

CORNELIUS NEPOS.

LIVES OF EMINENT COMMANDERS.

PREFACE.

I do not doubt that there will be many,* Atticus, who will think this kind of writing† trifling in its nature, and not sufficiently adapted to the characters of eminent men, when they shall find it related who taught Epaminondas music, or see it numbered among his accomplishments, that he danced gracefully, and played skilfully on the flutes‡. But these will be such, for the most part, as, being unacquainted with Greek literature, will think nothing right but what agrees with their own customs.

If these readers will but understand that the same things are not becoming or unbecoming among all people, but that every thing is judged by the usages of men's forefathers, they will not wonder that we, in setting forth the excellencies of the Greeks, have had regard to their manners. For to Cimon, an eminent man among the Athenians, it was thought no disgrace to have his half-sister,§ by the father's side, in marriage, as his countrymen followed the same practice; but such a union, according to the order of things among us, is deemed unlawful.

* *Plerosque.*] For *plurimos*. So, a little below, *pleraque—sunt decora*, for *plurima*.

† *Hoc genus scripturæ.*] These brief memoirs of eminent men, interspersed with allusions to national habits and peculiarities.

‡ *Tibiis cantasse.*] The plural, *flutes*, is used, because the Greeks, and the Romans, who adopted the practice from them, played on different kinds of flutes or pipes, *equal* and *unequal*, *right* and *left-handed*, and often on two at once. See Colman's preface to his translation of Terence; Smith's Classical Dict. art. *Tibia*; Life of Epaminondas, c. 2.

§ *Sororem germanam.*] A half-sister by the mother's side was called *soror uterina*. Her name was Elpinice. See the Life of Cimon.

In Greece it is considered an honour to young men to have as many lovers* as possible. At Lacedæmon there is no widow † so noble that will not go upon the stage, if engaged for a certain sum. Through the whole of Greece it was accounted a great glory to be proclaimed a conqueror at Olympia; while to appear upon the stage, and become a spectacle to the public, ‡

* *Amatores.*] See the Life of Alcibiades, c. 2. *Apud Græcos*, says Cic. de Rep. fragm. lib. iv., *opprobrio fuit adolescentibus, si amatores non haberent.* See Maximus Tyrius, Dissert. viii.—xi.; Potter's Antiq. of Greece, b. iv. c. 9.

+ *Nulla—vidua—quæ non ad scenam eat mercede conducta.*] This is not said with reference to that period in the history of Sparta when it adhered to the laws of Lycurgus, under which it was not allowed to witness either comedy or tragedy, as Plutarch in his *Instituta Laconica* shows, but to the time when the ancient discipline and austerity were trodden under foot, and the state sunk into luxury and effeminacy; a condition of things which took place under Leonidas and Agis, and chiefly, indeed, through the licentiousness of the women, if we may credit what Plutarch says in his life of Agis. From the earliest times, however, according to Aristotle, *Polit.* ii. 9, the Spartan women were inclined to live very intemperately and luxuriously, and Lycurgus endeavoured to subject them to laws, but was obliged to desist, through the opposition which they made. Hence Plato, also, de Legg. lib. ii., alludes to the ἀνεσις, laxity, of the Spartan women.—*Buchner.* But with all such explanations the passage is still difficult and unsatisfactory. Why is a widow particularly specified? No passage in any ancient author has been found to support this observation of Nepos, if it be his. What Aristotle says in disparagement of the Lacedæmonian women is pretty well refuted, as Van Staveren observes, by Plutarch in his life of Lycurgus, c. 14. Besides, there were no female actors among the Greeks. For *ad scenam* Freinshemius (apud Bœcler. ad h. l.) proposes to read *ad cœnam*, which Gesner approves; Heusinger conjectures *ad lenam*. The conjecture of Wihof, *ad encaniam*, compared with Hor. A. P. 232, *Festivæ matrona moveri jussa diebus*, might appear in some degree plausible, were not ἑγκαίνα a word resting on scarcely any other authority than that of the Septuagint and ecclesiastical writers; for though it occurs in Quintilian, vii. 2, the passage is scarcely intelligible, and the reading has generally been thought unsound. Gœrenz, ad Cic. de Fin. ii. 20, would read *quæ non ad cœnam eat mercede conductam*, i. e. to a supper or banquet furnished by a general contribution of the guests. But none of these critics cite any authority in support of their emendations. As to the last, it would be casting no dishonour upon a noble widow to say that she went to a *cœna conducta*, for such *cœna* might be among those of her own class. Nor is the applicability of *mercede* in such a phrase quite certain.

‡ *In scenam prodire et populo esse spectaculo, &c.*] Actors are here confounded with the rhapsodists, or reciters of poetry. Demosthenes,

was a dishonour to no one in that nation; but all these practices are, with us, deemed partly infamous, partly mean, and at variance with respectability. On the other hand, many things in our habits are decorous, which are by them considered unbecoming; for what Roman is ashamed to bring his wife to a feast, or whose consort does not occupy the best room in the house, and live in the midst of company? But in Greece the case is far otherwise; for a wife is neither admitted to a feast, except among relations, nor does she sit anywhere but in the innermost apartment of the house,* which is called the *gynaecitis*, and into which nobody goes who is not connected with her by near relationship.

But, both the size of my intended volume, and my haste to relate what I have undertaken, prevent me from saying more on this point. We will therefore proceed to our subject, and relate in this book the lives of eminent commanders.

de Coronâ, upbraids Æschines as being an actor.—*Rinckii Prolegom. in Æm. Prob.* p. xlii.

* This is not true of the Spartan women, for they, who boasted that they alone were the mothers of men, led a life of less restraint. Besides, by the laws of Lycurgus, the young women took part in the public exercises.—*Rinck. Prolegom. ibid.*

I. MILTIADES.

Miltiades leads out a colony to the Chersonese; is mocked by the people of Lemnos, I.—Makes himself master of the Chersonese; takes Lemnos and the Cyclades, II.—Is appointed by Darius, when he was making war on Scythia, to guard the bridge over the Ister; suggests a plan for delivering Greece from the Persians; is opposed by Histiaeus, III.—Exhorts his countrymen to meet Darius in the field, IV.—Defeats Darius before the arrival of the allies, V.—How he is rewarded, VI.—Breaks off the siege of Paros, is condemned, and dies in prison, VII.—True cause of his condemnatio VIII.

I. At the time when Miltiades, the son of Cimon, an Athenian, was eminent above all his countrymen, both for the antiquity of his family, the glory of his forefathers, and his own good conduct,* and was of such an age that his fellow citizens might not only hope well of him, but assure themselves that he would be such as they found him when he became known, it chanced that the Athenians wished to send colonists to the Chersonese.† The number of the party being great, and many applying for a share in the expedition, some chosen from among them were sent to Delphi,‡ to consult Apollo what leader they should take in preference to any other; for the Thracians at the time had possession of those parts, with whom they would be obliged to contend in war. The Pythia expressly directed them, when they put the question, to take Miltiades as their

* *Modestia.*] “Good conduct,” or “prudence,” or “knowledge how to act,” seems to be the true sense of the word. “Itaque, ut eandem [*εβραζιαν*] nos modestiam appellemus, sic definitur à Stoicis, ut modestia sit scientia earum rerum, quæ agentur aut dicuntur, suo loco collocandarum: . . . scientia—opportunitatis idoneorum ad agendum temporum. Sed potest esse eadem *prudentiæ* definitio”—Cic de Off. i. 40.

† The Thracian Chersonese. But it is to be observed that the author, in this biography, confounds Miltiades, the son of Cimon, with Miltiades the elder, the son of Cypselus. It was the latter who settled the colony in the Thracian Chersonese, and left the sovereignty of it at his death to Stesagoras, the son of his half-brother Cimon, and brother to Miltiades the younger, who became governor of it on the death of Stesagoras, being sent out by Pisistratus for that purpose.

‡ *Ex his delecti Delphos deliberatum missi sunt, qui consulerent Apollinem, &c.*] Either *deliberatum*, or *qui consulerent Apollinem*, might be omitted as superfluous. Bos retains both in his text, but suspects the latter.

commander, as, if they did so, their undertakings would be successful. Upon this answer from the oracle, Miltiades set out for the Chersonese with a fleet, accompanied by a chosen body of men,† and touched at Lemnos, when, wishing to reduce the people of the island under the power of the Athenians, and requesting the Lemnians to surrender of their own accord, they, in mockery, replied that “they would do so, whenever he, leaving home with a fleet, should reach Lemnos by the aid of the wind Aquilo;” for this wind, rising from the north, is contrary to those setting out from Athens. Miltiades, having no time for delay, directed his course to the quarter to which he was bound, and arrived at the Chersonese.

II. Having there, in a short time, scattered the forces of the barbarians, and made himself master of all the territory that he had desired, he strengthened suitable places with fortresses,* settled the multitude, which he had brought with him, in the country, and enriched them by frequent excursions. Nor was he less aided, in this proceeding, by good conduct than by good fortune, for after he had, by the valour of his men, routed the troops of the enemy, he settled affairs with the greatest equity, and resolved upon residing in the country himself. He held, indeed, among the inhabitants, the authority of a king, though he wanted the name; and he did not attain this influence more by his power than by his justice. Nor did he the less, on this account, perform his duty to the Athenians, from whom he had come. From these circumstances it happened that he held his office in perpetuity, not less with the consent of those who had sent him, than of those with whom he had gone thither.

Having settled the affairs of the Chersonese in this manner, he returned to Lemnos, and called on the people to deliver up their city to him according to their promise; for they had said that when he, starting from home, should reach their country by the aid of the north wind, they would surrender themselves; “and he had now a home,” he told them, “in the Chersonese.” The Carians, who then inhabited Lemnos,

* *Cum defectâ manu*] A body independent of those who were going to settle in the colony.

† *Loca castellis idonea communit.*] A late editor absurdly takes *castellis* for a dative. Tacit. Ann. iii. 74: *Castella et munitiones idoneis locis imponens.*

though the event had fallen out contrary to their expectation, yet being influenced, not by the words, but by the good fortune of their adversaries, did not venture to resist, but withdrew out of the island. With like success he reduced some other islands, which are called the Cyclades, under the power of the Athenians.

III. About the same period, Darius, king of Persia, resolved upon transporting his army from Asia into Europe, and making war upon the Scythians. He constructed a bridge over the river Ister, by which he might lead across his forces. Of this bridge he left as guardians, during his absence,* the chiefs† whom he had brought with him from Ionia and Æolia, and to whom he had given the sovereignty of their respective cities; for he thought that he should most easily keep under his power such of the inhabitants of Asia as spoke Greek, if he gave their towns to be held by his friends, to whom, if he should be crushed,‡ no hope of safety would be left. Among the number of those, to whom the care of the bridge was then entrusted, was Miltiades.

As several messengers brought word that Darius was unsuccessful in his enterprise, and was hard pressed by the Scythians, Miltiades, in consequence, exhorted the guardians of the bridge not to lose an opportunity, presented them by fortune, of securing the liberty of Greece; for if Darius should be destroyed, together with the army that he had taken with him, not only Europe would be safe, but also those who, being Greeks by birth, inhabited Asia, would be freed from the dominion of the Persians, and from all danger. "This," he said, "might easily be accomplished, for, if the bridge were broken down, the king would perish in a few days, either by the sword of the enemy, or by famine." After most of them had assented to this proposal, Histiaeus of Miletus, prevented the design from being executed; saying that "the same course would not be expedient for those who held sovereign command, as for the multitude, since their authority depended on the power of Darius, and,

* *Dum ipse abesset*] He fixed, according to Herodotus, a term of sixty days for his absence, on the expiration of which the guardians of the bridge might depart.

† *Principes*.] The tyrants or sovereigns of the Greek cities, who held their power under the protection of Darius.

‡ *Se oppresso*.] If he should be crushed, and the Persian empire consequently overthrown, they would be left without a protector.

if he were cut off, they would be deprived of their governments, and suffer punishment at the hands of their subjects;* and that he himself, therefore, was so far from agreeing in opinion with the rest, that he thought nothing more advantageous for them than that the kingdom of the Persians should be upheld." As most went over to this opinion, Miltiades, not doubting that his proposal, since so many were acquainted with it, would come to the ears of the king, quitted the Chersonese, and went again to reside at Athens. His suggestion, though it did not take effect, is yet highly to be commended, as he showed himself a greater friend to the general liberty than to his own power.

IV. Darius, when he had returned from Asia into Europe, prepared, at the exhortation of his friends, in order to reduce Greece under his dominion, a fleet of five hundred ships, and appointed Datis and Artaphernes to the command of it, to whom he assigned two hundred thousand infantry and ten thousand cavalry; alleging as a reason for his enterprise, that he was an enemy to the Athenians, because, with their aid, the Ionians had stormed Sardis† and put his garrison to death. These generals of the king, having brought up their fleet to Eubœa, soon took Eretria, carried off all the citizens of the place,‡ and sent them into Asia to the king. They then went to Attica, and drew up their forces in the plain of Marathon, which is distant from the city of Athens about ten miles. The Athenians, though alarmed at this sudden descent, so near and so menacing, sought assistance nowhere but from the Spartans, and despatched Phidippides, a courier of the class called *hemerodromoi*,§ to Lacedæmon, to acquaint them how speedy assistance they needed. At home,

* *Civibus suis pœnas daturus.*] They would be called to account for having made themselves tyrants.

† The Ionians had rebelled against Persia, to which they had been subject, and, with some Athenians and Eretrians, had burned Sardis. This is alleged among the frivolous reasons for the Persian war. See Herod. v. 101—105; Perizon. ad Ælian. V. H. xii. 53; Fabric. ad Oros. ii. 8; and Plut. Vit. Aristid.—*Van Staveren.*

‡ *Omnes ejus gentis cives.*] That is, all the people of Eretria in Eubœa. They were carried to Susa, and treated kindly by Darius. See Herod. vi. 119.

§ *ἡμεροδρόμοι*, "day couriers," who could run a great distance in a day. *Ingens die uno cursu emeticentes spatium.* Liv. xxvi. 24.

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