian alliance began to be felt irksome, and that Athens would only be able to preserve the advantages which she derived from her station in the confederacy, by taking a new ground, and exacting by force what was no longer cheerfully given. Naxos was conquered after a hard siege, and, instead of an ally, became a subject of Athens: the first member of the confederacy which experienced from its protectors the worst evil which it had to fear from the Persians. But its example did not induce those who were exposed to the same danger either to unite in defence of their liberty, or to abstain from provoking a like attack. One after another they unseasonably refused compliance with the requisitions of the leading state, and were punished with the loss of their independence. Many were imprudent enough to seek ease from their burdens by sacrificing their strength. They offered to commute their personal services in the endless expeditions to which they were summoned, for stated payments of money. Cimon perceived the advantage which Athens would reap from this arrangement, and accepted it whenever it was proposed. Its effect was, that the states which adopted it, exempt from the necessity of keeping up a naval force of their own, were ever after exposed, without any means of defence, to the growing demands of Athenian rapacity, and when the wants of their sovereign were multiplied, found themselves in addition subjected to the very services from which they had so dearly purchased a temporary relief.

In the year of the conquest of Naxos (B. C. 466) the same in which Themistocles took refuge in Asia, Cimon obtained his most memorable triumph over the Persians. A great sea and land force had been collected at the mouth of the Eurymedon in Pamphylia: the fleet, according to Ephorus, who is most moderate in his numbers, amounted to 350, and the Persian commanders expected to be joined by 80 Phœnician galleys from Cyprus. Cimon having strengthened his

fleet by successive reinforcements, as he slowly moved along the south coast of Asia Minor, till it amounted to 250 galleys, provoked the enemy to an engagement before the arrival of the Phœnicians, and having defeated them and sunk or taken 200 ships, sailed up the river to their camp, and landing his men flushed with victory, completely routed the Persian army, and carried away the rich booty which they left in their tents. According to the author whom Plutarch follows, he still found time for another victory the same day, and having sailed to meet the Phœnician squadron, which had not heard of the defeat of their allies, fell in with it and destroyed the whole.

Cimon's next enterprise was one in which he had a personal and hereditary interest. The Persians still kept possession of the Thracian Chersonesus, and were supported by some of the Thracian tribes of the main land. Cimon sailed with a small force, and dislodged them, not only from the territory of the republic, but from perhaps the most valuable part of his own patrimony. It appears to have been soon after the power of the Athenians had been thus strengthened in this quarter — in the year following the battles of the Eurymedon — that they were again engaged in a contest with one of their allies, who was able and disposed to make a vigorous resistance. The Thasians were compelled to defend their gold mines on the continent from the cupidity of Athens, which perhaps claimed them as a conquest won from the Persians. The islanders were first defeated at sea by Cimon, and then closely besieged. While the siege was in progress, the Athenians suffered a disastrous defeat in one of their most important possessions. They had sent a colony of ten thousand settlers, partly citizens and partly allies, to establish themselves in a site on the Strymon, then called, from the various lines of communication which branched from it, the Nine Ways¹, and occupied by the Edonian Thracians. These the colonists

¹ See Vol. II. p. 258.

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dislodged; but in an expedition which they made into the interior against the Edonian town of Drabescus they were attacked by the united forces of the Thracians, who viewed their settlement as a hostile invasion, and were cut off to a man.

The Thasians, alarmed at the turn which the war had taken, began to look out for foreign assistance. The jealousy of Sparta toward Athens had been betrayed, as we have seen, immediately after their joint victory over the common enemy; and the events of the subsequent period were not fitted to allay it. The Thasians therefore sent an embassy to engage the Spartans to make a diversion in their favour by invading Attica. Their envoys were favourably received, and dismissed with a secret promise that their wishes should be fulfilled; and the Spartans were preparing to keep their word, but had not yet taken any step which could disclose their intention to the Athenians, when a calamity befel them by which they were forced to renounce this design, and to struggle hard for their own preservation. The whole of Laconia was shaken by an earthquake, which opened great chasms in the ground, and rolled down huge masses from the highest peaks of Taygetus: Sparta itself became a heap of ruins, in which not more than five houses are said to have been left standing.¹ More than twenty thousand persons were believed to have been destroyed by the shock², and the flower of the Spartan youth was overwhelmed by the fall of the building in which they were exercising themselves at the time. It was chiefly the presence of mind displayed on this occasion by king Archidamus, that preserved the state from a still more terrible disaster. Many of the Helots assembled, and hastened to the city, to take advantage of the defenceless condition in which they hoped to surprise their masters. But Archidamus foreseeing the danger, as soon as the first consternation had subsided, while the survivors were busied among the ruins, ordered an

¹ Plut. Cim. 16.² Diod. xi. 63.

alarm to be sounded, as of an enemy's approach, and gathered all his people round him in arms. The Helots, finding an armed band ready to receive them, retreated and dispersed. But though this danger was thus averted, the safety of Sparta was not yet secured. The Messenians seized the opportunity of rising against their hated lords, and fortified themselves in the ancient stronghold of their liberty, Ithome. Their insurrection was the more formidable, as they were joined not only by many of the Helots, but by the free inhabitants of some of the Laconian towns. The Spartans, though reduced to extreme weakness, were still masters of the open country, and laid siege to Ithome, but made very slow advances toward the reduction of the place. In the meanwhile the Thasians, left to themselves, were compelled to capitulate in the third year of the war, and after dismantling their fortifications, surrendering their ships, ceding their continental territory and mines, paying a sum of money immediately, and stipulating to pay a certain tribute in future, were permitted to remain subjects of Athens.

As the siege of Ithome lingered, the Spartans called on their allies for aid ; and among the rest they did not blush to implore it from the Athenians. This application gave rise to a very warm debate in the Athenian assembly, and was treated by the leaders of the opposite parties as an occasion of trying their strength. The feelings with which it was received can scarcely be clearly understood, without taking a view of these parties and of their relative position : and a short digression on this subject will be necessary to place many events of the following history in their proper light.

Cimon was beyond dispute the ablest and most successful general of his day : and his victories had shed a lustre on the arms of Athens, which almost dimmed the glories of Marathon and Salamis. But while he was gaining renown abroad, he had rivals at home, who were endeavouring to supplant him in the affections of the people, and to establish a system of domestic and

foreign policy directly counter to his views, and were preparing contests for him in which his military talents would be of little avail. While Themistocles and Aristides were occupying the political stage, an extraordinary genius had been ripening in obscurity, and was only waiting for a favourable juncture to issue from the shade into the broad day of public life. Xanthippus, the conqueror of Mycale, had married Agariste, a descendant of the famous Cleisthenes, and had left two sons, Ariphron and Pericles. Of Ariphron little is known beside his name: but Pericles, to an observing eye, gave early indications of a mind formed for great things, and a will earnestly bent on them. In his youth he had not rested satisfied with the ordinary Greek education, but had applied himself, with an ardour which was not even abated by the lapse of years, nor stifled by his public avocations, to intellectual pursuits, which were then new at Athens, and confined to a very narrow circle of inquisitive spirits. His birth and fortune afforded him the means of familiar intercourse with all the men most eminent in every kind of knowledge and art, who were already beginning to resort to Athens as a common seat of learning. Thus, though Pythoclides taught him to touch the cithara, he sought the elements of a higher kind of music in the lessons of Damon, who was believed to have contributed mainly to train him for his political career: himself no ordinary person; for he was held up by the comic poets to public jealousy, as a secret favourer of tyranny, and was driven from Athens by the process of ostracism. But Pericles also entered with avidity into the abstrusest philosophical speculations, and even took pleasure in the arid subtleties of the Eleatic school, or at least in the ingenuity and the dialectic art with which they were unfolded to him by Zeno. But his principal guide in such researches, and the man who appears to have exercised the most powerful and durable influence on his mind and character, was the philosopher Anaxagoras, with whom he was long united in intimate friendship. Not only his public

and private deportment, and his habits of thought, but the tone and style of his eloquence were believed to have been formed by his intercourse with Anaxagoras. It was commonly supposed that this effect was produced by the philosopher's physical speculations, which, elevating his disciple above the ignorant superstition of the vulgar, had imparted to him the serene condescension and dignified language of a superior being. But we should be loth to believe that it was the possession of such physical secrets as Anaxagoras was able to communicate, that inspired Pericles with his lofty conceptions, or that he was intoxicated with the little taste of science which had weaned him from a few popular prejudices. We should rather ascribe so deep an impression to the distinguishing tenet of the Anaxagorean system, by which the philosopher himself was supposed to have acquired the title of *Mind* from his contemporaries. The doctrine of an ordering intelligence, distinct from the material universe, and ruling it with absolute sway, was striking from its novelty, and peculiarly congenial to the character of Pericles. Such was the supremacy which Athens exercised over the multitude of her dependent states, and such the ascendancy which he felt himself destined to obtain over the multitude at Athens.

It was undoubtedly not for the mere amusement of his leisure that Pericles had enriched his mind with so many rare acquirements. All of them were probably considered by him as instruments for the use of the statesman: and even those which seemed most remote from all practical purposes, may have contributed to the cultivation of that natural eloquence, to which he owed so much of his influence. He left no specimens of his oratory behind him, and we can only estimate it, like many other fruits of Greek genius, by the effect it produced. The few minute fragments preserved by Plutarch, which were recorded by earlier authors because they had sunk deep in the mind of his hearers, seem to indicate that he loved to concentrate his thoughts