EGYPT

Lesson	Chapters
EGYPT001	Chapters 1 to 4
EGYPT002	Chapters 5 to 10
EGYPT003	Chapters 11 to 15
EGYPT004	Chapter 16 to 20
EGYPT005	**Chapter 21 to 27**

XXI. Ethiopia vs Assyria

The miraculous destruction of his army was accepted by Sennacherib as a warning to desist from all further attempts against the independence of Judea, and from all further efforts to extend his dominions towards the south-west. He survived the destruction during a period of seventeen years, and was actively engaged in a number of wars towards the east, the north, and the north-west, but abstained carefully from further contact with either Palestine or Egypt. His son Esarhaddon succeeded him on the throne in B.C. 681, and at once, to a certain extent, modified this policy. He re-established the Assyrian dominion over Upper Syria, Phoenicia, and even Edom; but during the first nine years of his reign the memory of his father's disaster caused him to leave Judea and Egypt unattacked. At last, however, in B.C. 672, encouraged by his many military successes, by the troubled state of Judea under the idolatrous Manasseh, who "shed innocent blood very much from one end of Jerusalem to the other" (2 Kings xxi. 16), and by the advanced age of Tehrak, which seemed to render him a less formidable antagonist now than formerly, he resumed the designs on Egypt which his father and grandfather had entertained, swept Manasseh from his path by seizing him and carrying him off a prisoner to Babylon, marched his troops from Aphek along the coast of Palestine to Raphia, and there made the dispositions which seemed to him best calculated to effect the conquest of the coveted country. As Tirhakah, aware of his intentions, had collected all his available force upon his north-east frontier, about Pelusium and its immediate neighbourhood, the Assyrian monarch took the bold resolution of proceeding southward through the waste tract, known to the Hebrews as "the desert of Shur," in such a way as to turn the flank of Tirhakah's army, to reach Pithom (Heroopolis) and to attack Memphis along the line of the Old Canal. The Arab Sheikhs of the desert were induced to lend him their aid, and facilitate his march by conveying the water necessary for his army on the backs of their camels in skins. The march was thus made in safety, though the soldiers are said to have suffered considerably from fatigue and thirst, and to have been greatly alarmed by the sight of numerous serpents.

Tehrak, on his part, did all that was possible. On learning Esarhaddon's change of route, he broke up from Pelusium, and, by a hasty march across the eastern Delta succeeded in interposing his army between Memphis and the host of the Assyrians, which had to follow the line taken by Sir Garnet Wolseley in 1884, and encountered the enemy, probably, not far from the spot where the British general completely defeated the troops of Arabi. Here for the third time Asia and Africa stood arrayed the one against the other. Assyria brought into the field a host of probably not fewer than two hundred thousand men, including a strong chariot force, a powerful cavalry, and an infantry variously armed and appointed--some with huge shields and covered by almost complete panoplies, others lightly equipped with targe and dart, or even simply with slings. Egypt opposed to her a force, probably, even more numerous, but consisting chiefly of a light-armed infantry, containing a large proportion of mercenaries whose hearts would not be in the fight, deficient in cavalry, and apt to trust mainly to its chariots. In the flat Egyptian plains lightly accoutred troops fight at a great disadvantage

against those whose equipment is of greater solidity and strength; cavalry are an important arm, since there is nothing to check the impetus of a charge; and personal strength is a most important element in determining the result of a conflict. The Assyrians were more strongly made than the Egyptians; they had probably a better training; they certainly wore more armour, carried larger shields and longer spears, and were better equipped both for offence and defence. We have, unfortunately, no description of the battle; but it is in no way surprising to learn that the Assyrians prevailed; Tehrak's forces suffered a complete defeat, were driven from the field in confusion, and hastily dispersed themselves.

Memphis was then besieged, taken, and given up to pillage. The statues of the gods, the gold and silver, the turquoise and lapis lazuli, the vases, censers, jars, goblets, amphorae, the stores of ivory, ebony, cinnamon, frankincense, fine linen, crystal, jasper, alabaster, embroidery, with which the piety of kings had enriched the temples--especially the Great Temple of Phthah--during fifteen or twenty centuries, were ruthlessly carried off by the conquerors, who destined them either for the adornment of the Ninevite shrines or for their own private advantage. Tehrak's wife and concubines, together with several of his children and numerous officers of his court, left behind in consequence of his hurried flight, fell into the enemy's hands. Tehrak himself escaped, and fled first to Thebes, and then to Napata; while the army of Esarhaddon, following closely on his footsteps, advanced up the valley of the Nile, scoured the open country with their cavalry, stormed the smaller towns, and after a siege of some duration took "populous No," or Thebes, "that was situate among the rivers, that had the waters round about it, whose rampart was the great deep" (Nahum iii. 8). All Egypt was overrun from the Mediterranean to the First Cataract; thousands of prisoners were taken and carried away captive; the Assyrian monarch was undisputed master of the entire land of Mizraim from Migdol to Syene and from Pelusium to the City of Crocodiles.

Upon conquest followed organization. The great Assyrian was not content merely to overrun Egypt; he was bent upon holding it. Acting on the Roman principle, "_Divide et impera_," he broke up the country into twenty distinct principalities, over each of which he placed a governor, while in the capital of each he put an Assyrian garrison. Of the governors, by far the greater number were native Egyptians; but in one or two instances the command was given to an Assyrian. For the most part, the old divisions of the nomes were kept, but sometimes two or more nomes were thrown together and united under a single governor. Neco, an ancestor of the great Pharaoh who bore the same name (2 Kings xxiii. 29-35), had Sais, Memphis, and the nomes that lay between them; Mentu-em-ankh had Thebes and southern Egypt as far as Elephantine. Satisfied with these arrangements, the conqueror returned to Nineveh, having first, however, sculptured on the rocks at the mouth of the Nahr-el-Kelb a representation of his person and an account of his conquests.

Egypt lay at the feet of Assyria for about three or four years (B.C. 672-669). Then the struggle was renewed. Tehrak, who had bided his time, learning that Esarhaddon was seized with a mortal malady, issued (B.C. 669) from his Ethiopian fastnesses, descended the valley of the Nile, expelled the governors whom Esarhaddon had set up, and possessed himself of the disputed territory. Thebes received him with enthusiasm, as one attached to the worship of Ammon; and the priests of Phthah opened to him the gates of Memphis, despite the efforts of Neco and the Assyrian garrison. The religious sympathy between Ethiopia and Egypt was an important factor in the as yet undecided contest, and helped much to further the Ethiopic cause. But in war sentiment can effect but little. Physical force, on the whole,

prevails, unless in the rare instances where miracle intervenes, or where patriotic enthusiasm is exalted to such a pitch as to strike physical force with impotency.

In the conflict that was now raging patriotism had little part. Ethiopia and Assyria were contending, partly for military pre-eminence, partly for the prey that lay between them, inviting a master--the rich and now weak Egyptian kingdom. Tehrak's success, communicated to the Assyrian Court by the dispossessed governors, drew forth almost immediately a counter effort on the part of Assyria, which did not intend to relinquish without a struggle the important addition that Esarhaddon had made to the empire. In B.C. 668, Asshur-bani-pal, the Sardanapalus of the Greeks, having succeeded his father Esarhaddon, put the forces of Assyria once more in motion, and swooping down upon the unhappy Egypt, succeeded in carrying all before him, defeated Tehrak at Karbanit in the Delta, recovered Memphis and Thebes, forced Tehrak to take refuge at Napata, re-established in power the twenty petty kings, and restored the country in all respects to the condition into which it had been brought four years previously by Esarhaddon. Egypt thus passed under the Assyrians for the second time, Ethiopia relinquishing her hold upon the prey as soon as Assyria firmly grasped it.

Still the matter was not yet settled, the conflict was not yet ended. The petty kings themselves began now to coquet with Tehrak, and to invite his co-operation in an attempt, which they promised they would make, to throw off the yoke of the Assyrians. Detected in this intrigue, Neco and two others were arrested by the Assyrian commandants, loaded with chains, and sent as prisoners to Nineveh. But their arrest did not check the movement. On the contrary, the spirit of revolt spread. The commandants tried to stop it by measures of extreme severity: they sacked the great cities of the Delta--Sais, Mendes, and Tanis or Zoan; but all was of no avail. Tehrak once more took the field, descended the Nile valley, recovered Thebes, and threatened Memphis. Asshur-bani-pal upon this hastily sent Neco from Nineveh at the head of an Assyrian army to exert his influence on the Assyrian side--which he was content to do, since the Ninevite monarch had made him chief of the petty kings, and conferred the principality of Athribis on his son, Psamatik. Tehrak, in alarm retreated from his bold attempt, evacuated Thebes and returned to his own dominions, where he shortly afterwards died (B.C. 667).

It might have been expected that the death of the aged warrior-king would have been the signal for Ethiopia to withdraw from the struggle so long maintained, and relinquish Egypt to her rival; but the actual result was the exact contrary. Tehrak was succeeded at Napata by his step-son, Rut-Ammon, a young prince of a bold and warlike temper. Far from recoiling from the enterprize which Tehrak had adjudged hopeless, he threw himself into it with the utmost ardour. Once more an Ethiopian army descended the Nile valley, occupied Thebes, engaged and defeated a combined Egyptian and Assyrian force near Memphis, took the capital, made its garrison prisoners, and brought under subjection the greater portion of the Delta. Neco, having fallen into the hands of the Ethiopians, was cruelly put to death. His son, Psamatik, saved himself by a timely flight.

History now "repeated itself." In B.C. 666 Asshur-bani-pal made, in person, a second expedition into Egypt, defeated Rut-Ammon upon the frontier, recovered Memphis, marched upon Thebes, Rut-Ammon retiring as he advanced, stormed and sacked the great city, inflicted wanton injury on its temples, carried off its treasures, and enslaved its population. The triumph of the Assyrian arms was complete. Very shortly all resistance ceased. The subject princes were replaced in their principalities. Asshur-bani-pal's sovereignty was universally acknowledged, and Ethiopia, apparently, gave up the contest.

One more effort was, however, made by the southern power. On the death of Rut-Ammon, Mi-Ammon-Nut, probably a son of Tirhakah's, became king of Ethiopia, and resolved on a renewal of the war. Egyptian disaffection might always be counted on, whichever of the two great powers held temporary possession of the country; and Mi-Ammon-Nut further courted the favour of the Egyptian princes, priests, and people, by an ostentatious display of zeal for their religion. Assyria had allowed the temples to fall into decay; the statues of the gods had in some instances been cast down, the temple revenues confiscated, the priests restrained in their conduct of the religious worship. Mi-Ammon-Nut proclaimed himself the chosen of Ammon, and the champion of the gods of Egypt. On entering each Egyptian town he was careful to visit its chief temple, to offer sacrifices and gifts, to honour the images and lead them in procession, and to pay all due respect to the college of priests. This prudent policy met with complete success. As he advanced down the Nile valley, he was everywhere received with acclamations. "Go onward in the peace of thy name," they shouted, "go onward in the peace of thy name. Dispense life throughout all the land--that the temples may be restored which are hastening to ruin; that the statues of the gods may be set up after their manner; that their revenues may be given back to the gods and goddesses, and the offerings of the dead to the deceased; that the priest may be established in his place, and all things be fulfilled according to the Holy Ritual." In many places where it had been intended to oppose his advance in arms, the news of his pious acts produced a complete revulsion of feeling, and "those whose intention it had been to fight were moved with joy." No one opposed him until he had nearly reached the northern capital, Memphis, which was doubtless held in force by the Assyrians, to whom the princes of Lower Egypt were still faithful. A battle, accordingly, was fought before the walls, and in this Mi-Ammon-Nut was victorious; the Egyptians probably did not fight with much zeal, and the Assyrians, distrusting their subject allies, may well have been dispirited. After the victory, Memphis opened her gates, and soon afterwards the princes of the Delta thought it best to make their submission--the Assyrians, we must suppose, retired--Mi-Ammon-Nut's authority was acknowledged, and the princes, having transferred their allegiance to him, were allowed to retain their governments.

The consequences of this last Ethiopian invasion of Egypt appear to have been transient. Mi-Ammon-Nut did not live very long to enjoy his conquest, and in Egypt he had no successor. He was not even recognized by the Egyptians among their legitimate kings. Egypt at his death reverted to her previous position of dependence upon Assyria, feeling herself still too weak to stand alone, and perhaps not greatly caring, so that she had peace, which of the two great powers she acknowledged as her suzerain. She had now (about B.C. 650) for above twenty years been fought over by the two chief kingdoms of the earth--each of them had traversed with huge armies, as many as five or six times, the Nile valley from one extremity to the other; the cities had been half ruined, harvest after harvest destroyed, trees cut down, temples rifled, homesteads burnt, villas plundered. Thebes, the Hundred-gated, probably for many ages quite the most magnificent city in the world, had become a by-word for desolation (Nahum iii. 8, 9); Memphis, Heliopolis, Tanis, Sais, Mendes, Bubastis, Heracleopolis, Hermopolis; Crocodilopolis, had been taken and retaken repeatedly; the old buildings and monuments had been allowed to fall into decay; no king had been firmly enough established on his throne to undertake the erection of any but insignificant new ones. Egypt was "fallen, fallen, fallen--fallen from her high estate;" an apathy, not unlike the stillness of death, brooded over her; literature was silent, art extinct; hope of recovery can scarcely have lingered in many bosoms. As events proved, the vital spark was not actually fled; but the

keenest observer would scarcely have ventured to predict, at any time between B.C. 750 and B.C. 650, such a revival as marked the period between B.C. 650 and B.C. 530.

XXII. Psamatik I and Necho

When a country has sunk so gradually, so persistently, and for so long a series of years as Egypt had now been sinking, if there is a revival, it must almost necessarily come from without. The corpse cannot rise without assistance--the expiring patient cannot cure himself. All the vital powers being sapped, all the energies having departed, the Valley of the Shadow of Death having been entered, nothing can arrest dissolution but some foreign stock, some blood not yet vitiated, some "saviour" sent by Divine providence from outside the nation (Isa. xix. 20), to recall the expiring life, to revivify the paralyzed frame, to infuse fresh energy into it, and to make it once more live, breathe, act, think, assert itself. Yet the saviour must not be altogether from without. He must not be a conqueror, for conquest necessarily weakens and depresses; he must not be too remote in blood, or he will lack the power fully to understand and sympathize with the nation which he is to restore, and without true understanding and true sympathy he can effect nothing; he must not be a stranger to the nation's recent history, or he will make mistakes that will be irremediable. What is wanted is a scion of a foreign stock, connected by marriage and otherwise with the nation that he is to regenerate, and well acquainted with its circumstances, character, position, history, virtues, weaknesses. No entirely new man can answer to these requirements; he must be found, if he is to be found at all, among the principal men of the time, whose lot has for some considerable period been cast in with the State which is to be renovated.

In Egypt, at the time of which we are speaking, exactly this position was occupied by Psamatik, son of Neco. He was, according to all appearance, of Libyan origin; his stock was new; his name and his father's name are unheard of hitherto in Egyptian history; etymologically, they are non-Egyptian; and Psamatik has a non-Egyptian countenance. He was probably of the same family as "Inarus the Libyan," whose father was a Psamatik. He belonged thus to a Libyan stock, which had, however, been crossed, more than once, with the blood of the Egyptians. The family was one of those Libyan families which had long been domiciled at Sais, and had intermarried with the older Saites, who were predominantly Egyptian. He had also for twenty years or more been an important unit in the Egyptian political system, having shared the vicissitudes of his father's fortunes from B.C. 672 to B.C. 667, and having then been placed at the head of one of the many principalities into which Egypt was divided. In the same, or the next, year he seems to have succeeded his father; and he had reigned at Sais for sixteen or seventeen years before he felt himself called upon to take any step that was at all abnormal, or attempt in any way to change his position.

Familiar with the politics and institutions of Egypt, yet, as a semi-Libyan, devoid of Egyptian prejudices, and full of the ambition which naturally inspires young princes of a vigorous stock, Psamatik had at once the desire to shake off the yoke of Assyria, and reunite Egypt under his own sway, and also a willingness to adopt any means, however new and strange, by which such a result might be accomplished. He had probably long watched for a favourable moment at which to give his ambition vent, and found it at last in the circumstances that ushered in the second half of the seventh century. Assyria was, about B.C. 651, brought into a position of great difficulty, by the revolt of Babylon in alliance with Elam, and was thus quite unable to exercise a strict surveillance over the more distant parts of the Empire. The garrison by which she held Egypt had probably been weakened by the withdrawal of troops for the defence of Assyria Proper; at any rate, it could not be relieved or strengthened under the

existing circumstances. At the same time a power had grown up in Asia Minor, which was jealous of Assyria, having lately been made to tremble for its independence. Gyges of Lydia had, in a moment of difficulty, been induced to acknowledge himself Assyria's subject; but he had emerged triumphant from the perils surrounding him, had reasserted his independent authority, and was anxious that the power of Assyria should be, as much as possible, diminished. Psamatik must have been aware of this. Casting his eyes around the political horizon in search of any ally at once able and willing to lend him aid, he fixed upon Lydia as likely to be his best auxiliary, and dispatched an embassy into Asia Minor. Gyges received his application favourably, and sent him a strong Asiatic contingent, chiefly composed of Ionians and Carians. Both races were at this time warlike, and wore armour of much greater weight and strength than any which the Egyptians were accustomed to carry. It was in reliance, mainly, on these foreigners, that Psamatik ventured to proclaim himself "King of the Two Countries," and to throw out a gage of defiance at once to his Assyrian suzerain and to his nineteen fellow-princes.

The gage was not taken up by Assyria. Immersed in her own difficulties, threatened in three quarters, on the south, on the south-east, and on the east by Babylonia, by Elam, and by Media, she had enough to do at home in guarding her own frontiers, and seeking to keep under her immediate neighbours, and was therefore in no condition to engage in distant expeditions, or even to care very much what became of a remote and troublesome dependency. Thus Assyria made no sign. But the petty princes took arms at once. To them the matter was one of life or death; they must either crush the usurper or be themselves swept out of existence. So they gathered together in full force. Pakrur from Pisabtu, and Petubastes from Tanis, and Sheshonk from Busiris, and Tafnekht from Prosopitis, and Bek-en-nefi from Athribis, and Nakh-he from Heracleopolis, and Pimai from Mendes, and Lamentu from Hermopolis, and Mentu-em-ankh from Thebes, and other princes from other cities, met and formed their several contingents into a single army, and stood at bay near Momemphis, the modern Menouf, in the western Delta, on the borders of the Libyan Desert. Here a great battle was fought, which was for some time doubtful; but the valour of the Greco-Carians, and the superiority of their equipment, prevailed. The victory rested with Psamatik; his adversaries were defeated and dispersed; following up his first success, he proceeded to attack city after city, forcing all to submit, and determined that he would nowhere tolerate even the shadow of a rival. Disintegration had been the curse of Egypt for the space of above a century; Psamatik put an end to it. No more princes of Bubastis, or of Tanis, or of Sais, or of Mendes, or of Heracleopolis, or of Thebes! No more eikosiarchies, dodecarchies, or heptarchies even! Monarchy pure, the absolute rule of one and one only sovereign over the whole of Egypt, from the cataracts of Syene to the shores of the Mediterranean, and from Pelusium and Migdol to Momemphis and Marea, was established, and henceforth continued, as long as Egyptian rule endured. The lesson had been learnt at a tremendous cost, but it had now at last been thoroughly learnt, that only in unity is there strength--that the separate sticks of the faggot are impotent to resist the external force which the collective bundle might without difficulty have defied and scorned.

Psamatik had gained the object of his ambition--sovereignty over all Egypt; he had now to consider how it might best be kept. And first, as that which is won by the sword must be kept by the sword, he made arrangements with the troops sent to his aid by Gyges, that they should take permanent service under his banner, and form the most important element in his standing army. His native troops were quartered at Elephantine, in the extreme south, and in Marea and Daphnae, at the two extremities of the Delta towards the west and east. The new accession

to his military strength he stationed at no great distance from the capital, settling them in permanent camps on either side of the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, near the city of Bubastis. We are told that this exaltation of the new corps to the honourable position of keeping watch upon the capital, greatly offended the native troops, and induced 200,000 of them to quit Egypt and seek service with the Ethiopians. The facts have probably been exaggerated, for Ethiopia certainly does not gain, or Egypt lose, in strength, either at or after this period.

Psamatik, further, for the better securing of his throne against pretenders, thought it prudent to contract a marriage with the descendant of a royal stock held in honour by many of his subjects. The princess, Shepenput, was the daughter of a Piankhi, who claimed descent from the unfortunate Bek-en-ranf, the king burnt alive by Shabak, and who had also probably some royal Ethiopian blood in his veins. By his nuptials with this princess, Psamatik assured to his crown the legitimacy which it had hitherto lacked. Uniting henceforth in his own person the rights of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth dynasties, those of the Saites and those of the Ethiopians, he became the one and only legal king, and no competitor could possibly arise with a title to sovereignty higher or better than his own.

Being now personally secure, he could turn his attention to the restoration and elevation of the nationality of which he had taken it upon him to assume the direction. He could cast his eyes over the unhappy Egypt--depressed, down-trodden, well-nigh trampled to death--and give his best consideration to the question what was to be done to restore her to her ancient greatness. There she lay before his eyes in a deplorable state of misery and degradation. All the great cities, her glory and her boast in former days, had suffered more or less in the incessant wars; Memphis had been besieged and pillaged half a dozen times; Thebes had been sacked and burnt twice; from Syene to Pelusium there was not a town which had not been injured in one or other of the many invasions. The canals and roads, carefully repaired by Shabak, had since his decease met with entire neglect; the cultivable lands had been devastated, and the whole population decimated periodically. Out of the ruins of the old Egypt, Psamatik had to raise up a new Egypt. He had to revivify the dead corpse, and put a fresh life into the stiff and motionless limbs. With great energy and determination he set himself to accomplish the task. Applying himself, first of all, to the restoration of what was decayed and ruined, he re-established the canals and the roads, encouraged agriculture, favoured the development of the population. The ruined towns were gradually repaired and rebuilt, and vast efforts made everywhere to restore, and even to enlarge and beautify the sacred edifices. At Memphis, Psamatik built the great southern portal which gave completeness to the ancient temple of the god Phthah, and also constructed a grand court for the residence of the Apis-Bulls, surrounded by a colonnade, against the piers of which stood colossal figures of Osiris, from eighteen to twenty feet in height. At Thebes he re-erected the portions of the temple of Karnak, which had been thrown down by the Assyrians; at Sais, Mendes, Heliopolis, and Philae he undertook extensive works. The entire valley of the Nile became little more than one huge workshop, where stone-cutters and masons, bricklayers and carpenters, laboured incessantly. Under the liberal encouragement of the king and of his chief nobles, the arts recovered themselves and began to flourish anew. The engraving and painting of the hieroglyphics were resumed with success, and carried out with a minuteness and accuracy that provokes the admiration of the beholder. Bas-reliefs of extreme beauty and elaboration characterize the period. There rests upon some of them "a gentle and almost feminine tenderness, which has impressed upon the imitations of living creatures the stamp of an incredible delicacy both of conception and

execution." Statues and statuettes of merit were at the same time produced in abundance. The "Saitie art", as that of the revival under the Psamatiks has been called, is characterized by an extreme neatness of manipulation in the drawings and lines, the fineness of which often reminds us of the performances of a seal-engraver, by grace, softness, tenderness, and elegance. It is not the broad, but somewhat realistic style of the Memphitic period, much less the highly imaginative and vigorous style of the Ramesside kings; but it is a style which has quiet merits of its own, sweet and pure, full of refinement and delicacy.

Egypt was thus rendered flourishing at home; her magnificent temples and other edifices put off their look of neglect; her cities were once more busy seats of industry and traffic; her fields teemed with rich harvests; her population increased; her whole aspect changed. But the circumstances of the time led Psamatik to attempt something more. His employment of Greek and Carian mercenaries naturally led him on into an intimacy with foreigners, and into a regard and consideration for them quite unknown to previous Pharaohs, and in contradiction to ordinary Egyptian prejudices. Egypt was the China of the Old World, and had for ages kept herself as much as possible aloof from foreigners, and looked upon them with aversion. Foreign vessels were, until the time of Psamatik, forbidden to enter any of the Nile mouths, or to touch at an Egyptian port. Psamatik saw that the new circumstances required an extensive change. The mercenaries, if they were to be content with their position, must be allowed to communicate freely with the cities and countries from which they came, and intercourse between Greece and Egypt must be encouraged rather than forbidden. Accordingly the Greeks were invited to make settlements in the Delta, and Naucratis, favourably situated on the Canopic branch of the Nile, was specially assigned to them as a residence. Most of the more enterprizing among the commercial states of the time took advantage of the opening, and Miletus, Phocaea, Rhodes, Samos, Chios, Mytilene, Halicarnassus, and AEgina established factories at the locality specified, built temples there to the Greek gods, and sent out a body of colonists. A considerable trade grew up between Egypt and Greece. The Egyptians of the higher classes especially appreciated the flavour and quality of the Greek wines, which were consequently imported into the country in large quantities. Greek pottery and Greek glyptic art also attracted a certain amount of favour. On her side Egypt exported corn, alum, muslin and linen fabrics, and the excellent paper which she made from the _Cyperus Papyrus_.

The trade thus established was carried on mainly, if not wholly, in Greek bottoms, the Egyptians having a distaste to the sea, and regarding commerce with no great favour. Nevertheless, the life and stir which foreign commerce introduced among them, the familiarity with strange customs and manners, engendered by daily intercourse with the Greeks, the acquisition (on the part of some) of the Greek language, the sight of Greek modes of worship, of Greek painting and Greek sculpture, the insight into Greek habits of thought, which could not but follow, produced no inconsiderable effect upon the national character of the Egyptians, shaking them out of their accustomed groove, and awakening curiosity and inquiry. The effect was scarcely beneficial. Egyptian national life had been eminently conservative and unchanging. The introduction of novelty in ten thousand shapes unsettled and disturbed it. The old beliefs were shaken, and a multitude of superstitions rushed in. The corruptions introduced by the Greeks were more easy of adoption and imitation than the sterling points of their character, their intelligence, their unwearied energy, their love of truth. Egypt was awakened to a new life by the novel circumstances of the Psamatik period; but it was a fitful life, unquiet, unnatural, feverish. The character of

the men lost in dignity and strength by the discontinuance of military training consequent upon the substitution for a native army of an army of mercenaries. The position of the women sank through the adoption of those ideas concerning them which their contact with orientals had engrained into the minds of the Asiatic Greeks. The national spirit of the people was sapped by the concentration of the royal favour on a race of foreigners whose manners and customs were abhorrent to them, and whom they regarded with envy and dislike. If some improvement is to be seen on the surface of Egyptian life under the Psamatiks, some greater activity and enterprise, some increased intellectual stir, some improved methods in art, these ameliorations scarcely compensate for the indications of decline which lie deeper, and which in the sequel determined the fate of the nation.

The later years of the reign of Psamatik were coincident with a time of extreme trouble and confusion in Asia, in the course of which the Assyrian Monarchy came to an end, and south-western Asia was partitioned between the Medes and the Babylonians. A tempting field was laid open for an ambitious prince, who might well have dreamt of Syrian or even Mesopotamian conquest, and of recalling the old glories of Seti, Thothmes, and Amenhotep. Psamatik did go so far as to make an attack upon Philistia, but met with so little success that he was induced to restrain any grander aspirations which he may have cherished, and to leave the Asiatic monarchs to settle Asiatic affairs as it pleased them. Ashdod, we are told, resisted the Egyptian arms for twenty-nine years; and though it fell at last, the prospect of half-a-dozen such sieges was not encouraging. Psamatik, moreover, was an old man by the time that the Assyrian Empire fell to pieces, and we can understand his shrinking from a distant and dangerous expedition. He left the field open for his son, Neco, having in no way committed him, but having secured for him a ready entrance into Asia by his conquest of the Philistine fortress.

Neco, the son of Psamatik I., from the moment that he ascended the throne, resolved to make the bold stroke for empire from which his father had held back. Regarding his mercenary army as a sufficient land force, he concentrated his energies on the enlargement and improvement of his navy, which was weak in numbers and of antiquated construction. Naval architecture had recently made great strides, first by the inventiveness of the Phoenicians, who introduced the bireme, and then by the skill of the Greeks, who, improving on the hint furnished them, constructed the trireme. Neco, by the help of Greek artificers, built two fleets, both composed of triremes, one in the ports which opened on the Red Sea, the other in those upon the Mediterranean. He then, with the object of uniting the two fleets into one, when occasion should require, made an attempt to re-open the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, which had been originally constructed by Seti I. and Ramesses II., but had been allowed to fall into disrepair. The Nile mud and the desert sand had combined to silt it up. Neco commenced excavations on a large scale, following the line of the old cutting, but greatly widening it, so that triremes might meet in it and pass each other, without shipping their oars. After a time, however, he felt compelled to desist, without effecting his purpose, owing to an extraordinary mortality among the labourers. According to Herodotus, 120,000 of them perished. At any rate, the suffering and loss of life, probably by epidemics, was such as induced him to relinquish his project, and to turn his thoughts toward gaining his end in another way.

Might not Nature have herself established a water communication between the two seas by which Egypt was washed? It was well known that the Mediterranean and the Red Sea both communicated with an open ocean, and it was the universal teaching of the Greek geographers, that the ocean flowed round the whole earth. Neco determined to try whether Africa was not circumnavigable. Manning

some ships with Phoenician mariners, as the boldest and most experienced, accustomed to brave the terrors of the Atlantic outside the Pillars of Hercules, he dispatched them from a port on the Red Sea, with orders to sail southwards, keeping the coast of Africa on their right, and see if they could not return to Egypt by way of the Mediterranean. The enterprise succeeded. The ships, under the skilful guidance of the Phoenicians, anticipated the feat of Vasco di Gama--rounded the Cape of Storms, and returned by way of the Atlantic, the Straits of Gibraltar, and the Mediterranean to the land from which they had set out. But they did not reach Egypt _till the third year_. The success obtained was thus of no practical value, so far as the Pharaoh's warlike projects were concerned. He had to relinquish the idea of uniting his two fleets in one, owing to the length of the way and the dangers of the navigation.

He had, however, no mind to relinquish his warlike projects, Syria, Phoenicia, and Palestine were still in an unsettled state, the yoke of Assyria being broken, and that of Babylon not yet firmly fixed on them. Josiah was taking advantage of the opportunity to extend his authority over Samaria. Phoenicia was hesitating whether to submit to Nabopolassar or to assert her freedom. The East generally was In a ferment. Neco in B.C. 608, determined to make his venture. At the head of a large army, consisting mainly of his mercenaries, he took the coast route into Syria, supported by his Mediterranean fleet along the shore, and proceeding through the low tracts of Philistia and Sharon, prepared to cross the ridge of hills which shuts in on the south the great plain of Esdraelon; but here he found his passage barred by an army. Josiah, either because he feared that, if Neco were successful, his own position would be imperilled, or because he had entered into engagements with Nabopolassar, had resolved to oppose the further progress of the Egyptian army, and had occupied a strong position near Megiddo, on the southern verge of the plain. In vain did Neco seek to persuade him to retire, and leave the passage free. Josiah was obstinate, and a battle became unavoidable. As was to be expected, the Jewish army suffered complete defeat; Neco swept it from his path, and pursued his way, while Josiah mortally wounded, was conveyed in his reserve chariot to Jerusalem. The triumphant Pharaoh pushed forward into Syria and carried all before him as far as Carchemish on the Euphrates. The whole country submitted to him. After a campaign which lasted three months, Neco returned in triumph to his own land, carrying with him Jehoahaz, the second son of Josiah, as a prisoner, and leaving Jehoiakim, the eldest son, as tributary monarch, at Jerusalem.

For three years Egypt enjoyed the sense of triumph, and felt herself once more a conquering power, capable of contending on equal terms with any state or kingdom that the world contained. But then Nemesis swooped down on her. In B.C. 605 Nabopolassar of Babylon woke up to a consciousness of his loss of prestige, and determined on an effort to retrieve it. Too old to undertake a distant campaign in person, he placed his son, Nebuchadnezzar, at the head of his troops, and sent him into Syria to recover the lost provinces. Neco met him on the Euphrates. A great battle was fought at Carchemish between the forces of Egypt and Babylon, in which the former suffered a terrible defeat. We have no historical account of it, but may gratefully accept, instead, the prophetic description of Jeremiah:--

"Order ye the buckler and the shield, and draw ye near to battle; Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; Furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines. Wherefore have I seen them dismayed, and turned away backward? And their mighty ones are beaten down, and fled apace, and look not behind them; For fear is round about, saith Jehovah. Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty men escape; They shall stumble and

fall toward the north by the river Euphrates. Who is this that cometh up as a flood [like the Nile], whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt rises up as a flood [like the Nile], and his waters are moved as the rivers; And he saith, I will go up, and I will cover the earth; I will destroy the city, with its inhabitants. Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; Cush and Phut, that handle the shield, and Lud that handles and bends the bow. For this is the day of the Lord, the Lord of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may smite his foes; And the sword shall devour, and be made satiate and drunk with blood; For the Lord, the Lord of Hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country, by the river Euphrates. Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin daughter of Egypt! In vain shalt thou use many medicines; to thee no cure shall come. The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land; For the mighty man has stumbled against the mighty, and both are fallen together." Jeremiah 46:3-12

The disaster was utter, complete, not to be remedied--the only thing to be done was to "fly apace," to put the desert and the Nile between the vanquished and the victors, and to deprecate the conqueror's anger by submission. Neco gave up the contest, evacuated Syria and Palestine, and hastily sought the shelter of his own land, whither Nebuchadnezzar would probably have speedily followed him, had not news arrived of his father's, Nabopolassar's, death. To secure the succession, he had to return, as quickly as he could, to Babylon, and to allow the Egyptian monarch, at any rate, a breathing space.

Thus ended the dream of the recovery of an Asiatic Empire, which Psamatik may have cherished, and of which Neco attempted the realization. The defeat of Carchemish shattered the unsubstantial fabric into atoms, and gave a death-blow to hopes which no Pharaoh ever entertained afterwards.

XXIII. The Later Saite Kings

The Saitic revival in art and architecture, in commercial and general prosperity, which Psamatik the First inaugurated, continued under his successors. To the short reign of Psamatik II. belong a considerable number of inscriptions, some good bas-reliefs at Abydos and Philae, and a large number of statues. One of these, in the collection of the Vatican, is remarkable for its beauty. Apries erected numerous _stelae_, and at least one pair of obelisks, wherewith he adorned the Temple of Neith at Sais. Amasis afforded great encouragement to art and architecture. He added a court of entrance to the above temple, with propylaea of unusual dimensions, adorned the dromos conducting to it with numerous andro-sphinxes, erected colossal statues within the temple precincts, and conveyed thither from Elephantine a monolithic shrine or chamber of extraordinary dimensions. Traces of his architectural activity are also found at Memphis, Thebes, Abydos, Bubastis, and Thmuis or Leontopolis. Statuary flourished during his reign. Even portrait-painting was attempted; and Amasis sent a likeness of himself, painted on panel, as a present to the people of Cyrene. It was maintained by the Egyptians of a century later that the reign of Amasis was the most prosperous time which Egypt had ever seen, the land being more productive, the cities more numerous, and the entire people more happy than either previously or subsequently. Amasis certainly gave a fresh impulse to commerce, since he held frequent communication with the Greek states of Asia Minor, as well as with the settlers at Cyrene, and gave increased privileges to the trading community of Naucratis.

Even in a military point of view, there was to some extent a recovery from the disaster of Carchemish. The Babylonian empire was not sufficiently established or consolidated at the accession of Nebuchadnezzar for that monarch to form at once extensive schemes

of conquest. There was much to be done in Elam, in Asia Minor, in Phoenicia, and in Palestine, before his hands could be free to occupy themselves in the subjugation of more distant regions. Within three years after the battle of Carchemish Judaea threw off the yoke of Babylon, and a few years later Phoenicia rebelled under the hegemony of Tyre. Nebuchadnezzar had not much difficulty in crushing the Jewish outbreak; but Tyre resisted his arms with extreme obstinacy, and it was not till thirteen years after the revolt took place that Phoenicia was re-conquered. Even then the position of Judaea was insecure: she was known to be thoroughly disaffected, and only waiting an opportunity to rebel a second time. Thus Nebuchadnezzar was fully occupied with troubles within his own dominions, and left Egypt undisturbed to repair her losses, and recover her military prestige, as she best might.

Neco outlived his defeat about eight or nine years, during which he nursed his strength, and abstained from all warlike enterprises. His son, Psamatik II., who succeeded him B.C. 596, made an attack on the Ethiopians, and seems to have penetrated deep into Nubia, where a monument was set up by two of his generals, Apollonius, a Greek, and Amasis, an Egyptian, which may still be seen on the rocks of Abu-Simbel, and is the earliest known Greek inscription. The following is a facsimile, only reduced in size:--

Apries, the son of Neco, brought this war to an end in the first year of his reign (B.C. 590) by the arms of one of his generals; and, finding that Nebuchadnezzar was still unable to reduce Phoenicia to subjection, he ventured, in B.C. 588, to conclude a treaty with Zedekiah, king of Judah, and to promise him assistance, if he would join him against the Babylonians. This Zedekiah consented to do, and the war followed which terminated in the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, and the transfer of the Jewish people to Babylonia. It is uncertain what exact part Apries took in this war. We know that he called out the full force of the empire, and marched into Palestine, with the object of relieving Zedekiah. as soon as he knew that that monarch's safety was threatened. We know that he marched towards Jerusalem, and took up such a threatening attitude that Nebuchadnezzar at one time actually raised the siege (Jer. xxxvii. 5). We do not know what followed. Whether Apries, on finding that the whole Chaldaean force had broken up from before Jerusalem and was marching against himself, took fright at the danger which he had affronted, and made a sudden inglorious retreat; or whether he boldly met the Babylonian host and contended with them in a pitched battle, wherein he was worsted, and from which he was forced to fly into his own land, is uncertain. Josephus positively declares that he took the braver and more honourable course: the silence of Scripture as to any battle is thought to imply that he showed the white feather. In either case, the result was the same. Egypt recoiled before Babylon; Palestine was evacuated; and Zedekiah was left to himself. In B.C. 586 Jerusalem fell; Zedekiah was made a prisoner and cruelly deprived of sight; the Temple and city were burnt, and the bulk of the people carried into captivity. Babylon rounded off her dominion in this quarter by the absorption of the last state upon her south-western border that had maintained the shadow of independence: and the two great powers of these parts, hitherto prevented from coming into contact by the intervention of a sort of political "buffer," became conterminous, and were thus brought into a position in which it was not possible that a collision should for any considerable time be avoided.

Recognizing the certainty of the impending collision, Apries sought to strengthen his power for resistance by attaching to his own empire the Phoenician towns of the Syrian coast, whose adhesion to his side would secure him, at any rate, the maritime

superiority. He made an expedition against Tyre and Sidon both by land and sea, defeated the combined fleet of Phoenicia and Cyprus in a great engagement, besieged Sidon, and after a time compelled it to surrender. He then endeavoured further to strengthen himself on the land side by bringing under subjection the Greek city of Cyrene, which had now become a flourishing community; but here his good fortune forsook him; the Cyrenaean forces defeated the army which he sent against them, with great slaughter; and the event brought Apries into disfavour with his subjects, who imagined that he had, of malice prepense, sent his troops into the jaws of destruction. According to Herodotus, the immediate result was a revolt, which cost Apries his throne, and, within a short time, his life; but the entire narrative of Herodotus is in the highest degree improbable, and some recent discoveries suggest a wholly different termination to the reign of this remarkable king.

It is certain that in B.C. 568 Nebuchadnezzar made an expedition into Egypt According to all accounts this date fell into the lifetime of Apries. Amasis, however, the successor of Apries, appears to have been Nebuchadnezzar's direct antagonist, and to have resisted him in the field, while Apries remained in the palace at Sais. The two were joint kings from B.C. 571 to B.C. 565. Nebuchadnezzar, at first, neglected Sais, and proceeded, by way of Heliopolis and Bubastis (Ezek. xxx. 17), against the old capitals, Memphis and Thebes. Having taken these, and "destroyed the idols and made the images to cease," he advanced up the Nile valley to Elephantine, which he took, and then endeavoured to penetrate into Nubia. A check, however, was inflicted on his army by Nes-Hor, the Governor of the South, whereupon he gave up his idea of Nubian conquest. Returning down the valley, he completed that ravage of Egypt which is described by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. It is probable that in B.C. 565, three years after his first invasion, he took Sais and put the aged Apries to death. Amasis he allowed still to reign, but only as a tributary king, and thus Egypt became "a base kingdom" (Ezek. xxix. 14), "the basest of the kingdoms" (ibid. verse 15), if its former exaltation were taken into account.

The "base kingdom" was, however, materially, as flourishing as ever. The sense of security from foreign attack was a great encouragement to private industry and commercial enterprise. The discontinuances of lavish expenditure on military expeditions improved the state finances, and enabled those at the head of the government to employ the money, that would otherwise have been wasted, in reproductive undertakings. The agricultural system of Egypt was never better organized or better managed than under Amasis. Nature seemed to conspire with man to make the time one of joy and delight, for the inundation was scarcely ever before so regularly abundant, nor were the crops ever before so plentiful. The "twenty thousand cities," which Herodotus assigns to the time, may be a myth; but, beyond all doubt, the tradition which told of them was based upon the fact of a period of unexampled prosperity. Amasis's law, that each Egyptian should appear once each year before the governor of his canton, and show the means by which he was getting an honest living, may have done something towards making industry general; but his example, his active habits, and his encouragement of art and architecture, probably did more. His architectural works must have given constant employment to large numbers of persons as quarrymen, boatmen, bricklayers, plasterers, masons, carpenters, and master builders; his patronage of art not only gave direct occupation to a multitude of artists, but set a fashion to the more wealthy among his subjects by which the demand for objects of art was multiplied a hundredfold. Sculptors and painters had a happy time under a king who was always building temples, erecting colossi, or sending statues or paintings of

himself as presents to foreign states or foreign shrines.

The external aspect of Egypt under the reign of Amasis is thus as bright and flourishing as that which she ever wore at any former time; but, as M. Lenormant observes, this apparent prosperity did but ill conceal the decay of patriotism and the decline of all the institutions of the nation. The kings of the Saite dynasty had thought to re-vivify Egypt, and infuse a little new blood into the old monarchy founded by Menes, by allowing the great stream of liberal ideas, whereof Greece had already made herself the propagator, to expand itself in her midst. Without knowing it, they had by these means introduced on the banks of the Nile a new element of decline. Constructed exclusively for continuance, for preserving its own traditions in defiance of the flight of centuries, the civilization of Egypt could only maintain itself by remaining unmoved. From the day on which it found itself in contact with the spirit of progress, personified in the Grecian civilization and in the Greek race, it was under the absolute necessity of perishing. It could neither launch itself upon a wholly new path, one which was the direct negation of its own genius, nor continue on without change its own existence. Thus, as soon as it began to be penetrated by Greek influence, it fell at once into complete dissolution, and sank into a state of decrepitude, that already resembled death. We shall see, in the next section, how suddenly and completely the Egyptian power collapsed when the moment of trial came, and how little support the surface prosperity which marked the reign of Amasis was able to render to the Empire in the hour of need and distress.

XXIV. The Persian Conquest

The subjection of Egypt to Babylon, which commenced in B.C. 565, was of that light and almost nominal character, which a nation that is not very sensitive, or very jealous of its honour, does not care to shake off. A small tribute was probably paid by the subject state to her suzerain, but otherwise the yoke was unfelt There was no interference with the internal government, or the religion of the Egyptians; no appointment of Babylonian satraps, or tax-collectors; not even, so far as appears, any demands for contingents of troops. Thus, although Nebuchadnezzar died within seven years of his conquest of Egypt, and though a time of disturbance and confusion followed his death, four kings occupying the Babylonian throne within little more than six years, two of whom met with a violent end, yet Amasis seems to have continued quiescent and contented, in the enjoyment of a life somewhat more merry and amusing than that of most monarchs, without making any effort to throw off the Babylonian supremacy or reassert the independence of his country. It was not till his self-indulgent apathy was intruded upon from without, and he received an appeal from a foreign nation, to which he was compelled to return an answer, that he looked the situation in the face, and came to the conclusion that he might declare himself independent without much risk. He had at this time patiently borne his subject position for the space of above twenty years, though he might easily have reasserted himself at the end of seven.

The circumstances under which the appeal was made were the following. A new power had suddenly risen up in Asia. About B.C. 558, ten years after Nebuchadnezzar's subjection of Egypt, Cyrus, son of Cambyses, the tributary monarch of Persia under the Medes, assumed an independent position and began a career of conquest. Having made himself master of a large portion of the country of Elam, he assumed the title of "King of Ansan," and engaged in a long war with Astyages (Istivegu), his former suzerain, which terminated (in B.C. 549) in his taking the Median monarch prisoner and succeeding to his dominions. It was at once recognized through Asia that a new peril had arisen. The Medes, a mountain people of great physical strength and remarkable bravery, had for

about a century been regarded as the most powerful people of Western Asia. They had now been overthrown and conquered by a still more powerful mountain race. That race had at its head an energetic and enterprising prince, who was in the full vigour of youth, and fired evidently with a high ambition. His position was naturally felt as a direct menace by the neighbouring states of Babylon and Lydia, whose royal families were interconnected. Croesus of Lydia was the first to take alarm and to devise measures for his own security. He formed the conception of a grand league between the principal powers whom the rise of Persia threatened, for mutual defence against the common enemy; and, in furtherance of this design, sent, in B.C. 547, an embassy to Egypt, and another to Babylon, proposing a close alliance between the three countries. Amasis had to determine whether he would maintain his subjection to Babylon and refuse the offer; or, by accepting it, declare himself a wholly independent monarch. He learnt by the embassy, if he did not know it before that Nabonadius, the Babylonian monarch, was in difficulties, and could not resent his action. He might probably think that, under the circumstances, Nabonadius would regard his joining the league as a friendly, rather than an unfriendly, proceeding. At any rate, the balance of advantage seemed to him on the side of complying with the request of Croesus. Croesus was lord of Asia Minor, and it was only by his permission that the Ionian and Carian mercenaries, on whom the throne of the Pharaohs now mainly depended, could be recruited and maintained at their proper strength. It would not do to offend so important a personage; and accordingly Amasis came into the proposed alliance, and pledged himself to send assistance to whichever of his two confederates should be first attacked. Conversely, they no doubt pledged themselves to him; but the remote position of Egypt rendered it extremely improbable that they would be called upon to redeem their pledges.

Nor was even Amasis called upon actually to redeem the pledges which he had given. In B.C. 546, Croesus, without summoning any contingents from his allies, precipitated the war with Persia by crossing the river Halys, and invading Cappadocia, which was included in the dominions of Cyrus. Having suffered a severe defeat at Pteria, a Cappadocian city, he returned to his capital and hastily sent messengers to Egypt and elsewhere, begging for immediate assistance. What steps Amasis took upon this, or intended to take, is uncertain; but it must have been before any troops could have been dispatched, that news reached Egypt which rendered it useless to send out an expedition. Croesus had scarcely reached his capital when he found himself attacked by Cyrus in his turn; his army suffered a second defeat in the plain before Sardis; the city was besieged, stormed, and taken within fourteen days. Croesus fell, alive, into the hands of his enemy, and was kindly treated; but his kingdom had passed away. It was evidently too late for Amasis to attempt to send him succour. The tripartite alliance had, by the force of circumstances, come to an end, and Amasis was an independent monarch, no longer bound by any engagements.

Shortly afterwards, in B.C. 538, the conquering monarchy of Persia absorbed another victim. Nabonadius was attacked, Babylon taken, and the Chaldaean monarchy, which had lasted nearly two thousand years, brought to an end. The contest had been prolonged, and in the course of it some disintegration of the empire had taken place. Phoenicia had asserted her independence; and Cyprus, which was to a large extent Phoenician, had followed the example of the mother-country. Under these circumstances, Amasis thought he saw an opportunity of gaining some cheap laurels, and accordingly made a naval expedition against the unfortunate islanders, who were taken unawares and forced to become his tributaries. It was unwise of the Egyptian monarch to remind Cyrus that he had still an

open enemy unchastised, one who had entered into a league against him ten years previously, and was now anxious to prevent him from reaping the full benefit of his conquests. We may be sure that the Persian monarch noted and resented the interference with territories which he had some right to consider his own; whether he took any steps to revenge himself is doubtful. According to some, he required Amasis to send him one of his daughters as a concubine, an insult which the Egyptian king escaped by _finesse_ while he appeared to submit to it.

It can only have been on account of the other wars which pressed upon him and occupied him during his remaining years, that Cyrus did not march in person against Amasis. First, the conquest of the nations between the Caspian and the Indian Ocean detained him; and after this, a danger showed itself on his north-eastern frontier which required all his attention, and in meeting which he lost his life. The independent tribes beyond the Oxus and the Jaxartes have through all history been an annoyance and a peril to the power which rules over the Iranian plateau, and it was in repelling an attack in this quarter that Cyrus fell. Amasis, perhaps, congratulated himself on the defeat and death of the great warrior king; but Egypt would, perhaps, have suffered less had the invasion, which was sure to come, been conducted by the noble, magnanimous, and merciful Cyrus, than she actually endured at the hands of the impulsive tyrannical, and half-mad Cambyses.

The first step taken by Cambyses, who succeeded his father Cyrus in B.C. 529, was to reduce Phoenicia under his power. The support of a fleet was of immense importance to an army about to attack Egypt, both for the purpose of conveying water and stores, and of giving command over the mouths of the Nile, so that the great cities, Pelusium, Tanis, Sais, Bubastis, Memphis, might be blockaded both by land and water. Persia, up to the accession of Cambyses, had (so to speak) no fleet. Cambyses, by threatening the Phoenician cities on the land side, succeeded in inducing them to submit to him; he then, with their aid, detached Cyprus from her Egyptian masters, and obtained the further assistance of a Cypriote squadron. Some Greek ships also gave their services, and the result was that he had the entire command of the sea, and was able to hold possession of all the Nile mouths, and to bring his fleet up the river to the very walls of Memphis.

Still, there were difficulties to overcome in respect of the passage of an army. Egypt is separated from Palestine by a considerable tract of waterless desert and it was necessary to convey by sea, or on the backs of camels, all the water required for the troops, for the camp-followers, and for the baggage animals. A numerous camel corps was indispensable for the conveyance, and the Persians, though employing camels on their expeditions, are not likely to have possessed any very considerable number of these beasts. At any rate, it was extremely convenient to find a fresh and abundant supply of camels on the spot, together with abundant water-skins. This good fortune befell the Persian monarch, who was able to make an alliance with the sheikh of the most powerful Bedouin tribe of the region, who undertook the entire responsibility of the water supply. He thus crossed the desert without disaster or suffering, and brought his entire force intact to the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, near the point where it poured its waters into the Mediterranean Sea.

At this point he found a mixed Egyptian and Graeco-Carian army prepared to resist his further progress. Amasis had died about six months previously, leaving his throne to his son, Psamatik the Third. This young prince, notwithstanding his inexperience, had taken all the measures that were possible to protect his kingdom from the invader. He had gathered together his Greek and Carian mercenaries, and having also levied a large native army, had posted the entire force not far from Pelusium, in an advantageous

position. On his Greeks and Carians he could thoroughly depend, though they had lately seen but little service; his native levies, on the contrary, were of scarcely any value; they were jealous of the mercenaries, who had superseded them as the ordinary land force, and they had had little practice in warfare for the last forty years. At no time, probably, would an Egyptian army composed of native troops have been a match for such soldiers as Cambyses brought with him into Egypt--Persians, Medes, Hyrcanians, Mardians, Greeks--trained in the school of Cyrus, inured to arms, and confident of victory. But the native soldiery of the time of Psamatik III. fell far below the average Egyptian type; it had little patriotism, it had no experience, it was smarting under a sense of injury and ill-treatment at the hands of the Saite kings. The engagement between the two armies at Pelusium was thus not so much a battle as a carnage. No doubt the mercenaries made a stout resistance, but they were vastly outnumbered, and were not much better troops than their adversaries. The Egyptians must have been slaughtered like sheep. According to Ctesias, fifty thousand of them fell, whereas the entire loss on the Persian side was only six thousand. After a short struggle, the troops of Psamatik fled, and in a little time the retreat became a complete rout. The fugitives did not stop till they reached Memphis, where they shut themselves up within the walls.

It is the lot of Egypt to have its fate decided by a single battle. The country offers no strong positions, that are strategically more defensible than others. The whole Delta is one alluvial flat, with no elevation that has not been raised by man. The valley of the Nile is so wide as to furnish everywhere an ample plain, wherein the largest armies may contend without having their movements cramped or hindered. An army that takes to the hills on either side of the valley is not worth following: it is self-destroyed, since it can find no sustenance and no water. Thus the sole question, when a foreign host invades Egypt, is this: Can it, or can it not, defeat the full force of Egypt in an open battle? If it gains one battle, there is no reason why it should not gain fifty; and this is so evident, and so well known, that on Egyptian soil one defeat has almost always been accepted as decisive of the military supremacy. A beaten army may, of course, protract its resistance behind walls, and honour, fame, patriotism, may seem sometimes to require such a line of conduct; but, unless there is a reasonable expectation of relief arriving from without, protracted resistance is useless, and, from a military point of view, indefensible. Defeated commanders have not, however, always seen this, or, seeing it, they have allowed prudence to be overpowered by other considerations. Psamatik, like many another ruler of Egypt, though defeated in the field, determined to defend his capital to the best of his power. He threw himself, with the remnant of his beaten army, into Memphis, and there stood at bay, awaiting the further attack of his adversary.

It was not long before the Persian army drew up under the walls, and invested the city by land, while the fleet blockaded the river. A single Greek vessel, having received orders to summon the defenders of the place to surrender it, had the boldness to enter the town, whereupon it was set upon by the Egyptians, captured, and destroyed. Contrarily to the law of nations, which protects ambassadors and their escort, the crew was torn limb from limb, and an outrage thus committed which Cambyses was justified in punishing with extreme severity. Upon the fall of the city, which followed soon after its investment, the offended monarch avenged the crime which had been committed by publicly executing two thousand of the principal citizens, including (it is said) a son of the fallen king. The king himself was at first spared, and might perhaps have been allowed to rule Egypt as a tributary monarch, had he not been detected in a design to rebel and renew the war. For this offence he, too, was

condemned to death, and executed by Cambyses' order.

The defeat had been foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, who had said:--

"Woe worth the day! For the day is near, Even the day of the Lord is near, a day of clouds; It shall be the time of the heathen. And a sword shall come upon Egypt, and anguish shall be in Ethiopia; When the slain shall fall in Egypt; and they shall take away her multitude, And her foundations shall be broken down. Ethiopia and Phut and Lud, and all the mingled people, and Chub, And the children of the land that is in league, shall fall with them by the sword.... I will put a fear in the land of Egypt. And I will make Pathros desolate, And will set a fire in Zoan, and will execute judgments in No.... Sin [Pelusium] shall be in great anguish, And No shall be broken up, and Noph shall have adversaries in the daytime. The young men of Aven and of Pi-beseth shall fall by the sword: And these cities shall go into captivity. At Tehaphnehes also the day shall withdraw itself, When I shall break there the yokes of Egypt; And the pride of her power shall cease." Ezekiel 30:3-18

According to Herodotus, Cambyses was not content with the above-mentioned severities, which were perhaps justifiable under the circumstances, but proceeded further to exercise his rights as conqueror in a most violent and tyrannical way. He tore from its tomb the mummy of the late king, Amasis, and subjected it to the grossest indignities. He stabbed in the thigh an Apis-Bull, recently inaugurated at the capital with joyful ceremonies, suspecting that the occasion was feigned, and that the rejoicings were really over the ill-success of expeditions carried out by his orders against the oasis of Ammon, and against Ethiopia. He exhumed numerous mummies for the mere purpose of examining them. He entered the grand temple of Phthah at Memphis, and made sport of the image. He burnt the statues of the Cabeiri, which he found in another temple. He scourged the priests of Apis, and massacred in the streets those Egyptians who were keeping the festival. Altogether, his object was, if the informants of Herodotus are to be believed, to pour contempt and contumely on the Egyptian religion, and to insult the religious feelings of the entire people.

On the other hand, we learn from a contemporary inscription, that Cambyses so far conformed to Egyptian usages as to take a "throne-name," after the pattern of the ancient Pharaohs; that he cleared the temple of Neith at Sais of the foreigners who had taken possession of it; that he entrusted the care of the temple to an Egyptian officer of high standing; and that he was actually himself initiated into the mysteries of the goddess. Perhaps we ought not to be greatly surprised at these contradictions. Cambyses had the iconoclastic spirit strong in him, and, under excitement, took a pleasure in showing his abhorrence of Egyptian superstitions. But he was not always under excitement--he enjoyed lucid intervals, during which he was actuated by the spirit of an administrator and a statesman. Having in many ways greatly exasperated the Egyptians against his rule, he thought it prudent, ere he quitted the country, to soothe the feelings which he had so deeply wounded, and conciliate the priest-class, to which he had given such dire offence. Hence his politic concessions to public feeling at Sais, his Initiation into the mysteries of Neith, his assumption of a throne-name, and his restoration of the temple of Sais to religious uses. And the policy of conciliation, which he thus inaugurated, was continued by his successor, Darius. Darius built, or repaired, the temple of Ammon, in the oasis of El Khargeh, and made many acknowledgments of the deities of Egypt; when an Apis-Bull died early in his reign, he offered a reward of a hundred talents for the discovery of a new Apis; and he proposed to adorn the temple of Ammon at Thebes with a new obelisk. At the same time, in his administration he carefully considered the interests of Egypt, which he

entrusted to a certain Aryandes as satrap; he re-opened the canal between the Nile and the Red Sea, for the encouragement of Egyptian commerce; he kept up the numbers of the Egyptian fleet; in his arrangement of the satrapies, he placed no greater burthen on Egypt than it was well able to bear; and he seems to have honoured Egypt by his occasional presence. He failed, however, to allay the discontent, and even hatred, which the outrages of Cambyses had aroused; they still remained indelibly impressed on the Egyptian mind; the Persian rule was detested; and in sullen dissatisfaction the entire nation awaited an opportunity of reclaiming its independence and flinging off the accursed yoke.

XXV. Three Desperate Revolts

The first revolt of the Egyptians against their conquerors, appears to have been provoked by the news of the battle of Marathon. Egypt heard, in B.C. 490, that the arms of the oppressor, as she ever determined to consider Darius, had met with a reverse in European Greece, where 200,000 Medes and Persians had been completely defeated by 20,000 Athenians and Plataens. Darius, it was understood, had taken greatly to heart this reverse, and was bent on avenging it. The strength of the Persian Empire was about to be employed towards the West, and an excellent opportunity seemed to have arisen for a defection on the South. Accordingly Egypt, after making secret preparations for three years, in B.C. 487 broke out in open revolt. She probably overpowered and massacred the Persian garrison in Memphis, which is said to have numbered 120,000 men, and, proclaiming herself independent, set up a native sovereign.

The Egyptian monuments suggest that this monarch bore the foreign-sounding name of Khabash. He fortified the coast of Egypt against attempts which might be made upon it by the Persian fleet, and doubtless prepared himself also to resist an invasion by land. But he was quite unable to do anything effectual. Though Darius died in the year after the revolt, B.C. 486, yet its suppression was immediately undertaken by his son and successor, Xerxes, who invaded Egypt in the next year, easily crushed all resistance, and placed the province under a severer rule than any that it had previously experienced. Achaemenes, his brother, was made satrap.

Twenty-five years of tranquillity followed, during which the Egyptians were submissive subjects of the Persian crown, and even showed remarkable courage and skill in the Persian military expeditions. Egypt furnished as many as two hundred triremes to the fleet which was brought against Greece by Xerxes, and the squadron particularly distinguished itself in the sea-fights off Artemisium, where they actually captured five Grecian vessels with their crews. Mardonius, moreover, set so high a value on the marines who fought on board the Egyptian ships, that he retained them as land-troops when the Persian fleet returned to Asia after Salamis.

No further defection took place during the reign of Xerxes; but in B.C. 460, after the throne had been occupied for about five years by Xerxes' son, Artaxerxes, a second rebellion broke out, which led to a long and terrible struggle. A certain Inarus, who bore rule over some of the African tribes on the western border of Egypt, and who may have been a descendant of the Psamatiks, headed the insurrection, and in conjunction with an Egyptian, named Amyrtaeus, suddenly attacked the Persian garrison stationed in Egypt, the ordinary strength of which was 120,000 men. A great battle was fought at Papremis, in the Delta, wherein the Persians were completely defeated, and their leader, Achaemenes, perished by the hand of Inarus himself. Memphis, however, the capital, still resisted, and the struggle thus remained doubtful. Inarus and Amyrtaeus implored the assistance of Athens, which had the most powerful navy of the time, and could lend most important aid by taking possession of the river. Athens, which was under the

influence of the farsighted Pericles, cheerfully responded to the call, and sent two hundred triremes, manned by at least forty thousand men, to assist the rebels, and to do as much injury as possible to the Persians. On sailing up the Nile, the Athenian fleet found a Persian squadron already moored in the Nile waters, but it swept this obstacle from its path without any difficulty. Memphis was then blockaded both by land and water; the city was taken, and only the citadel. Leucon-Teichos, or "the White Fortress," held out. A formal siege of the citadel was commenced, and the allies lay before it for months, but without result. Meanwhile, Artaxerxes was not idle. Having collected an army of 300,000 men, he gave the command of it to Megabyzus, one of his best generals, and sent him to Egypt against the rebels. Megabyzus marched upon Memphis, defeated the Egyptians and their allies in a great battle under the walls of the town, relieved the Persian garrison which held the citadel, and recovered possession of the place. The Athenians retreated to the tract called Prosopitis, a sort of island in the Delta, surrounded by two of the branch streams of the Nile, which they held with their ships. Here Megabyzus besieged them without success for eighteen months; but at last he bethought himself of a stratagem like that whereby Cyrus is said to have captured Babylon, and adapted it to his purpose. Having blocked the course of one of the branch streams, and diverted its waters into a new channel, he laid bare the river-bed, captured the triremes that were stuck fast in the soft ooze, marched his men into the island, and overwhelmed the unhappy Greeks by sheer force of numbers. A few only escaped, and made their way to Cyrene. The entire fleet of two hundred vessels fell into the hands of the conqueror; and fifty others, sent as a reinforcement, having soon afterwards entered the river, were attacked unawares and defeated, with the loss of more than half their number. Inarus, the Libyan monarch, became a fugitive, but was betrayed by some of his followers, surrendered, and crucified. Amyrtaeus, who had been recognized as king of Egypt during the six years that the struggle lasted, took refuge in the Nile marshes, where he dragged out a miserable existence for another term of six years. The Egyptians offered no further resistance; and Egypt became once more a Persian satrapy (B.C. 455).

It was at about this time that Herodotus, the earliest Greek historian, the Father of History, as he has been called, visited Egypt in pursuance of his plan of gathering information for his great work. He was a young man, probably not far from thirty years of age (for he was born between the dates of the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae). He travelled through the land as far as Elephantine, viewing with his observant eyes the wonders with which the "Story of Egypt" has been so much occupied; and he described them with the enthusiasm that we have occasionally noted. He saw the battle-field on which Inarus had just been defeated--the ground strewn with the skulls and other bones of the slain; he made his longest stay at Memphis, then at the acme of its greatness; he visited the quarries on the east of the Nile whence the stone had been dug for the pyramids, and he gazed upon the great monuments themselves, on the opposite side of the stream. We have seen that he visited Lake Moeris, and examined the famous Labyrinth, which he thought even more wonderful than the pyramids themselves. Finally, he sailed away for Tyre, and Egypt was again closed to travellers from Greece.

A second period of tranquillity followed, which covered the space of about half a century. Nothing is known of Egypt during this interval; and it might have been thought that she had grown contented with her lot, and that her aspirations after independence were over. For fifty years she had made no sign. Even the troubled time between the death of Artaxerxes I. and the accession of Darius II. had not tempted her to strike a

blow for freedom. But still she was, in reality, irreconcilable. She was biding her time, and preparing herself for a last desperate effort.

In B.C. 406 or 405, towards the close of the reign of Darius Nothus, the third rebellion of Egypt against Persia broke out. A native of Mendes, by name Nepheritis, or more properly Nefaa-rut, raised the banner of independence, and commenced a war, which must have lasted for some years, but which terminated in the expulsion of the Persian garrison, and the reestablishment of the throne of the Pharaohs. It is unfortunate that no ancient authority gives any account of the struggle. We only know that, after a time, the power of Nefaa-rut was established; that Persia left him in undisturbed possession of Egypt, and that he reigned quietly for the space of six years, employing himself in the repair and restoration of the temple of Ammon at Karnak. Nothing that can be called a revival, or _renaissance_, distinguished his reign; and we must view his success rather as the result of Persian weakness, than of his own energy. His revolt, however, inaugurated a period of independence, which lasted about sixty years, and which threw over the last years of the doomed monarchy a gleam of sunshine, that for a brief space recalled the glories of earlier and happier ages.

XXVI. The Last Gleam of Sunshine – Nectanebo I

A troubled time followed the reign of Nefaa-rut. The Greek mercenary soldiery, on whom the monarchs depended, were fickle in their temperament, and easily took offence, if their inclinations were in any way thwarted. Their displeasure commonly led to the dethronement of the king who had provoked it; and we have thus, at this period of the history, five reigns in twenty-five years. No monarch had time to distinguish himself by a re-organization of the kingdom, or even by undertaking buildings on a large scale--each was forced to live from hand to mouth, meeting as he best might the immediate difficulties of his position, without providing for a future, which he might never live to see. Fear of re-conquest was also perpetual; and the monarchs had therefore constantly to be courting alliances with foreign states, and subjecting themselves thereby to risks which it might have been more prudent to have avoided.

With the accession of Nectanebo I. (Nekht-Horheb), about B.C. 385, an improvement in the state of affairs set in. Nekht-hor-heb was a vigorous prince, who held the mercenaries well under control, and, having raised a considerable Egyptian army, set himself to place Egypt in such a state of defence, that she might confidently rely on her own strength, and be under no need of entangling herself with foreign alliances. He strongly fortified all the seven mouths of the Nile, guarding each by two forts, one on either side of each stream, and establishing a connection between each pair of forts by a bridge. At Pelusium, where the danger of hostile attack was always the greatest, he multiplied his precautions, guarding it on the side of the east by a deep ditch, and carefully obstructing all the approaches to the town, whether by land or sea, by forts and dykes and embankments, and contrivances for laying the neighbouring territory under water. No doubt these precautions were taken with special reference to an expected attack on the part of Persia, which was preparing, about B.C. 376, to make a great effort to bring Egypt once more into subjection.

The expected attack came in the next year. Having obtained the services of the Athenian general, Iphicrates, and hired Greek mercenaries to the number of twenty thousand, Artaxerxes Mnemon, in B.C. 375, sent a huge armament against Egypt, consisting of 220,000 men, 500 ships of war, and a countless number of other vessels carrying stores and provisions. Pharnabazus commanded the Persian soldiery, Iphicrates the mercenaries. Having rendezvoused at Acre in the spring of the year, they set out early in the summer, and proceeded in a

leisurely manner through Philistia and the desert, the fleet accompanying them along the coast. This route brought them to Pelusium, which they found so strongly fortified that they despaired of being able to force the defences and felt it necessary to make a complete change in their plan of attack. Putting to sea with a portion of the fleet, and with troops to the number of three thousand, and sailing northward till they could no longer be seen from the shore, they then, probably at nightfall, changed their course, and steering south-west, made for the Mendesian mouth of the Nile, which was only guarded by the twin forts with their connecting bridge. Here they landed without opposition, and proceeded to reconnoitre the forts. The garrison gave them battle outside the walls, but was defeated with great loss; and the forts themselves were taken. The remainder of the force conveyed by the ships, was then landed without difficulty; and the invaders, having the complete mastery of one of the Nile mouths, had it in their power to direct their attack to any point that might seem to them at once most important and most vulnerable.

Under these circumstances the Athenian general, Iphicrates, strongly recommended a dash at Memphis. The main strength of the Egyptian army had been concentrated at Pelusium. Strong detachments held the other mouths of the Nile. Memphis, he felt sure, must be denuded of troops, and could probably be carried by a _coup de main_; but the advice of the rapid Greek was little to the taste of the slow-moving and cautious Persian. Pharnabazus declined to sanction any rash enterprise--he would proceed according to the rules of art. He had the advantage of numbers--why was he to throw it away? No, a thousand times no. He would wait till his army was once more collected together, and would then march on Memphis, without exposing himself or his troops to any danger. The city would be sure to fall, and the object of the expedition would be accomplished. In vain did Iphicrates offer to run the whole risk himself--to take no troops with him besides his own mercenaries, and attack the city with them. As the Greek grew more hot and reckless, the Persian became more cool and wary. What might not be behind this foolhardiness? Might it not be possible that the Greek was looking to his own interests, and designing, if he got possession of Memphis, to set himself up as king of Egypt? There was no knowing what his intention might be; and at any rate it was safest to wait the arrival of the troops. So Pharnabazus once more coolly declined his subordinate's offer.

Nectanebo, on his side, having thrown a strong garrison into Memphis, moved his army across the Delta from the Pelusiac to the Mendesian branch of the Nile, and having concentrated it in the neighbourhood of the captured forts, proceeded to operate against the invaders. His troops harassed the enemy in a number of petty engagements, and in the course of time inflicted on them considerable loss. In this way midsummer was reached--the Etesian winds began to blow, and the Nile to rise. Gradually the abounding stream spread itself over the broad Delta; roads were overflowed, river-courses obliterated; the season for military operations was clearly past. There was no possible course but to return to Asia. Iphicrates and Pharnabazus took their departure amid mutual recriminations, each accusing the other of having caused the expedition to be a complete failure.

The repulse of this huge host was felt by the Egyptians almost as the repulse of the host of Xerxes was felt by the Greeks. Nectanebo was looked upon as a hero and a demigod; his throne was assured; it was felt that he had redeemed all the failures of the past, and had restored Egypt to the full possession of all her ancient dignity and glory. Nectanebo continued to rule over "the Two Lands" for nine years longer in uninterrupted peace, honour, and prosperity. During this time he applied himself, with considerable success, to

the revival of Egyptian art and architecture. At Thebes he made additions to the great temple of Karnak, restored the temple of Khonsu, and adorned with reliefs a shrine originally erected by Ramesses XII. At Memphis he was extraordinarily active: he built a small temple in the neighbourhood of the Serapeum, set up inscriptions in the Apis repository in honour of the sacred bulls, erected two small obelisks in black granite, and left his name inscribed more than once in the quarries of Toora. Traces of his activity are also found at Edfu, at Abydos, at Bubastis, at Rosetta in the Delta, and at Tel-el-Maskoutah. The art of his time is said to have all the elegance of that produced under the twenty-sixth (Psamatik) dynasty, but to have been somewhat more florid. The two black obelisks above-mentioned, which are now in the British Museum, show the admirable finish which prevailed at this period. The sarcophagus which Nectanebo prepared for himself, which adorns the same collection, is also of great beauty.

We cannot be surprised to find that Nectanebo was worshipped after his death as a divine being. A priesthood was constituted in his honour, which handed down his cult to later times, and bore witness to the impression made on the Egyptian mind by his character and his successes.

XXVII. The Light Goes Out in Darkness

Nectanebo's successors had neither his foresight nor his energy. Te-her, the Tachos or Teos of the Greeks, who followed him on the throne in B.C. 366, went out of his way to provoke the Persians by fomenting the war of the satraps against Artaxerxes Mnemon, and, having obtained the services of Agesilaues and Chabrias, even ventured to invade Phoenicia and attempt its reduction. His own hold upon Egypt was, however, far too weak to justify so bold a proceeding. Scarcely had he reached Syria, when revolt broke out behind him. The Regent, to whom he had entrusted the direction of affairs during his absence, proved unfaithful, and incited his son, Nekht-nebf, to become a candidate for the crown, and to take up arms against his father. The young prince was seduced by the offers made him, and Egypt became plunged in a civil war. But for the courage and conduct of Agesilaues, which were conspicuously displayed, Tacho would have yielded to despair and have given up the contest. In two decisive battles the Spartan general completely defeated the army of the rebels, which far outnumbered that of Tacho, and replaced the king on his tottering throne.

However, it was not long before the party of the rebels recovered from their defeats. Agesilaues either joined them, or withdrew from the struggle, and removing to Cyrene died there at an advanced age. Tacho, deserted by his followers, quitted Egypt and fled to Sidon, whence he made his way across the desert to the court of the Great King. Ochus, who had by this time succeeded Mnemon, received him favourably, and professed an intention of embracing his cause; but nothing came of this expression of good-will. Tacho lived a considerable time at the court of Ochus, without any steps being taken to restore him to his former position. At last a dysentery carried him off, and legitimated the position of the usurper who had driven him into exile.

The end now drew nigh. Nekht-nebf, whom the Greeks called Nectanebo II., having after a time established himself firmly upon the throne, and got rid of pretenders, resumed the ambitious policy of his predecessor, and entered into an alliance with the people of Sidon and their neighbours, who were in revolt against Persia. He had the excuse that Ochus, some time previously, had sent an expedition against Egypt, which he had repulsed by the assistance of two Greek generals, Diophantus of Athens and Lamius of Sparta. But this expedition was a thing of the past; it had inflicted no injury on Egypt, and it demanded no revenge. Nekht-nebf was in no way called upon to join the rebel confederacy, which (in B.C. 346) raised the flag of revolt

from Persia, and sought to enrol in its ranks as many allies as possible. But he rashly gave in his name, and sent to Sidon as his contingent towards the army that was being raised, four thousand of his Greek mercenaries, under the command of Mentor of Rhodes. With their aid, Tennes, the Sidonian king, completely defeated the troops which Ochus had sent against him, and drove the Persians out of Phoenicia.

The success, however, which was thus gained by the rebels only exasperated the Persian king, and made him resolve all the more on a desperate effort. The time had gone by, he felt, for committing wars to satraps, or sending out generals, with a few thousand troops, to put down this or that troublesome chieftain. The conjuncture called for measures of no ordinary character. The Great King must conduct an expedition in person. Every sort of preparation must be made; arms and provisions and stores of all kinds must be accumulated; the best troops must be collected from all parts of the empire; a sufficient fleet must be manned; and such an armament must go forth under the royal banner as would crush all opposition. Ochus succeeded in gathering together from the nations under his direct rule 300,000 foot, 30,000 horse, 300 triremes, and 500 transports or provision-ships. He then directed his efforts towards obtaining efficient assistance from the Greeks. Though refused aid by Athens and Sparta, he succeeded in obtaining a thousand Theban heavy-armed under Lacrates, three thousand Argives under Nicostratus, and six thousand AEolians, Ionians, and Dorians from the Greek cities of Asia Minor. The assistance thus secured was numerically small, amounting to no more than ten thousand men--not a thirtieth part of his native force; but it formed, together with the Greek mercenaries from Egypt--who went over to him afterwards--the force on which he placed his chief reliance, and to which the ultimate success of his expedition was mainly due.

The overwhelming strength of the armament which Ochus had brought with him into Syria alarmed the chiefs of the rebel confederacy. Tennes, especially, the Sidonian monarch, despaired of a successful resistance, and made up his mind that his only chance of safety lay in his appeasing the anger of Ochus by the betrayal of his confederates and followers. He opened his designs to Mentor of Rhodes, the commander of the Greek mercenaries furnished by Egypt, and found him quite ready to come into his plans. The two in conjunction betrayed Sidon into the hands of Persia, by the admission of a detachment within the walls; after which the defence became impracticable. The Sidonians, having experienced the unrelenting temper and sanguinary spirit of the Persian king, who had transfixed with javelins six hundred of their principal citizens, came to the desperate resolution of setting fire to their houses, and so destroying themselves with their town. One is glad to learn that the cowardly traitor, Tennes, who had brought about these terrible calamities, did not derive any profit from them, but was executed by the command of Ochus, as soon as Sidon had fallen.

The reduction of Sidon was followed closely by the invasion of Egypt. Ochus, besides his 330,000 Asiatics, had now a force of 14,000 Greeks, the mercenaries under Mentor having joined him. Marshalling his army in four divisions, he proceeded to the attack. The first, second, and third divisions contained, each of them, a contingent of Greeks and a contingent of Asiatics, commanded respectively by a Greek and a Persian leader. The Greeks of the first division, consisting mainly of Boeotians, were under the orders of Lacrates, a Theban of enormous strength, who regarded himself as a second Hercules, and adopted the traditional costume of that hero, a lion's skin and a club. His Persian colleague was Rhosaces, satrap of Ionia and Lydia, who claimed descent from one of "the Seven" that put down the conspiracy of the Magi. In the second division, where the Argive mercenaries served, the Greek leader was

Nicostratus, the Persian Aristazanes, a court usher, and one of the most trusted friends of the king. Mentor and the eunuch Bagoas, Ochus's chief minister in his later years, were at the head of the third division, Mentor commanding his own mercenaries, and Bagoas the Greeks whom Ochus had levied in his own dominions, together with a large body of Asiatics. The king himself was sole commander of the fourth division, as well as commander-in-chief of the entire host. Nekht-nebf, on his side, was only able to oppose to this vast array an army less than one-third of the size. He had enrolled as many as sixty thousand of the Egyptian warrior class, and had the services of twenty thousand Greek mercenaries, and of about the same number of Libyan troops.

Pelusium, as usual, was the first point of attack. Nekht-nebf had taken advantage of the long delay of Ochus in Syria to see that the defences of Egypt were in good order; he had made preparations for resistance at all the seven mouths of the Nile, and had guarded Pelusium with especial care. Ochus, as he had expected, advanced along the coast route which led to this place. Part of his army traversed the narrow spit of land which separated the Lake Serbonis from the Mediterranean, and in doing so met with a disaster. A strong wind setting in from the north, as the troops were passing, brought the waters of the Mediterranean over the low strip of sand which is ordinarily dry, and confounding sea and shore and lake together, caused the destruction of a large detachment; but the main army, which had probably kept Lake Serbonis on the right, reached its destination intact. A skirmish followed between the Theban troops of the first division under Lacrates and the garrison of Pelusium under Philophron; but this first engagement was without definite result.

The two armies lay now for a while on the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, which was well protected by forts, fortified towns, and a network of canals on either side of it. There was every reason to expect that Nekht-nebf, by warily guarding his frontier, and making full use of his resources, might baffle for a considerable time, if not wholly frustrate, the Persian attack. But his combined self-conceit and timidity ruined his cause. Taking the direction of affairs wholly upon himself and asking no advice from his Greek captains, he failed to show any of the qualities of a great commander, and was speedily involved in difficulties with which he was quite incapable of dealing. Having had his first line of defence partially forced by a bold movement on the part of the Argives under Nicostratus, instead of trying to redeem the misfortune by a counter-movement, or a concentration of troops, he hastily abandoned to his generals the task of continuing the resistance on this outer line, and retiring to Memphis, concentrated all his efforts on making preparations to resist a siege.

Meantime, the Persians were advancing. Lacrates the Theban set himself to reduce Pelusium, and, having drained dry one of the ditches, brought his military engines up to the walls of the place. In vain, however, did he batter down a portion of the wall--the garrison had erected another wall behind it; in vain did he advance his towers--they had movable towers ready prepared to resist him. No progress had been made by the besiegers, when on a sudden the resistance of the besieged slackened. Intelligence had reached them of Nekht-nebf's hasty retreat. If the king gave up hope, why should they pour out their blood to no purpose? Accordingly they made overtures to Lacrates for a surrender upon terms, and it was agreed that they should be allowed to evacuate the place and return to Greece, with all the goods and chattels that they could carry with them. Bagoas demurred to the terms; but Ochus confirmed them, and Pelusium passed into the possession of the Persians without further fighting.

About the same time Mentor had proceeded southwards and laid siege to Bubastis. Having invested the town, he caused intelligence to

reach the besieged that Ochus had determined to spare all who should surrender their cities to him without resistance, and to treat with the utmost severity all who should fight strenuously in their defence. By these means he introduced dissension within the walls of the towns, since the native Egyptians and their Greek allies naturally distrusted and suspected each other. At Bubastis the Egyptians were the first to move. The siege had only just begun when they sent an envoy to Mentor's colleague, Bagoas, to offer to surrender the town to him. But this proceeding did not suit the Greeks, who caught the messenger, extracted from him his message, and then attacked the Egyptian portion of the garrison and slew great numbers of them. The Egyptians, however, though beaten, persisted, established communication with Bagoas, and fixed a day on which they would receive his forces into the town. Mentor, who wished to secure to himself the credit of the surrender, hereupon exhorted his Greek friends to be on the watch, and, when the time came, to resist the movement. This they did with such success that they not only frustrated the attempt, but captured Bagoas himself, who had ventured within the walls. Bagoas had to implore the interference of his colleague on his behalf, and was obliged to promise that henceforth he would attempt nothing without Mentor's knowledge and consent. Mentor gained his ends, had the credit of being the person to whom the town surrendered itself, and at the same time established his ascendancy over Bagoas. It is clear that had the Egyptians possessed an active and able commander, advantage might have been taken of the jealousies which divided the Persian generals from their Greek colleagues, to bring the expedition into difficulties.

Unfortunately, the Egyptian monarch, alike pusillanimous and incapable, was so far from making any offensive effort, that he was not prepared even to defend his capital against the invaders. When he found that Pelusium and Bubastis had both fallen, and that the way lay open for the Persians to march upon Memphis and invest it, he left the city with all the wealth on which he could lay his hands, and fled away into Ethiopia. Ochus did not pursue him. He was content to have regained a valuable province, which for above fifty years had been lost to the Persian crown, without even having had to fight a single pitched battle, or to engage in one difficult siege. According to the Greek writers, he showed his contempt of the Egyptian religion after his conquest by stabbing an Apis-Bull, and violating the sanctity of a number of the most holy shrines; but the story of the Apis-Bull is probably a fiction, and it was to obtain the plunder of the temples, not to insult the Egyptian gods, that he violated the shrines. There is no trace of his having treated the conquered people with cruelty, or even with severity. Prudence induced him to destroy the walls and other fortifications of the chief Egyptian towns; and cupidity led him to carry off into Persia all the treasures that Nekht-nebf had left behind. Even the sacred books, of which he is said to have robbed the temples, may have been taken on account of their value. We do not hear of his having dragged off any prisoners, or inflicted any punishment on the country for its rebellion. Even the tribute is not said to have been increased.

There is nothing surprising in the fact that, when once Persia took resolutely in hand the subjugation of the revolted province, a few months sufficed for its accomplishment. The resources of Persia were out of all comparison with those of Egypt; alike in respect of men and of money, there was an extreme disparity. What had protected Egypt so long was the multiplicity of Persia's enemies, the large number of wars that were continually being waged and the want of a bold, energetic, and warlike monarch. As soon as the full power of the vast empire of the Achaemenidae was directed against the little country which had detached itself, and pretended to a separate existence, the result was certain. Egypt could no more maintain a

struggle against Persia in full force than a lynx could contend with a lion. But while all this is indubitably true, the end of Egypt might have been more dignified and more honourable than it was. Nekht-nebf, the last king, was a poor specimen of the Pharaonic type of monarch. He had none of the qualities of a great king. He did not even know how to fall with dignity. Had he gathered together all the troops that he could anyhow muster, and met Ochus in the open field, and fallen fighting for his crown, or had he even defended Memphis to the last, and only yielded himself when he could resist no longer, a certain halo of glory would have surrounded him. As it was, Egypt sank ingloriously at the last--her art, her literature, her national spirit decayed and almost extinct--paying, by her early disappearance from among the nations of the earth, the penalty of her extraordinarily precocious greatness.