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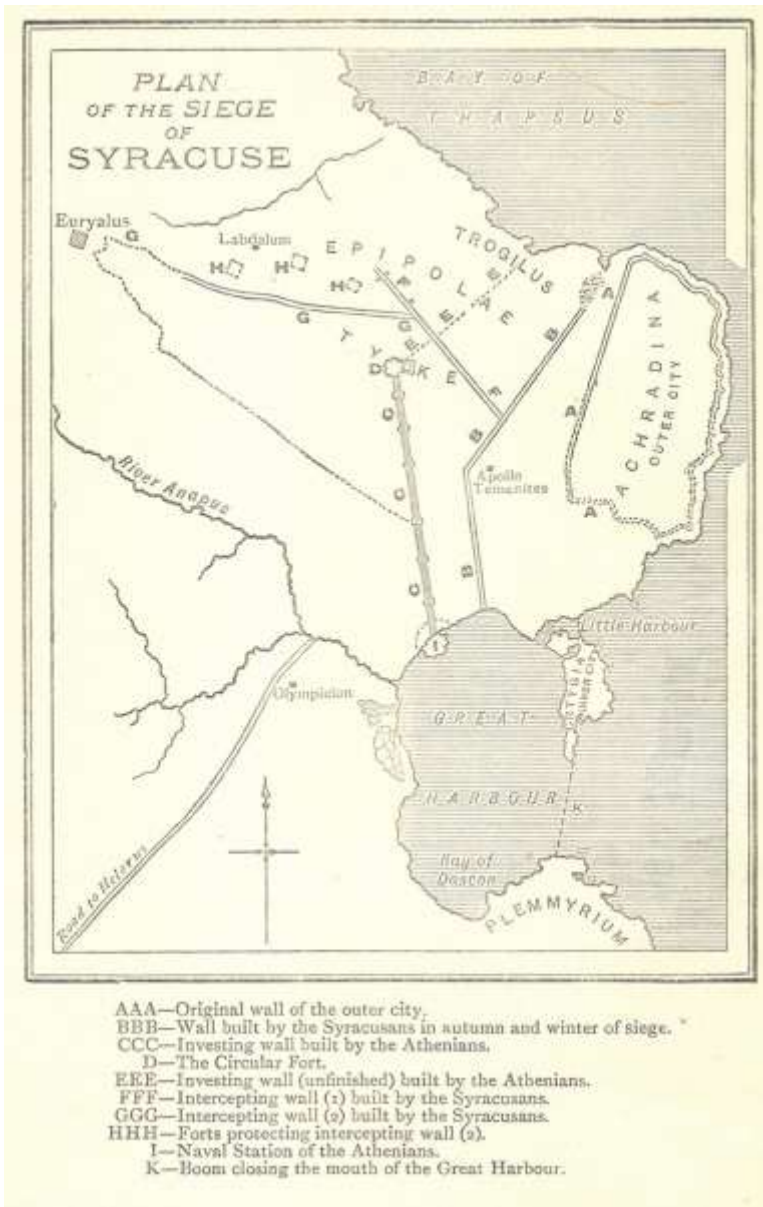
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## PREFACE

The ultimate, it might be said, the only authority for the military and political facts given in this narrative, is Thucydides. These facts have been admirably expounded and arranged by Grote, to whom everyone interested in Greek history must be under obligations which cannot be adequately expressed. I have to acknowledge specially my indebtedness to the maps which accompany the sixth volume of his history. In writing this little book I have also had before me Mr. Haverfield's plan of Syracuse (executed in relief), and have found it very helpful.

A.J.C.

*3rd February 1899.*



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## CHAPTER I

### STATESMAN AND CITIZEN

'Three men,' says Aristotle, as quoted by Plutarch in his *Life of Nicias*, 'I rank first among patriots—Nicias, Thucydides, Theramenes; but I put Theramenes below the other two.' That the philosopher should have mentioned Theramenes at all is incomprehensible. We know him only as an unscrupulous oligarch, who became on occasion an equally unscrupulous democrat. Thucydides, who must be distinguished from his namesake and contemporary the historian, was a respectable and consistent, but not very able, leader of the aristocratic party in Athens, whose limitations in point of cleverness and eloquence were made more conspicuous by his having to stand forth as the opponent of Pericles. Nicias, as we shall see, had many qualities that made him worthy of Aristotle's praise; he would have added to them the distinction of a uniform success in war, if an evil fortune, taking occasion of his weakness, had not put into his hands a most formidable enterprise, one which, we may well believe, no mortal man could have carried out, and to which he certainly was not equal.

Nicias, son of Niceratus, came of one of the noblest and wealthiest families in Athens. We know nothing of his descent, except that it was such as to rank him as an aristocrat of the very bluest blood; of his wealth various particulars are given. It was indeed so great as to make him one of the most famous millionaires of Greece. Athenaeus, who is the great gossip-monger of antiquity, singles him out for mention together with the wealthiest Romans. A part at least of his income came from the silver mines of Laurium, which the State used to lease out to private citizens for long periods, and, doubtless, on terms more profitable to them than to itself. He had so vast an army of slaves that after providing for his own

works he could supply a master miner in Thrace with a thousand men at a charge of an obol apiece daily.

At Athens it was a great thing for a statesman to be rich. Ways were open to him of using his wealth in such a manner as to make a very favourable impression on his fellow-citizens, and that without laying himself open to the charge of ostentation. Among ourselves no one knows anything about the large cheque which the wealthy noble or merchant pays over to the collector of income-tax. The Athenian millionaire paid his income-tax in a manner which could not but bring him under public notice. In times of peace, he had to furnish the means for putting a play upon the stage at the great dramatic festivals, to provide performers at the public games, to entertain his tribe at the great yearly feasts, and to equip the embassies which were sent, from time to time, to the sacred island of Delos, or to the oracle of Delphi. There would seldom be a year in which one or other of these duties would not be imposed upon him. In the course of time he would be called upon to discharge them all. But, of course, there would be different ways of discharging them. Some men, whose income brought them within the class that was liable to these duties, would be unable or unwilling to spend more than the necessary sum. Some, on the other hand, would be anxious to do everything in as splendid a style as possible, and for such the reward of popular favour was immediate. It was an expenditure which everyone enjoyed, and for which everyone was grateful. A still more imposing form of patriotic generosity could be displayed in times of war, for then the wealthier citizens were called upon to furnish a ship for the public service, or, to put it more exactly, to supplement what the State supplied, this being the bare ship, the necessary equipment, and wages at the lowest rate.

Plutarch has given us an account of the magnificence with which Nicias performed one of these public services—the sacred embassy to the shrine of the Twin Deities of Delos, Apollo and Artemis. Part of the ceremonial of the day was the

procession to the Temple from the shore, a chorus, brought for the purpose from Athens, singing, as it marched, a hymn in honour of the Twins. This might have been an imposing spectacle, but its effect was greatly marred by the confusion which prevailed. The crowd of spectators, always a disturbing element in such scenes, thronged round the landing-place at which the singers disembarked. These had to don their robes and chaplets in the midst of the multitude, and to make their way through the crush, singing all the while as best they could. Nicias, when it fell to his lot to conduct the embassy, changed all this for the better. He landed the chorus, on the previous day, at the neighbouring island of Rheneia. During the night, a bridge, which had been constructed at Athens, and was profusely decorated with gilding and tapestry, was thrown across the strait which separated Rheneia from Delos. At the appointed time the chorus crossed by this, undisturbed and in orderly array. Nicias further commemorated the occasion by consecrating a brazen palm-tree to Apollo, and by buying, at the cost of 10,000 drachmae, a piece of land, the rent of which was to be expended in sacrifices and feasts, on the condition that prayers should be offered up for the founder. A minor instance of the same pious munificence is also supplied by Plutarch. At one of the dramatic festivals, a youth, who represented in the chorus the god Dionysus, excited universal admiration by his grace and beauty. When the applause had ceased, Nicias rose in his place and said that it was manifestly wrong that one whom the general voice had declared to bear a close resemblance to the god should be kept in slavery, and set him free on the spot.

Another characteristic that gave Nicias a high place in popular esteem was his absolute integrity. And here, too, his wealth was a help to him. Rich men are not of necessity better than poor. 'Rich but honest' describes a not very common combination of circumstances just as truly as does the proverbial 'poor but honest.' Yet it was a great advantage for a Greek statesman to be put out of the reach of money temptations. The public men of Athens yielded to these

temptations with lamentable frequency, from Themistocles onwards; against Nicias no one ever breathed any reproach of the kind.

He was personally courageous in a very high degree. Courage was not conspicuous among the virtues of the Greek character. When Aristotle has to find an instance of recklessness he looks for it, not among his own countrymen but among the barbarians of Northern Europe. Thucydides, who, whether or not he puts into the mouths of his characters what they actually did say, never, we may be sure, puts into them what they could not have said, attributes to Nicias the remarkable words, 'I have less fear than other men for my own safety.' There is no quality which is more generally and ungrudgingly admired than this.

As to his temperance and chastity, virtues much more thought of by ourselves than they were by the Greeks, we have only negative evidence. Not a word of scandal against him in these respects has come down to us, and this may be fairly taken as conclusive in his favour.

His piety was conspicuous. The two instances given above of his munificence in the discharge of public duties are both concerned with religion. This is not in itself a positive proof. A rich citizen, who was personally indifferent to religion, might have gladly seized either opportunity of commending himself to the favour of his countrymen. But respect for Divine Powers was a dominant influence in the mind of Nicias. He sacrificed daily, he kept in his establishment a soothsayer whose business it was to ascertain the pleasure of the gods. These religious feelings, associated as they were in his case with a pure morality, command our respect. Nor must we harshly condemn if they were largely mingled with superstition. St Paul, when he visited the native city of Nicias, described its religious condition by a word which hovers, so to speak, between a good and bad meaning. 'I perceive ye are,' he said to his audience on the Areopagus, 'in all things,' according to the Authorised Version, 'somewhat

superstitious,' according to the Revised, 'too superstitious,' with 'religious' in the margin. Nor in the eighteen centuries that have passed since then has the teaching of the apostle or of One that was greater than he sufficed to make men clearly see the border line between the two.

## CHAPTER II

### SOLDIER

The command of the fleets and armies of Athens was in the hands of a college of ten members, bearing the title of Generals (*strategi*), and annually elected. Nicias is said to have held this office more than once during the lifetime of Pericles. Its duties included home administration as well as command in the field, and it is possible that the former fell to the share of Nicias on the earlier occasions of his being elected to the office. Anyhow, we do not hear of him as conducting any operation of either army or fleet before the year 427 B.C. (the fifth year of the Peloponnesian war). He then distinguished himself by a success which must have been highly gratifying to his countrymen. There was no state in the Lacedaemonian alliance that was more hated by the Athenians than Megara. It had been under their power, and had successfully rebelled, slaughtering at the same time the Athenian garrison. It was close at hand, the mouth of its harbour being little more than fifteen miles from the Peiraeus. A long series of mutual injuries had embittered the feelings of the two cities to the uttermost. Athens, on losing her dependency, had retaliated by forbidding the Megarians to use her markets or harbours, a measure which had been one of the provocations that resulted in the Peloponnesian War. Compelled to see her own territory ravaged by the superior forces of Sparta, she had taken the revenge of invading once, or even twice, a year the territory of Megara, and Megara, on the other hand, was always on the watch to do what injury she could to the commerce of her

powerful neighbour. Freebooting ships issued from her harbour, seized Athenian merchantmen, and even committed ravages on unprotected points of the coast. An Athenian squadron was sent to blockade the harbour, but could not do this effectually because it had no anchorage nearer than Salamis. Nicias saw an opportunity of striking a heavy blow at this enemy. In the mouth of the harbour was a rocky island, Minoa by name—legend connected the famous Minos of Crete with the history of the city—which was occupied by a fort, and further protected on one side by towers and walls extending from Nisaea, the port of Megara, and on the other by a lagoon bridged over by a causeway. Nicias embarked some battering-rams on his ships of war, knocked the towers to pieces, captured the fort, and made the island, which he strongly fortified on the side of the lagoon, into a convenient base for the blockading fleet.

This was the earliest operation of the year. Later on, he sailed with sixty ships of war to Melos, an island in the southwest of the Aegean, settled in former days by a colony from Sparta, which had always declined to ally itself with Athens. He called upon the city to submit and receive a garrison within its walls, and on its refusal ravaged the surrounding country. This done, as he was not prepared to undertake a siege, he sailed away to the point where the frontier between Bœotia and Attica touched the coast. Here he was joined by some troops from Athens, and with the combined forces ravaged part of the Bœotian territory. Reembarking his army, he sailed northwards, wasting the country as he went, where there this could be done without risk, and, when the season for operations drew to an end, returned to Athens.

During the next year he seems not to have been employed, but in that which followed—the seventh of the war—he was in chief command of an expedition which was directed against the territory of Corinth. It helps us to realise the smallness of the scene on which these operations were

carried on to note that, starting from the Peiraeus in the evening he arrived at his destination, a point seven miles south of Corinth, before sunrise. No very great success was gained, possibly because the Corinthians had been warned of what was intended; but after a brisk engagement, in which the fortune of the day varied from time to time, the Athenians were left in possession of the field of battle. They had lost forty-seven men, their adversaries more than four times as many. Technically, however, Nicias had to own to a defeat. He discovered, when the increasing forces of the enemy had made it prudent to retreat, that he had left two of his own dead on the field. This compelled him to send a herald to ask for a truce, and to send a herald was to confess that he had been worsted.

In the eighth year of the war, Nicias conducted with success an operation of more importance, and likely to have a more permanent effect. This was the occupation of the island of Cythera, off the southern coast of Laconia. Cythera was the most vulnerable point of the Spartan territory. Chilon, one of the Seven Wise Men, himself a Spartan, had said that it would be well for his country if Cythera could be sunk to the bottom of the sea. If we imagine the Isle of Wight in the possession of the French, we have an idea of what Sparta would feel with Cythera occupied by a hostile force. Nicias, who had been in communication for some time with an anti-Spartan party in this island, sailed thither with a force of about 4000. This time he caught the enemy unprepared. The two towns of the island were simultaneously attacked. One made no resistance; the other surrendered after a brief struggle. A few prominent members of the pro-Spartan party were carried away, but the remainder of the inhabitants were leniently treated, becoming allies of Athens, and paying a tribute of four talents. Nicias, leaving an Athenian garrison in Cythera, spent some days in ravaging the neighbouring coast of the mainland.

On his way home he gratified another long-standing grudge of his countrymen against an ancient enemy. In the days when Athens was still a feeble state, she had had two

hostile neighbours against whom she had hardly been able to hold up. Of one of these—Megara—I have already spoken; Aegina was the other. After various fluctuations of fortune, Aegina had become (in 456 B.C.) a dependency of Athens. When, a quarter of a century later, the Peloponnesian War broke out, the Athenians regarded with apprehension the possibility of a revolt. 'Aegina,' said the great Pericles, 'is the eye-sore of the Peiraeus,' from which indeed it was but some twelve miles distant. The Athenians proceeded to expel the whole population, and to fill their place with settlers of their own nationality. The Spartans gave the exiles a home at Thyrea, a district in the eastern part of their own territory. The town itself was too far from the sea to suit the tastes of its new inhabitants, who came of a race famous for seamanship. They were at this time engaged, with the help of a contingent of Lacedaemonian troops, in building a fort upon the coast. This they abandoned when the Athenian squadron came in sight, retreating inland to Thyrea. Thyrea consisted of an upper and a lower town. The Aeginetans resolved to hold the former, but could not persuade their allies to remain. The Lacedaemonians declared that the place was untenable, and retreated to the hills. Their judgment was proved to be right, for the Athenians stormed the place with but little difficulty, and captured its defenders. These were carried to Athens and there put to death. Mercy was never shown to prisoners of war except their captors believed that some advantage might be gained by keeping them alive.

It is now necessary to turn back to an event which had an important bearing on the fortunes of Athens in general, and of Nicias in particular. In the earlier part of the seventh year—the same as that in which Nicias had conducted his operations against Corinth—Athens had secured a signal advantage over its great enemy. A powerful force under the command of Demosthenes, who was probably the ablest soldier in the Athenian service, had landed on the western coast of Laconia, and, after a series of operations which it is not necessary to describe in detail, had succeeded in shutting up in the island of



Sphacteria a force of about 460 Peloponnesian heavy-armed troops, of whom more than 120 were pure-blood Spartans belonging to the first families of the city. The Spartan Government was so affected by this disaster that it sent envoys to Athens to solicit peace. This mission accomplished nothing. The terms demanded were such as it was impossible to grant, and the envoys went home. Then affairs took another turn. The siege of the Spartans in the island did not seem to make any progress; the besiegers were in as bad a plight as the besieged, it may be in a worse, as they were actively employed in the blockade, while the besieged had only to sit still. Provisions they had, but they were very short of water, for there was but one spring available, and that was quite insufficient to supply the needs of so large an armament. As for the besieged, they fared pretty well. They seem not to have wanted water, and there were plenty of Helots ready to run cargoes of food, tempted by the handsome offers of reward, in the shape of pay and freedom, which the government offered. Demosthenes determined to make an assault in force, and for this purpose collected troops from friendly cities in Western Greece, and sent home a request for reinforcements.

The disappointment at Athens was intense, and the reaction of feeling against the politicians who had spoken against peace proportionately great. Of these politicians, Cleon was the leader, and Cleon felt that his popularity was in imminent danger. He began by declaring that the envoys from Demosthenes had exaggerated the difficulties of the enterprise. The answer to this was simple. 'Send commissioners to examine the state of things.' This suggestion was approved, and Cleon and another were actually named. Cleon did not like the prospect of going, and altered his tone. 'Don't waste time,' he cried, 'in sending envoys. Sail to Sphacteria and capture the soldiers that have been shut up there. If our generals were men,' and he pointed as he spoke contemptuously to Nicias, 'this they would easily do with a proper force. This I would do, if I were in their place.' There was a hostile murmur from part of the assembly. 'Why not go, if it is so easy.' Nicias caught

eagerly at the idea. It seemed to put his adversary into a dilemma. 'Go, Cleon,' he said, 'and do it; I and my colleagues will put at your disposal such forces as you may think necessary.'

At first Cleon accepted, not thinking for a moment that the offer was serious. When he perceived his mistake, he drew back. 'It was Nicias's business, not his,' he said, 'to direct the campaign.' Instantly there arose a great shout from the assembly, which doubtless enjoyed the humour of the situation. They shouted to Nicias to make over the command to Cleon; they shouted to Cleon that he must accept it. There was nothing for the two but to yield. Nicias formally resigned the command; Cleon, so to speak, took the bull by the horns. 'I am not afraid,' he said. 'Give me some heavy-armed men—I don't want them from our own muster roll—some light-armed, and, say, 400 archers, and I will bring the Spartans, dead or alive, within twenty days.' And, not to lengthen the story, he did it.

It is impossible to say that the conduct of Nicias in this matter was patriotic. It may have been a telling party-stroke to take Cleon at his word, and to commit him to an undertaking which Nicias believed must end in failure, but it was made at the expense of Athens. If the man was an incompetent braggart, why should he be trusted with the lives of Athenian soldiers? It was impossible for Nicias and his friends not to wish that he might fail, and his failure meant, not only an immediate loss of men, but the missing of such an opportunity of bringing Sparta to terms as might never occur again. If, on the other hand, Cleon succeeded, a result which Nicias clearly never expected for a moment, this meant another spell of power to a politician whom he believed to be unprincipled and mischievous. And this was the result which actually followed.



## CHAPTER III

### PEACE MAKER

Cleon's success at Sphacteria put an end for the time to all hopes of peace. Athens, now encouraged to fresh hopes and ambitions, began the eighth year of the war with new attempts to carry hostilities into the country of her adversaries. She made an attack on Megara, and, though failing to capture the city itself, got possession of the harbour. This was followed up by the invasion of Bœotia. Thirty-three years before Athens had acquired, and had retained for nine years, an ascendancy over this country. This ascendancy she had never given up the hope of regaining, a hope that was built, it must be remembered, not so much on superiority of force as on the enmity of the Bœotian towns to Thebes. Here, as almost everywhere else in Greece, party divisions counted for much. Thebes was governed by an oligarchy; in each dependent town there was a democratic party anxious for its downfall, and looking to Athens to effect it. It is not within my province to tell the story of the campaign. It will suffice to say that the attempt failed, and failed disastrously. The Athenians were defeated in a great battle at Delium, with the loss of the general in command and a thousand heavy-armed troops. Later on in the same year they suffered greatly in Thrace, where, through the energetic action of Brasidas, by far the ablest Spartan of the time, they lost many valuable dependencies, the most important of which was Amphipolis.

It will be easily imagined that a year which had opened with such high hopes found the Athenians at its close in a very different temper of mind. The war party was greatly discouraged; the friends of peace, of whom, it will be remembered, Nicias was the leader, were proportionately strengthened. Sparta was still anxious to bring the war to an end. Its government had sanctioned the expedition of Brasidas

against the Athenian dominion in Thrace in the hope that if it should be successful it might work for peace. Its dominant motive was the desire to recover the Spartan prisoners at Athens. Many of these belonged to the first families in the state, and had powerful friends, who were ready to use every means to bring about their release. Brasidas, on the other hand, full as he was of ambitious schemes, and Cleon, who may possibly have hoped, on the strength of his success at Sphacteria, for military distinctions in the future, were strongly opposed to peace.

Grote thinks, and very likely is right in thinking, that both the political leaders at Athens were wrong; Cleon in advising the people to insist on terms which it was impossible for Sparta to grant, Nicias in failing to urge them to make a vigorous effort to save what remained, and to recover what had been lost, of their dominion in Thrace. The terrible loss at Delium, falling largely, as it did, on Athenian citizens, made vigorous counsels unwelcome, and Nicias, who, though personally brave, had but little moral courage, was not the man to give them.

The immediate result was a compromise. It was not found possible, at least for the time, to agree upon terms of peace, but a truce for a year was made. This was sworn in what in our calendar is March. Two days afterwards the Athenian dependency of Scioné in Thrace revolted to Brasidas. This general had just made arrangements to secure his new ally, when commissioners arrived to announce to him the conclusion of the truce. The news was most unwelcome to him. Scioné he absolutely refused to surrender, and, to justify his refusal, positively asserted that it had revolted *before* the truce was sworn. The Athenian commissioner, however, had no difficulty in satisfying himself of the real facts of the case, and he sent home a despatch in which he stated them.

A fierce and, it must be allowed, a perfectly justifiable outburst of anger was the result. There was no desire to disturb the working of the truce elsewhere, but at the same time there

was a resolute determination to recover Scioné, and to punish it severely for its revolt, Cleon proposing that, in the event of its recapture, all the male inhabitants should be put to death. Popular feeling was further exasperated by the news of the revolt of another town in Thrace, Mendé by name. The recovery of these towns was a matter on which all parties were bound to agree. Nicias was for the time on the same side as Cleon, and went out in command of the expedition, a certain Nicostratus being his colleague. They had with them fifty ships of war, 1000 heavy-armed troops; about as many light-armed, and 1000 Thracian mercenaries. Mendé was recovered. An assault failed, Nicias, who led one of the attacking parties, being wounded; but, soon afterwards, a popular movement put the place into the hands of the Athenians. The majority of the inhabitants had been adverse to the revolt. Scioné was closely invested, and Nicias, leaving a division to guard the lines, returned with the armament to Athens.

In March 421 the year's truce expired. The condition of affairs in Thrace made peace impossible, but there was no immediate resumption of hostilities. In August, however, Cleon prevailed upon the Athenians to make a vigorous effort to recover what had been lost in Thrace. Nicias, we may be sure, led the opposition. Whether, as Grote supposes, he was one of the generals of the year, and refused to serve when the Assembly resolved on sending an expedition, is more doubtful. It can hardly be supposed that the generals had it in their power to go or not to go as they pleased. The case of Sphacteria was evidently exceptional, something, we may almost say, of a huge practical joke. It is more likely that Cleon was in office, and that he hoped, though hardly, I should suppose, without misgivings, that he might be victorious. It is not part of my task to give the details of the campaign. The result was that the Athenians suffered a crushing defeat, losing 600 heavy-armed in killed and missing. Cleon was among them. On the other side there were but seven men killed, but one of the seven was Brasidas.

The death of these two men removed the principal obstacles to peace. Sparta was still as anxious as ever for it, and Athens, after this second disaster, which was scarcely less damaging than the defeat at Delium, had begun to look upon it as a necessity. A conference of the allies of Sparta was held at that city, and this was attended by envoys from Athens, among whom Nicias was the most important and influential. The discussion was prolonged. At first both sides made impossible demands, and at one time the prospects of a successful conclusion were so small that the Spartan government made, or, at least, threatened to make, preparations for an invasion of Attica in the spring. The point chiefly in dispute was the territory acquired during the war. Finally, it was agreed that each party should surrender what it had acquired by force. On the term 'force' a narrow interpretation was put. Plataea, which had surrendered, was not given back to Athens; Athens, on the other hand, kept the Megarian and Corinthian towns which had capitulated to her. A peace for fifty years was concluded in March 421. Nicias was one of the Athenian commissioners who swore to it, and it was generally known as the 'Peace of Nicias.'

Some of the allies of Sparta were discontented with the terms agreed upon, and refused to accept the vote of the majority. For this and for other reasons it was soon made evident that the arrangement was far from satisfactory. Difficulties started up at once. It had been agreed to decide by lot which of the two contracting parties should be the first to fulfill its part of the conditions. Athens gained the choice, an advantage so great that Nicias is accused by Theophrastus of having secured the result by a bribe. The Spartans immediately released all the Athenian prisoners in their possession, and sent envoys to Clearidas, their commander in Thrace, with directions that Amphipolis and the other revolted dependencies of Athens should be delivered up to that state. Clearidas declared that it was not in his power to fulfill this stipulation, and went back with the envoys to explain the situation. He was sent again with peremptory orders to carry

out his instructions. If the towns still refused to submit, he was to remove the Lacedaemonian garrisons. This he did, but Athens did not recover her Thracian possessions. At the same time the dissatisfied allies of Sparta came back with fresh instructions from home to protest against the peace.

Sparta was now in a very embarrassing position. She could not fulfill her part of the terms, and consequently she could not ask for the prisoners. At the same time she dreaded a new combination of parties. Argos had stood aloof from the war, and was now, with her strength unimpaired, a formidable power. A thirty years' truce that she had concluded with Sparta was drawing to an end. If she was to ally herself with Athens, the consequences might be serious. The Spartan government now proposed a new arrangement to Nicias and his colleagues (they had remained in Sparta, waiting, it would seem, for the fulfillment of the conditions). Let Athens and Sparta come closer together—become, in fact, allies. And this was done. A defensive alliance was formed; each party bound itself to assist the other in case it should be attacked. This was the single provision of the treaty. It was specified, however, as a case coming under this provision, that the Athenians should give their most energetic help in repressing any insurrection of the Helots that might take place in Laconia. A further condition, not expressed in the treaty, but secretly agreed upon, was that the Sphacterian prisoners should be at once given up. This last was immediately carried out.

Nicias has been severely criticised for having been a party to the conclusion of a peace so little advantageous to his country. And it must be confessed that the criticism is just. He and his colleagues ought to have insisted, as a necessary preliminary, on the restoration of the Thracian towns. It might be true that the Spartan force in those regions was not strong enough to compel the towns to return to their Athenian allegiance; but if, as Grote urges, Sparta and Athens had combined in an energetic effort to compel submission, the towns could not have long resisted. From this point of view,

the withdrawal of the garrisons was a mistake. With a besieging force outside, and a garrison within, under peremptory orders to assist not the defence but the attack, surrender would have been inevitable. We can only suppose that Nicias and his friends fairly lost their heads when they saw a chance of what they had never ventured to hope for—an actual alliance with Sparta. After this, they may well have thought, perpetual peace was almost assured. As a matter of fact, the peace and the treaty which followed it were doomed from the beginning to a speedy end.

It is needless to describe the obscure and perverse politics which occupied the Greek States during the period that followed the conclusion of the peace of Nicias. There was little or no inclination in either Athens or Sparta honestly to fulfill their obligations. If there had been, it would probably have been defeated by the unprincipled action of statesmen seeking to advance personal or party aims. It is possible, for instance, that Sparta intended to do right when she sent envoys to Athens to discuss, and, if possible, to arrange the matters in dispute, though one at least of their demands was highly unreasonable. But they were shamefully tricked by Alcibiades, with the result of making them seem absolutely unworthy of trust. Nicias had introduced them to the Senate. There they had declared that they came with full powers to settle, and had made a very favourable impression by their moderation and reasonableness. Alcibiades, whose object it was to ally Athens with Argos, began to fear that an arrangement might be made with Sparta. Accordingly, he went to one of the envoys, with whose family he had an hereditary friendship. 'You will find,' he said, 'the Assembly far less reasonable than the Senate. If it is known that you have full powers to treat, it will seek to intimidate you, and to extort, by fear or force, concessions which you are not authorised to make. It will be better, therefore, to say that you have come with no powers, but only to explain and discuss. The people will listen calmly and quietly. I myself will support you as strongly as I can, and have no doubt that I shall be able to obtain the consent of the

Assembly on the doubtful point of Pylos.' The envoys naturally fell into the trap, not saying a word about the matter to Nicias, though he was certainly the foremost friend of Sparta in Athens, and was probably, as Grote suggests, their own host. The Assembly met. Do you come with powers to treat?' asked Alcibiades of the envoys. They answered as they had been instructed, 'No; only to discuss and explain.' Nicias, the Senate which had heard from the men's own lips an exactly contrary statement, and the Assembly generally, which had in fact met under the impression that the affair could be settled then and there, were astonished and indignant. Alcibiades himself made a furious speech denouncing Spartan duplicity, and seized the opportunity of proposing that the envoys from Argos should be called in. This would have been done, had there not occurred at the moment the shock of an earthquake. On this the Assembly was, as usual, dismissed. Of the conduct of Alcibiades it is needless to speak. The Spartans, though, perhaps, more sinned against than sinning, gave another proof of the bad faith which was characteristic of their diplomacy. As for Nicias, his reputation as a sagacious politician must have suffered greatly. He was disgraced along with the clients whose cause he had espoused.

With this unpopularity may be connected a curious incident which occurred about this time. The demagogue Hyperbolus, a feeble successor of Cleon, conceived the idea that one or other of the two politicians with whom he contended on unequal terms might be got rid of by the method of ostracism. But he was 'hoist with his own petard.' The persons threatened combined against their adversary, and when the votes were counted it was found that the person named was Hyperbolus himself. He was banished accordingly, but it was felt that he was too insignificant a person to have so formidable an engine directed against him. The engine itself was discredited, and was never again employed in Athenian politics.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE GREAT SCHEME

We have already seen an instance of the vivacity and recuperative power of the Athenian people. Their country had been desolated by repeated invasions; a plague had more than decimated their population; they had suffered from an incessant drain of blood and treasure during seven years of warfare, and yet in the eighth we find them undertaking the conquest of Bœotia. The attempt ends in a disastrous loss (p. 21), which is followed in little more than a year by another grave calamity (p. 25). And yet, in the course of a few years more, we find them eagerly accepting a still more magnificent scheme—nothing less than the conquest of Sicily, with an ulterior view to the great cities in Southern Italy, and possibly to Carthage itself.

Athens had already interfered, during the earlier years of the war, in Sicilian affairs, her aim, real or nominal, being to protect the Ionian against the Dorian cities. The first result was to be politely told that Sicily, having arrived at a general pacification, did not need her services any more. But this pacification proved to be delusive. The Ionian city of Leontini, in particular, had been actually destroyed by its powerful neighbour, Syracuse, and its dispossessed inhabitants had naturally turned in their extremity to their old protectors the Athenians. Their first application for help was made in the year of truce. Various circumstances hindered the giving of any effectual help. But in 417 B.C. their chances of being heard were materially improved. Athens was less preoccupied with other matters, and fresh troubles had occurred in Sicily to give additional force to their representations. Selinus, a Greek city in the west of the island, had quarrelled with its neighbour Egesta, which was inhabited by a people of Italian race. Syracuse came to the help of Selinus, and Egesta, which had

been active on the side of Athens on the occasion of her first interference in Sicilian affairs, now applied for assistance to her old ally.

The envoys from Egesta arrived in the spring of 416 B.C. They made their appeal to the fears as well as to the hopes of the Athenian people. 'Syracuse,' they said, 'is destroying, one by one, the cities that are friendly to you; Leontini is gone; Egesta will follow. When she has accomplished this and united all the strength of Sicily in her own hands, she will combine with her fellow Dorians of the Peloponnesus to crush you!' This must have been a potent argument, even if those to whom it was addressed only half believed in its truth. Tacitus says of a pretender to the imperial throne at Rome that he sought to persuade himself that his life was in danger as an excuse for his schemes. 'To whet his ambition he even pretended to fear.' The envoys added that they could do their part in a war; if they had not men enough for their own defence, they had money. 'Send a squadron to help us,' they said, 'and we will furnish its pay.'

The feeling of the Assembly was not unanimous. Finally it was agreed that commissioners should be sent to Egesta who should see for themselves whether the city really possessed the means which it represented itself as having. The commissioners went, and were egregiously duped. They saw jars which they supposed to be full of gold coin, but which had but a thin layer at the top. The treasures of the Temple of Eryx were displayed before them as if they belonged to the city. They were entertained at banquets where the same plate, really silver gilt, but said to be gold, did duty in house after house. The result was that they brought back a glowing report of the wealth of the city, and, as an earnest of treasure to come, sixty talents in uncoined silver. Meanwhile the crew of the galley which had carried them, having had its share of Egestaean hospitality, talked with enthusiasm of the wealth of its entertainers. These representations, formal and informal, practically decided the matter. We have no record of the

proceedings in the Assembly which followed, but only of the result. It was voted that sixty ships-of-war should be sent to Sicily under the command of Alcibiades, Nicias, and Lamachus. The business of the Generals was to relieve Egesta, refound Leontini, and further Athenian interests generally.

A few days afterwards another Assembly was held, for the purpose of voting such supplies as the Generals might deem to be necessary. Nicias seized the opportunity to reopen the whole question, and entreated the Athenians to reconsider their decision. 'You are met,' he said, 'to consider ways and means; I implore you to think, while there is yet time, whether you ought not to abandon the scheme altogether. It is much more formidable than it seems, and you are undertaking it on the persuasion of strangers. I have always been wont to tell you the truth, and I shall not change my habit now. You are leaving enemies behind you here to make fresh enemies there. Do not suppose that you are protected by the peace, or rather truce, that you have with the Spartans. They made it on compulsion; there are many disputed points in it; their most powerful allies have never accepted it. Divide your forces and they will be sure to attack you, helped by these very Sicilian cities, whose alliance, indeed, they have long coveted. Your subjects in Thrace are still in revolt and you do not reduce them; you are going to champion Egesta and leave your own injuries unredressed. Thrace you will be able to hold, if you conquer it; over Sicily your sway, even should you establish it, could not possibly last, so distant is the island, and so powerful. And what does it matter to you if Syracuse should establish its rule over the rest of Sicily? It will be even less likely to attack you in that case than it is now, for why should it risk its own empire to assail yours? You are just recovering from the plague, and from the exhaustion of ten years of war; husband your strength; don't waste it on the impracticable schemes which some ruined exiles are suggesting to you!'

Then, turning to Alcibiades, he went on, 'And if there is a man who is delighted to be put into such a command—for

which, indeed, he is far too young—and so urges you to this undertaking, a man who looks for admiration on the score of his racing chariots, and hopes to repair the ruin of his fortunes out of the profits of his office, do not let him gain his ends at the expense of his country. He and his fellows are as wasteful of the public means as they are of their own. I tremble to see this reckless band where they sit by their leader. Do you, men of riper years, who are near them, refuse to be shamed out of your opposition because they may call you cowards. Leave them their fatal passion for the impossible; it is foresight, not reckless impulse, that commands success. Vote against this scheme. Keep undisturbed our present relations with the cities of Sicily, and bid Egesta finish without us the quarrel with Selinus that she began without us. Do not hesitate, Mr. President, to put this question again. An act in which so many share is no real breach of the law. What you will really do will be to give the Assembly a chance of correcting a perilous mistake.'

Alcibiades immediately rose to reply. He began by a personal vindication. What the ill-disposed blamed as extravagances were really proofs of the national resources. Who, for instance, could suppose that Athens was exhausted, when one of its citizens did what no private person had ever done before at Olympia—start seven chariots in the lists, win the first prize, and also secure the second and fourth places? He then proceeded to argue the general question. The Sicilian cities were not really formidable; they were populous, indeed, but their populations were neither united nor patriotic. And the native population was universally hostile. 'Our allies there,' he went on, 'we are bound to help; they will help us in return by keeping our enemies employed. Generally it is folly for an imperial city to decline adventure; she cannot stand still; it is the necessity of her nature and position to advance, otherwise her energies will be wasted in internal strife. The only safeguard against this danger is enterprise abroad.'

The envoys from Egesta and Leontini made fresh appeals to the Assembly not to go back from its engagements, and Nicias, finding that the general sympathy was with them could see no other chance of carrying his point than by insisting on the magnitude of the forces that it would be necessary to employ. 'Supposing,' he said, 'the Ionian cities Naxos and Catana join us, there will still be seven powerful cities to deal with. They have soldiers, ships, treasure in abundance. You must have a great force, both of horse and foot, if you would be more than their match, and you must take with you all you want in the way of stores, and not depend on Sicily for anything.' And he went on to set forth a formidable catalogue of what would be required. This kind of argument was a fatal mistake. Discredited as a politician, Nicias had still a high reputation as a soldier. In the field he had always been successful. His name was a guarantee for skill and prudence. By what he now said he gave his case away. He conceded that the enterprise was practicable if Athens would only use adequate means. Nor was he allowed to retreat from this position. One of the advocates of the expedition stood up in the Assembly and said, 'Let us have no more talk and delay. Let Nicias tell us plainly what he thinks will be wanted in the way of ships and men.' To this appeal Nicias could not refuse to reply. 'I must talk over these matters quietly with my colleagues,' he said, 'but generally, I should say, we must have a hundred ships of war and transports, either of our own or from the allies, as may be wanted; of heavy-armed troops we must have 5000 at least, more if we can. Then we must have archers from here and from Crete, and slingers, and other troops as may be wanted.' The Assembly gave the Generals absolute power to settle the strength of the expedition at their discretion. Nicias was now committed to the enterprise as deeply as Alcibiades.

## CHAPTER V

### AN ILL-OMENED START

Preparations for the expedition went briskly on, and were not far from their completion, when Athens was shocked by an extraordinary outrage. Among the multiplicity of religious images and symbols which so struck the attention of St Paul when he traversed the streets of Athens, the *Hermae* were conspicuous. These were four-sided pillars of stone surmounted by a human head, neck and bust, and stood in the doorways of many private homes and of the temples. All these, with a few exceptions, according to one account, with but one according to another, were mutilated in a single night. The city was thrown into a frenzy of rage and terror. That the religious feelings of the people were deeply wounded it is easy to understand. We can imagine what the feelings of London would be if every church and chapel within its borders were simultaneously disfigured. We all can also realise, though less vividly, the fear that would be felt of divine anger, of the vengeance which the tutelary dieties thus insulted would take upon a guilty city. But the most general and the strongest apprehension was one into which we are but little capable of entering. This outrage seemed to threaten revolution. There was, it seemed, a party, active and numerous—it could not but be such if so much was done in a single night—which was hostile to the established order of things. It might be expected at any time to break out into open violence.

If the act was anything beyond a piece of reckless folly, there are two objects which it may be supposed to have had; it is probable that it was intended to delay, or even altogether to prevent, the expedition; it is certain that it was specially aimed at Alcibiades. His notorious recklessness of demeanour at once suggested his name as one of the guilty parties, and he lost no time in endeavouring to free himself

from the charge. He demanded that he should be put on his trial at once, not only for this but for a kindred accusation that he had, in company with some of his friends, celebrated a profane travesty of the mysteries. His enemies demurred. Their real reason was that the popular feeling ran strongly in favour of the accused. The reason which they alleged, putting it into the mouths of speakers whom they employed for the occasion, and on whom they enjoined a studied moderation of tone, was that the trial which Alcibiades demanded could not fail to delay the starting of the expedition and greatly diminish its chances of success. This argument prevailed and the trial was postponed. That this course was unjust, is manifest; we shall see, as we proceed, that its effects were fatal.

It was midsummer when the start took place. The gathering place of the whole armament had been fixed at Corcyra, but the contingent that sailed from Athens was imposingly great and splendid. There were a hundred ships-of-war, sixty of which were equipped for naval action, while forty were to be used as transports. The heavy-armed soldiers numbered close upon 3000; 1500 of these were from the muster-roll of Athenian citizens; 700 were of the poorer class, whose arms and armour were furnished by the state, and 750 were a contingent from Argos and Mantinea. (These last served for pay but were attracted by the personal influence of Alcibiades.) The force of cavalry was but weak, for it required only a single transport. But it was not only the number of the ships and the men, it was also the splendour of the equipment that was remarkable. Never before had the wealthy citizens of Athens shown their patriotism more conspicuously. They vied with each other in supplementing to the utmost out of their private means the state allowances, in providing gorgeous figure-heads for the ships, and attracting by extra pay strong rowers for what may be called the labour-oars. As it was the greatest expedition that Athens had ever sent out, and its aims the most ambitious, so it was the most splendidly equipped.



At dawn on the appointed day, the whole population of the city, native and foreign, flocked down to the Peiraeus, to see the embarkation of the troops. Many were parting with friends and kinsfolk; all were attracted by the magnificence of the spectacle. The embarkation concluded, a trumpet gave the signal for silence. A herald then pronounced the prayers that were customarily offered before setting out to sea, and the whole armament repeated the words after him. The crews, the soldiers, and the officers offered libations out of cups of gold and silver. The crowd on the shore joined in these acts of devotion. Then the pan or war-song was sung; finally the ships moved in line out of harbour. Once outside, they raced to Aegina.

At Corcyra the force was reviewed and carefully organised in three divisions, with a special view to making it more easy to provision. Three swift ships were also sent in advance to arrange for such friendly accommodation as the Greek cities in Italy might be disposed to afford. The total numbers were now—134 triremes and two fifty-oared ships from Corcyra (the 34 being furnished by Chios and other independent allies); 5100 heavy-armed soldiers; 480 archers (the 80 being from Crete); 700 slingers from Rhodes; 120 light-armed troops (exiles from Megara). There were also 30 store ships carrying cargoes of provisions, and with them bakers, masons and carpenters, and 100 smaller vessels attending on them, besides a larger number owned by traders, who followed the expedition in hopes of profit.

The armament sailed across to the coast of Italy. It met with a discouraging reception. Not one of the cities would admit the newcomers within its walls, or allow them to buy food. Tarentum and Locri would not even allow them anchor off their shore, or supply themselves with water. Rhegium, the nearest point to Sicily, was somewhat more hospitable. It allowed them to buy food and to beach their ships. Here they received the unwelcome news that the reported wealth of

Egesta was a fraud. A council of war followed. The opinions given were as follows:—

NICIAS.—'Let us sail to Selinus. This is our main business. If Egesta can furnish pay for the whole armament, we will reconsider our action; if not, we will demand the pay for the sixty ships for which they asked, and, on receiving it, either compel or persuade Selinus to make restitution. That done, we will make a demonstration of our force. Should, however, Leontini by any chance give us any help or any new alliance present itself, then again we will consider the case.'

ALCIBIADES.—'It would be disgraceful when we have collected such a force to go back without doing anything. Let us approach the other cities in Sicily, and see which will range themselves on our side. If we can secure Messené, it would be specially convenient both for our army and our fleet. Let us see also what we can do with the native tribes. If they are friendly, we shall be well supplied with provisions. This done, we should at once attack Syracuse. Of course, if Syracuse will restore Leontini, and Selinus come to terms with Egesta, the objects of our expedition will have been obtained.'

LAMACHUS.—'My voice is for attacking Syracuse at once, while it is unprepared and panic-stricken. The first impression made by a great armament is the strongest; so we shall find it. If we go now, we shall find many of the citizens still outside the walls, and secure a great amount of property; and Megara, which is now deserted, and is close to Syracuse, will be a convenient headquarters with its town and harbour.'

As the opinion of Lamachus found no favour with either of his colleagues, he withdrew it and voted with Alcibiades. There can be but little doubt that here a great opportunity was lost. It is highly probable that if the Athenians had attacked Syracuse at once they would have captured it, just as the allied armies in the Crimea would have been spared the long and tedious siege, costly both in lives and money, if they had marched on Sebastopol immediately after the victory of the Alma.

Alcibiades now began to put the plan which he had proposed into operation. He sailed to Messené, but, though allowed to address the Assembly, he could not obtain anything beyond permission to buy provisions, etc., outside the walls. Naxos accepted the proposal of alliance; Catana was gained by an accident. While Alcibiades was addressing the Assembly, some soldiers broke open an unguarded postern gate, and entered the town. The leaders of the anti-Athenian party were glad to escape, and Catana became an ally. Camarina preferred to remain neutral. Meanwhile a squadron of ten ships had been sent into the great harbour of Syracuse. From the deck of one of them a herald proclaimed, 'All citizens of Leontini that are in Syracuse may come out without fear and join their friends and benefactors, the Athenians.'

On the return of the fleet to Catana they found one of the state ships awaiting them with a summons to Alcibiades and some others to go back to Athens and stand their trial on charges of having profaned the mysteries and mutilated the Hermae. The accused appeared to obey, and started, Alcibiades traveling with his friends in his own ship—the officers had been instructed not to arrest him. When they arrived at Thurii, they left the ship and went into hiding. Shortly after, Alcibiades betook himself to Sparta. He was condemned to death in his absence. 'I will show them that I am alive,' he remarked, when he heard of the sentence; and he set himself with all his powers and with a fatal success to make good his threat.

Nothing more of importance was done during what remained of the usual season for campaigning. Fruitless attempts were made to gain over Himera and Hybla, and a native town, Hyccara by name, was captured, and its inhabitants sold as slaves, realising 120 talents.

## CHAPTER VI

### AT SYRACUSE

It will be as well, before I proceed any further, to give a brief description of Syracuse, and of the surrounding localities.

Syracuse itself consisted of an Inner and an Outer City. The Inner City occupied an island, or rather what had been an island, for, as Thucydides says, it was no longer surrounded by water. This bore the name of Ortygia. The Outer City was called Achradina. It was built partly on some level ground, separated from the island by what was called the Inner Harbour (to be described hereafter), partly on the southern portion of a plateau which came down with a gradual slope from the interior to the sea. This plateau was triangular in shape, the base being occupied by the Outer City, the apex, about four miles and a half westward from the sea, being at a point called Euryalus, where a narrow ridge connected it with the high land of the interior. The Outer City was protected by a wall, built by Gelon, which ran from the Bay of Thapsus on the north to a point on the coast not far from the Little Harbour. Outside the wall of Gelon, which seems to have been built along a slight declivity, separating two portions of the plateau, was the region of Epipolae. This had probably been, to a certain extent, occupied by houses. Here, we may suppose, would have been found the inhabitants and the property on which Lamachus hoped to lay hands when he proposed an immediate movement on Syracuse. The Great Harbour was a natural bay, sheltered from the open sea by the island of Ortygia on the one side, and by the promontory of Plemmyrium on the other. The entrance between these two was somewhat less than a mile broad, and the bay made consequently a well-sheltered harbour. To this day it is one of the best in Sicily. The Inner Harbour included the channel

between Ortygia and the mainland, and adjacent spaces of water, some of them probably excavations. It was small, but so protected by its situation as to be safe from hostile attack. The river Anapus flowed into the Great Harbour, after skirting the southern side of the plateau. On some high ground overhanging its right bank, about half-a-mile from its mouth, was a temple of Olympian Zeus, from which the whole ridge got its name of Olympieion.

Three months had now been passed either in inaction or in trifling enterprises, and, as has been said, the usual season for campaigning was closed. But Nicias, who was now practically in command of the expedition, his colleague Lamachus being a far less influential personage, could not for very shame allow the whole year to pass without some more serious effort. The Syracusans, at first terrified at the imposing force of the invaders, began to despise them. The citizen army clamoured to be led against them, if, as appeared, they were not disposed themselves to commence an attack. Horsemen would ride up to their lines at Catana, and put insulting questions, wanting to know why they had come. Was it to settle peaceably or to restore Leontini?

Nicias now devised and put in practice a sufficiently ingenious stratagem, which would not, however, have been possible but for the discreditable fact that there was scarcely a Greek community in which some citizens might not be found who were ready to play the traitor to serve a party end. His object was to make a demonstration in force which would have the effect of proving to the Syracusans that the invaders were more formidable than they seemed. But to do this he wanted to transport the army to the neighbourhood of the city unopposed. If he went by sea, he would have to disembark on a shore occupied by the enemy; if he went by land, the numerous cavalry of the enemy, to which he had none of his own to oppose, would certainly do much damage. The problem was, to get the Syracusans out of the way, and it was managed thus.

A citizen of Catana, friendly to Athens, who yet contrived to keep on good terms with the other side, went to Syracuse with what purported to be a message from sympathisers in that city. It ran thus, 'Many of the Athenian soldiers are in the habit of leaving their camp, and passing the night in the city without their arms. If you come at daybreak with a strong force you will surprise them; we will do our part, closing the gates, assailing the Athenians, and setting fire to their ships.' The Syracusan generals fell into the trap. They made a levy of the whole force of the city, and marched out in the direction of Catana, encamping for the night at a spot about eight miles from that town. That same night Nicias embarked his whole army, and sailing southward, made his way round Ortygia into the Great Harbour. At break of day he disembarked his men, unopposed, as he had hoped, a little to the south of where the Anapus flows into the sea. He broke down the bridge by which the road to Helorus crossed the river. The ridge of the Olympieion protected his left wing; some marshy ground by the sea his right; in front the ground was broken with walls, houses, gardens. He made a palisade to protect the ships, and constructed a rough breastwork of timber and stone which touched the sea at a spot called Dascon, where there were small indentations on the shore. No attempt to hinder these operations was made from the city, which was, indeed, denuded of troops. Late in the day the cavalry of the Syracusans, who had discovered the fraud practised upon them, came back; the infantry followed. Wearied as they must have been, for they had marched, going and returning, between forty and fifty miles, they offered battle. As Nicias did not accept the challenge, they bivouacked for the night outside the city.

The next day Nicias marshalled his troops in front of his position, arranging them in two divisions, one of which was kept in reserve, in the formation of a hollow square, with the baggage in the middle. Both were eight files deep. The Syracusan troops were ranged in sixteen files. They were superior in number, and had some 1200 cavalry, an arm in

which their adversaries were wholly wanting. But they were ill-disciplined. Many had straggled into the city, not from any desire of shirking the fight, for they were conspicuously brave, but from the indifference which the citizen soldier feels for discipline till a sharp experience has taught him its value. Some of these, when they came back, found that the battle had begun, and joined it where they could.

Nicias, according to Greek custom, made an encouraging speech to his men. 'The best encouragement,' he said, 'is the certainty of our superiority over the enemy. This is far better than fine words and a feeble force. And how can we, men of Argos and Mantinea, Athenians and the flower of the island peoples, fail to be superior to this indiscriminate levy, a Sicilian rabble which looks down upon us because it is as ignorant as it is rash. But if you need any other thought, remember that you are fighting far away from your home. You must make yourselves masters of the country, or you will find it hard to escape from it. The enemy has a multitude of cavalry which will not fail to trouble you if you give way. Your position is one such as to make victory a necessity!'

Such language, whatever effect it might have at the moment, was of ill omen for the future. An invading army, which had to fight for its life the very first time that it met the enemy, was clearly in its wrong place. The best thing that could have happened to it, as Grote points out, would have been a defeat. Success for the present implied overwhelming disaster in the future.

Nicias at once took the offensive, charging with his first division. This was obviously the right course to follow. It was the action of an army that felt itself superior in morale to its enemies; and as Nicias, who, with all his faults, was a skilful soldier, had expected, it found the enemy unprepared. The battle that followed was stubbornly fought. A thunderstorm that occurred in the course of it helped to decide it in favour of the Athenians. Their experience taught them that it was a common incident of the season; the Syracusans,

on the contrary, regarded it as a sign of divine displeasure. The left wing, attacked by the Argive heavy-armed, was the first to yield, the centre was broken by the Athenians, and before long the whole army was in retreat. The conquerors did not pursue them far, checked as they were by the hostile cavalry. Nor were the Syracusans so shattered as to forget to detach a force for the protection of the temple on the Olympieion, which had a rich treasury. The Athenians, after burning their dead, fifty in number, bivouacked for the night. On the following day the enemy sent a herald to ask for the bodies of those who had fallen on their side. These numbered two hundred and sixty. Nicias attempted nothing further, but reembarking his army, returned to Catana. The campaign for that year was over. One thing was clear to him. He must have some cavalry if he was to hold the field at all against the Syracusans. Accordingly he sent home a requisition for this, and for a fresh supply of money, while he set himself to get as much as he could of both on the spot.

When we take stock of the results of four months' operations, we see that next to nothing had been effected. In the way of local help little had been obtained. Some of the cities, which had been expected to be friendly, had stood aloof; not one of those that were doubtful had come over. Nothing had been done towards the investment of Syracuse. One success in the field was all that had been gained.

Five months of inaction now followed, probably an inevitable loss of time, but one that was most damaging to the invading force. Nicias received, indeed, the reinforcement of cavalry for which he had asked. (It will hereafter have to be considered how it was that they started without this necessary arm. The omission is all the more strange seeing that Nicias and his colleagues had only to requisition what they wanted.) He attempted to win over Messené, but failed. A democratic revolution had been plotted, but Alcibiades, who was of course in the secret, had put the aristocrats on their guard, and the attempt was crushed. This was the beginning of the damage

that Alcibiades was to do to the undertaking to which he had persuaded Athens. At Camarina a formal argument was held, Hermocrates representing Syracuse, and Euphemus, whose name, if we translate it by 'fair-spoken,' was curiously appropriate, pleading for Athens. The point debated was practically this: Is Syracuse or Athens more likely to interfere with the independence of Camarina? Their arguments may be thus epitomized:—

HERMOCRATES.—'The professions of the Athenians are a sham. How is it that they are so anxious to befriend Leontini, a colony of Chalcis in Eubœa, while they keep Chalcis itself in slavery? How can they pretend to champion Ionians against Dorians here, when they tyrannise over Ionians in Asia? Their claims are obviously false. This scheme of theirs does but come from that insatiable ambition which has already enslaved their kinsmen at home and now seeks to add Sicily to its victims. Show them that you are not Ionians, only fit to be handed over from one master to another, but Dorians with a birth-right of freedom. Perhaps you think that it would be well that Syracuse should be humbled. Yes; but remember that whatever she suffers you will suffer next, for you are her neighbours. You say that you are bound to the Athenians by alliance. But the alliance is for defence, not aggression. So much I have said to show why you should not help them. Do not think to stand neutral; if we are victorious, we will take care that that policy shall not answer; if we fall, you will be rewarded for your inaction by being made slaves.'

EUPHEMUS.—'Between Ionians and Dorians there has always been enmity. We found it to be so, and we seized the opportunity of the victory over the Persians to rid ourselves of the unjust predominance of Sparta. At the same time we established our own supremacy over the island states. This was in their interest, for we were their best protectors; and it was in our interest also, for had they not aided the Persians in attacking us? This latter reason—our own safety—brings us here. Only it acts differently here and there. There

we had to make these states subject to us. You we desire to make independent. It would not answer our purpose to weaken you. The stronger you are, the better for us, because the worse for Syracuse. For it is Syracuse that both we and you have reason to fear. We, because she will ally herself with our enemies at home; you, because she desires to establish an imperial sway over Sicily. It was the fear of this that made you seek our alliance in past years. Do not reject this alliance now. You will surely miss it when there are no Athenian auxiliaries at hand to help you against a powerful and ambitious neighbour.'

The Athenian pleader was right so far—Syracuse was dangerous to the smaller states of Sicily. He was less successful in showing that there was good reason for the interference of Athens. The plea of self-preservation, protection against a possible alliance of Dorians from Sicily with Dorians of the Peloponnesus, was a sham. Every one must have known that Athens could best protect herself by keeping her forces at home.

In the face of this conflict of probabilities and interests, Camarina thought it best to declare her neutrality.

With the tribes of independent natives in the centre of the island, Nicias was more successful. It was their obvious interest to play off Athens against Syracuse. Of the two Athens could certainly harm them less, because she was further away. They sent provisions and money to the camp at Naxos. Envoys were sent to Carthage to invite help, but without success. Some auxiliaries were obtained from the maritime cities of Etruria.

The Syracusans were far more successful in their application for help. Their first petition was naturally to their own mother city, Corinth. The envoys were received in the most friendly manner, the Assembly deciding to send commissioners of their own to accompany them to Sparta and support their plea with the utmost energy. At Sparta they found unexpected assistance. Alcibiades was there. He had

come by the invitation of the government, sent, doubtless, in reply to a suggestion of his own, and protected by a safe-conduct. His policy had been so strongly anti-Spartan that he naturally hesitated before taking this step, but the feeling that dominated him—the passionate desire to revenge himself upon his own countrymen—prevailed. The Syracusan envoys had made their petition for help, and found but an indifferent response. The government was ready with advice—Syracuse had better not make terms with the Athenians—but it was disinclined to send troops. It was at this point that Alcibiades intervened with a most persuasive speech. Here it is in an abbreviated form,—

'Let me first set myself personally right with you. I renewed the friendship which my ancestors had repudiated. I did all that I could for your countrymen when they were prisoners; you requited me with hostility. Then and then only did I act against you. Doubtless you suspect me as being a partisan of democracy. That I am, so far as opposition to tyrants goes. But of democracy itself I am no friend. But how could I attempt to change our system of government when we were at war with you?

'Now let me tell you what we hoped to do. No one knows this better than I, for I helped to plan it. We were to begin by conquering Sicily; after this we were to attack the Greeks in Italy; from Italy we were to go on to Carthage. This, or most of it, done, we were to attack the Peloponnesus. We should bring with us a great host of Sicilian and Italian Greeks, and of barbarian tribes. Our fleet would blockade your coasts; our armies would take your cities. Then we were to become undisputed masters of Greece. This was our scheme, and you may be sure that the generals that are left will do their best to carry it out. You alone can hinder them. If Syracuse falls, nothing can save Sicily and Italy, or, indeed, you. My advice, therefore, is this: send an army to help Syracuse, and, what is still more important than an army, a general to take the command. Renew your war with Athens, and so prevent her

from sending reinforcements to Sicily. Occupy and fortify Deceleia. This will intercept a large part of the revenues of Athens.'

Alcibiades ended by attempting to vindicate his conduct in thus acting against his country. This argument I may omit. The speech convinced its audience. It was resolved to send an army in the spring. This was to be commanded by a certain Gylippus, who proved himself, as we shall see, eminently worthy of the choice.

## CHAPTER VII

### ENERGY OF THE ATHENIANS

The cavalry which was dispatched from Athens early in the year was to be horsed in Sicily. Attica was too hilly a region, and had, for the most part, too light a soil, to be suitable for the breeding of horses. We may be certain, therefore, that at all times, when any large number was wanted, they would have to be procured elsewhere. After the beginning of the war the native supply must have ceased altogether, nor could it have had time to be renewed in the few years that had elapsed since the peace. It is difficult to suppose that a man so experienced as Nicias could have forgotten this necessary arm when making his requisitions for the expedition. Probably it had always been intended to find horses in the island, which, indeed, was famous for its breed, and one of the results of the unfriendly reception given to the expedition was the disappointment of this expectation. This important defect was now, however, remedied, and the generals began the new campaign with energy.

This campaign it was possible to carry on in one way only. The city had to be invested. During the winter the Syracusans had been busy on a work which rendered this operation more laborious and difficult. This was a new wall, built about a thousand yards in advance of the wall of Gelon, and reaching from the cliffs on the southern side of the Bay of Thapsus down to the Great Harbour. This wall had to be matched, so to speak, by an Athenian wall of equal length—I might say greater length, seeing it had to cover more ground. So far the attacking side was at a great disadvantage as compared with the position which it might have occupied if the advice of Lamachus, given in the previous summer, had been followed. If the Syracusan generals had followed up this measure of defence with another, and had occupied the high

ground of Epipolae, first with an armed force, and then with a fort, a siege would have been rendered almost impossible. This precaution they neglected, nor did Nicias think of seizing this point of vantage till he was on the point of beginning his operations. He anticipated, indeed, the Syracusan generals, but he anticipated them by but a very short time. A detachment of six hundred picked troops from the city had been told off to occupy Epipolae, and were about to march for that purpose when intelligence reached the officer in command that the Athenians had taken possession of it. On the preceding night, so long had the step been delayed, Nicias and Lamachus had embarked a force at Catana, landed them on the south side of the Bay of Thapsus, and, marching up the north-eastern slope by which Epipolae was approached from the sea, had occupied the position in force. The Syracusans were not disposed to acquiesce without a struggle in the loss of this commanding position. The detachment spoken of was led by the officer in command to the attack. But it had to march in haste nearly three miles, it had to breast the hill, and it found the enemy strongly posted. The assault failed, with the loss of the leader and half his men. The besiegers were able to erect forts without molestation at a spot called Labdalum, situated on the southern cliffs of the Bay of Thapsus, and at Tyke, a commanding position in the Epipolae region, including one to be called the Circle. This last was to be, it seemed, the central point from which the investing lines were to start, being drawn north-ward to the Bay of Thapsus, southward to the Great Harbour.

The Athenians had always enjoyed, and appear to have deserved, a high reputation for the celerity and skill with which they conducted siege operations. Their vigour now terrified the Syracusans, who saw the lines which were to shut them in pushed forward with an astonishing speed. They approached with the intention of delivering an attack, but the Athenians promptly accepted the challenge, and presented so orderly and imposing an array that the Syracusan generals, contrasting it with the disorder in their own undisciplined



ranks, did not venture to give battle. They retired, but left some troopers to harass the besiegers. These brought out their own cavalry, and in the skirmish which followed the latter had the advantage. This is the first and last appearance of the Athenian cavalry in the story of the siege.

The Circle Fort—if fort it was—was next finished. This done, the investing line was pushed northward towards the shore at Trogius, one part of the soldiers building the wall, another carrying timber and stone, which they deposited according as materials would be required. Though these occupations must have put them at a disadvantage in the face of a vigilant enemy, Hermocrates did not venture to risk a battle. A defeat would have caused such discouragement as to imperil the safety of the city, and he felt compelled to adhere to a more prudent policy. His plan was to push an intercepting wall from the Syracusan fortification across the line of circumvallation; this, or at least a palisade, which would serve the same purpose for a time, he hoped to finish before the Athenians could hinder him. This intercepting wall was to be between the Circle Fort and the southern end of the Outer City, at a spot where there was a temple of Apollo surrounded by a grove (temenos) of olive trees, and known accordingly as Apollo Teminites. Hermocrates succeeded in finishing this work; perhaps I should rather say, was allowed to finish it without interruption. The heavy-armed soldiers belonging to one of the city tribes were told off to guard it, and the remainder of the army retired within their own line.

Nicias, however, had no intention of allowing this interruption to continue. While the enemy was busy with the work, he could pursue his own operations undisturbed, nor did he care to challenge a conflict for which he could detach but a portion of his forces, the other portion being wanted to protect the circumvallation. An opportunity was sure, he thought, to occur of attacking the new wall with success. Nor was he disappointed. The garrison soon began to relax its vigilance. The inaction of the Athenians had put it off its guard. It

seemed as if it would be allowed to keep the position, just as it had been allowed to occupy it, without interruption. By degrees the customary watches ceased. The soldiers of the garrison, instead of manning the wall, took their ease in tents which they set up behind it to shelter them from the sun. Some even stole away at mid-day to take their meal and the siesta which followed it at their own homes. Here was the opportunity for which the Athenian generals had been waiting. They selected three hundred heavy-armed soldiers, with a number of light-armed similarly accoutred for the occasion, and sent them to attack the wall, covering the movement by a demonstration of their whole force, one half being detached to watch the postern gate at which the intercepting wall began, the other being ready to check any sally that might be attempted from other parts of the city. The assault, delivered as it was with the rapidity for which the Athenians were famous, was completely successful. The garrison, taken by surprise, fled in hot haste along the inner side of the wall towards the postern gate. The storming party followed in pursuit, and overtook them. Some were adventurous enough to press through the postern gates along with the fugitives; some soldiers from the main division, which had reached the gate at the same time, doing the same. Here, however, they met with a check. The Syracusans were in force inside the wall, and drove out the intruders with some loss. But the wall and the stockade which covered it were destroyed, the Athenians carrying off the materials to be used for their own walls. The same day an aqueduct which partially supplied the city with water was destroyed.

But the plan of the intercepting wall was not to be given up. It was a necessity to the besieged, if they were to save the city from being blockaded, and another attempt was made to construct one. The first had been pushed across Epipolae as far as the cliffs in which that region terminated. These cliffs were now strongly occupied by Nicias, and another direction had to be taken. This time the building party, starting as before from the wall, but from a lower point,

traversed the low-lying ground west of the city till they reached the River Anapus. Again they were allowed to complete their work without interruption, and again they had the mortification of seeing it destroyed. On the former occasion the attack had been timed for the noonday meal and rest; on this it was made before dawn. Lamachus was in command, Nicias, as we shall see hereafter, being on the sick-list. Lamachus came down from the fort which commanded the cliffs of Epipolae into the low ground, his men carrying planks and door panels to help them across impassable portions of the marsh. It had been arranged that the fleet should have its anchorage in the Bay of Thapsus, and sail round into the Great Harbour. This movement had a two-fold purpose—to divert the attention of the Syracusan army, and to threaten the defenders of the new wall on the flank. While the fleet was on its way, the wall was attacked and carried. The Syracusan army sallied from the city to retake it, and a general action followed. Once more the superiority of the Athenians, a well-disciplined force, strongly leavened with the veterans of many campaigns, asserted itself. The right wing of the Syracusans was driven to take refuge within the line; the left, including the cavalry, retreated along the river bank towards the bridge by which, as has been already mentioned, the road to Helorus was carried across the stream. A body of Athenian heavy-armed, on the initiative, it would seem, of the subordinate officer in command, hurried to intercept them. But the Athenians became disordered by the rapidity of their movement, and the hostile cavalry, seizing the opportunity, charged with such energy as to drive them back on the right wing of the main army. This also was disordered by the impact of the fugitives, and the fortune of the day seemed about to change when Lamachus, who was in command on the left wing, came to the rescue with the Argive heavy-armed and as many archers as he could collect on the spur of the moment. His arrival restored the Athenian superiority, but the help that he brought cost his countrymen dear. Pressing to the front with characteristic impetuosity, he found himself with but a few

followers on the further side of a dyke. There he was slain by a Syracusan horseman. A few moments afterwards the Athenians came up, but the enemy had by this time crossed the bridge, carrying the dead body of Lamachus along with them.

Fighting was not yet over for the day. The Syracusans, encouraged by the check administered to the Athenian right, made a sally against the Circle Fort. The movement was unexpected, and the garrison was probably weaker than usual, some of the troops serving for the day in the ranks of the main army. The outworks of the fort were carried, and the fort itself might have been captured but for the presence of mind of Nicias, who happened to be on the spot, an attack of illness preventing him from taking the field. By his orders a pile of timber and some battering-rams which lay in front of the walls were set on fire. The flame checked the advance of the enemy, and served also as a signal of help required to the army engaged in the lower ground. At the same time the Athenian fleet was seen to sail into the Great Harbour. This diversion was immediately effective. The Syracusan generals, anticipating an attack on their quarters, recalled all their troops, and retreated within their lines.

It is difficult to estimate the loss which Athens suffered by the death of Lamachus. The extraordinary change in the prospects of the enterprise which took place between the beginning of the campaign and the battle in which he met with his end—a period of some three months—was largely due to his energy and enterprise. When he died, Athens was within a measurable distance of success. We may be entirely convinced that the whole affair was a piece of madness, on the ground that no permanent occupation of the island was possible, and yet feel that if Lamachus had been permitted to have his way when he advised an immediate attack on Syracuse, a great victory might well have been won. That first chance was missed, and now when it seemed possible that the mistake might have been retrieved, the army lost its most vigorous leader. There is something else to be said. It was a fortunate

thing for the moment that illness had kept Nicias at the Circle Fort just when his sagacity and experience were found to be particularly useful. But the cause that detained him from the field of battle had the most disastrous consequences.

We happen to know from the sufferer himself the nature of his disease. It was an affection of the kidneys. There is no ailment that is more apt to cloud the brain. In some trouble of this kind, it is believed, may be found the mysterious cause which from time to time in Napoleon's latter days seemed to paralyse the great soldier's energies. Nicias was no Napoleon, and was wholly unequal to the conduct of the great enterprise which was forced upon him, but there were occasions on which he would not have failed so disastrously as he did if he had had full command of his mental and bodily energies.

For the moment, however, the fortunes of Athens were in the ascendant. The Syracusan forces had been proved to be manifestly unequal to their antagonists; so unequal, indeed, that for a time their commanders did not venture to risk an engagement. The investing wall was not wholly finished—the northern portion, from the Circle to the Bay of Thapsus, never was completed—but not much remained to be done. It reached, or was soon about to reach, from the Circle down to the Great Harbour. Four-fifths, we may say, of the land circuit of Syracuse was blockaded; the remaining fifth was, in a way, open. But the egress and ingress thus left was not by any means easy or convenient. Everything had to pass by the narrow neck of ground which connected Epipolae with the high lands of the interior. It only remained for Nicias to occupy this by a fort—and it is impossible to imagine why he did not—and Syracuse would have been practically cut off from communication with the outer world.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SPARTA TO THE RESCUE

Syracuse had enjoyed a period of almost unbroken peace for nearly fifty years. She had had difficulties with other Greek cities, and had been threatened at one time by the ambitious schemes of a native prince, but had never actually felt the privations of a siege, or, indeed, any of the inconveniences of warfare. This accounts for the want of discipline that we have observed in her citizen soldiers, and even for the profound discouragement which prevailed. The question of surrender began to be discussed, and informal negotiations were opened with the Athenian commanders through persons whose politics led them to regard the possibility of submission without abhorrence. The peace-party indeed was but small, while the democracy, which was opposed to surrender, was overpoweringly strong. Hence there was no serious division to interfere with the defence. Nevertheless, the hope of making successful resistance was rapidly growing weaker. The prospects of the besiegers, on the other hand, were daily brightening. Most of the Greek cities of South Italy abandoned their attitude of indifference or hostility, and furnished supplies in abundance. The Etrurian maritime cities actually sent, in the shape of three fifty-oared ships-of-war, the help which they had promised at an earlier time, while the native tribes gave in their adherence. But Nicias, no longer having the energetic Lamachus at his side, neither considered seriously the willingness of the Syracusans to treat nor pushed the siege with vigour.

At Sparta and Corinth the cause of the besieged city was given up as lost. It was reported that the investment was complete, and that surrender was now merely a question of time. Gylippus, the Spartan, who had been struggling in vain to overcome the indifference of his countrymen, was still (in

June 414) waiting for the complete equipment of the Corinthian fleet—for it was to Corinth, rather than to Sparta, that he looked for help. He had, however, four ships ready, two of them Spartan, two Corinthian, and with these he resolved to start. It was too late, he feared, to help Syracuse, but the Greek cities in Italy, which would be the next to be attacked, might yet be saved. Crossing the sea without misadventure, the Athenian ships being otherwise engaged, he put into Tarentum. This city was a Spartan colony, and for this reason, and also because Gylippus had many personal friends in it, it welcomed him with enthusiasm. At Thurii he met with a very different reception. The pro-Athenian party in this city was now dominant, and Gylippus could make no impression on the government. After leaving Thurii, he encountered a violent storm which drove him far to the south. Narrowly escaping shipwreck, he made his way back to Tarentum. Here he had to beach and refit his ships. This loss of time might well have proved fatal to the enterprise. But Nicias, by his negligence and supineness, let slip the opportunity that fortune had put in his hands. It seems that both he and the government of Thurii, from whom he heard that Gylippus was approaching, failed to appreciate the gravity of the incident. An adventurer who had no more than four ships with him seemed little better than a pirate. It was not worth while to take precautions against any mischief that he might do. The more acute Alcibiades had seen what powerful help there would be in the mere name and presence of a Spartan general.

Gylippus now learnt that the danger threatening Syracuse had been exaggerated. The city was not completely invested, and might still be entered by way of Epipolae and the ridge that connected it with the high lands of the interior. Of course it was open to him still, as it had always been, to run the blockade of the Athenian ships and to make his way into the city by sea. Probably this seemed too hazardous. A Spartan was naturally more at home on land, and it was by land that he resolved to make the attempt. He sailed through the Strait of Messen . Even here he found no Athenian ships on guard. A

small squadron of four arrived, indeed, at Rhegium shortly afterwards, but he was then out of reach of pursuit. Shortly afterwards he sailed along the north coast of the island, his destination being Himera, the only city of importance on that side of Sicily. There he hoped to levy a force strong enough to give him a chance of making his way into Syracuse, even against the resistance of the besiegers. Nor was he disappointed. The announcement that he was a Spartan and came on behalf of his country obtained for him a hearty welcome. Himera consented to join him with a muster of her own citizens, and to furnish with arms and armour such of his sailors and marines as wanted them. If a summons was sent to Selinus to send her whole available force to a specified spot on the line of march. A small contingent came in from Gela, and a thousand men from some of the native tribes, among whom, owing to the death of a friendly chief, Athens had lately lost ground. The whole force amounted to about 3000. With this he marched across the island, and making his way along the ridge that led into Epipolae, effected unopposed a junction with the Syracusan army.

The besieged had received notice of his coming from the captain of one of the ships belonging to the Corinthian squadron. It had been left behind to repair an accident when the rest of the squadron set sail, but contrived, escaping the Athenian blockade, to reach Syracuse in advance. It arrived just in time. The Syracusans were deliberating in public assembly on the question of surrender, and were inclined to consent to it. The news that Gylippus was on his way to relieve the city made a complete change in their feeling. They now determined to resist to the last. It was not long before Gylippus was seen to be approaching. The whole armed force of the city marched out to meet him.

It is useless to speculate on the causes which led Nicias to permit these operations to be conducted without any attempt at resistance. Nothing, indeed, can be suggested as probable, except the inertia produced by the disease from which we

know him to have been suffering. He knew of the mission of Gylippus; he must have heard from the commander of the small squadron sent to the Strait of Messen  that he was on his way, and he must have been able to conjecture, almost with certainty, the route that he would take. He was not taken by surprise, for Gylippus must have spent some time in collecting his troops. And yet he made no effort to stop his advance. No attack was made upon him during his march, although, as Himera was not less than a hundred miles from Syracuse, there must have been many opportunities. Nor was there any attempt to block the one road, narrow and difficult though it was, by which Syracuse could be approached. A stranger instance of negligence in an experienced soldier cannot be found in the whole history of warfare.

The Spartan general, who at once took over the supreme command of all the Syracusan forces, lost no time in making a demonstration of his strength. He approached the Athenian line with his army in order of battle. The besiegers, astonished though they were for a time by his unexpected appearance, did not refuse the challenge, but took up a position in front of the wall. Gylippus then sent a herald with the proposition that if the Athenians would evacuate Sicily within five days, they would be allowed to do so without molestation. To this Nicias did not condescend to make any reply. This proceeding took up some time, and gave the Spartan what he probably wished to have—an opportunity of estimating the quality of the troops under his command. This did not satisfy him, and he accordingly retired to some more open ground nearer the Syracusan lines. Here he could more easily man uvre his inexperienced infantry and have the help of his cavalry. Nicias did not venture to follow him. This was really to acknowledge defeat. The garrison of the city had come outside the walls, and he declined to engage it; the capture of the city itself was plainly impossible. The inaction of the besiegers seems to have so improved the morale of the Syracusan troops that on the following day Gylippus made another demonstration in front of the line of investment. The

besieging army made no movement in return. While it was thus occupied, the Spartan general attacked and captured the fort of Labdalum, putting all the garrison to the sword. The same day there happened another incident ominous of the end. One of the ships of the blockading squadron was captured.

## CHAPTER IX

### DECLINE OF THE ATHENIANS

I have already related how two attempts were made by the Syracusans to cut off the investing line of the besiegers by a cross wall and how both had failed. A third attempt was now made by Gylippus. From the Circle Fort southward to the Great Harbour the Athenian wall was complete; of the northern portion, from the Circle to the Bay of Thapsus, much remained to be done. It was here, then, that Gylippus set to work. He began at a point some 500 yards south of the northern end of Epipolae, and succeeded in carrying it beyond the Athenian fortifications. Not only did his men work with untiring energy, but their general also kept the besiegers employed by constant demonstrations against their works. Within a month or so of the arrival of the Spartan commander, the prospect of capturing Syracuse was practically lost.

Nicias acknowledged so much by the next step that he took. He fortified the promontory of Plemmyrium, the southern arm of the Great Harbour. Up to this time the Athenian ships had been stationed at the point where the blockading wall touched the Great Harbour. From this spot they had kept up their watch over the Inner Harbour with its two entrances. The new station was much more convenient. It gave more accommodation, and was more conveniently occupied, but it practically meant that the investment of the city on the land side was no longer possible. And it had this positive disadvantage—there was no water supply, and there was no wood at hand. For both of these necessities the crews

had to range for considerable distances inland, and were, consequently, exposed to incessant attack from the force which occupied the Olympieion. At the same time desertion became more easy. The ships were largely manned by slaves. These had never had any reason for not escaping, except the difficulty of doing it safely, and this difficulty was now removed. Besides the slaves there were many foreigners in the crews. These would be faithful to their service as long as they were paid, and as long as they saw a prospect of success. Their pay was still regular, but success was evidently becoming to all observers more and more doubtful. We shall see before long how these causes operated to destroy the effectiveness of the Athenian fleet.

A gleam of success now brightened the prospects of the Athenians. Gylippus, after challenging an engagement several times to no purpose, ventured to attack the Athenian lines. He met with a severe repulse. The battlefield was ill chosen, for it did not give space enough for the arms in which he was especially strong—cavalry and skirmishers—to be properly utilised. He confessed his mistake in the Assembly next day, and by thus accounting for his defeat did away with much of its injurious effect. 'It is monstrous,' he said in conclusion, 'to suppose that we, men of the Peloponnesus and Dorians as we are, should not be able to drive out of the country this rabble of Ionians and islanders.'

A few days afterwards he did something towards making his boast good. This time it was Nicias who attacked, encouraged, doubtless, by his former success. But Gylippus had chosen his ground better. He had plenty of room for the movements of the skirmishers and the cavalry. The latter charged and broke the left wing of the Athenians, and the engagement ended in the hurried retreat of the whole army. On the night of this same day the intercepting wall was carried beyond the Athenian line. Practically the investment was at an end; the besiegers had not been able to hinder the completing

of the wall, and it was not likely that they would capture it when it was completed.

The remainder of the Corinthian squadron now arrived; the crews were disembarked, and helped in completing the defences of the city. The most important of the new works was the construction of a fort at Euryalus, the western extremity of Epipolae. Communication with the interior was thus secured, while, at the same time, the Athenians were cut off from the Bay of Thapsus. Gylippus felt confidence enough in the position of affairs to quit the city for a time, in order to visit various cities from which he hoped to obtain reinforcements. Meanwhile, at his suggestion, the Syracusan ships were manned, and daily practised in naval manœuvres. Already able to hold their own on land, the Syracusans now hoped to meet the enemy successfully on his own element—the sea.

Nicias, on the other hand, was profoundly discouraged. His army was shut up within the lines, for it could not venture forth in the face of the enemy. It was even doubtful whether, should that enemy receive any considerable reinforcements, it would be able to resist an attack. The fleet, it was true, still commanded the sea, but, as has been before mentioned, it was deteriorating in efficiency. The crews were growing weaker; the ships, which had to be kept continually afloat, were suffering from want of cleaning and repair. A strong man, so circumstanced, would probably have given up the enterprise as hopeless, and evacuated his position while it was still possible to do so in safety. But Nicias was not a strong man; he feared responsibility. He left, as we shall see, the Assembly to make a decision which he ought to have made himself. One thing, however, was evident. If he was to stay, he must have reinforcements. This he put plainly to the people. Thucydides has preserved the dispatch which he sent him when the second campaign was drawing to an end. It is doubtless a *verbatim* copy of the original. The speeches with which Thucydides intersperses his narrative probably represent with sufficient fidelity the thoughts of the speakers. Possibly they do not all

stand on the same level of probability. Some of the debates the historian must have himself heard. Of others—that, for instance, which took place in the Syracusan Assembly—he must have had but a general report. All are greatly shortened, unless politicians in Greek cities were much more given to brevity than they have been in any other age or country. But the dispatch of Nicias is probably exactly as he wrote it, and is, from every point of view, a highly interesting document. It runs thus:—

'Of what has happened up to this time you have been kept informed, men of Athens, by frequent dispatches. The present crisis is such as to need on your part, when you have been told how matters stand, a not less full deliberation. We defeated in frequent engagements the forces of Syracuse, and it was against Syracuse that we were sent, and we constructed the fortified lines which we now occupy. Then Gylippus, the Spartan, came with an army raised partly in the Peloponnesus, partly in some of the Sicilian cities. Him, too, we conquered in our first engagement; in the second we were so overwhelmed by a multitude of cavalry and javelin-throwers that we had to retreat within our lines. We have been thus constrained, by the superior forces of the enemy, to suspend our investment of the city and indeed all action. Having to keep some of heavy-armed to guard our lines, we cannot bring our whole force into the field. Meanwhile, the enemy have carried a single intercepting wall across our line of investment. Unless we can attack and storm this wall, we cannot finish our line. In fact, things have come to this pass—we profess to be besieging others; we are in fact besieged ourselves. By land we are certainly so, for the cavalry do not leave us free to move. More than this, the enemy has sent envoys to the Peloponnesus to ask for more help, and Gylippus himself is going on a tour of the Sicilian cities. He is trying to bring over the neutral, and to obtain additional help in soldiers and ships from the friendly. It is, I understand, the purpose of the enemy not only to assail our lines, but to attack our ships.

'You must not think it strange to hear that they are actually going to take the offensive even by sea. When we came, our fleet was in excellent condition. Our ships were dry; the crews were excellent. Now our ships are leaky, having remained too long at sea, and our crews greatly depreciated.

'First, as to our ships. We can never haul them ashore to refit; for the enemy's fleet, equal, if not superior, in numbers, is always ready to attack. They can keep their ships high and dry, for they are not maintaining a blockade; we are bound to have all our fleet always afloat. It is only a vast superiority of numbers that could enable us to keep one fleet on guard and another under repair. If we relax our vigilance in the least, we risk losing our supplies, which are already brought close under the walls of the city, and, therefore, with no little difficulty.

'Second, as to the crews. They have been, and still are, wasting away from various causes. Of our citizen seamen, many have been cut off by the enemy's cavalry, either when they were fetching wood and water, or when they were pillaging. The slaves desert now that we are no longer superior to the enemy; the foreigners whom we have induced to enter our service leave us to make their way to one or other of the neighbouring cities. Those who joined us, tempted by high pay to make a profit rather than to fight, change our service for that of the enemy, or stray away somewhere in the wide area of Sicily. Others, again, while they busy themselves in trafficking on their own account, bribe their captains to take slaves for substitutes. You know as well as I that a crew never remains for long in a really good condition; of the first-class seamen, the men who take the time from the stroke-oar, there are but few.

'Of all these troubles the worst is, that I, as your general, can find no remedy for the mischief. Athenians are not easy to manage; nor can I find, as the enemy can easily do, recruits to fill the vacant places. We have only the force that we brought with us at the first from which to make good our



losses and to supply present needs. Naxos and Catana, our only allies, are but insignificant places. If the enemy secure one further advantage, if the cities in Italy, from which we now draw our supplies, turn against us, in the conviction that our condition is hopeless, and no reinforcement comes from you, we shall be starved out; the enemy will gain a complete victory without even having to fight for it.

'I could easily have sent you a more agreeable account of our fortunes, but not a more useful. It is absolutely necessary, if you are to deliberate to any good purpose, that you should have a full knowledge of the state of our affairs. And it is, I feel, the safer policy to tell you the undisguised truth, for I am well acquainted with your temper. You hate, indeed, to hear any but the most favourable accounts, but you are furious if, in the end, the results are not favourable. Do not doubt but that the force which you sent out at the first has done itself credit as to both officers and men. But now all Sicily is united against us, and fresh forces are coming from the Peloponnesus; this is the prospect before us, and remember that we are no match even for those whom we now have against us. Either tell us to come home or send us a reinforcement of men, as well as ships, equal to our present strength, and with it a large supply of money. And send a successor to myself; I am incapable of service, suffering as I am from a disease of the kidneys. I think that I have a right to ask this favour of you; while my health lasted, I did you much service in various commands. And whatever you do, do it without delay, as soon the spring begins. The help which the enemy is expecting from Sicily, or which will come from the Peloponnesus, will not be here, indeed, as soon as that; yet, unless you are on the watch, it will forestall your action, as it has done already.'

Athens was, it seems, too deeply committed to the Sicilian undertaking to draw back. To persist in the face of such a story as Nicias had told them in the dispatch given above seems to us, who can view the circumstances without

passion, little better than madness. But it was passion that distorted the popular judgment. The pride and the anger of the people forbade them to draw back. They did exactly as other nations have done in a similar situation—as we did when the American colonies struggled for their independence, and we persisted in the conflict long after it had become absolutely hopeless; as Spain did recently, carrying on a war for years in Cuba which was as hopeless as it was ruinous both to herself and to her colony. The Assembly refused to supersede Nicias in the command, but named two subordinate officers, who were already serving in the expedition, to assist him in his duties. Reinforcements to the full extent demanded were to be sent out as soon as possible in the spring. Two fresh commanders were named—Eurymedon and Demosthenes—the latter being, perhaps, the most distinguished soldier that the city then possessed. Eurymedon was to go out at once—it was then mid-winter—with twelve ships of war and 120 talents of money.

## CHAPTER X

### HELP FROM ATHENS

Early in the spring the Athenians sent out the promised help. The reinforcement consisted of sixty Athenian and five Chian ships-of-war, of 1200 heavy-armed soldiers from the citizen roll, and a number, not given by the historian, of troops furnished by the subject allies and by Argos. Light-armed troops were to be levied among the friendly tribes of Acarnania, and 1500 Thracians were also engaged for the same service. These latter arrived too late to accompany the expedition, and when they came, it was found impossible, so exhausted was the treasury, to pay them. They were therefore sent home. It was a stupendous effort, all the more wonderful because the pressure of war, withdrawn for a time by the peace of Nicias, was now renewed, and the Peloponnesian forces had again invaded Attica, while they fortified the fort of Deceleia (p. 65). Yet, in addition to the armament intended for Sicily, another squadron was ravaging the coasts of the Peloponnesus, and yet another was watching the exit from the Gulf of Corinth. Still there was not a ship or a man more than was wanted. Not only were reinforcements from the Peloponnesus and elsewhere on their way to Syracuse, but the besiegers had suffered a great disaster, entailing losses which it is not too much to call irreparable.

Gylippus, who had been busy during the winter raising troops in Sicily, had returned to Syracuse early in the spring. He counselled a bold policy. 'It is by boldness,' he told the Syracusans, 'that your enemies have won their successes; it is in boldness that you will find the best method of dealing with them.' By this argument he prevailed upon them to make a simultaneous attack on the besiegers by land and sea. The Small Harbour had two divisions. From one of these forty-five, from the other thirty-five, ships-of-war sailed out to

engage the Athenian fleet. This, which had not expected to be so challenged, was taken by surprise. Nevertheless, the ships were hastily manned, and went to meet the enemy. There were sixty in all as against the enemy's eighty. For a time the fortune of the day seemed to go with the Syracusans, but they were wanting in skill and practice, and they were demoralised by success. The Athenians recovered from the confusion of the first shock, for which, as I have said, they were not prepared, and inflicted a serious defeat upon the enemy, who lost eleven ships, with most of their crews, three Athenian men-of-war being also destroyed. But this victory was more than counterbalanced by the loss of the forts on Cape Plemmyrium. This loss came about in a way that makes us think that Nicias was but badly served by his subordinates. The garrisons crowded down to the water's edge when the Athenian ships were being manned, and left the forts insufficiently guarded. Gylippus had probably observed some such defect of discipline before, and made arrangements to take advantage of it. He attacked the forts at daybreak, and captured the largest with ease. The other two were deserted by their garrisons. A vast amount of stores was taken with them, not the least important being the masts and sails of forty ships-of-war, and the hulls of three ships which had been drawn up on land, probably for repairs. The historian distinctly asserts, doubtless on the authority of persons who had served in the expedition, that no incident in the war was more disastrous to the Athenian fortunes, or caused more profound discouragement. The actual loss in stores and money must have caused great inconvenience. What was yet worse was this: with Ortygia on one side of the entrance to the Great Harbour, and Plemmyrium on the other, in the enemy's hand, no supplies could be brought in without at least the risk of a fight. Yet the Athenians got all their supplies in this way, and the time was come when a fight was as likely to end in a defeat as in a victory. The Athenians were now hemmed in within a very narrow space, their position being bounded by the river Anapus on the south, and their own wall of investment on the

north. The shore of the Great Harbour between these two points could not have been more than 1200 yards in length. Here all the ships-of-war were drawn up. Their rear seems to have been protected.

Small skirmishing operations went on. These it is not necessary to describe in detail, especially as the losses and gains were almost equally balanced. It must be remembered, however, that for an invading force, so far away from its base as was the Athenian armament, merely to hold its own practically meant defeat. One considerable advantage, however, the Athenians gained, or, rather, they escaped a danger which, in their enfeebled condition, might have caused their immediate ruin. About a month before, envoys had been sent from Syracuse to invite help from the other Sicilian cities. These had been well received everywhere, except in Catana and Naxos, which they probably did not visit, and in Agrigentum, which adhered to a policy of neutrality. A body of more than 2000 heavy-armed collected, and began its march to Syra-cuse. But Nicias was on the alert; he prevailed upon the native tribes, through whose territory the force had to pass, to lay an ambush for them. The result was the loss of about two-fifths of the number. Demosthenes, with the relieving force, was now well on his way. Gylippus had all along intended to make a concerted effort to destroy the Athenian armament before the reinforcements arrived. The discouragement produced by the loss first mentioned induced him to postpone the execution of his plan for a short time; but when he heard that Demosthenes was but two or three days' sail distant, he felt that there must be no further delay. The time, however, had not been lost. A Corinthian seaman, of great practical skill, Ariston by name, had suggested an important change in the equipment of the ships belonging to the Syracusans and their allies. The conditions of a sea fight in the limited area of the Great Harbour were very different from those which prevailed when two fleets met in the open sea. Put briefly, in the former case it was a trial of strength, in the latter a trial of skill. The Athenian ships were built for rapid

manœuvring. It was no part of naval tactics, as their skilful seamen understood them, to meet an enemy's vessel beak to beak. They did not seek to make a direct impact, and they evaded it from an adversary. Well-trained rowers and experienced helmsmen enabled the captain to avoid an advancing foe, and then by some rapid evolution to take him on the flank, striking him on some weak spot, or crashing into his banks of oars. For this purpose the prow of the ship was made narrow, with a long, projecting beak, very sharp, but hollow and thin, calculated to pierce, but only where the timbers were comparatively weak. But this mode of fighting, of which an admirable example may be found in the victory won by Phormio in the early years of the war, was impracticable in the narrow space within which the approaching battle would have to be fought. It was to this situation of affairs that Ariston addressed himself. The long, light beak, elevated so as to strike the enemy high above water-mark, was exchanged for one much shorter, heavier, and stronger, and placed much lower. The opposing ships must, he foresaw, meet directly, and the victory would go, not to the more skilfully manœuvred, but to the more strongly built.

These preparations completed, Gylippus proceeded to deliver his attack. He marched out of the city at the head of the whole available force and threatened the rear of the Athenian lines. At the same time, the garrison of the Olympieion made a demonstration on their right flank. While their attention was thus occupied, they saw the Syracusan fleet come out of the Inner Harbour, eighty strong, and ready for action. They manned their own ships and went out to meet them. That day nothing decisive occurred, but the Syracusans had a slight advantage in the desultory fighting.

Prudence would have suggested to the Athenians that they should decline a conflict to which, enfeebled as they were, they were terribly unequal. But national pride was against such cautious counsels. Nicias, who is said by Plutarch to have argued for this course, was overruled by his two

colleagues. The next day passed without any movement, but on the third the Syracusan fleet repeated the proceedings of the first. Nicias, meanwhile, had done what he could in the way of preparation. One precaution which he took turned out to be very useful. He protected the approach to the mooring ground of his ships by stationing some merchant vessels at intervals of 200 feet. These were provided with heavy beams armed with massive iron heads, which could be dropped on any hostile ship that attempted to pass.

At first it seemed as if the Syracusan captains intended nothing beyond making a demonstration. They avoided anything like a general engagement, retiring to the city when the Athenians advanced to meet them. But arrangements had been made to give the crews a meal on the shore. This was taken in haste, and the ships were then manned apart, and moved forward to the attack. The Athenians, who seem to have been very badly provisioned, for many of them were still fasting, hurried on board. Even then the enemy avoided a decisive conflict, till the Athenian captains, losing all patience, assumed the offensive. What Ariston had anticipated took place. The heavier prows and beaks broke down the weaker. In another way the Syracusans had the advantage. They had a number of dart-throwers on their ships, and these kept up a destructive discharge of missiles on the Athenian decks. A number of little boats, too, took part in the action, the men who manned them throwing their darts through the port-holes. In the end the Athenians had to give way. They lost seven ships, and would have lost more but for the protection afforded by the merchant vessels.

And now, just when things were at their very worst, help arrived.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NEW ARMAMENT

Nothing could have exceeded the astonishment, one might almost say the dismay, with which the Syracusans and their allies beheld the entrance of Demosthenes with his fleet into the Great Harbour. The new armament came with all the pomp of war. The ships were handsomely adorned, the armour glittered in the sun, the flute-players gave time to the rowers with an inspiring tune. And, indeed, it was a magnificent effort. There were seventy-three ships of war, and these carried soon heavy-armed, besides a great number of light troops, archers, slingers and javelin-throwers, with the requisite engines of war. That Athens beset with foes, with an invading army actually within sight of her walls, should send such a force on so distant an expedition was indeed astonishing.

The encouragement given to the besieging army, if we may use the term of what was itself practically besieged, was proportionately great. But the newcomers were dismayed at the condition of things which they saw. It was almost desperate; if it was to be retrieved at all, it must be retrieved by an immediate effort. Demosthenes realised how terrible was the mistake which the generals had made in not attacking the city when they first arrived and while they still possessed their full strength. That mistake he must not repeat. He must strike at once, before his resources had begun to waste, and while the enemy were still impressed by the unexpected magnitude of his armament. He resolved, therefore, at once to attack, and if he failed to raise the siege and go home.

One thing was distinctly encouraging—the Athenians had, for the time at least, recovered their superiority. Neither by sea nor by land did the Syracusans venture to encounter them. Demosthenes accordingly took the offensive. The first

necessity was obviously to beat down or capture the intercepting wall which the besieged had built. Demosthenes began by attacking it in front, using the usual methods of a siege—the battering-ram and other engines. Nothing could be effected in this way. The engines were burnt by the enemy; the storming parties were repulsed. The other alternative was to turn the position by attacking the fortification at its western extremity where it terminated in the fort with which the Syracusans had occupied the neck of land so often mentioned in this narrative. This was a difficult operation, almost impossible, in the face of the enemy, to be effected, if effected at all, by a surprise. He therefore resolved on a night attack; to this his colleagues consented. He took the command himself, Nicias remaining within the lines. Besides a very considerable force of heavy and light-armed troops, he had with him some masons and carpenters, as it would be necessary, should he make himself master of the position, to occupy it permanently. Starting not long after sunset on a moonlight night, and making a long circuit that his movements might be neither seen nor heard, he reached Euryalus, the fort on the ridge. The surprise was complete. The garrison, after a very feeble resistance, evacuated the position. Some were slain, the rest succeeded in escaping to three redoubts which had been erected in rear of the wall. Shortly after a battalion of heavy-armed, under the command of Hermocrates, whose special duty it was to be ready for all emergencies, came up, but it was charged and routed by the Athenians. The wall was now in possession of Demosthenes, and the artisans whom he had brought with him began to pull it down. If he could have maintained his position till this operation was completed, the object of his movement would have been attained. Unfortunately he was not content with this success. Anxious to complete the rout of the enemy, he pressed forward with an eagerness that threw his troops into confusion. For a time, indeed, all went well. Gylippus hurried up from the city with some fresh troops, but could not withstand the impetuous charge of the Athenians. It was the Bœotians, says

Thucydides, with marked emphasis, suggested doubtless by earlier events, who first checked the Athenian advance. A forward movement followed, and the Athenian van was hurled back upon the troops that were coming up from behind, and communicated to them their confusion and terror. A scene of wild confusion followed. A night attack is a great success if it succeeds, but, if it fails, the failure is ruinous. This was attempted on a scale which far exceeded any previous experiences in the war, and the disaster in which it ended was proportionately great. The night, as has been said, was moonlight, and the combatants could, in a way, see both each other and the locality in which the battle was being fought. But moonlight is deceptive, and is far more useful to those who know the ground than to those who do not. Then, again, the loud and incessant shouting of the Syracusans made it impossible for their adversaries to hear the words of command, and without direction they could not act with any effect. Then the watch-word of each army became known to the other. Here, again, the Syracusans had the advantage. Being at home they had a better chance of learning the watchword of the Athenians than the Athenians had of learning theirs. When they challenged, they often found the enemy at a loss to answer; challenged themselves, they frequently contrived to escape. Another fertile cause of terror and loss was the battle-cry. There were not a few Dorians in the Athenian army, men from Argos, Corcyra and other countries, and these used a battle-cry closely resembling that of the enemy. The Athenians hearing it raised, it might be, close to them, were as much confused and alarmed as if the enemy himself had been at hand. Not unfrequently they actually came to blows with their own friends and allies. The result of all this was a general rout. The path by which the attacking force had reached the battlefield was steep and narrow, and the hurrying crowd of fugitives choked it completely. Many leaped down from the cliffs and were killed, others lost their way and were killed next day by the

Syracusan cavalry. One historian estimates the Athenian loss at a total not short of two thousand.

The victorious army, their confidence now fully restored, entertained no doubt of being able to destroy the invaders. But they thought it best to spare no pains to ensure the result. Gylippus started on another tour to solicit help, and an envoy was sent to Agrigentum, which, it was hoped, was about to renounce its neutrality.

Meanwhile, in the Athenian camp, Demosthenes was urging with all his powers the adoption of the second of the two alternatives which he had set before them immediately on his arrival. The first had been attempted, and had failed. An assault which he had made with all his available strength, and which he could not hope to repeat under circumstances equally favourable, had been repulsed with loss. The second remained to be tried. For the present it was still practicable. The new ships had restored them the command of the sea, and the season—it was now probably August—was not too far advanced for a prosperous voyage. On the other hand, it was useless and even perilous in the extreme to remain. The army was utterly discouraged, and sickness was rife among them, for they had come to the most unhealthy season of the year. At home, where the invaders had established a fortified fort in Attica itself, they were sorely wanted.

Nicias vehemently opposed this proposal. He acknowledged, and indeed he could not deny, the deplorable state of the armament, but he maintained that the enemy was not better off. They were sorely pressed for want of money, and must give in sooner or later if the Athenians firmly persisted in their purpose. He had received assurances from the pro-Athenian party in Syracuse which did not permit him to doubt that this was the fact; under these circumstances it would be bad policy to go; it would be perilous, for the purpose, once adopted, would soon become generally known, and at Athens such a step would excite the greatest anger. 'Those who will have to decide,' he went on, 'will look at the

matter from a point of view very different from ours. We know the circumstances of the case, and they do not. Yes, and the very men who are now crying out the loudest about the danger in which they stand will then alter their cry and declare that the general betrayed their country for a bribe. I know my countrymen; I would far sooner die here with credit by the hand of the enemy than meet a criminal's doom at Athens.'

Nicias was doubtless right in his anticipations of what would happen at home, and he was in possession of facts that proved the financial exhaustion of Syracuse. His friends in the city had furnished him with these. He could assert that it had already spent 2000 talents and owed a large sum in addition. These things were, it is true, no adequate answer to the imperious necessities which Demosthenes urged; but they seem to have convinced the generals who had been commissioned to act before the arrival of Demosthenes, for though Eurymedon supported Demosthenes, Nicias had a majority in the council of war.

Demosthenes then fell back on another proposal—let them at least leave their present position on the Great Harbour, and return to Catana and the Bay of Thapsus. 'We shall not be shut up,' he said, 'in the close quarters in which we are now. We shall have the enemy's country to ravage at our pleasure, and we shall have the open sea in which to manœuvre our ships.' Nicias again opposed, and again carried the majority with him. He saw, doubtless, that to abandon their present position was virtually to raise the siege.

And so the armament remained where it was, doing nothing, but gradually losing its strength and energy. Nicias probably persuaded himself that his anticipations of a financial crisis in Syracuse were well founded. To us such hopes seem ridiculous; history teaches us that a victorious state can always command money for its necessities, or dispense with it. But the really overpowering motive of his conduct was his dread of public opinion at home. Brave in the field, he was timid in the Assembly, and he did not dare to confront his angry

countrymen at home. He had made himself responsible for the expedition, and the charge of mismanaging it, whether true or untrue, would be held to have been proved. Results were against him, and it is by results, as he well knew, that a popular assembly is accustomed to judge. There was, it is probable, scarcely a man in the army but was eager to go, but Nicias went on hoping against hope and refused to give the word. Perhaps he had a 'plan,' such as General Trochu secretly cherished during the Siege of Paris, possibly this plan was the hope—as it is said to have been in the case of General Trochu—of a Divine interposition in favour of a person so eminent for piety as himself.

So things went on for nearly another month. Then Gylippus returned to Syracuse with a considerable reinforcement, consisting partly of contingents sent by Sicilian cities, partly of a body of Peloponnesian heavy-armed which had come by the roundabout way of Cyrene and the North African coast. His arrival settled the disputed question of retreat in favour of the counsel of Demosthenes. Nicias still clung to his hopes or his 'plan,' but he had nothing to urge in support of them and he could not but give way. No council was held, but it was unanimously agreed to go. Preparations for departure were made with secrecy and speed, and things were nearly ready when there occurred an eclipse of the moon. The day was August 28th (B.C. 412).

It would be a mistake to suppose that the superstitious fears of Nicias availed on this occasion to overrule a general anxiety in the army to depart. Possibly, if it had come to a question, he would have positively refused to move in the face of what seemed to him so direct a prohibition. But he was not by any means alone in his feeling. On the contrary, he had the majority of the army with him. Indeed, there seems to have been no difference of opinion. Whatever Demosthenes and Eurymedon may have thought, they did not attempt to go against the general feeling. It was decided on the advice of the

sooth-sayers to make a delay of twenty-seven days, and to perform during that interval various expiatory sacrifices.

The irony of the situation lies in the fact that, according to the best opinion on the subject, Nicias and the army were wrong. An eminent soothsayer, Philochorus by name, who flourished at Athens about a century later, gave it as his opinion that for an enterprise requiring secrecy an eclipse was of the happiest significance. Possibly, if the adviser to whom Nicias had been accustomed for many years to go for advice had been still alive, this interpretation, so rational, or at least so convenient, might have been suggested. If it had, Nicias, we may be sure, would have had no difficulty in inducing his countrymen to accept it.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LAST STRUGGLE

The Syracusans, we may be sure, were well aware that the invading force intended to go but had delayed the execution of their purpose. Such an intention was a clear confession of defeat and inferiority, and it naturally encouraged the victorious side to push their success to the furthest. The Athenians must not be allowed to take up another position where they could be more free to do mischief; on the contrary, they must be attacked where they were, and destroyed. Gylippus accordingly had the ships-of-war exercised for a few days till the crews were, he thought, sufficiently perfect in their duties. This done, he made a demonstration of his land forces against the Athenian lines, but without obtaining, or indeed aiming at, any important result. On the day after, a great and practically decisive battle was fought. The whole of the Syracusan army marched out of the city and took up a position threatening the Athenian lines; the whole of the fleet ranged itself outside the stockade within which was the Athenian ships-of-war. In numbers there was

no very considerable difference, the Syracusans having seventy-six triremes, the Athenians eighty-six. In efficiency the advantage was largely on the side of the former. The crews were at their full complement, fresh, vigorous, and made efficient by practice. Eurymedon, who was in command of the Athenian right wing, endeavoured to outflank the squadron opposed to him. This was doubtless a favourite manœuvre with Athenian seamen, but it required more space than the Great Harbour afforded. The enemy, who had by this time broken through the Athenians' centre, replied by a movement directed against Eurymedon's own left, and ultimately hemmed him and his squadron in a recess of the harbour, known by the name of Dascon. Eurymedon was slain and his squadron destroyed. The same fate nearly overtook the whole, or nearly the whole, of the Athenian fleet. Few of the ships were able to get back to the stockade; by far the greater part were driven ashore or grounded by their own crews at various points in the Great Harbour, where they were liable to attack by the land forces of the enemy. Gylippus saw his opportunity and hurried down with his troops to the water's edge, his object being to prevent the escape of the crews of the stranded ships, and at the same time to give the Syracusan captains time to secure the ships themselves. But the haste with which the troops moved threw them into confusion. Some Etrurians, who were on guard along the Athenian lines, sallied out against the foremost as they passed and routed them. As others arrived the men from within the line came out in greater numbers. A general battle followed, and the victory remained with the Athenians, who were able to save the ships and the crews. As it was, eighteen vessels were lost, the whole of the crews being either slain or captured. An attempt to destroy the Athenian station by a fireship was made the same day, but failed.

The Athenians were now almost in despair, for they had been conclusively beaten on their own element. They now recognised how insane was the enterprise on which they were embarked. It was not only the strength of the cities which they had attacked that made them feel how hopeless was the

undertaking, there was also the fact that these cities had a political constitution resembling their own. On this fact Thucydides insists, and it is, as I have pointed out before, a significant comment on the average morality of Greek politics. A democratic state attacking one that was governed by an oligarchy might count with certainty on finding allies in the party that was out of power. The experience was too common to call for comment. But in Syracuse the democracy was all powerful, and the democracy was fiercely hostile to Athens. The Syracusans, on the other hand, were full of exultation and pride. They began actually to take that wider outlook into the general affairs of Greece with which the Athenians had credited, or pretended to credit, them when they resolved on the expedition. 'We must attack and disable them,' had been the argument of Alcibiades and his friends, 'or they will come over here, and, by siding with our enemies, turn the scale of power greatly against us.' In all probability the Sicilian cities had never entertained any such purpose, though the thought may have crossed the mind of a far-seeing statesman such as was Brasidas. But the unprovoked attack that had been made upon them inevitably suggested it. Syracuse felt that she had earned the gratitude of the Greek cities, which her victory would most certainly liberate from Athenian domination—that Athens should still hold her own after the destruction of the Sicilian armament seemed impossible—and her ambition was flattered by the thought that hereafter she would share with Sparta and Athens the leadership of Greece.

We have already heard of the magnificent scheme of conquest which Alcibiades entertained, or with which, anyhow, he credited himself, when he proposed the expedition against Syracuse to the Athenian Assembly. The actual scale of this conflict was scarcely inferior in magnitude. And not less remarkable than the number was the variety of the combatants, so many were the tribes engaged in the struggle, and so great the confusion of kinship among them. I have relegated to a note the remarkable passage in which



Thucydides sets forth this state of things; it is too interesting to omit, but it would here interrupt the sequence of the narrative.

The Syracusans now felt that the whole Athenian force was practically in their power, and they proceeded to secure it by blocking up the entrance to the Great Harbour, a space of about 1600 yards, with a small islet about half way. A line of ships-of-war, merchant vessels and craft of various kind, anchored and chained together, was constructed obliquely across it. The work took three days to complete, and apparently no attempt was made by the Athenians to interrupt it. When it was finished the necessity for immediate action became imperative. Only a small quantity of provisions was in stock. Further supplies had been countermanded in view of their intended departure. Countermanded or not, they could hardly have been introduced with the entrance to the harbour blockaded. Two alternatives were before them—to burn their ships and retreat by land, or to make an attempt to break the blockading line. The first approved itself to many, but it was reserved for the last effort; the ships were to be tried once more. The first step was to contract their lines within the narrowest compass. Only so much as was absolutely necessary to hold the troops was retained. The object was, to make as many men as possible available for manning the ships; the numbers detailed for guarding the walls being reduced to a very small amount. Every ship that was in any sense serviceable was to be utilised, and men of all ranks and arms were compelled to man them. Each vessel had a double complement, one being its usual crew and the other consisting of heavy-armed bowmen and javelin-throwers; the heavy-armed being stationed on the prow with grappling-irons. These they were to throw on to the enemy's ships as soon as collision had taken place, with the intention of holding them fast, and so preventing a second blow. Nicias reviewed his forces when they were prepared for action. He saw that they were eager to fight; they must either fight or be starved; but it was too evident that theirs was the eagerness of despair, not of confidence or hope. He did his best to encourage them.

'You,' he said, 'are fighting for your lives and your country, as really as are the enemy. Unless you conquer you cannot see your homes again. Yet do not despair. You know the changes and chances of war. You have had many of its evil turns; look now for the good. We have provided against the advantage possessed by your enemies in their stronger ships, and in the narrow space where the battle will be fought. You are to be soldiers on shipboard rather than sailors. It is a sad change for Athenians, but you must adapt yourselves to it. You, heavy-armed men, grapple the enemy's ships and hold them fast till they have been boarded and captured. You, seamen and oarsmen, do your best. You are more numerous and you are better defended on deck than you were in the last battle. Allies, fight for the country which has made you share all the benefits of its empire. Athenians, remember that this is the last hope of your country. Here is its all. Win this battle, for the occasion can never return, either for Athens or for you.'

Thucydides very probably received a report of this oration from one of those who heard it delivered. It is less easy to imagine how he became acquainted with the substance of what Gylippus, in Syracuse, said to his men. The topics on which he enlarged were such as would occur to a speaker on such an occasion. Former successes were a pledge of victory. They had vanquished the enemy when he was in the full tide of confidence; much more easily will they repeat the success when he is only thinking of escape. Now was the time to take a just revenge for a most wanton attack, and to ensure for the future that such an attack would never be repeated.

Nicias took command of the forces that were retained to garrison the lines. The fleet he handed over to his colleagues—Demosthenes, Menander, Euthydemus. But before it started he made a special appeal to the captains. He knew that all depended on the result of that day's struggle, and he felt that no preparation could be sufficient, no exhortation to energy too urgent, when the issue was of so transcendent an importance. All the officers and citizens of high birth and

station were personally known to him. He knew the parentage, the circumstances, and the personal record of each. To some he recalled their own achievements; to others he spoke of the achievements of their fathers and ancestors. To all he appealed by the memory of family, home and country, by all sacred associations, both human and divine.

The battle that followed was fiercely fought; the numbers of the opposing fleets were much the same as they had been in the last conflict. Some of the Syracusan troops were told off to guard the line of blockading vessels; others were stationed about the harbour to act where they might be wanted. Volunteers from the city manned a number of smaller craft and took their share in the conflict, being especially useful in saving or destroying the crews of disabled triremes, according as they belonged to friends or enemies. The shore and the city walls were lined with crowds of spectators, who eagerly watched the varying fortunes of the fight. The Athenian ships steered straight for the mouth of the harbour. There was an open space in the barrier, left, doubtless, for the passage of ships. Against this they directed their attack. So energetic was it that the line of ships set to guard the barrier was broken through, and the Athenian crews began to destroy it. But the other squadrons crowded in upon them, and compelled them to desist in order to defend themselves. For a time the struggle was something like that which was usually seen in a naval battle. The oarsmen rowed with all their might, the steersmen used all their skill. But it seldom happened that when one ship met another in conflict that they became separated again. While they were approaching each other the slingers and archers were busy; once locked together by the grappling irons, it was the heavy-armed that took up the struggle. Sometimes one ship would be engaged with a single adversary, sometimes with two or more. Sometimes the conflict was of her own choosing, sometimes it came about by accident. It was a sailor's or rather a soldier's battle. There was no manœuvring, no room for the skill of the officer who commanded the squadron, or the captain who had the single

ship in charge. All over the harbour there were 200 ships engaged in a narrow space of scarcely two square miles—a number of furious struggles, each like a small pitched battle, were taking place.

A battle in which the combatants were so numerous, which could be seen from so small a distance, and of which the issues were so momentous, was watched by the spectators on the shore with breathless interest. With the Athenians it was a matter of life and death. Had it been a mere spectacle, it would have had an entrancing interest; what it was to men whose all depended upon it, can hardly be imagined, certainly not described. The historian tells us how they shouted encouragement when they saw their own side victorious, how they cried aloud and wailed when they witnessed the defeat of countrymen and friends; how, while they watched some struggle not yet decided, they showed, by swaying their bodies to and fro, how intensely they sympathised with each variation of the strife.

At last it became evident with whom the victory was to remain. All the Athenian ships were beaten back; some were able to get to the stockade which protected them; others were captured before they reached it; many had already been sunk. The loss on the Athenian side was a loss of 56 ships out of a total of 116; the Syracusans had 50 left out of 76. So overwhelming was the blow that the defeated did not even beg a truce for the burial of their dead. Even the pious Nicias had no thoughts to spare for this duty, one of the most solemn obligations that the Greek mind recognised.

Demosthenes, however, had not lost his energy. He proposed to Nicias that with the sixty ships remaining they should make another effort to break the barrier. Nicias consented, but the soldiers flatly refused to embark again. Their one hope now was to escape by land.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE END

Escape might still have been possible, if all energy had not been beaten, so to speak, out of the defeated army. Once again the want of discipline which was so conspicuous in the citizen soldiers of Syracuse might have served the Athenians well. Hermocrates, who was evidently a man of remarkable ability, saw how inexpedient it was to allow an army which had done, and might do yet again, so much damage to Syracuse, to escape and renew the war from a position of greater advantage, say from the country of the independent native tribes. He strongly represented this view to the generals in command, urging them to occupy positions on the route which the Athenians would have to take in escaping. They thought that he was right, but were sure that the plan could not be carried out. They might order their troops to march, but the troops would certainly not obey. A great victory had been gained, finally delivering the city from a terrible danger which had been long hanging over it. The occasion was one that called for joyous celebration. It happened also to coincide with the great festival of Heracles, and the combined attraction to revelry was such as it would be useless to contend against. If the Athenian army had started that night, they might, for the time at least, have made their escape. But Hermocrates had recourse to a stratagem which, thanks to the credulity of Nicias, succeeded. He sent some friends of his own with a message to the Athenian generals, purporting to come from their correspondents within the city. This was to the effect that the Syracusan army had occupied some strong points on the route, and that the Athenians had better make proper preparations for overcoming this obstacle to their escape. Nicias, who had always been too ready to give credence to communications proceeding from this quarter, took the

message as genuine, and acted upon it. The order to march, if indeed it had been given, was countermanded. Such delays, once permitted, are apt to be extended. The next day was also lost. There was indeed much to be done. It was only natural that the soldiers should try to select their most valuable and most portable property to take with them, and they had also to provision themselves for the march. At the same time the pitiable necessities of the situation tended to delay. The dead had to be left unburied; the sick and wounded had to be abandoned to the mercy, or rather the cruelty, of the enemy. Such resolutions, if time is once taken to think about them, are not carried out in a moment. If on the night of the battle in the Great Harbour all the able-bodied men had hurriedly crammed into their haversacks such food as came to their hands, and left everything else except their arms behind, the starting might have been effected in an hour. As it was, it did not take place till the morning of the second day after the battle.

Thucydides draws a harrowing picture of the scene of departure. To leave the body of friend or comrade without due rites of sepulture was shocking to the best sentiments of the Greek. But when he had to desert the sick and the wounded, all of them bound to him by the associations of a common service, some of them friends, among them, it might well be, a kinsman, or a brother, even a father, or a son, it was a blow that struck deeper still. Those who were being left behind seemed to themselves to be losing a last hope of safety. It was not so in reality. The doom of such as were able to go was not less terrible or less instant than the doom of those who were compelled to remain. But these helpless ones did not think so, and they made piteous appeals to their more vigorous comrades not to desert them. Such as still possessed any feeble remnant of strength followed their departing friends as far as they could, and only dropped behind when they were utterly exhausted. If this was a deplorable spectacle, that of the army as it marched was not hopeful. A mixed multitude of forty thousand struggled along, loaded, many of them, to the utmost capacity of their strength with the property from which they

could not bring themselves to part. These encumbrances diminished their fighting power. So also did the necessary burden of food which the horse soldiers and the heavy-armed were forced, contrary to habit, to carry; forced, because the slaves who usually were charged with this duty could not be trusted. It was a lamentable contrast between all this misery and the splendid, even boastful, promise with which, little more than two years before, the armament had sailed out of the Peiraeus.

All that was best and noblest in the character of Nicias made him rise to the occasion. He addressed the soldiers in words of sympathy, comfort and encouragement. 'Do not despair,' he said; 'men have been saved out of circumstances even worse than these. You see to what a condition my disease has reduced me; yet I, deprived though I am of all the advantages of prosperous fortune, and on a level with the meanest soldier, yet I still hope. And one of my reasons is this: I have never failed in my duty to the gods, and therefore I fear the dangers of the situation less than their magnitude might seem to warrant. Surely our enemies have had their full turn of good fortune, and we have suffered enough to have satisfied the jealous wrath of heaven. Remember, too—I speak to the heavy-armed—how many there are of you, and how excellent is your quality as soldiers. There is no city in this island that can repulse your attack, or drive you away if you are bent on remaining. Keep your firmness and order; let every man remember that the spot on which he stands is his fortress. We have but small store of food, therefore we must press on day and night till we reach the country of the friendly natives; friendly to us because they are bound to be enemies of Syracuse. We have sent a message to them, begging them to meet us with a supply of provisions. And now, bear yourselves like men if you would save your own lives and restore the falling fortunes of your country. There is no state to which you can flee for shelter; but the real essence of a state is not to be found in walls or ships, but in men.'

The order of march was in squares, the heavy-armed enclosing the camp-followers and the rest of the multitude. Nicias led the van, Demosthenes the rear. The first incident was the passage of the Anapus. Here they found a force of Syracusans and allies posted, but were able to dislodge it and cross the river. Continuously attacked by the cavalry and skirmishers, they moved slowly, very slowly, on, the whole distance accomplished in the day being but five miles. Starting early next day they marched about two miles and a half. They had now but little food left, and as their march would be for some time to come over a country without springs or streams, they were obliged to provide themselves with water. While they were searching for these necessaries, the Syracusans occupied in force a pass through which they would have to make their way. The road here was over a steep hill, with precipices on either side. That day the Athenians made no further advance. On the morning of the third they attempted to move forward, but were so harassed by the cavalry and the light-armed troops of the enemy that after a day of incessant fighting they could do nothing but return to their encampment of the night before. On the fourth day they did succeed in, at least, approaching the fortified pass mentioned above. But they found a Syracusan force, many files deep, drawn up in front of it. It was in vain that they tried to force their way. The heavy-armed of the enemy formed a solid obstacle in their front, and they were incessantly harassed by the missiles showered upon them from the javelin-throwers, who occupied the rising ground on either side. Frequent thunderstorms completed their confusion and dismay. Two years before, as Grote remarks, they had viewed this phenomenon with indifference. Now, such was their depression, they regarded it as a sign of the anger of heaven. They defeated, indeed, an attempt to block their retreat, and made their way back again to the level ground on which they had encamped. The next day, the fifth, they again attempted to march, but suffered so much from the incessant attacks of the enemy that they could not accomplish even a mile, and returned to their encampment.

That night Nicias and Demosthenes resolved on a change of plan. Their purpose hitherto had been to reach the interior, where they hoped to get help from the independent native tribes. They now altered the direction of their march, which was to be the southern coast of the island, to the neighbourhood of Camarina and Gela. Employing the familiar device of leaving their camp fires burning, they started that same night. The start was not made without much panic and disturbance. The van, under Nicias, was the more successful of the two divisions of the army in keeping together and in making progress. At dawn they reached the sea. Arrived at the river Cacyparis they found the ford staked and guarded by some Syracusan troops, but forced their way over, and reached another stream named the Erineus. Nicias's division had now got a start of about six miles over that of Demosthenes'. The latter had been overtaken by the Syracusans, who had started in pursuit of the Athenian army immediately on discovering the change of route. (Their first impulse had been to accuse Gylippus of a treacherous understanding with the enemy.) The Athenians turned to defend themselves. When they did so, a detachment of the enemy hurried forward and got between the two divisions of the retreating army. Demosthenes and his troops found what seemed a temporary shelter in an orchard of olive trees surrounded by a wall. But the spot afforded no real protection, for the light-armed troops of the enemy occupied the walls and poured showers of missiles into the crowded ranks. When they sought to leave the enclosure, they found the exit strongly guarded. Late in the day Gylippus and his colleagues proclaimed that any islander in the Athenian army surrendering himself would be allowed to go free. Some few accepted the offer. Afterwards a general capitulation took place, the terms being that no prisoners should be executed or done to death by intolerable conditions of imprisonment or by starvation. Six thousand surrendered on these conditions. The prisoners gave up their money, of which they still had so much as to fill the hollows of four shields, and were escorted back to the city.

The next day the Syracusan forces came up with Nicias, and summoned him to surrender on the terms which Demosthenes had accepted. He refused to believe what they told him, but sending, by permission, a horseman to ascertain the fact, found that it was true. He then offered, on behalf of Athens, to pay the whole expense of the war, and to leave, as a guarantee for payment, a number of hostages—one for each talent of the indemnity. These terms were refused, and an attack was commenced and continued till evening. The fugitives endeavoured to renew their retreat during the night, but, finding that the enemy had discovered their purpose, they abandoned it. Three hundred men, however, neglecting the order to stop, forced their way through and escaped. The next day at dawn Nicias altered his route somewhat so as to reach the river Assinarus. The thirst of the troops was such that it had to be satisfied at any cost. The river, once reached, became a scene of frightful confusion. The men rushed pell-mell into the stream, heedless of everything, so that they could get to the water. Many were slain by the enemy, who followed them even into the river; some were killed by the spears of their own comrades, against which they fell or were pushed; others were carried down by the stream. Even when the water was fouled with blood and dirt, the wretched fugitives still sought to relieve their thirst with, and even fought with each other for, the nauseous draught. Nothing was left but to surrender. Nicias gave himself up to Gylippus, begging that his helpless soldiers might be spared. The Spartan general issued an order that the massacre should cease, but many were slain before it reached the Syracusan troops. Few of the beaten army escaped, the 300 mentioned above being soon captured. Of Nicias's division only a thousand prisoners were saved for the state, the greater part were seized by private persons and sold for their own profit.

It is not easy to estimate the Athenian loss in killed and wounded—the two words mean much the same in ancient warfare, where we are thinking of the defeated side. The state secured 7000 prisoners, private persons, perhaps, 3000 or 4000

more (chiefly, it would seem, from the detachment of Nicias). Few of those who remained with the main bodies till the end escaped, but many of those who had straggled away on the march were more fortunate. It is not improbable that half of the 40,000 perished during the six miserable days of this most disastrous retreat.

The fate of the survivors was wretched in the extreme. Gylippus made an effort to save the lives of the two captive generals. He would dearly have liked, we may well imagine, to exhibit at Sparta the two most distinguished of Athenian soldiers—one notorious as Sparta's friend, the other as her enemy. But this was not permitted. The Syracusans insisted on their execution, and all that the liberal-minded Spartan could do was to give his prisoners an opportunity of putting an end to their own lives. The other prisoners were confined in certain stone quarries excavated in the southern cliffs of the Epipolae. One pound of wheaten bread and half-a-pint of water was all the provision furnished to them. There they were kept for seventy days, and there they died in crowds. Released when the place became an intolerable nuisance and danger to the city, the survivors were sold for slaves. A few—only, we may well believe, a very few—got back to Athens. Some of them, we are told, won the favour of their masters by reciting the verses of Euripides, a favourite poet among cultured Sicilians. This is the one bright spot in a story of unequalled gloom.

Plutarch, who writes his *Lives of Illustrious Men* in pairs, gives a parallel to Nicias in Crassus, the third member of the so-called First Triumvirate. Some points of resemblance are sufficiently obvious. Both led invading armies; both had some reputation for military skill; both showed themselves incompetent, and both perished miserably, involving thousands of their countrymen in their fall. But the difference between the two is great. Crassus was largely responsible for a war which he had wantonly provoked; Nicias did his best to stop the fatal expedition, but used a method which had the effect of committing him hopelessly to it. As to private worth

there is no comparison. Nicias is the most blameless as he is the most pathetic figure in the long list of Greek statesmen and soldiers.

After remarking that the struggle at Syracuse involved a variety and number of combatants, surpassed only by the great catalogue of tribes and states that took part in the Peloponnesian war itself, Thucydides goes on to say:—

'These many races that came to share in the conquest or in the defence of Syracuse ranged themselves on one side or the other, not from the sense of right or obligation of kinship, but from the accident of private interest or the constraint of superior force. That the Athenians, being of Ionic race, should attack Syracuse, a Dorian state, was natural enough, and with the Athenians, as using the same speech and institutions, came the men of Lemnos, of Imbros, of Aegina (as it then was), and of Histiaea in Eubœa, all of them Athenian colonists. Of the other combatants on this side, some were subjects, others self-governing allies, and others, again, mercenaries. Among the subjects and tributaries must be reckoned the men of the Eubœan cities, Eretria, Chalcis, Styria and Carystus; islanders from Ceos, Andros and Tenos; Ionians from Miletus, Samos and Chios. The Chians, however, were not tributaries; they furnished ships, and served as self-governing allies. Generally speaking, these were Ionic (with the exception of Carystus, which is Aeolic) and of Athenian origin. Subjects they were, it is true, and acting under constraint, but still Ionians, fighting against a Dorian foe. With these were Aeolic contingents from Methymna (which furnished ships but did not pay tribute), from Tenedos and from Aenos, tributary cities both of them. It was under constraint that these Aeolic peoples fought against their own founders, the Aeolic state of Bœotia, which was on the side of Syracuse. One Bœotian city, however, Plataea, ranged itself, in pursuance of an ancient feud, against its Bœotian kinsmen. Then there were two Dorian contingents, the men of Rhodes and of Cythera. The Cythereans were Lacedaemonian colonists, but bore arms on the Athenian side

against the Lacedaemonians serving with Gylippus; the Rhodians, though Argive by descent, were now constrained to fight against the Dorian state of Syracuse, and against their own colonists of Gela, who were serving in the Syracusan ranks. With Athens also were contingents from the islands near the Peloponnese, Cephalonia and Zacynthus, both independent states, but practically compelled so to act by their position as islanders, in view of the Athenian command of the sea. With the Corcyreans it was otherwise. Dorians as they were, and not only Dorians but Corinthians, they openly bore arms against their mother-city of Corinth and their kinsfolk of Syracuse. They made constraint a pretext, but their action was really voluntary, for they hated the Corinthians. The Messenians, as the dwellers in Naupactus were then called, and from Pylos, which was then held by Athens, were enlisted on the Athenian side; so was a small company of exiles from Megara, who thus found themselves opposed to fellow Megarians in the people of Selinus. As to the other Dorian allies, their service was more entirely voluntary. There were the Argives, for instance; they were allies of Athens, it is true, but their real motive was either their enmity to Sparta or considerations of private gain. So, Dorians as they were, they fought, side by side with Ionians, against a Dorian antagonist. The Mantineans and the other Arcadian mercenaries fought, as is their habit, against those whom they were instructed for the time to regard as enemies, and were ready, on this occasion, so to regard the, other Arcadians who were in the pay of Corinth. It was for hire also that the Cretans and Aetolians served. The Cretans found themselves paid to fight against the men of Rhodes, a state associated with their own in the founding of Gela. As for the Acarnanians, some indeed served for pay, but most of them were brought by their regard for Demosthenes and their goodwill to Athens. So much for the nations that border the Ionian Sea. Of the Italian Greeks came the men of Thurii and Metapontum, acting under the necessities of domestic revolution. Of the Sicilian Greeks there were the inhabitants of Naxos and Catana. The barbarians of Egesta

also were there—it was at their invitation that the expedition had come—and the majority of the Sicel tribes. From outside Sicily there were some Etrurians, always on bad terms with Syracuse, and some Iapygian mercenaries. These, then, were the people that fought for Athens.

On the side of Syracuse was Camarina, its next neighbour, Gela, the nearest state beyond Camarina, and—Agrigentum, the next in order, being neutral—Selinus. These cities are on that coast of the island that faces Africa. From the coast facing the Etrurian Sea came the men of Himera, the only Greek city and only ally of Syracuse in that region. All these cities were Dorian, and all independent. Of the native Sicels they were but the few who did not ally themselves with the Athenian invader. Of the Greeks from outside Sicily there were the Lacedaemonians, who supplied a Spartan general and troops, both slave and freedmen. Corinth was the only state that furnished both a fleet and an army. With these came Leucadians and Ambraciots; Corinth also paid some Arcadian mercenaries, and compelled some natives of Sicyon to serve. From Greece outside the Peloponnese came the Bœotians.'

It will be observed that the Syracusan catalogue is much shorter than the Athenian. But the historian tells us that any inferiority in this respect was made up by the wealth and populousness of the Sicilian cities.