Pelopidas, the Orchomenians, being ſpirited up by ſome Theban fugitives, had formed a deſign to change the The­ban government into an ariſtocracy ; and 300 horſemen of the former had been actually ſent to put it in execution. Their project, however, was timely diſcovered by the vigi­lance of the magiſtrates, who cauſed them to be ſeized, and put immediately to death. They next ſent a ſufficient force againſt the city of Orchomenos, with orders to put all the men to death, and to fell the women and children for ſlaves, which was punctually done ; after which they razed that noble city to the ground. Pelopidas was then on his way to Thessaly, at the head of a powerful army, whither he had been ſent to aſſiſt the Theſsalians, who ſtill groaned under the tyranny of Alexander the Pheræan, and had made ſeve­ral brave efforts to recover their liberty, but had been ſtill overpowered by that uſurper. Being joined by the Theſſalians, he encamped in the face of the enemy, though far ſuperior in number, and consiſting of above 20,000 men. A fierce engagement ſoon enſued, in which both ſides fought with uncommon bravery. The place where the battle was fought was called *Cynocephala,* from ſeveral little hills on it, between which there ran a large plain. Both sides endea­voured at firſt to poſt themſelves on theſe eminences with their foot, whilſt Pelopidas ordered his cavalry to charge that of the enemy below ; which they did with ſuch ſucceſs, that they ſoon put them to the rout, and purſued them over the plain. This obliged the tyrant to gain the tops of the hills, where he greatly annoyed the Thessalians that endea­voured to force thoſe aſcents ; ſo that Pelopidas was obliged to give over his purſuit to come to their relief. This im­mediately inſpired the Thessalians with freſh courage, who began again to charge the enemy at ſeveral onſets ; and ſoon threw them into ſuch diſorder, that they were forced to give way. Pelopidas no ſooner perceived the advantage, than he began so look about for Alexander, with a deſign of engaging him. Having found him out as he was com­manding his right wing, and endeavouring to rally his men, he moved directly to him ; and being got near enough to be heard by him, challenged him to decide the battle by single combat with him. Alexander, inſtead of accepting the offer, turned about, and with all the ſpeed he could ran to ſcreen himſelf amongſt his guards. Upon this Pelopidas charged him with ſuch furious ſpeed, that he obliged him to retire farther, and ſhelter himſelf within the thickeſt ranks ; the fight of which made him attack with freſh vi­gour, and fight more deſperately againſt him. He tried in vain ſeveral times to break through their ranks to reach him, cutting down great numbers of thoſe that came forward to oppoſe him : his eagerneſs at length expoſed him ſo far to the darts that were shot at him at a diſtance, that ſome of them went quite through his armour, and gave him a deſperate wound or two, while the reſt advanced and ſtabbed him in the breaſt with their fpears.

It is ſcarce poſſible for words to expreſs the grief and deſpair which not only his brave Thebans, but likewiſe the Thessalians and other allies, ſhowed at the sight of their ſlain general : ſome of the latter, who had perceived the danger he was expoſed to, came down the hill with all poſſible ſpeed to his relief ; but when they perceived that they were come too late to ſave him, both they and the reſt of the little army thought on nothing now but to revenge his death. They rallied accordingly, both horſe and foot, as quick as poſſible, and began to charge the enemy afreſh, and with ſuch deſperate fury, that they at length gained a com­plete victory over them, and killed above 3000 of them in their purſuit, beſides a much greater number which they had ſlain on the field of battle, though they ſtill looked up. on all theſe advantages as vaſtly too ſmall to compensate the loſs of their brave general.

The news of his death had no ſooner reached Thebes, than the whole city was ſeen in as deep a mourning as his army. However, they ſent a reinforcement to it of 7000 foot and 700 horſe, as well to revenge the death of that ge­neral, as to improve the victory he had gained over the enemy ; by the help of which they fell ſo furiously on them, that they quickly broke and totally defeated the ſhattered remains of Alexander’s army. Hereupon he was forced to ſue for peace, and to accept it on ſuch conditions as the conquerors thought fit to impoſe. He was at length diſpatched in his bed by his wife Thebe, aſſiſted by her bro­thers, about ſeven years after his defeat. His body was af­terwards dragged along the ſtreets, trodden under foot, and left a prey to the dogs.

All this while the Thebans were watching to improve every commotion that happened, every ſucceſs they met with, to the forwarding of their then reigning and favourite project, of increasing their power above all the reſt, and in their turn to give laws to Greece. Their late ſucceſs in Thessaly, and the rupture between the Arcadians and Mantineans at the same time, about ſome conſecrated money which the former had taken out of the temple of Olympias to pay their troops employed againſt the Eleans, and which the latter called a downright ſacrilege, beſides other diſcords that reigned in the other ſtates of Greece, gave freſh encouragement to Thebes to ſet up for arbitress in thoſe diſputes ; and ſo much the more, as thoſe who had embez­zled the ſacred money, and wanted rather to embroil mat­ters than to have them brought to light, ſent that republic word that the Arcadians were juſt upon the point of revolting to the Spartans, and adviſed them to come and put an immediate ſtop to it. At the ſame time they diſpatched ſome private directions to a Theban officer at Tegea, to apprehend ſeveral of their own people as diſturbers of the peace. This was accordingly done, and ſeveral eminent perſons were confined as prisoners of ſtate : they were ſoon after diſchargcd, and loud complaints were made againſt ſuch arbitrary and unjust proceedings. The officer was accuſed before the Theban ſenate for having intermeddled in their affairs, and endeavoured to interrupt the good correſpondence between the two ſtates. It was even inſiſted on by ſome of the Tegeans, that he ſhould be indicted and proceeded againſt by his principals ; whilſt the more mode­rate sort, who foresaw the conſequences that were likely to attend ſuch appeals, and that it would infallibly bring the Thebans upon them, loudly proteſted againſt their march­ing into their territories, and did all they could to prevent it. The Thebans, however, were become too powerful and ambitious to miſs ſo fair an opportunity of getting once more footing in Peloponneſus, as they had long ago preme­ditated ; and Epaminondas was ſo far from making a secret of their deſign, that he told the Arcadian deputies in justifica­tion of it, that as it was on their account that the Thebans engaged in the war, they had acted treacherously with them in making peace with Athens without their conſent : how­ever, that when he was got with his army on his march into Peloponneſus to aſſiſt his friends, he would soon ſee what proofs the Arcadians would give of their fidelity. This speech did not fail to alarm them greatly ; eſpecially as it was ſpoken in ſuch a magiſterial ſtyle and threatening tone. Even thoſe who were beſt affected to the Thebans could not forbear expreſſing their diſlike of it ; and all that had the welfare of Peloponneſus at heart readily agreed with the Mantineans, that there was no time to be loſt to uſe all proper means to prevent the impending ſtorm.