



75 AD  
AGESILAUS  
485-401 B.C.  
by Plutarch  
translated by John Dryden

AGESILAUS

ARCHIDAMUS, the son of Zeuxidamus, having reigned gloriously over the Lacedaemonians, left behind him two sons, Agis the elder, begotten of Lampido, a noble lady, Agesilaus, much the younger, born of Eupolia, the daughter of Melesippidas. Now the succession belonging to Agis by law, Agesilaus, who in all probability was to be but a private man, was educated according to the usual discipline of the country, hard and severe, and meant to teach young men to obey their superiors. Whence it was that, men say, Simonides called Sparta "the tamer of men," because by early strictness of education they, more than any nation, trained the citizens to obedience to the laws, and made them tractable and patient of subjection, as horses that are broken in while colts. The law did not impose this harsh rule on the heirs apparent of the kingdom. But Agesilaus, whose good fortune it was to be born a younger brother, was consequently bred to all the arts of obedience, and so the better fitted for the government, when it fell to his share; hence it was that he proved the most popular-tempered of the Spartan kings, his early life having added to his natural kingly and commanding qualities the gentle and humane feelings of a citizen.

While he was yet a boy, bred up in one of what are called the flocks, or classes, he attracted the attachment of Lysander, who was particularly struck with the orderly temper that he manifested. For though he was one of the highest spirits, emulous above any of his companions, ambitious of pre-eminence in everything, and showed an impetuosity and fervour of mind which irresistibly carried him through all opposition or difficulty he could meet with; yet, on the other side, he was so easy and gentle in his nature, and so apt to yield to authority, that though he would do nothing on compulsion, upon ingenuous motives he would obey any commands, and was more hurt by the least rebuke or disgrace than he was distressed by any toil or hardship.

He had one leg shorter than the other, but this deformity was little observed in the general beauty of his person in youth. And the easy way in which he bore (he being the first always to pass a jest upon himself) went far to make it disregarded. And indeed his high spirit and eagerness to distinguish himself were all the more conspicuous by it, since he never let his lameness withhold him from any toil or any brave action. Neither his statue nor picture are extant, he never allowing them in his life, and utterly forbidding them to be made after his death. He is said to have been a little man, of a contemptible presence; but the goodness of his humour, and his constant cheerfulness and playfulness of temper, always free from anything of moroseness or haughtiness, made him more attractive, even to his old age, than the most beautiful and youthful men of the nation. Theophrastus writes that the Ephors laid a fine upon Archidamus for marrying a little wife, "For," said they, "she will bring us a race of kinglets, instead of kings."

Whilst Agis, the elder brother, reigned, Alcibiades, being then an exile from Athens, came from Sicily to Sparta; nor had he stayed long there before his familiarity with Timaea, the king's wife, grew suspected, insomuch that Agis refused to own a child of hers, which,

he said, was Alcibiades's, not his. Nor, if we may believe Duris, the historian, was Timaea much concerned at it, being herself forward enough to whisper among her helot maid-servants that the infant's true name was Alcibiades, not Leotychides. Meanwhile it was believed that the amour he had with her was not the effect of his love but of his ambition, that he might have Spartan kings of his posterity. This affair being grown public, it became needful for Alcibiades to withdraw from Sparta. But the child Leotychides had not the honours due to a legitimate son paid him, nor was he ever owned by Agis, till by his prayers and tears he prevailed with him to declare him his son before several witnesses upon his deathbed. But this did not avail to fix him in the throne of Agis, after whose death Lysander, who had lately achieved his conquest of Athens by sea, and was of the greatest power in Sparta, promoted Agesilaus, urging Leotychides's bastardy as a bar to his pretensions. Many of the other citizens, also, were favourable to Agesilaus, and zealously joined his party, induced by the opinion they had of his merits, of which they themselves had been spectators, in the time that he had been bred up among them. But there was a man, named Diopithes, at Sparta, who had a great knowledge of ancient oracles, and was thought particularly skilful and clever in all points of religion and divination. He alleged, that it was unlawful to make a lame man king of Lacedaemon, citing in the debate the following oracle:-

"Beware, great Sparta, lest there come of thee,  
Though sound thyself, an halting sovereignty:  
Troubles, both long and unexpected too,  
And storms of deadly warfare shall ensue."

But Lysander was not wanting with an evasion, alleging that if the Spartans were really apprehensive of the oracle, they must have a care of Leotychides; for it was not the limping foot of a king that the gods cared about, but the purity of the Herculean family, into whose rights, if a spurious issue were admitted, it would make the kingdom to halt indeed, Agesilaus likewise alleged that the bastardy of Leotychides was witnessed to by Neptune, who threw Agis out of bed by a violent earthquake, after which time he ceased to visit his wife, yet Leotychides was born above ten months after this.

Agesilaus was upon these allegations declared king, and soon possessed himself of the private estate of Agis, as well as his throne, Leotychides being wholly rejected as a bastard. He now turned his attention to his kindred by the mother's side, persons of worth and virtue, but miserably poor. To them he gave half his brother's estate, and by this popular act gained general good-will and reputation, in the place of the envy and ill-feeling which the inheritance might otherwise have procured him. What Xenophon tells us of him, that by complying with, and, as it were, being ruled by his country, he grew into such great power with them, that he could do what he pleased, is meant to apply to the power he gained in the following manner with the Ephors and Elders. These were at that time of the greatest authority in the state; the former, officers annually chosen; the Elders, holding their places during life; both instituted, as already told in the life of Lycurgus, to restrain the power of the kings. Hence it was that there was always from generation to generation a feud and contention between them and the kings. But Agesilaus took another course. Instead of contending with them, he courted them in all proceedings he commenced by taking their advice, was always ready to go, nay almost run, when they called him; if he were upon his royal seat, hearing causes, and the Ephors came in, he rose to them; whenever any man was elected into the Council of

Elders he presented him with a gown and an ox. Thus, whilst he made a show of deference to them, and of a desire to extend their authority, he secretly advanced his own, and enlarged the prerogatives of the kings by several liberties which their friendship to his person conceded.

To other citizens he so behaved himself as to be less blamable in his enmities than in his friendships; for against his enemy he forbore to take any unjust advantage, but his friends he would assist, even in what was unjust. If an enemy had done anything praiseworthy, he felt it shameful to detract from his due, but his friends he knew not how to reprove when they did ill, nay, he would eagerly join with them, and assist them in their misdeed, and thought all offices of friendship commendable, let the matter in which they were employed be what it would. Again, when any of his adversaries was overtaken in a fault, he would be the first to pity him; and he soon entreated to procure his pardon, by which he won the hearts of all men. Insomuch that his popularity grew at last suspected by the Ephors, who laid a fine on him, professing that he was appropriating the citizens to himself who ought to be the common property of the state. For as it is the opinion of philosophers, that could you take away strife and opposition out of the universe, all the heavenly bodies would stand still, generation and motion would cease in the mutual concord and agreement of all things, so the Spartan legislator seems to have admitted ambition and emulation among the ingredients of his commonwealth, as the incentives of virtue, distinctly wishing that there should be some dispute and competition among his men of worth, and pronouncing the mere idle, uncontested, mutual compliance to unproved deserts to be but a false sort of concord. And some think Homer had an eye to this when he introduces Agamemnon well pleased with the quarrel arising between Ulysses and Achilles, and with the "terrible words" that passed between them, which he would never have done, unless he had thought emulation and dissensions between the noblest men to be of great public benefit. Yet this maxim is not simply to be granted, without restriction, for if animosities go too far they are very dangerous to cities and of most pernicious consequence.

When Agesilaus was newly entered upon the government, there came news from Asia that the Persian king was making great naval preparations, resolving with a high hand to dispossess the Spartans of their maritime supremacy. Lysander was eager for the opportunity of going over and succouring his friends in Asia, whom he had there left governors and masters of the cities, whose maladministration and tyrannical behaviour was causing them to be driven out, and in some cases put to death. He therefore persuaded Agesilaus to claim the command of the expedition, and by carrying the war from Greece into Persia, to anticipate the designs of the barbarian. He also wrote to his friends in Asia, that by embassy they should demand Agesilaus for their captain. Agesilaus, therefore, coming into the public assembly, offered his service, upon condition that he might have thirty Spartans for captains and counsellors; two thousand chosen men of the newly enfranchised helots, and allies to the number of six thousand. Lysander's authority and assistance soon obtained his request, so that he was sent away with the thirty Spartans, of whom Lysander was at once the chief, not only because of his power and reputation, but also on account of his friendship with Agesilaus, who esteemed his procuring him this charge a greater obligation than that of preferring him to the kingdom.

Whilst the army was collecting to the rendezvous at Geraestus, Agesilaus went with some of his friends to Aulis, where in a dream he saw a man approach him, and speak to him after this manner: "O king

of the Lacedaemonians, you cannot but know that, before yourself, there hath been but one general captain of the whole of the Greeks, namely, Agamemnon; now, since you succeed him in the same office and command the same men, since you war against the same enemies, and begin your expedition from the same place, you ought also to offer such a sacrifice as he offered before he weighed anchor." Agesilaus at the same moment remembered that the sacrifice which Agamemnon offered was his own daughter, he being so directed by the oracle. Yet was he not at all disturbed by it, but as soon as he arose, he told his dream to his friends, adding that he would propitiate the goddess with the sacrifices a goddess must delight in, and would not follow the ignorant example of his predecessor. He therefore ordered an hind to be crowned with chaplets, and bade his own soothsayer perform the rite, not the usual person whom the Boeotians, in ordinary course, appointed to that office. When the Boeotian magistrates understood it, they were much offended, and sent officers to Agesilaus to forbid his sacrificing contrary to the laws of the country. These, having delivered their message to him, immediately went to the altar and threw down the quarters of the hind that lay upon it. Agesilaus took this very ill, and without further sacrifice immediately sailed away, highly displeased with the Boeotians, and much discouraged in his mind at the omen, boding to himself an unsuccessful voyage and an imperfect issue of the whole expedition.

When he came to Ephesus, he found the power and interest of Lysander, and the honours paid to him, insufferably great; all applications were made to him, crowds of suitors attended at his door, and followed upon his steps, as if nothing but the mere name of commander belonged, to satisfy the usage, to Agesilaus, the whole power of it being devolved upon Lysander. None of all the commanders that had been sent into Asia was either so powerful or so formidable as he; no one had rewarded his friends better, or had been more severe against his enemies; which things having been lately done, made the greater impression on men's minds, especially when they compared the simple and popular behaviour of Agesilaus with the harsh and violent and brief-spoken demeanour which Lysander still retained. Universal preference was yielded to this, and little regard shown to Agesilaus. This first occasioned offence to the other Spartan captains, who resented that they should rather seem the attendants of Lysander, than the councillors of Agesilaus. And at length Agesilaus himself, though not perhaps an envious man in his nature, nor apt to be troubled at the honours redounding upon other men, yet eager for honour and jealous of his glory, began to apprehend that Lysander's greatness would carry away from him the reputation of whatever great action should happen. He therefore went this way to work. He first opposed him in all his counsels; whatever Lysander specially advised was rejected, and other proposals followed. Then whoever made any address to him, if he found him attached to Lysander, certainly lost his suit. So also in judicial cases, any one whom he spoke strongly against was sure to come off with success, and any man whom he was particularly solicitous to procure some benefit for might think it well if he got away without an actual loss.

These things being clearly not done by chance, but constantly and of a set purpose, Lysander was soon sensible of them, and hesitated not to tell his friends, that they suffered for his sake, bidding them apply themselves to the king, and such as were more powerful with him than he was. Such sayings of his seeming to be designed purposely to excite ill-feeling, Agesilaus went on to offer himself a more open affront, appointing him his meat-carver, and would in public companies, scornfully say, "Let them go now and pay their court to my carver." Lysander, no longer able to brook these indignities,

complained at last to Agesilaus himself, telling him that he knew very well how to humble his friends. Agesilaus answered, "I know certainly how to humble those who pretend to more power than myself." "That," replied Lysander, "is perhaps rather said by you, than done by me: I desire only that you will assign me some office and place in which I may serve you without incurring your displeasure."

Upon this Agesilaus sent him to the Hellespont, whence he procured Spithridates, a Persian of the province of Pharnabazus, to come to the assistance of the Greeks with two hundred horse and a great supply of money. Yet his anger did not so come down, but he thenceforward pursued the design of wresting the kingdom out of the hands of the two families which then enjoyed it, and making it wholly elective; and it is thought that he would on account of his quarrel have excited a great commotion in Sparta, if he had not died in the Boeotian war. Thus ambitious spirits in a commonwealth, when they transgress their bounds, are apt to do more harm than good. For though Lysander's pride and assumption was most ill-timed and insufferable in its display, yet Agesilaus surely could have found some other way of setting him right, less offensive to a man of his reputation and ambitious temper. Indeed they were both blinded with the same passion, so as one not to recognize the authority of his superior, the other not to bear with the imperfections of his friend.

Tisaphernes, being at first afraid of Agesilaus, treated with him about setting the Grecian cities at liberty, which was agreed on. But soon after finding a sufficient force drawn together, he resolved upon war, for which Agesilaus was not sorry. For the expectation of this expedition was great, and he did not think it for his honour that Xenophon with ten thousand men should march through the heart of Asia to the sea, beating the Persian forces when and how he pleased, and that he at the head of the Spartans, then sovereigns both at sea and land, should not achieve some memorable action for Greece. And so to be even with Tisaphernes, he requites his perjury by a fair stratagem. He pretends to march into Caria, whither, when he has drawn Tisaphernes and his army, he suddenly turns back, and falls upon Phrygia, takes many of their cities, and carries away great booty, showing his allies that to break a solemn league was a downright contempt of the gods, but the circumvention of an enemy in war was not only just but glorious, a gratification at once and an advantage.

Being weak in horse, and discouraged by ill-omens in the sacrifices, he retired to Ephesus, and there raised cavalry. He obliged the rich men, that were not inclined to serve in person, to find each of them a horseman armed and mounted, and there being many who preferred doing this, the army was quickly reinforced by a body, not of unwilling recruits for the infantry, but of brave and numerous horsemen. For those that were not good at fighting themselves hired such as were more military in their inclinations, and such as loved not horse-service substituted in their places such as did. Agamemnon's example had been a good one, when he took the present of an excellent mare to dismiss a rich coward from the army.

When by Agesilaus's order the prisoners he had taken in Phrygia were exposed to sale, they were first stripped of their garments and then sold naked. The clothes found many customers to buy them, but the bodies being, from the want of all exposure and exercise, white and tender-skinned, were derided and scorned as unserviceable, Agesilaus, who stood by at the auction, told his Greeks, "These are the men against whom ye fight, and these the things you will gain by it."

The season of the year being come, he boldly gave out that he would invade Lydia; and this plain dealing of his was now mistaken for

a stratagem by Tisaphernes, who by not believing Agesilaus, having been already deceived by him, overreached himself. He expected that he should have made choice of Caria, as a rough country, not fit for horse, in which he deemed Agesilaus to be weak, and directed his own marches accordingly. But when he found him to be as good as his word, and to have entered into the country of Sardis, he made great haste after him, and by great marches of his horse, overtaking the loose stragglers who were pillaging the country, he cut them off. Agesilaus meanwhile, considering that the horse had outridden the foot, but that he himself had the whole body of his own army entire, made haste to engage them. He mingled his light-armed foot, carrying targets, with the horse, commanding them to advance at full speed and begin the battle, whilst he brought up the heavier-armed men in the rear. The success was answerable to the design; the barbarians were put to the rout, the Grecians pursued hard, took their camp, and put many of them to the sword. The consequence of this victory was very great; for they had not only the liberty of foraging the Persian country, and plundering at pleasure, but also saw Tisaphernes pay dearly for all the cruelty he had showed the Greeks, to whom he was a professed enemy. For the King of Persia sent Tithraustes, who took off his head, and presently dealt with Agesilaus about his return into Greece, sending to him ambassadors to that purpose with commission to offer him great sums of money. Agesilaus's answer was that the making of peace belonged to the Lacedaemonians, not to him; as for wealth, he had rather see it in his soldiers' hands than his own; that the Grecians thought it not honourable to enrich themselves with the bribes of their enemies, but with their spoils only. Yet, that he might gratify Tithraustes for the justice he had done upon Tisaphernes, the common enemy of the Greeks, he removed his quarters into Phrygia, accepting thirty talents for his expenses. Whilst he was upon his march, he received a staff from the government at Sparta, appointing him admiral as well as general. This was an honour which was never done to any but Agesilaus, who being now undoubtedly the greatest and most illustrious man of his time, still, as Theopompus had said, gave himself more occasion of glory in his own virtue and merit than was given him in this authority and power. Yet he committed a fault in preferring Pisander to the command of the navy, when there were others at hand both older and more experienced; in this not so much consulting the public good as the gratification of his kindred, and especially his wife, whose brother Pisander was.

Having removed his camp into Pharnabazus's province, he not only met with great plenty of provisions, but also raised great sums of money, and marching on to the bounds of Paphlagonia, he soon drew Cotys, the king of it, into a league, to which he of his own accord inclined, out of the opinion he had of Agesilaus's honour and virtue. Spithridates, from the time of his abandoning Pharnabazus, constantly attended Agesilaus in the camp whithersoever he went. This Spithridates had a son, a very handsome boy, called Megabates, of whom Agesilaus was extremely fond, and also a very beautiful daughter that was marriageable. Her Agesilaus matched to Cotys, and taking of him a thousand horse, with two thousand light-armed foot, he returned into Phrygia, and there pillaged the country of Pharnabazus, who durst not meet him in the field, nor yet trust to his garrisons, but getting his valuables together, got out of the way and moved about up and down with a flying army, till Spithridates, joining with Herippidas the Spartan, took his camp and all his property. Herippidas being too severe an inquirer into the plunder with which the barbarian soldiers had enriched themselves, and forcing them to deliver it up with too much strictness, so disobliged

Spithridates with his questioning and examining that he changed sides again, and went off with the Paphlagonians to Sardis. This was a very great vexation to Agesilaus, not only that he had lost the friendship of a gallant commander, and with him a considerable part of his army, but still more that it had been done with the disrepute of a sordid and petty covetousness, of which he always had made it a point of honour to keep both himself and his country clear. Besides these public causes, he had a private one, his excessive fondness for the son, which touched him to the quick, though he endeavoured to master it, and, especially in presence of the boy, to suppress all appearance of it; so much so that when Megabates, for that was his name, came once to receive a kiss from him, he declined it. At which, when the young boy blushed and drew back, and afterward saluted him at a more reserved distance, Agesilaus soon repenting his coldness, and changing his mind, pretended to wonder why he did not salute him with the same familiarity as formerly. His friends about him answered, "You are in the fault, who would not accept the kiss of the boy, but turned away in alarm; he would come to you again if you would have the courage to let him do so." Upon this Agesilaus paused a while, and at length answered, "You need not encourage him to it; I think I had rather be master of myself in that refusal, than see all things that are now before my eyes turned into gold." Thus he demeaned himself to Megabates when present, but he had so great a passion for him in his absence, that it may be questioned whether, if the boy had returned again, all the courage he had would have sustained him in such another refusal.

After this Pharnabazus sought an opportunity of conferring with Agesilaus, which Apollophanes of Cyzicus, the common host of them both, procured for him. Agesilaus coming first to the appointed place, threw himself down upon the grass under a tree, lying there in expectation of Pharnabazus, who, bringing with him soft skins and wrought carpets to lie down upon, when he saw Agesilaus's posture, grew ashamed of his luxuries, and made no use of them, but laid himself down upon the grass also, without regard for his delicate and richly dyed clothing. Pharnabazus had matter enough of complaint against Agesilaus, and therefore, after the mutual civilities were over, he put him in mind of the great services he had done the Lacedaemonians in the Attic war, of which he thought it an ill recompense to have his country thus harassed and spoiled by those men who owed so much to him. The Spartans that were present hung down their heads, as conscious of the wrong they had done to their ally. But Agesilaus said, "We, O Pharnabazus, when we were in amity with your master the king, behaved ourselves like friends, and now that we are at war with him, we behave ourselves as enemies. As for you, we must look upon you as a part of his property, and must do these outrages upon you, not intending the harm to you, but to him whom we wound through you. But whenever you will choose rather to be a friend to the Grecians than a slave of the King of Persia, you may then reckon this army and navy to be all at your command, to defend both you, your country, and your liberties, without which there is nothing honourable or indeed desirable among men." Upon this Pharnabazus discovered his mind, and answered, "If the king sends another governor in my room, I will certainly come over to you, but as long as he trusts me with the government I shall be just to him, and not fail to do my utmost endeavours in opposing you." Agesilaus was taken with the answer and shook hands with him; and rising, said, "How much rather had I have so brave a man my friend than my enemy."

Pharnabazus being gone off, his son staying behind, ran up to Agesilaus, and smilingly said, "Agesilaus, I make you my guest;" and thereupon presented him with a javelin which he had in his hand.

Agesilaus received it, and being much taken with the good mien and courtesy of the youth, looked about to see if there were anything in his train fit to offer him in return; and observing the horse of Idaeus, the secretary, to have very fine trappings on, he took them off, and bestowed them upon the young gentleman. Nor did his kindness rest there, but he continued ever after to be mindful of him, so that when he was driven out of his country by his brothers, and lived in exile in Peloponnesus, he took great care of him and condescended even to assist him in some love matters. He had an attachment for a youth of Athenian birth, who was bred up as an athlete; and when at the Olympic games this boy, on account of his great size and general strong and full-grown appearance, was in some danger of not being admitted into the list, the Persian betook himself to Agesilaus, and made use of his friendship. Agesilaus readily assisted him, and not without a great deal of difficulty effected his desires. He was in all other things a man of great and exact justice, but when the case concerned a friend, to be strait-laced in point of justice, he said, was only a colourable pretence of denying him. There is an epistle written to Idrieus, Prince of Caria, that is ascribed to Agesilaus; it is this: "If Nicias be innocent, absolve him; if he be guilty, absolve him upon my account; however, be sure to absolve him." This was his usual character in his deportment towards his friends. Yet his rule was not without exception; for sometimes he considered the necessity of his affairs more than his friend, of which he once gave an example, when upon a sudden and disorderly removal of his camp, he left a sick friend behind him, and when he called loudly after him, and implored his help, turned his back, and said it was hard to be compassionate and wise too. This story is related by Hieronymus, the philosopher.

Another year of the war being spent, Agesilaus's fame still increased, insomuch that the Persian king received daily information concerning his many virtues, and the great esteem the world had of his temperance, his plain living, and his moderation. When he made any journey, he would usually take up his lodging in a temple, and there make the gods witnesses of his most private actions, which others would scarce permit men to be acquainted with. In so great an army you should scarce find a common soldier lie on a coarser mattress than Agesilaus: he was so indifferent to the varieties of heat and cold that all the seasons, as the gods sent them, seemed natural to him. The Greeks that inhabited Asia were much pleased to see the great lords and governors of Persia, with all the pride, cruelty, and luxury in which they lived, trembling and bowing before a man in a poor threadbare cloak, and, at one laconic word out of his mouth, obsequiously deferring and changing their wishes and purposes. So that it brought to the minds of many the verses of Timotheus-

"Mars is the tyrant, gold Greece does not fear."

Many parts of Asia now revolting from the Persians, Agesilaus restored order in the cities, and without bloodshed or banishment of any of their members re-established the proper constitution in the governments, and now resolved to carry away the war from the seaside, and to march further up into the country, and to attack the King of Persia himself in his own home in Susa and Ecbatana; not willing to let the monarch sit idle in his chair, playing umpire in the conflicts of the Greeks, and bribing their popular leaders. But these great thoughts were interrupted by unhappy news from Sparta; Epicydidas is from thence sent to remand him home, to assist his own country, which was then involved in a great war:-

"Greece to herself doth a barbarian grow,  
Others could not, she doth herself o'erthrow."

What better can we say of those jealousies, and that league and conspiracy of the Greeks for their own mischief, which arrested fortune in full career, and turned back arms that were already uplifted against the barbarians, to be used upon themselves, and recalled into Greece the war which had been banished out of her? I by no means assent to Demaratus of Corinth, who said that those Greeks lost a great satisfaction that did not live to see Alexander sit in the throne of Darius. That sight should rather have drawn tears from them, when they considered that they had left that glory to Alexander and the Macedonians, whilst they spent all their own great commanders in playing them against each other in the fields of Leuctra, Coronea, Corinth, and Arcadia.

Nothing was greater or nobler than the behaviour of Agesilaus on this occasion, nor can a nobler instance be found in story of a ready obedience and just deference to orders. Hannibal, though in a bad condition himself and, almost driven out of Italy, could scarcely be induced to obey when he was called home to serve his country. Alexander made a jest of the battle between Agis and Antipater, laughing and saying, "So, whilst we were conquering Darius in Asia, it seems there was a battle of mice in Arcadia." Happy Sparta, meanwhile, in the justice and modesty of Agesilaus, and in the deference he paid to the laws of his country; who, immediately upon receipt of his orders, though in the midst of his high fortune and power, and in full hope of great and glorious success, gave all up and instantly departed, "his object unachieved," leaving many regrets behind him among his allies in Asia, and proving by his example the falseness of that saying of Demostratus. the son of Phaeax, "That the Lacedaemonians were better in public, but the Athenians in private." For while approving himself an excellent king and general, he likewise showed himself in private an excellent friend and a most agreeable companion.

The coin of Persia was stamped with the figure of an archer; Agesilaus said, That a thousand Persian archers had driven him out of Asia meaning, the money that had been laid out in bribing the demagogues and the orators in Thebes and Athens, and thus inciting those two states to hostility against Sparta.

Having passed the Hellespont, he marched by land through Thrace, not begging or entreating a passage anywhere, only he sent his messengers to them to demand whether they would have him pass as a friend or as an enemy. All the rest received him as a friend, and assisted him on his journey. But the Trallians, to whom Xerxes is also said to have given money, demanded a price of him, namely, one hundred talents of silver and one hundred women. Agesilaus in scorn asked, Why they were not ready to receive them? He marched on, and finding the Trallians in arms to oppose him, fought them, and slew great numbers of them. He sent the like embassy to the King of Macedonia, who replied, He would take time to deliberate. "Let him deliberate," said Agesilaus, "we will go forward in the meantime." The Macedonian, being surprised and daunted the resolution of the Spartan, gave orders to let him pass as a friend.

When he came into Thessaly he wasted the country, because they were in league with the enemy. To Larissa, the chief city of Thessaly, he sent Xenocles and Scythes to treat of a peace, whom when the Larissaeans had laid hold of, and put into custody, others were enraged, and advised siege of the town; but he answered, That he valued either of those men at more than the whole country of Thessaly. He therefore made terms with them, and received his men again upon

composition. Nor need wonder at this saying of Agesilaus, since when he had news brought him from Sparta, of several great captains in a battle near Corinth, in which the slaughter fell upon other Greeks, and the Lacedaemonians obtained a great victory with small loss, he did not appear at all satisfied; but with a great sigh cried out, "O Greece, how many brave men hast thou destroyed; who, if they had been preserved to so good an use, had sufficed to have conquered all Persia!" Yet when the Pharsalians grew troublesome to him, by pressing upon his army and incommoding his passage, he led out five hundred horse, and in person fought and routed them, setting up a trophy under the mount Narthacius. He valued himself very much upon that victory, that with so small a number of his own training, he had vanquished a body of men that thought themselves the best horsemen of Greece.

Here Diphridas, the Ephor, met him, and delivered his message from Sparta, which ordered him immediately to make an inroad into Boeotia; and though he thought this fitter to have been done at another time, and with greater force, he yet obeyed the magistrates. He thereupon told his soldiers that the day had come on which they were to enter upon that employment for the performance of which they were brought out of Asia. He sent for two divisions of the army near Corinth to his assistance. The Lacedaemonians at home, in honour to him, made proclamations for volunteers that would serve under the king to come in and be enlisted. Finding all the young men in the city ready to offer themselves, they chose fifty of the strongest, and sent them.

Agesilaus having gained Thermopylae, and passed quietly through Phocis, as soon as he had entered Boeotia, and pitched his camp near Chaeronea, at once met with an eclipse of the sun, and with ill news from the navy, Pisander, the Spartan admiral, being beaten and slain at Cnidos by Pharnabazus and Conon. He was much moved at it, both upon his own and the public account. Yet lest his army, being now near engaging, should meet with any discouragement, he ordered the messengers to give out that the Spartans were the conquerors, and he himself putting on garland, solemnly sacrificed for the good news, and sent portions of the sacrifices to his friends.

When he came near to Coronea, and was within view of the enemy, he drew up his army, and giving the left wing to the Orchomenians, he himself led the right. The Thebans took the right wing of their army, leaving the left to the Argives. Xenophon, who was present, and fought on Agesilaus's side, reports it to be the hardest-fought battle that he had seen. The beginning of it was not so, for the Thebans soon put the Orchomenians to rout, as also did Agesilaus the Argives. But both parties having news of the misfortune of their left wings, they betook themselves to their relief. Here Agesilaus might have been sure of his victory had he contented himself not to charge them in the front, but in the flank or rear; but being angry and heated in the fight he would not wait the opportunity, but fell on at once, thinking to bear them down before him. The Thebans were not behind him in courage, so that the battle was fiercely carried on on both sides, especially near Agesilaus's person, whose new guard of fifty volunteers stood him in great stead that day, and saved his life. They fought with great valour, and interposed their bodies frequently between him and danger, yet could they not so preserve him, but that he received many wounds through his armour with lances and swords, and was with much difficulty gotten off alive by their making a ring about him, and so guarding him, with the slaughter of many of the enemy, and the loss of many of their own number. At length, finding it too hard a task to break the front of the Theban troops, they opened their own files, and let the enemy march through them (an artifice which in the beginning they scorned), watching in

the meantime the posture of the enemy, who, having passed through, grew careless, as esteeming themselves past danger, in which position they were immediately set upon by the Spartans. Yet were they not then put to rout, but marched on to Helicon, proud of what they had done, being able to say that they themselves, as to their part of the army, were not worsted.

Agesilaus, sore wounded as he was, would not be borne to his tent till he had been first carried about the field, and had seen the dead conveyed within his encampment. As many of his enemies as had taken sanctuary in the temple he dismissed. For there stood near the battlefield the temple of Minerva the Itonian, and before it a trophy erected by the Boeotians, for or victory which, under the conduct of Sparton, their general, they obtained over the Athenians under Tolmides, who himself fell in the battle. Next morning early, to make trial of the Theban courage, whether they had any mind to a second encounter, he commanded his soldiers to put on garlands on their heads, and play with their flutes, and raise a trophy before their faces; but when they, instead of fighting, sent for leave to bury their dead, he gave it them; and having so assured himself of the victory, after this he went to Delphi, to the Pythian games, which were then celebrating, at which feast he assisted, and there solemnly offered the tenth part of the spoils he had brought from Asia, which amounted to a hundred talents.

Thence he returned to his own country, where his way and habits of life quickly excited the affection and admiration of the Spartans; for, unlike other generals, he came home from foreign lands the same man that he went out, having not so learned the fashions of other countries, as to forget his own, much less to dislike or despise them. He followed and respected all the Spartan customs, without any change either in the manner of his supping, or bathing, or his wife's apparel, as if he had never travelled over the river Eurotas. So also with his household furniture and his own armour, nay, the very gates of his house were so old that they might well be thought of Aristodemus's setting up. His daughter's Canathrum, says Xenophon, was no richer than that of any one else. The Canathrum, as they call it, is a chair or chariot made of wood, in the shape of a griffin, or tragelaphus, on which the children and young virgins are carried in processions. Xenophon has not left us the name of this daughter of Agesilaus; and Dicaearchus expresses some indignation, because we do not know, he says, the name of Agesilaus's daughter, nor of Epaminondas's mother. But in the records of Laconia, we ourselves found his wife's name to have been Cleora, and his two daughters to have been called Eupolia and Prolyta. And you may also to this day see Agesilaus's spear kept in Sparta, nothing differing from that of other men.

there was a vanity he observed among the Spartans, about keeping running horses for the Olympic games, upon which he found they much valued themselves. Agesilaus regarded it as a display not of any real virtue, but of wealth and expense; and to make this evident to the Greeks, induced his sister, Cynisca, to send a chariot into the course. He kept with him Xenophon, the philosopher, and made much of him, and proposed to him to send for his children, and educate them at Sparta, where they would be taught the best of all learning; how to obey, and how to command. Finding on Lysander's death a large faction formed, which he on his return from Asia had established against Agesilaus, he thought it advisable to expose both him and it, by showing what manner of a citizen he had been whilst he lived. To that end, finding among his writings an oration, composed by Cleon the Halicarnassean, but to have been spoken by Lysander in a public assembly, to excite the people to innovations and changes in

the government, he resolved to publish it as an evidence of Lysander's practices. But one of the Elders having the perusal of it, and finding it powerfully written, advised him to have a care of digging up Lysander again, and rather bury that oration in the grave with him; and this advice he wisely hearkened to, and hushed the whole thing up and ever after forbore publicly to affront any of his adversaries, but took occasions of picking out the ringleaders, and sending them away upon foreign services. He thus had means for exposing the avarice and the injustice of many of them in their employments; and again when they were by others brought into question, he made it his business to bring them off, obliging them, by that means, of enemies to become his friends, and so by degrees left none remaining.

Agesipolis, his fellow-king, was under the disadvantage of being born of an exiled father, and himself young, modest, and inactive, meddled not much in affairs. Agesilaus took a course of gaining him over and making him entirely tractable. According to the custom of Sparta, the kings, if they were in town, always dined together. This was Agesilaus's opportunity of dealing with Agesipolis, whom he found quick, as he himself was, in forming attachments for young men, and accordingly talked with him always on such subjects, joining and aiding him, and acting as his confidant, such attachments in Sparta being entirely honourable, and attended always with lively feelings of modesty, love of virtue, and a noble emulation; of which more is said in Lycurgus's life.

Having thus established his power in the city, he easily obtained that his half-brother Teleutias might be chosen admiral, and thereupon making an expedition against the Corinthians, he made himself master of the long walls by land, through the assistance of his brother at sea. Coming thus upon the Argives, who then held Corinth, in the midst of their Isthmian festival, he made them fly from the sacrifice they had just commenced, and leave all their festive provision behind them. The exiled Corinthians that were in the Spartan army desired him to keep the feast, and to preside in the celebration of it. This he refused, but gave them leave to carry on the solemnity if they pleased, and he in the meantime stayed and guarded them.

When Agesilaus marched off, the Argives returned and celebrated the games over again, when some who were victors before became victors a second time; others lost the prizes which before they had gained. Agesilaus thus made it clear to everybody that the Argives must in their own eyes have been guilty of great cowardice since they set such a value on presiding at the games, and yet had not dared to fight for it. He himself was of opinion that to keep a mean in such things was best; he assisted at the sports and dances usual in his own country, and was always ready and eager to be present at the exercises either of the young men or of the girls, but things that many men used to be highly taken with he seemed not at all concerned about. Callippides, the tragic actor, who had a great name in all Greece and was made much of once met and saluted him; of which when he found no notice taken, he confidently thrust himself into his train, expecting that Agesilaus would pay him some attention. When all that failed, he boldly accosted him, and asked him whether he did not remember him? Agesilaus turned, and looking him in the face, "Are you not," said he, "Callippides the showman?" Being invited once to hear a man who admirably imitated the nightingale, he declined, saying he had heard the nightingale itself. Menecrates, the physician, having had great success in some desperate diseases, was by way of flattery called Jupiter; he was so vain as to take the name, and having occasion to write a letter to Agesilaus, thus addressed it: "Jupiter Menecrates to King Agesilaus, greeting." The king returned answer:

"Agesilaus to Menecrates, health and a sound mind."

Whilst Agesilaus was in the Corinthian territories, having just taken the Heraeum, he was looking on while his soldiers were carrying away the prisoners and the plunder, when ambassadors from Thebes came to him to treat of peace. Having a great aversion for that city, and thinking it then advantageous to his affairs publicly to slight them, he took the opportunity, and would not seem either to see them or hear them speak. But as if on purpose to punish him in his pride, before they parted from him, messengers came with news of the complete slaughter of one of the Spartan divisions by Iphicrates, a greater disaster than had befallen them for many years, and that the more grievous because it was a choice regiment of full-armed Lacedaemonians overthrown by a parcel of mere mercenary targeteers. Agesilaus leapt from his seat, to go at once to their rescue, but found it too late, the business being over. He therefore returned to the Heraeum and sent for the Theban ambassadors to give them audience. They now resolved to be even with him for the affront he gave them, and without speaking one word of the peace, only desired leave to go into Corinth. Agesilaus, irritated with this proposal, told them in scorn, that if they were anxious to go and see how proud their friends were of their success they should do it to-morrow with safety. Next morning, taking the ambassadors with him, he ravaged the Corinthian territories, up to the very gates of the city, where, having made a stand, and let the ambassadors see that the Corinthians durst not come out to defend themselves, he dismissed them. Then gathering up the small remainders of the shattered regiment, he marched homewards, always removing his camp before day, and always pitching his tents after night, that he might prevent their enemies among the Arcadians from taking any opportunity of insulting over their loss.

After this, at the request of the Achaeans, he marched with them into Acarnania, and there collected great spoils, and defeated the Acarnanians in battle. The Achaeans would have persuaded him to keep his winter quarters there, to hinder the Acarnanians from sowing their corn; but he was of the contrary opinion, alleging that they would be more afraid of a war next summer, when their fields were sown, than they would be if they lay fallow. The event justified his opinion; for next summer, when the Achaeans began their expedition again, the Acarnanians immediately made peace with them.

When Conon and Pharnabazus with the Persian navy were grown masters of the sea, and had not only infested the coast of Laconia, but also rebuilt the walls of Athens at the cost of Pharnabazus, the Lacedaemonians thought fit to treat of peace with the King of Persia. To that end, they sent Antalcidas to Tiribazus, basely and wickedly betraying the Asiatic Greeks, on whose behalf Agesilaus had made the war. But no part of this dishonour fell upon Agesilaus, the whole being transacted by Antalcidas, who was his bitter enemy, and was urgent for peace upon any terms, because war was sure to increase his power and reputation. Nevertheless, once being told by way of reproach that the Lacedaemonians had gone over to the Medes, he replied, "No, the Medes had come over to the Lacedaemonians." And when the Greeks were backward to submit to the agreement, he threatened them with war, unless they fulfilled the King of Persia's conditions, his particular end in this being to weaken the Thebans; for it was made one of the articles of peace that the country of Boeotia should be left independent. This feeling of his to Thebes appeared further afterwards, when Phoebidas, in full peace, most unjustifiably seized upon the Cadmea. The thing was much resented by all Greece, and not well liked by the Lacedaemonians themselves; those especially who were enemies to Agesilaus required an account of the action, and by whose authority it was done, laying the suspicion of it

at his door. Agesilaus resolutely answered, on the behalf of Phoebidas, that the profitableness of the act was chiefly to be considered; if it were for the advantage of the commonwealth, it was no matter whether it were done with or without authority. This was the more remarkable in him, because in his ordinary language he was always observed to be a great maintainer of justice, and would commend it as the chief of virtues, saying, that valour without justice was useless, and if all the world were just, there would be no need of valour. When any would say to him, the Great King will have it so, he would reply, "How is he greater than I, unless he be juster?" nobly and rightly taking, as a sort of royal measure of greatness, justice and not force. And thus when, on the conclusion of the peace, the King of Persia wrote to Agesilaus, desiring a private friendship and relations of hospitality, he refused it, saying that the public friendship was enough; whilst that lasted there was no need of private. Yet in his acts he was not constant to his doctrine, but sometimes out of ambition, and sometimes out of private pique, he let himself be carried away; and particularly in this case of the Thebans, he not only saved Phoebidas, but persuaded the Lacedaemonians to take the fault upon themselves, and to retain the Cadmea, putting a garrison into it, and to put the government of Thebes into the hands of Archias and Leontidas, who had been betrayers of the castle to them.

This excited strong suspicion that what Phoebidas did was by Agesilaus's order, which was corroborated by after-occurrences. For when the Thebans had expelled the garrison, and asserted their liberty, he, accusing them of the murder of Archias and Leontidas, who indeed were tyrants, though in name holding the office of Polemarchs, made war upon them. He sent Cleombrotus on that errand, who was now his fellow-king, in the place of Agesipolis, who was dead, excusing himself by reason of his age for it was forty years since he had first borne arms, and he was consequently exempt by the law; meanwhile the true reason was, that he was ashamed, having so lately fought against tyranny in behalf of the Phliasians, to fight now in defence of a tyranny against the Thebans.

One Sphodrias, of Lacedaemon, of the contrary faction to Agesilaus, was governor in Thespieae, a bold and enterprising man, though he had perhaps more of confidence than wisdom. This action of Phoebidas fired him, and incited his ambition to attempt some great enterprise, which might render him as famous as he perceived the taking of the Cadmea had made Phoebidas. He thought the sudden capture of the Piraeus, and the cutting off thereby the Athenians from the sea, would be a matter of far more glory. It is said, too, that Pelopidas and Melon, the chief captains of Boeotia, put him upon it; that they privately sent men to him, pretending to be of the Spartan faction, who, highly commending Sphodrias, filled him with a great opinion of himself, protesting him to be the only man in the world that was fit for so great an enterprise. Being thus stimulated, he could hold no longer, but hurried into an attempt as dishonourable and treacherous as that of the Cadmea, but executed with less valour and less success; for the day broke whilst he was yet in the Thriasian plain, whereas he designed the whole exploit to have been done in the night. As soon as the soldiers perceived the rays of light reflecting from the temples of Eleusis, upon the first rising of the sun, it is said that their hearts failed them; nay, he himself, when he saw that he could not have the benefit of the night, had not courage enough to go on with his enterprise; but having pillaged the country, he returned with shame to Thespieae. An embassy was upon this sent from Athens to Sparta, to complain of the breach of peace; but the ambassadors found their journey needless, Sphodrias being then

under process by the magistrates of Sparta. Sphodrias durst not stay to expect judgment, which he found would be capital, the city being highly incensed against him, out of the shame they felt at the business, and their desire to appear in the eyes of the Athenians as fellow-sufferers in the wrong, rather than accomplices in its being done.

This Sphodrias had a son of great beauty named Cleonymus, to whom Archidamus, the son of Agesilaus, was extremely attached. Archidamus, as became him, was concerned for the danger of his friend's father, but yet he durst not do anything openly for his assistance, he being one of the professed enemies of Agesilaus. But Cleonymus having solicited him with tears about it, as knowing Agesilaus to be of all his father's enemies the most formidable, the young man for two or three days followed after his father with such fear and confusion that he durst not speak to him. At last, the day of sentence being at hand, he ventured to tell him that Cleonymus had entreated him to intercede for his father. Agesilaus, though well aware of the love between the two young men, yet did not prohibit it, because Cleonymus from his earliest years had been looked upon as a youth of very great promise; yet he gave not his son any kind or hopeful answer in the case, but coldly told him that he would consider what he could honestly and honourably do in it, and so dismissed him. Archidamus being ashamed of his want of success, forbore the company of Cleonymus, whom he usually saw several times every day. This made the friends of Sphodrias to think his case desperate, till Etymocles, one of Agesilaus's friends, discovered to them the king's mind; namely, that he abhorred the fact, but yet he thought Sphodrias a gallant man such as the commonwealth much wanted at that time. For Agesilaus used to talk thus concerning the cause, out of a desire to gratify his son. And now Cleonymus quickly understood that Archidamus had been true to him, in using all his interests with his father; and Sphodrias's friend ventured to be forward in his defence. The truth is, that Agesilaus was excessively fond of his children; and it is to him the story belongs, that when they were little ones, he used to make a horse of a stick, and ride with them; and being caught at this sport by a friend, he desired him not to mention it till he himself were the father of children.

Meanwhile, Sphodrias being acquitted, the Athenians betook themselves to arms, and Agesilaus fell into disgrace with the people; since to gratify the whims of a boy he had been willing to pervert justice, and make the city accessory to the crimes of private men, whose most unjustifiable actions had broken the peace of Greece. He also found his colleague, Cleombrotus, little inclined to the Theban war; so that it became necessary for him to waive the privilege of his age, which he before had claimed, and to lead the army himself into Boeotia; which he did with variety of success, sometimes conquering, and sometimes conquered; insomuch that receiving a wound in a battle, he was reproached by Antalcidas, that the Thebans had paid him well for the lessons he had given them in fighting. And, indeed, they were now grown far better soldiers than ever they had been, being so continually kept in training by the frequency of the Lacedaemonian expeditions against them. Out of the foresight of which it was that anciently Lycurgus, in three several laws, forbade them to make any wars with the same nation, as this would be to instruct their enemies in the art of it. Meanwhile, the allies of Sparta were not a little discontented at Agesilaus, because this war was commenced not upon any fair public ground of quarrel, but merely out of his private hatred to the Thebans; and they complained with indignation that they, being the majority of the army, should from year to year be thus exposed to danger and hardship here and there, at

the will of a few persons. It was at this time, we are told, that Agesilaus, to obviate the objection, devised this expedient, to show the allies were not the greater number. He gave orders that all the allies, of whatever country, should sit down promiscuously on one side, and all the Lacedaemonians on the other: which being done, he commanded a herald to proclaim, that all the potters of both divisions should stand out; then all the blacksmiths; then all the masons; next the carpenters; and so he went through all the handicrafts. By this time almost all the allies were risen, but of the Lacedaemonians not a man, they being by law forbidden to learn any mechanical business; and now Agesilaus laughed and said, "You see my friends, how many more soldiers we send out than you do."

When he brought back his army from Boeotia through Megara, as he was going up to the magistrate's office in the Acropolis, he was suddenly seized with pain and cramp in his sound leg, and great swelling and inflammation ensued. He was treated by a Syracusan physician, who let him blood below the ankle; this soon eased his pain, but then the blood could not be stopped, till the loss of it brought on fainting and swooning; at length, with much trouble, he stopped it. Agesilaus was carried home to Sparta in a very weak condition, and did not recover strength enough to appear in the field for a long time after.

Meanwhile, the Spartan fortune was but ill; they received many losses both by sea and land; but the greatest was that at Tegyrae, when for the first time they were beaten by the Thebans in a set battle.

All the Greeks were, accordingly, disposed to a general peace, and to that end ambassadors came to Sparta. Among these was Epaminondas, the Theban, famous at that time for his philosophy and learning, but he had not yet given proof of his capacity as a general. He, seeing all the others crouch to Agesilaus, and court favour with him, alone maintained the dignity of an ambassador, and with that freedom that became his character made a speech in behalf not of Thebes only, from whence he came, but of all Greece, remonstrating that Sparta alone grew great by war, to the distress and suffering of all her neighbours. He urged that a peace should be made upon just and equal terms, such as alone would be a lasting one, which could not otherwise be done than by reducing all to equality. Agesilaus, perceiving all the other Greeks to give much attention to this discourse, and to be pleased with it, presently asked him whether he thought it a part of this justice and equality that the Boeotian towns should enjoy their independence. Epaminondas instantly and without wavering asked him in return, whether he thought it just and equal that the Laconian towns should enjoy theirs. Agesilaus started from his seat and bade him once for all speak out and say whether or not Boeotia should be independent. And when Epaminondas replied once again with the same inquiry, whether Laconia should be so, Agesilaus was so enraged that, availing himself of the pretext, he immediately struck the name of the Thebans out of the league, and declared war against them. With the rest of the Greeks he made a peace, and dismissed them with this saying, that what could be peaceably adjusted, should; what was otherwise incurable, must be committed to the success of war, it being a thing of too great difficulty to provide for all things by treaty.

The Ephors upon this despatched their orders to Cleombrotus, who was at that time in Phocis, to march directly into Boeotia, and at the same time sent to their allies for aid. The confederates were very tardy in their business and unwilling to engage, but as yet they feared the Spartans too much to dare to refuse. And although many portents and prodigies of ill-presage, which I have mentioned in the

life of Epaminondas, had appeared, and though Prothous, the Laconian, did all he could to hinder it, yet Agesilaus would needs go forward, and prevailed so, that the war was decreed. He thought the present juncture of affairs very advantageous for their revenge, the rest of Greece being wholly free, and the Thebans excluded from the peace. But that this war was undertaken more upon passion than judgment the event may prove; for the treaty was finished but the fourteenth of Scirophorion, and the Lacedaemonians received their great overthrow at Leuctra on the fifth of Hecatombaeon, within twenty days. There fell at that time a thousand Spartans, and Cleombrotus their king, and around him the bravest men of the nation; particularly the beautiful youth, Cleonymus, the son of Sphodrias, who was thrice struck down at the feet of the king, and as often rose, but was slain at the last.

This unexpected blow, which fell so heavy upon the Lacedaemonians, brought greater glory to Thebes than ever was acquired by any other of the Grecian republics in their civil wars against each other. The behaviour, notwithstanding, of the Spartans, though beaten, was as great, and as highly to be admired, as that of the Thebans. And indeed, if, as Xenophon says, in conversation good men even in their sports and at their wine let fall many sayings that are worth the preserving, how much more worthy to be recorded is an exemplary constancy of mind, as shown both in the words and in the acts of brave men when they are pressed by adverse fortune! It happened that the Spartans were celebrating a solemn feast, at which many strangers were present from other countries, and the town full of them, when this news of the overthrow came. It was the gymnopaediae, and the boys were dancing in the theatre, when the messengers arrived from Leuctra. The Ephors, though they were sufficiently aware that this blow had ruined the Spartan power, and that their primacy over the rest of Greece was gone for ever, yet gave orders that the dances should not break off, nor any of the celebration of the festival abate; but privately sending the names of the slain to each family, out of which they were lost, they continued the public spectacles. The next morning when they had full intelligence concerning it, and everybody knew who were slain, and who survived, the fathers, relatives, and friends of the slain came out rejoicing in the market-place, saluting each other with a kind of exultation; on the contrary, the fathers of the survivors hid themselves at home among the women. If necessity drove any of them abroad they went very dejectedly, with downcast looks and sorrowful countenances. The women outdid the men in it; those whose sons were slain openly rejoicing, cheerfully making visits to one another, and meeting triumphantly in the temples; they who expected their children home being very silent and much troubled.

But the people in general, when their allies now began to desert them, and Epaminondas, in all the confidence of victory, was expected with an invading army in Peloponnesus, began to think again of Agesilaus's lameness, and to entertain feelings of religious fear and despondency, as if their having rejected the sound-footed, and having chosen the halting king, which the oracle had specially warned them against, was the occasion of all their distresses. Yet the regard they had to the merit and reputation of Agesilaus so far stilled this murmuring of the people that, notwithstanding it, they intrusted themselves to him in this distress, as the only man that was fit to heal the public malady, the arbiter of all their difficulties, whether relating to the affairs of war or peace. One great one was then before them concerning the runaways (as their name is for them) that had fled out of the battle, who being many and powerful, it was feared that they might make some commotion in the republic, to prevent the execution of the law upon them for their

cowardice. The law in that case was very severe; for they were not only to be debarred from all honours, but also it was a disgrace to intermarry with them; whoever met any of them in the streets might beat him if he chose, nor was it lawful for him to resist; they, in the meanwhile, were obliged to go about unwashed and meanly dressed, with their clothes patched with divers colours, and to wear their beards half shaved, half unshaven. To execute so rigid a law as this, in a case where the offenders were so many, and many of them of such distinction, and that in a time when the commonwealth wanted soldiers so much as then it did, was of dangerous consequence. Therefore they chose Agesilaus as a sort of new lawgiver for the occasion. But he, without adding to or diminishing from or any way changing the law, came out into the public assembly, and said that the law should sleep for to-day, but from this day forth be vigorously executed. By this means he at once preserved the law from abrogation and the citizens from infamy; and that he might alleviate the despondency and self-distrust of the young men, he made an inroad into Arcadia, where, carefully avoiding all fighting, he contended himself with spoiling the territory, and taking a small town belonging to the Mantineans, thus reviving the hearts of the people, letting them see that they were not everywhere unsuccessful.

Epaminondas now invaded Laconia with an army of forty thousand, besides light-armed men and others that followed the camp only for plunder, so that in all they were at least seventy thousand. It was now six hundred years since the Dorians had possessed Laconia, and in all that time the face of an enemy had not been seen within their territories, no man daring to invade them; but now they made their entrance, and burnt and plundered without resistance the hitherto untouched and sacred territory up to Eurotas and the very suburbs of Sparta; for Agesilaus would not permit them to encounter so impetuous a torrent, as Theopompus calls it, of war. He contented himself with fortifying the chief parts of the city, and with placing guards in convenient places, enduring meanwhile the taunts of the Thebans, who reproached him by name as the kindler of the war, and the author of all that mischief to his country, bidding him defend himself if he could. But this was not all; he was equally disturbed at home with the tumults of the city, the outcries and running about of the old men, who were enraged at their present condition, and the women yet worse, out of their senses with the clamours, and the fires of the enemy in the field. He was also himself afflicted by the sense of his lost glory; who, having come to the throne of Sparta when it was in its most flourishing and powerful condition, now lived to see it laid low in esteem, and all its great vaunts cut down, even that which he himself had been accustomed to use, that the women of Sparta had never seen the smoke of the enemy's fire. As it is said, also, that when Antalcidas, once being in dispute with an Athenian about the valour of the two nations, the Athenian boasted that they had often driven the Spartans from the river Cephissus, "Yes," said Antalcidas, "but we never had occasion to drive you from Eurotas." And a common Spartan of less note, being in company with an Argive, who was bragging how many Spartans lay buried in the fields of Argos, replied, "None of you are buried in the country of Laconia." Yet now the case was so altered that Antalcidas, being one of the Ephors, out of fear sent away his children privately to the island of Cythera.

When the enemy essayed to get over the river, and thence to attack the town, Agesilaus, abandoning the rest, betook himself to the high places and strongholds of it. But it happened Eurotas at that time was swollen to a great height with snow that had fallen and made the passage very difficult to the Thebans, not only by its depth, but much

more by its extreme coldness. Whilst this was doing, Epaminondas was seen in the front of the phalanx, and was pointed out to Agesilaus, who looked long at him, and said but these words, "O bold man!" But when he came to the city, and would have fain attempted something within the limits of it that might raise him a trophy there, he could not tempt Agesilaus out of his hold, but was forced to march off again, wasting the country as he went.

Meanwhile, a body of long discontented and bad citizens, about two hundred in number, having got into a strong part of the town called the Issorion, where the temple of Diana stands, seized and garrisoned it. The Spartans would have fallen upon them instantly; but Agesilaus, not knowing how far the sedition might reach, bade them forbear, and going himself in his ordinary dress, with but one servant, when he came near the rebels, called out, and told them that they mistook their orders; this was not the right place; they were to go, one part of them thither, showing them another place in the city, and part to another, which he also showed. The conspirators gladly heard this, thinking themselves unsuspected of treason, and readily went off to the places which he showed them. Whereupon Agesilaus placed in their room a guard of his own; and of the conspirators he apprehended fifteen, and put them to death in the night. But after this a much more dangerous conspiracy was discovered of Spartan citizens, who had privately met in each other's houses, plotting a revolution. These were men whom it was equally dangerous to prosecute publicly according to law and to connive at. Agesilaus took council with the Ephors, and put these also to death privately without process; a thing never before known in the case of any born Spartan.

At this time, also, many of the helots and country people, who were in the army, ran away to the enemy, which was a matter of great consternation to the city. He therefore caused some officers of his, every morning, before day, to search the quarters of the soldiers, and where any man was gone, to hide his arms, that so the greatness of the number might not appear.

Historians differ about the cause of the Thebans' departure from Sparta. Some say the winter forced them; as also that the Arcadian soldiers disbanding, made it necessary for the rest to retire. Others say that they stayed there three months, till they had laid the whole country waste. Theopompus is the only author who says that when the Boeotian generals had already resolved upon the retreat, Phrixus, the Spartan, came to them, and offered them from Agesilaus ten talents to be gone, so hiring them to do what they were already doing of their own accord. How he alone should come to be aware of this I know not; only in this all authors agree, that the saving of Sparta from ruin was wholly due to the wisdom of Agesilaus, who in this extremity of affairs quitted all his ambition and his haughtiness, and resolved to play a saving game. But all his wisdom and courage was not sufficient to recover the glory of it, and to raise it to its ancient greatness. For as we see in human bodies, long used to a very strict and too exquisitely regular diet, any single great disorder is usually fatal; so here one stroke overthrew the whole state's long prosperity. Nor can we be surprised at this. Lycurgus had formed a polity admirably designed for the peace, harmony, and virtuous life of the citizens; and their fall came from their assuming foreign dominion and arbitrary sway, things wholly undesirable, in the judgment of Lycurgus, for a well-conducted and happy state.

Agesilaus being now in years, gave over all military employments; but his son, Archidamus, having received help from Dionysius of Sicily, gave a great defeat to the Arcadians, in the fight known by

the name of the Tearless Battle, in which there was a great slaughter of the enemy without the loss of one Spartan. Yet this victory, more than anything else, discovered the present weakness of Sparta; for heretofore victory was esteemed so usual a thing with them that for their greatest successes they merely sacrificed a cock to the gods. The soldiers never vaunted, nor did the citizens display any great joy at the news; even when the great victory, described by Thucydides, was obtained at Mantinea, the messenger that brought the news had no other reward than a piece of meat, sent by the magistrates from the common table. But at the news of this Arcadian victory they were not able to contain themselves; Agesilaus went out in procession with tears of joy in his eyes to meet and embrace his son, and all the magistrates and public officers attended him. The old men and the women marched out as far as the river Eurotas, lifting up their hands, and thanking the gods that Sparta was now cleared again of the disgrace and indignity that had befallen her, and once more saw the light of day. Since before, they tell us, the Spartan men, out of shame at their disasters, did not dare so much as to look their wives in the face.

When Epaminondas restored Messene, and recalled from all quarters the ancient citizens to inhabit it, they were not able to obstruct the design, being not in condition of appearing in the field against them. But it went greatly against Agesilaus in the minds of his countrymen, when they found so large a territory, equal to their own in compass, and for fertility the richest of all Greece, which they had enjoyed so long, taken from them in his reign. Therefore it was that the king broke off treaty with the Thebans when they offered him peace, rather than set his hand to the passing away of that country, though it was already taken from him. Which point of honour had like to have cost him dear; for not long after he was overreached by a stratagem, which had almost amounted to the loss of Sparta. For when the Mantineans again revolted from Thebes to Sparta, and Epaminondas understood that Agesilaus was come to their assistance with a powerful army, he privately in the night quitted his quarters of Tegea, and, unknown to the Mantineans, passing by Agesilaus, marched toward Sparta, insomuch that he failed very little of taking it empty and unarmed.

Agesilaus had intelligence sent him by Euthynus, the Thespian, as Callisthenes says, but Xenophon says by a Cretan; and immediately despatched a horseman to Lacedaemon to apprise them of it, and to let them know that he was hastening to them. Shortly after his arrival the Thebans crossed the Eurotas. They made an assault upon the town, and were received by Agesilaus with great courage, and with exertions beyond what was to be expected at his years. For he did not now fight with that caution and cunning which he formerly made use of, but put all upon a desperate push; which, though not his usual method, succeeded so well, that he rescued the city out of the very hands of Epaminondas, and forced him to retire, and, at the erection of a trophy, was able, in the presence of their wives and children, to declare that the Lacedaemonians had nobly paid their debt to their country, and particularly his son Archidamus, who had that day made himself illustrious, both by his courage and agility of body, rapidly passing about by the short lanes to every endangered point, and everywhere maintaining the town against the enemy with but few to help him.

Isadas, however, the son of Phoebidas, must have been, I think, the admiration of the enemy as well as of his friends. He was a youth of remarkable beauty and stature, in the very flower of the most attractive time of life, when the boy is just rising into the man. He had no arms upon him and scarcely clothes; he had just anointed

himself at home, when, upon the alarm, without further awaiting, in that undress, he snatched a spear in one hand and a sword in the other, and broke his way through the combatants to the enemies, striking at all he met. He received no wound, whether it were that a special divine care rewarded his valour with an extraordinary protection, or whether his shape being so large and beautiful, and his dress so unusual, they thought him more than a man. The Ephors gave him a garland; but as soon as they had done so, they fined him a thousand drachmas for going out to battle unarmed.

A few days after this there was another battle fought near Mantinea, in which Epaminondas, having routed the van of the Lacedaemonians, was eager in the pursuit of them, when Anticrates, the Laconian, wounded him with a spear, says Dioscorides; but the Spartans to this day call the posterity of this Anticrates, swordsmen, because he wounded Epaminondas with a sword. They so dreaded Epaminondas when living, that the slayer of him was embraced and admired by all; they decreed honours and gifts to him, and an exemption from taxes to his posterity, a privilege enjoyed at this day by Callicrates, one of his descendants.

Epaminondas being slain, there was a general peace again concluded, from which Agesilaus's party excluded the Messenians, as men that had no city, and therefore would not let them swear to the league; to which when the rest of the Greeks admitted them, the Lacedaemonians broke off, and continued the war alone, in hopes of subduing the Messenians. In this Agesilaus was esteemed a stubborn and headstrong man, and insatiable of war, who took such pains to undermine the general peace, and to protract the war at a time when he had not money to carry it on with, but was forced to borrow of his friends and raise subscriptions, with much difficulty, while the city, above all things, needed repose. And all this to recover the one poor town of Messene, after he had lost so great an empire both by sea and land, as the Spartans were possessed of when he began to reign.

But it added still more to his ill-repute when he put himself into the service of Tachos, the Egyptian. They thought it too unworthy of a man of his high station, who was then looked upon as the first commander in all Greece, who had filled all countries with his renown, to let himself out to hire to a barbarian, an Egyptian rebel (for Tachos was no better), and to fight for pay, as captain only of a band of mercenaries. If, they said, at those years of eighty and odd, after his body had been worn out with age, and enfeebled with wounds, he had resumed that noble undertaking, the liberation of the Greeks from Persia, it had been worthy of some reproof. To make an action honourable, it ought to be agreeable to the age and other circumstances of the person; since it is circumstance and proper measure that give an action its character, and make it either good or bad. But Agesilaus valued not other men's discourses; he thought no public employment dishonourable; the ignoblest thing in his esteem was for a man to sit idle and useless at home, waiting for his death to come and take him. The money, therefore, that he received from Tachos, he laid out in raising men, with whom, having filled his ships, he took also thirty Spartan counsellors with him, as formerly he had done in his Asiatic expedition, and set sail for Egypt.

As soon as he arrived in Egypt, all the great officers of the kingdom came to pay their compliments to him at his landing. His reputation, being so great, had raised the expectation of the whole country, and crowds flocked in to see him; but when they found, instead of the splendid prince whom they looked for, a little old man of contemptible appearance, without ceremony lying down upon the grass, in coarse and threadbare clothes, they fell into laughter and scorn of him, crying out that the old proverb was now made good,

"The mountain had brought forth a mouse." They were yet more astonished at his stupidity, as they thought it, who, when presents were made him of all sorts of provisions, took only the meal, the calves, and the geese, but rejected the sweetmeats, the confections, and perfumes: and when they urged him to the acceptance of them, took them and gave them to the helots in his army. Yet he was taken, Theophrastus tells us, with the garlands they made of the papyrus, because of their simplicity, and when he returned home, he demanded one of the king, which he carried with him.

When he joined with Tachos, he found his expectation of being general-in-chief disappointed. Tachos reserved that place for himself, making Agesilaus only captain of the mercenaries, and Chabrias, the Athenian, commander of the fleet. This was the first occasion of his discontent, but there followed others; he was compelled daily to submit to the insolence and vanity of this Egyptian, and was at length forced to attend him into Phoenicia, in a condition much below his character and dignity, which he bore and put up with for a time, till he had opportunity of showing his feelings. It was afforded him by Nectanabis, the cousin of Tachos, who commanded a large force under him, and shortly after deserted him, and was proclaimed king by the Egyptians. This man invited Agesilaus to join his party, and the like he did to Chabrias, offering great rewards to both. Tachos, suspecting it, immediately applied himself both to Agesilaus and Chabrias, with great humility beseeching their continuance in his friendship. Chabrias consented to it, and did what he could by persuasion and good words to keep Agesilaus with them. But he gave this short reply, "You, O Chabrias, came hither a volunteer, and may go and stay as you see cause; but I am the servant of Sparta, appointed to head the Egyptians, and therefore I cannot fight against those to whom I was sent as a friend, unless I am commanded to do so by my country." This being said, he despatched messengers to Sparta, who were sufficiently supplied with matter both for dispraise of Tachos and commendation of Nectanabis. The two Egyptians also sent their ambassadors to Lacedaemon, the one to claim continuance of the league already made, the other to make great offers for the breaking of it, and making a new one. The Spartans having heard both sides, gave in their public answer, that they referred the whole matter to Agesilaus; but privately wrote to him to act as he should find it best for the profit of the commonwealth. Upon receipt of his orders, he at once changed sides, carrying all the mercenaries with him to Nectanabis, covering, with the plausible pretence of acting for the benefit of his country, a most questionable piece of conduct, which, stripped of that disguise, in real truth was no better than downright treachery. But the Lacedaemonians, who make it their first principle of action to serve their country's interest, know not anything to be just or unjust by any measure but that.

Tachos, being thus deserted by the mercenaries, fled for it; upon which a new king of the Mendesian province was proclaimed his successor, and came against Nectanabis with an army of one hundred thousand men. Nectanabis, in his talk with Agesilaus, professed to despise them as newly raised men, who, though many in number, were of no skill in war being most of them mechanics and tradesmen, never bred to war. To whom Agesilaus answered, that he did not fear their numbers, but did fear their ignorance, which gave no room for employing stratagem against them. Stratagem only avails with men who are alive to suspicion, and, expecting to be assailed, expose themselves by their attempts at defence; but one who has no thought or expectation of anything, gives as little opportunity to the enemy as he who stands stock-still does to a wrestler. The Mendesian was not

wanting in solicitations of Agesilaus, insomuch that Nectanabis grew jealous. But when Agesilaus advised to fight the enemy at once, saying it was folly to protract the war and rely on time, in a contest with men who had no experience in fighting battles, but with their great numbers might be able to surround them, and cut off their communications by entrenchments, and anticipate them in many matters of advantage, this altogether confirmed him in his fears and suspicions. He took quite the contrary course, and retreated into a large and strongly fortified town. Agesilaus, finding himself mistrusted, took it very ill, and was full of indignation, yet was ashamed to change sides back again, or to go away without effecting anything, so that he was forced to follow Nectanabis into the town.

When the enemy came up, and began to draw lines about the town, and to entrench, the Egyptian now resolved upon a battle out of fear of a siege. And the Greeks were eager for it, provisions growing already scarce in the town. When Agesilaus opposed it, the Egyptians then suspected him much more, publicly calling him the betrayer of the king. But Agesilaus, being now satisfied within himself, bore these reproaches patiently, and followed the design which he had laid, of over-reaching the enemy, which was this.

The enemy were forming a deep ditch and high wall, resolving to shut up the garrison and starve it. When the ditch was brought almost quite round and the two ends had all but met, he took the advantage of the night and armed all his Greeks. Then going to the Egyptian, "This, young man, is your opportunity," said he, "of saving yourself, which I all this while durst not announce, lest discovery should prevent it; but now the enemy has, at his own cost, and the pains and labour of his own men, provided for our security. As much of this wall as is built will prevent them from surrounding us with their multitude, the gap yet left will be sufficient for us to sally out by; now play the man, and follow the example the Greeks will give you, and by fighting valiantly save yourself and your army; their front will not be able to stand against us, and their rear we are sufficiently secured from by a wall of their own making."

Nectanabis, admiring the sagacity of Agesilaus, immediately placed himself in the middle of the Greek troops, and fought with them; and upon the first charge soon routed the enemy. Agesilaus having now gained credit with the king, proceeded to use, like a trick in wrestling, the same stratagem over again. He sometimes pretended a retreat, at other times advanced to attack their flanks, and by this means at last drew them into a place enclosed between two ditches that were very deep and full of water. When he had them at this advantage, he soon charged them, drawing up the front of his battle equal to the space between the two ditches, so that they had no way of surrounding him, being enclosed themselves on both sides. They made but little resistance; many fell, others fled and were dispersed.

Nectanabis, being thus settled and fixed in his kingdom, with much kindness and affection invited Agesilaus to spend his winter in Egypt, but he made haste home to assist in wars of his own country, which was, he knew, in want of money, and forced to hire mercenaries, whilst their own men were fighting abroad. The king, therefore, dismissed him very honourably, and among other gifts presented him with two hundred and thirty talents of silver toward the charge of the war. But the weather being tempestuous, his ships kept inshore, and passing along the coast of Africa he reached an uninhabited spot called the Port of Menelaus, and here, when his ships were just upon landing, he expired, being eighty-four years old, and having reigned in Lacedaemon forty-one. Thirty of which years he passed with the reputation of being the greatest and most powerful man of all Greece, and was looked upon as, in a manner, general and king of it,

until the battle of Leuctra. It was the custom of the Spartans to bury their common dead in the place where they died, whatsoever country it was, but their kings they carried home. The followers of Agesilaus, for want of honey, enclosed his body in wax, and so conveyed him to Lacedaemon.

His son, Archidamus, succeeded him on his throne; so did his posterity successively to Agis, the fifth from Agesilaus; who was slain by Leonidas while attempting to restore the ancient discipline of Sparta.

THE END

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