

Ch. VIII. *Of the Peloponnesian Warre*

Ch. IX. *Of matters concurring with the Peloponnesian Warre*

Ch. X. *Of the expedition of Cyrvs the younger*

Ch. XI. *Of the affaires of Greece, whilst they were managed by the Lacedæmonians*

Ch. XII. *Of the flourishing estate of Thebes, from the battaile of Leuctra to the battaile of Mantinæa*

§I. *How Thebes and Athens ioyned together against Sparta. . . . The battaile of Leuctra, and beginning of the Theban greatnesse.*

- §2. . . . Epaminondas *inuadeth and wasteth the Territorie of Lacedæmon.*
- §3. . . . *the Thebans . . . againe inuade and spoile Peloponnesus . . .*
- §4. *The great growth of the Theban Estate . . .*
- §5. *How all Greece was diuided, betweene the Athenians and Lacedæmonians, on the one side, and Thebans on the other . . .*
- §6. *A terrible inuasion of Peloponnesus by Epaminondas.*

Certaine it is, that the condition of things did at that time require a verie firme consent, and vniforme care of the common safetie. For beside the great forces raised out of the other parts of *Greece*, the *Argiues*, and *Messenians*, prepared with all their strength to joyne with *Epaminondas*; who hauing lien a while at *Nemea*, to intercept the *Athenians*, receiued there intelligence, that the Armie comming from *Athens* would passe by Sea, whereupon he dislodged, and came to *Tegea*, which Citie, and the most of all *Arcadia* besides, forth-with declared themselues his. The common opinion was, that the first attempt of the *Thebans*, would be vpon such of the *Arcadians* as had reuolted; which caused the *Lacedæmonian* Captaines to fortifie *Mantinæa* with all diligence, and to send for *Agesilaus* to *Sparta*, that he bringing with him all that small force of able men, which remained in the Towne, they might be strong enough to abide *Epaminondas* there. But *Epaminondas* held so good espiall vpon his Enemies, that had not an vnknowne fellow brought hastie aduertisement of his purpose to *Agesilaus*, who was then well onward in the way to *Mantinæa*, the Citie of *Sparta* had sodainely beene taken. For thither with all speede and secrecie did the *Thebans* march, who had surely carried the Citie, notwithstanding anie defence that could haue beene made by that handfull of men remaining within it; but that *Agesilaus* in all flying hast got into it with his Companies, whom the Armie of his Confederates followed thither to the rescue as fast as it was able. The arriuell of the

*Lacedæmonians* and their friends, as it cut off all hope from *Epaminondas* of taking *Sparta*, so it presented him with a faire aduantage vpon *Mantinæa*. It was the time of Haruest, which made it very likely that the *Mantinæans*, finding the warre to be carried from their walls into an other quarter, would vse the commoditie of that vacation, by fetching in their corne, and turning out their cattaile into their fields, whilst no enimie was neare that might empeach them. Wherefore hee turned away from *Sparta* to *Mantinæa*, sending his horse-men before him, to seize vpon all that might be found without the Citie. The *Mantinæans* (according to the expectation of *Epaminondas*) were scattered abroad in the Countrie; farre more intent vpon their haruest-businesse, than vpon the warre, whereof they were secure, as thinking themselues out of distance. By which presumption it fell out, that great numbers of them, and all their Cattaile, being vnable to recouer the Towne, were in a desperate case; and the Towne it selfe in no great likelihood of holding out, when the enimie should haue taken all their prouision of victuals with so many of the people, as had not ouer-dearely beene redeemed, by that Cities returning to societie with *Thebes*. But at the same time, the *Athenians* comming to the succour of their Confederates, whom they thought to haue found at *Mantinæa*, were very earnestly entreated by the Citizens to rescue their goods, and people, from the danger whereinto they were fallen, if it were possible by any couragious aduenture to deliuer those who otherwise were giuen as lost. The *Thebans* were knowne at that time to bee the best Souldiers of all the *Greekes*, and the commendation of good horsemanship had alwaies beene giuen to the *Thessalians*, as excelling in that qualitie all other Nations; yet the regard of honour so wrought vpon the *Athenians*, that for the reputation of their Citie, which had entred into this warre, vpon no necessitie of her owne, but only in desire of relieuing her distressed friends, they issued forth of *Mantinæa*, not abiding so long as to refresh themselues, or their horses with meat, and giuing a lustie charge vpon the enimie, who as brauely receiued them, after a long and hot fight they remained masters of the field, giuing by this victorie a safe and easie retrait to all that were without

the walls. The whole power of the *Bæotians* arrived in the place soone after this battaile, whom the *Lacedæmonians* and their Assistants were not farre behinde.

§7. *The great battaile of Mantinæa. The honourable death of Epaminondas, with his commendation.*

*Epaminondas*, considering that his Commission was almost now expired, and that his attempts of surprising *Sparta* and *Mantinæa* hauing failed, the impression of terrour which his name had wrought in the *Peloponnesians*, would soone vanish, vnlesse by some notable act he should abate their courage in their first growth, and leaue some memorable character of his expedition; resolved to giue them battaile, whereby he reasonably hoped both to settle the doubtfull affections of his owne Associates, and to leaue the *Spartans* as weake in spirit and abilitie, as he found them, if not wholly to bring them into subjection. Hauing therefore warned his men to prepare for that battaile, wherein victorie should be rewarded with Lordship of all *Greece*; and finding the alacritie of his Souldiers to be such, as promised the accomplishment of his owne desire; he made shew of declining the enemy, and intrenching himselfe in a place of more aduantage, that so by taking from them all expectation of fighting that day, he might allay the heate of their valour, and afterward strike their senses with amazement, when hee should come vpon them vnexpected. This opinion deceiued him not. For with verie much tumult, as in so great and sodaine a danger; the enemy ranne to Armes, necessitie enforcing their resolution, and the consequence of that daies seruice vrging them to doe as well as they might. The *Theban* Armie consisted of thirtie thousand foot, and three thousand horse; the *Lacedæmonians* and their friends were short of this number, both in horse and in foot, by a third part. The *Mantinæans* (because the warre was in their Countrie) stood in the right wing, and with them the *Lacedæmonians*: the *Athenians* had the left wing, the *Achæans*, *Eleans*, and others of lesse account, filled the bodie of the Armie. The *Thebans* stood in the left wing of their owne

battaile, opposite to the *Lacedæmonians*, hauing by them the *Arcadians*; the *Eubæans*, *Locrians*, *Sicyonians*, *Messenians*, and *Thessalians* with others, compounding the maine battaile; the *Argiues* held the right wing; the horse-men on each part were placed in the flancks, only a troupe of the *Eleans* were in reare. Before the footmen could joyne, the encounter of the horse on both sides was very rough, wherein finally the *Thebans* preuailed, notwithstanding the valiant resistance of the *Athenians*: who not yeelding to the enemie either in courage or skill, were ouer-laied with numbers, and so beaten vpon by *Thessalian* slings, that they were driuen to forsake the place, and leaue their infanterie naked. But this retrait was the lesse disgracefull, because they kept themselues together, and did not fall backe vpon their owne foot-men; but finding the *Theban* horse to haue giuen them ouer, and withall discovering some Companies of foot, which had beene sent about by *Epaminondas*, to charge their battaile in the reare, they brake vpon them, routed them, and hewed them all in peeces. In the meane season the battaile of the *Athenians* had not only to doe with the *Argiues*, but was hardly pressed by the *Theban* Horse-men, in such wise that it beganne to open, and was readie to turne back, when the *Elean* squadron of Horse came vp to the reliefe of it, and restored all on that part. With farre greater violence did the *Lacedæmonians* and *Thebans* meete, these contending for Dominion, the other for the maintenance of their ancient honour, so that equall courage and equall losse on both sides made the hope and appearance of victorie to either equally doubtfull: vnlesse perhaps the *Lacedæmonians* being very firme abiders, might seeme the more likely to preuaile, as hauing borne the first brunt, and furie of the on-set, which was not hitherto remitted; and being framed by Discipline, as it were by Nature, to excell in patience, whereof the *Thebans*, by practise of a few yeares, cannot bee thought to haue gotten a habite so sure and generall. But *Epaminondas* perceiuing the obstinate stiffenesse of the Enemies to bee such, as neither the badde successe of their owne horse, nor all the force of the *Bæotian* Armie, could abate so farre, as to make them giue one foote of ground; taking a choise Companie of the most able men, whom he cast into the

forme of a Wedge, or Diamond, by the aduantage of that figure against a squadron, and by his owne exceeding vertue, accompanied with the great strength and resolution of them which followed him, did open their rancks, and cleaue the whole battaile in despite of all resistance. Thus was the honour of that day wonne by the *Thebans*, who may justly bee said to haue carried the victorie, seeing that they remained Masters of the ground whereon the battaile was fought, hauing driuen the Enemie to lodge farther off. For that which was alleaged by the *Athenians*, as a token that the victorie was partly theirs, the slaughter of those Mercenaries vpon whom they lighted by chance in their owne flight, finding them behinde their Armie, and the retaying of their dead bodies; it was a Ceremonie regardable only among the *Greekes*, and serued meerely for ostentation, shewing that by the fight they had obtayned somewhat, which the Enemie could not get from them otherwise than by request. But the *Thebans* arriued at the generall immediate end of battaile; none daring to abide them in the field: whereof a manifest confession is expressed from them, who forsake the place which they had chosen or accepted, as indifferent for triall of their abilitie and prowess. This was the last worke of the incomparable vertue of *Epaminondas*, who being in the head of that Warlike troupe of men, which broke the *Lacedæmonian* esquadron, and forced it to giue back in disaray, was furiously charged on the sodaine, by a desperate Companie of the *Spartans*, who all at once threw their Darts at him alone; whereby receiuing many wounds, hee neuerthelessse with a singular courage maintayned the fight, vsing against the Enemies many of their Darts, which hee drew out of his owne bodie; till at length by a *Spartan*, called *Anticrates*, hee receiued so violent a stroke with a Dart, that the wood of it brake, leauing the yron and a peece of the tronchion in his breast. Hereupon hee sunke downe, and was soone conueighed out of the fight by his friends; hauing by his fall somewhat animated the *Spartans* (who faine would haue got his bodie) but much more inflamed with reuengefull indignation, the *Thebans*, who raging at this heauie mischance did with great slaughter compell their disordered enemies to leaue the field; though long they followed

not the chase, being wearied more with the sadness of this disaster, than with all the trouaile of the day. *Epaminondas* being brought into his Tent, was told by the Phisitians, That when the head of the Dart should bee drawne out of his bodie, hee must needes die. Hearing this, hee called for his shield, which to haue lost was held a great dishonour: It was brought vnto him. Hee bad them tell him which part had the victorie; answeare was made, that the *Bœotians* had wonne the field. Then said hee, it is faire time for mee to die, and withall sent for *Iolidas*, and *Diophantes*, two principall men of Warre, that were both slaine; which being told him, He aduised the *Thebans* to make Peace, whilst with aduantage they might, for that they had none left that was able to discharge the office of a Generall. Herewithall he willed that the head of the weapon should be drawne out of his bodie; comforting his friends that lamented his death, and want of issue, by telling them that the victories of *Leuctra* and *Mantinæa* were two faire Daughters, in whom his memorie should liue.

So died *Epaminondas*, the worthiest man that euer was bred in that Nation of *Greece*, and hardly to bee matched in any Age or Countrie: for hee equalled all others in the seuerall vertues, which in each of them were singular. His Iustice, and Sinceritie, his Temperance, Wisedome, and high Magnanimitie, were no way inferiour to his Militarie vertue; in euery part whereof hee so excelled, That hee could not properly bee called a Warie, a Valiant, a Politique, a Bountifull, or an Industrious, and a Proudient Captaine; all these Titles, and many other, being due vnto him, which with his notable Discipline, and good Conduct, made a perfect composition of an Heroique Generall. Neither was his priuate Conuersation vnanswerable to those high parts, which gaue him praise abroad. For hee was Graue, and yet very Affable and Curteous; resolute in publique businesse, but in his owne particular easie, and of much mildnesse; a louer of his People, bearing with mens infirmities, wittie and pleasant in speech, farre from insolence, Master of his owne affections, and furnished with all qualities that might winne and keepe loue. To these Graces were added great abilitie of bodie, much Eloquence, and very deepe

knowledge in all parts of Philosophie and Learning, where-with his minde being enlightened, rested not in the sweetnesse of Contemplation, but brake forth into such effects as gaue vnto *Thebes*, which had euer-more beene an vnderling, a dreadfull reputation among all people adjoyning, and the highest command in *Greece*.

§8. *Of the peace concluded in Greece after the battaile of Mantinæa. . . .*