Lacedemonians, all reſolved to die with their leader ; who being told by the oracle, that either Sparta ſhould be deſtroyed or the king loſe his life, determined with­out the leaſt heſſitation to ſacrifice himſelf for his coun­try. The Thebans indeed remained againſt their incli­nation, being detained by Leonidas as hoſtages ; for they were ſuspected to favour the Perſians. The Thespians, with their leader Demophilus, could not by any means be prevailed upon to abandon Leonidas and the Spartans. The augur Megiſtias, who had foretold the event of this enterprize, being preſſed by Leonidas to retire, ſent home his only ſon ; but remained himſelf, and died by Leonidas. Thoſe who ſtaid did not feed themſelves with any hopes of conquering or eſcaping, but looked upon Thermopylae as their graves; and when Leonidas, exhorting them to take ſome nouriſhment, ſaid, that they ſhould all ſup together with Pluto, with one accord they ſet up a ſhout of joy, as if they had been invited to a banquet.

Xerxes, after pouring out a libation at the riſing of the ſun, began to move with the whole body of his ar­my, as he had been adviſed by Epialtes. Upon their approach, Leonidas advanced to the broadeſt part of the paſſage, and fell upon the enemy with ſuch undaunt­ed courage and reſolution, that the Perſian officers were obliged to ſtand behind the diviſions they commanded, in order to prevent the flight of their men. Great numbers of the enemy falling into the ſea, were drowned ; others were trampled under foot by their own men, and a great many killed by the Greeks; who knowing they could not avoid death upon the arrival of thoſe who were advancing to fall upon their rear, exerted their utmoſt efforts. In this action fell the brave Leonidas; which Abrocomes and Hyperanthes, two of the bro­thers of Xerxes, obſerving, advanced with great resolution to ſeize his body, and carry it in triumph to Xerxes. But the Lacedemonians, more eager to defend it than their own lives, repulſed the enemy four times, killed both the brothers of Xerxes, with many other command­ers of diſtinction, and reſcued the body of their beloved general out of the enemy’s hands. But in the mean time, the army that was led by the treacherous Epialtes, advancing to attack their rear, they retired to the narroweſt place of the paſſage, and drawing all together except the Thebans, poſted themſelves on a riſing ground. In this place they made head againſt the Perſians, who poured in upon them on all ſides, till at length, not vanquiſhed, but oppreſſed and overwhelmed by numbers, they all fell, except one who eſcaped to Sparta, where he was treated as a coward and traitor to his country ; but afterwards made a glorious reparation in the battle of Platæa, where he diſtinguiſhed himſelf in an extraor­dinary manner. Some time after, a magnificent monu­ment was erected at Thermopylae, in honour of thoſe brave defenders of Greece, with two inſcriptions ; the one general, and relating to all thoſe who died on this occaſion, importing, that the Greeks of Peloponneſus, to the number only of 4000, made head againſt the Per­ſian army, conſiſting of 3,000,000. The other related to the Spartans in particular, and was compoſed by the poet Simonides, to this purport : “ Go, passenger, and acquaint the Spartans that we died here in obedience to their juſt commands.” At thoſe tombs a funeral ora­tion was yearly pronounced in honour of the dead he­roes, and public games performed with great ſolenmity,

wherein **none** but **the** Lacedemonians and Thespians had any ſhare, to ſhow that they alone were concerned in the glorious defence of Thermopylae.

At the end of the 77th Olympiad, a moſt dreadful earthquake happened at Sparta, in which, according to Diodorus, 20,000 perſons loſt their lives ; and Plutarch tells us, that only five houſes were left ſtanding in the whole city. On this occaſion the Helotes or ſlaves, whom the Spartans had all along treated with the utmoſt cruelty, attempted to revenge themſelves, by ta­king up arms, and marching directly to the ruins of the city, in hopes of cutting off at once thoſe who had eſca­ped from the earthquake. But in this they were pre­vented by the prudence of the Spartan king Archidamus ; for he, obſerving that the citizens were more deſirous of preſerving their effects than taking care of their own lives, cauſed an alarm to be founded, as if he had known that an enemy was at hand. On this the citizens armed themſelves in haste with ſuch weapons as they could come at ; and having marched a little way from the city, met the Helotes, whom they ſoon compelled to retire. The latter, however, knowing that they had now no mercy to expect from thoſe who had already treated them with ſuch cruelty, reſolved to defend themſelves to the laſt. Having therefore ſeized a ſea-port town in Meſſenia, they from thence made ſuch incurſions into the Spartan territories, that they compelled thoſe imperious matters to aſk aſſiſtance from the Athenians. This was immediately granted ; but when the Spartans ſaw that the ſkill of the Athenians in beſieging towns was much greater than their own, they became jealous, and diſmiſſed their allies, telling them, that they had now no farther occaſion for their ſervices. On this the Athenians left them in diſguſt ; and as the Helotes and Meſſenians did not chooſe to come to an engagement with a Spartan army in the field, but took ſhelter in their fortified places, the war was protracted for ten years and upwards. At laſt the Helotes were reduced to their former miſery ; and the Meſſenians were obliged to leave Peloponneſus, on pain of being made ſlaves alſo. Theſe poor people were then received by the Athenians, who granted them Naupactus for their reſidence, and afterwards brought them back to a part of their own country, from whence in the courſe of the Peloponneſian war they had driven the Spartans.

In the year 431 B. C. the Peloponneſian war com­menced ; of which a full account has been given under the article Attica, n⁰ 116—165. It ended moſt un­fortunately for the Athenians ; their city being taken and diſmantled, as related in the article above-mention­ed. Thus were the Spartans raiſed to the higheſt pitch of glory ; and, in the reign of Ageſilaus, they ſeemed to be on the point of ſubverting the Perſian empire, as related under the article Persia, n⁰ 34. But here their good fortune and their views of empire were ſuddenly checked. Ageſilaus had carried on the war in Aſia with the greateſt ſucceſs ; and as he would hearken to no terms of accommodation, a Perſian governor named *Tithraustes,* having firſt attempted in vain to bribe the king, dispatched Timocrates the Rhodian with 50 ta­lents into Greece, in order to try whether he could there meet with any perſons leſs incorruptible than the Spartan monarch. This agent found many who incli­ned to accept his offers ; particularly in Thebes, Co-