and Argos, which also about this time became democratic, united with other causes to bring about a rupture between the Athenians and the Peloponnesian League. In this so-called first Peloponnesian War Sparta herself took but a small share beyond helping to inflict a defeat on the Athenians at Tanagra in 457 B.c. After this battle they concluded a truce, which gave the Athenians an opportunity of taking their revenge on the Boeotians at the battle of Oenopbyta, of annexing to their empire Boeotia, Phocis and Locris, and of subjugating Aegina. In 449 the war was ended by a five years’ truce, but after Athens had lost her mainland empire by the battle of Coronea and the revolt of Megara a thirty years’ peace was concluded, probably in the winter 446-445 B.C. By this Athens was obliged to sur- render Troezen, Achaea and the two Megarian ports, Nisaea and Pegae, but otherwise the *status quo* was maintained. A fresh struggle, the great Peloponnesian War *(q.v.),* broke out in 431 B.c. This may be to a certain extent regarded as a contest between Ionian and Dorian; it may with greater truth be called a struggle between the democratic and oligarchic principles of government; but at bottom its cause was neither racial nor constitutional, but economic. The maritime supremacy of Athens was used for commercial purposes, and important members of the Pelopon­nesian confederacy, whose wealth depended largely on their commerce, notably Corinth, Megara, Sicyon and Epidaurus, were being slowly but relentlessly crushed. Materially Sparta must have remained almost unaffected, but she was forced to take action by the pressure of her allies and by the necessities imposed by her position as head of the league. She did not, however, prosecute the war with any marked vigour: her operations were almost confined to an annual inroad into Attica, and when in 425 a body of Spartiates was captured by the Athenians at Pylos she was ready, and even anxious, to terminate the war on any reasonable conditions. That the terms of the Peace of Nicias, which in 421 concluded the first phase of the war, were rather in favour of Sparta than of Athens was due almost entirely to the energy and insight of an individual Spartan, Brasidas *(q.v.),* and the disastrous attempt of Athens to regain its lost land-empire. The final success of Sparta and the capture of Athens in 405 were brought about partly by the treachery of Alcibiades, who induced the state to send Gylippus to conduct the defence of Syracuse, to fortify Decelea in northern Attica, and to adopt a vigorous policy of aiding Athenian allies to revolt. The lack of funds which would have proved fatal to Spartan naval warfare was remedied by the intervention of Persia, which supplied large subsidies, and Spartan good fortune culminated in the possession at this time of an admiral of boundless vigour and considerable military ability, Lysander, to whom much of Sparta’s success is attributable.

The *4th Century.*—The fall of Athens left Sparta once again supreme in the Greek world and demonstrated clearly her total unfitness for rule. Everywhere democracy was replaced by a philo-Laconian oligarchy, usually consisting of ten men under a harmost or governor pledged to Spartan interests, and even in Laconia itself the narrow and selfish character of the Spartan rule led to a serious conspiracy. For a short time, indeed, under the energetic rule of Agesilaus, it seemed as if Sparta would pursue a Hellenic policy and carry on the war against Persia. But troubles soon broke out in Greece, Agesilaus was recalled from Asia Minor, and his schemes and successes were rendered fruitless. Further, the naval activity displayed by Sparta during the closing years of the Peloponnesian War abated when Persian subsidies were withdrawn, and the ambitious projects of Ly- sander led to his disgrace, which was followed by his death at Haliartus in 395. In the following year the Spartan navy under Peisander, Agesilaus’ brother-in-law, was defeated off Cnidus by the Persian fleet under Conon and Pharnabazus, and for the future Sparta ceased to be a maritime power. In Greece itself meanwhile the opposition to Sparta was growing increasingly powerful, and, though at Coronea Agesilaus had slightly the better of the Boeotians and at Corinth the Spartans main­tained their position, yet they felt it necessary to rid them- selves of Persian hostility and if possible use the Persian power to strengthen their own position at home: they therefore concluded with Artaxerxes II. the humiliating Peace of Antalcidas (387 B.c.), by which they surrendered to the Great King the Greek cities of the Asia Minor coast and of Cyprus, and stipulated for the independence of all other Greek cities. This last clause led to a long and desultory war with Thebes, which refused to acknowledge the independence of the Boeotian towns under its hegemony: the Cadmeia, the citadel of Thebes, was treacherously seized by Phoebidas in 382 and held by the Spartans until 379. Still more momentous was the Spartan action in crushing the Olynthiac Confederation (see Olynthus), which might have been able to stay the growth of Macedonian power. In 371 a fresh peace congress was summoned at Sparta to ratify the Peace of Callias. Again the Thebans refused to renounce their Boeotian hegemony, and the Spartan attempt at coercion ended in the defeat of the Spartan army at the battle of Leuctra and the death of its leader, King Cleombrotus. The result of the battle was to transfer the Greek supremacy from Sparta to Thebes.

In the course of three expeditions to the Peloponnese conducted by Epaminondas, the greatest soldier and statesman Thebes ever produced, Sparta was weakened by the loss of Messenia, which was restored to an independent position with the newly built Messene as its capital, and by the foundation of Megalopolis as the capital of Arcadia. The invading army even made its way into Laconia and devastated the whole of its southern portion; but the courage and coolness of Agesilaus saved Sparta itself from attack. On Epaminondas’ fourth expedition Sparta was again within an ace of capture, but once more the danger was averted just in time; and though at Mantinea (362 B.c.) the Thebans, together with the Arcadians, Messenians and Argives, gained a victory over the combined Mantinean, Athenian and Spartan forces, yet the death of Epaminondas in the battle more than counterbalanced the Theban victory and led to the speedy break up of their supremacy. But Sparta had neither the men nor the money to recover her lost position, and the continued existence on her borders of an independent Messenia and Arcadia kept her in constant fear for her own safety. She did, indeed, join with Athens and Achaea in 353 to prevent Philip of Macedon passing Thermopylae and entering Phocis, but beyond this she took no part in the struggle of Greece with the new power which had sprung up on her northern borders. No Spartiate fought on the field of Chaeronea. After the battle, however, she refused to submit voluntarily to Philip, and was forced to do so by the devastation of Laconia and the transference of certain border districts to the neighbouring states of Argos, Arcadia and Messenia. During the absence of Alexander the Great in the East Agis III. revolted, but the rising was crushed by Antipater, and a similar attempt to throw off the Macedonian yoke made by Archidamus IV. in the troublous period which succeeded Alexander’s death was frustrated by Demetrius Poliorcetes in 294 B.c. Twenty-two years later the city was attacked by an immense force under Pyrrhus, but Spartan bravery had not died out and the formidable enemy was repulsed, even the women taking part in the defence of the city. About 244 an Aetolian army overran Laconia, working irreparable harm and carrying off, it is said, 50,000 captives.

But the social evils within the state were even harder to combat than foes without. Avarice, luxury and the glaring inequality in the distribution of wealth, threatened to bring about the speedy fall of the state if no cure could be found. Agis IV. and Cleomenes III. *(qq.v.)* made an heroic and entirely disinterested attempt in the latter part of the 3rd century to improve the conditions by a redistribution of land, a widening of the citizen body, and a restoration of the old severe training and simple life. But the evil was too deep-seated to be remedied by these artificial means; Agis was assassinated, and the