

*The Coward of Thermopylae*, by Caroline Dale Snedeker, is a historical novel of ancient Greece and is "The Coward of Thermopylae" based upon certain passages in Herodotus, wherein it is mentioned that at the time of the death of Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans, two of

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the number happened to be ill from a painful disease of the eyes which made them for the time being blind, and on this account they received permission to leave the army and return home. When the news came to them that the Persians had learned of the secret pass and that their comrades were being massacred, one of the blind men had himself led by a shepherd to the battlefield and there perished with the rest; but the other, seeing no merit in such a useless sacrifice, made his way back to Sparta and was ever after branded as a coward. From these meagre facts Caroline Dale Snedeker has woven a tale which has the merit of seeming to be alive. Although obviously painstaking in her antiquarian material, she has escaped that most frequent blemish of historical novels, the taint of midnight oil, the flavour of the professorial chair and the antiquarian museum. How or where the book was written the present reviewer does not know. But it is impossible to read it without feeling that the author had diligently gone over every foot of the various journeys that she makes her characters accomplish, and that every temple, every landmark, every wayside shrine which she so vividly depicts were sketched in from first-hand observation. It is a careful piece of work and one that brings those far-off centuries surprisingly near.