that the pretensions of the city of Thebes to Bœotia were as well founded, at leaſt, as thoſe of Sparta to theſe two countries. After this he went on, and ſhowed how far Sparta had aggrandized herſelf at the expence of her neigh­bours : that peace might be indeed obtained, and upon a solid and laſting footing ; but that this could not be otherwiſe than by bringing all to an equality. This bold, though juft remonſtrance, in which not only Thebes, but Greece in general was concerned, failed not, however, to exaſperate the haughty Spartan monarch ; and the Athenians, who had till now looked upon the Thebans as dependents either on them or on the Macedonians, were not a little offended to hear their ambaſſadors talk in ſuch high terms. The result of the conference was, that Ageſilaus struck the name of *Thebes* out of the treaty, and declared war againſt them, about the year 371 B. C.

The Thebans were in no ſmall consternation to ſee them­ſelves engaged in a war with the powerful Spartans, with­out any ally to aſſiſt them ; and the rest of the Grecian states having made peace with the latter, began to look upon the ruin of the former as unavoidable. However, they resolved to make the beſt defence they could ; and put their army under the command of Epaminondas, aſſigning him, at his own requeſt, six others to act: as counſellors or aſſistants. The Theban army conſisted at moſt but of 6000 men, whereas that of the enemy was at leaſt thrice that number ; but Epaminondas trusted moſt to his horſe, wherein he had much the advantage both in quality and good ma­nagement : the rest he endeavoured to ſupply by the diſpoſition of his men, and the vigour of the attack. He even refuſed to ſuffer any to ſerve under him in the engagement, but ſuch as he knew to be fully reſolved to conquer or die. The two armies met at Leuctra, where the Spar­tans were defeated with great ſlaughter, as related under that article.

The victorious general, deſirous to improve this great victory, ſent an herald, crowned with garlands, to commu­nicate it in form to the Athenians, in hopes that this would be an effectual means to reunite them to the Theban interest. But it proved quite otherwiſe. Athens, which now looked upon them with a jealous eye, and had then in view the ſovereignty of Greece, choſe rather, if they could not wholly obtain it, to ſhare it with Sparta, than to let the Thebans into the whole ; and therefore even declined giving their herald audience. However, the Thebans took, care to ſtrengthen themſelves by alliances ; and, beſides the Ar­cadians and Eleans, had got the Phocians, Locrians, Acarnanians, Eubœaus, and other states, under their depend­ence : ſo that they were now in a condition to act offenſiveſively againſt the Spartans. Accordingly, under pretence of aſſisting the Arcadians, they entered Peloponneſus with a gallant army, with Epaminondas and Pelopidas at their head. Here they were joined by the Arcadian and other confederate forces ; ſo that the whole amounted to 40,000, ſome ſay 50,000 men, beſides great numbers of thoſe who followed the camp, rather for plunder than fighting, and were computed about 20,000 more. The army was divided into four columns, and moved ſtraight towards Sellaſia, the place of their rendezvous, from which they purſued their journey with fire and ſword towards Sparta. But here they were repulſed by Ageſilaus, who was then returned to that metropolis.

To repair, in ſome meaſure, this diſgrace, and at the ſame time to leave ſome lasting monument which ſhould re­dound as much to his glory as to the mortification of the Spartans, Epaminondas left not their territories till he had restored the posterity of the old Meſſenians to their ancient dominions, out of which they had been baniſhed near 300 years ; rebuilt their capital, and left a ſtrong garrison for its defence. He was, however, like to have been stopped in his return by Iphicrates, whom the Athenians had ſent with 12,000 men to intercept him; but this laſt loitered ſo long at Corinth, that the Thebans had passed the defiles of Cen­chreas, the chief place where he could have obstructed his retreat had he taken posseſſion or it in proper time. Epa­minondas continued his match till he came in full view of the city of Corinth. He found the roads choaked up with trees, rocks, ftones, and every thing that could render them impaſſable ; and the Corinthians well fortified, and reſolute on a ſtout defence. But he came ſo furiouſly upon them, notwithstanding all theſe difficulties, that they abandoned all their entrenchments and outworks to the Thebans, and fled into the city. Thither these purſued them ſword in hand, and made an horrid slaughter of them ; inſomuch that Corinth muſt have unavoidably fallen into their hands, had their generals thought fit to purſue theſe advantages ; but whether they were afraid of the Atheni­ans falling upon them, or apprehended ſome dangerous ambuſh in a country with which they were but indifferently ac­quainted, or whether the army was too much weakened through ſo many fatigues, or laftly, whether the coldneſs of the ſeaſon, it being then the depth of winter, would not permit them to proceed farther, they immediately marched towards Bœotia. This gave ſuch an handle to their ene­mies, that they met with a very mortifying reception at their return to Thebes, where they were both arrested, and clapped up as ſtate-prisoners, for having preſumed to pro­long their command four months longer than the time li­mited by law, which time took in almoſt the whole of their expedition from their firſt entrance into Peloponneſus. How­ever, at laſt, the judges being aſhamed to proceed any far­ther, they were both honourably acquitted.

This proſecution had been chiefly carried on and encou­raged by Meneclides, a diſcontented Theban, and a bold and able ſpeaker, who, by his artful calumnies at the trial, had ſo far prevailed with the judges as to get Epaminondas deprived of the government of Bœotia for a whole year, though he could not gain the ſame advantage againſt Pelo­pidas, who was a greater favourite of the people, as being his ſenior.

By this delay the Spartans, with much difficulty, had re­covered themſelves from their great defeat at Leuctra, and settled their affairs in as good a posture as they could : but though they had repulſed the Thebans in Peloponneſus, yet from the exploits they had performed there, eſpecially in the diſmembering the whole kingdom of Meſſenia from them, they had ſtill cauſe to fear what their forces might do under two ſuch generals ; and had accordingly taken due care to ſtrengthen themſelves againſt them, and to provide themſelves with a great number of auxiliaries from other states, eſpecially from that of Athens, with whom they had renewed their old treaty, and had agreed that each should have the command five days alternately. Soon after this trea­ty the Arcadians renewed the war, and took Pallene in La­conia by storm, put the garriſon to the ſword, and were preſently aſſisted by the Argives and Eleans, and eſpecially by the Thebans, who ſent to them 7000 foot and 500 horſe under the command of Epaminondas. This ſo alarmed the Athenians likewiſe, that they immediately ſent Gobrias with ſome forces to oppoſe his paſſage in good earnest ; and he ſo behaved himſelf againſt the Thebans, that they were forced to abandon Pelponnelus a ſecond time. This ill-ſucceſs gave freſh occasion to the enemies of Epaminondas to blame his conduct in the highest terms, notwithstanding the singular bravery with which he and his troops had for­ced the paſs. Even his friends could not but ſuſpect him