

75 AD

PYRRHUS
365?-272 B.C.

Plutarch
translated by John Dryden

Plutarch (46-120) - Greek biographer, historian, and philosopher, sometimes known as the encyclopaedist of antiquity. He is most renowned for his series of character studies, arranged mostly in pairs, known as "Plutarch's Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans" or "Parallel Lives." Pyrrhus (75 AD) - A study of the life of Pyrrhus, a Roman king.

PYRRHUS

OF the Thesprotians and Molossians after the great inundation, the first king, according to some historians, was Phaethon, one of those who came into Epirus with Pelasgus. Others tell us that Deucalion and Pyrrha, having set up the worship of Jupiter at Dodona, settled there among the Molossians. In after time, Neoptolemus, Achilles's son, planting a colony, possessed these parts himself, and left a succession of kings, who, after him, was named Pyrrhidae, as he in his youth was called Pyrrhus, and of his legitimate children, one was born of Lanassa, daughter of Cleodaeus, Hyllus's son, had also that name. From him Achilles came to have divine honours in Epirus, under the name of Aspetus, in the language of the country. After these first kings, those of the following intervening times becoming barbarous, and insignificant both in their power and their lives, Tharrhyphas is said to have been the first who, by introducing Greek manners and learning, and humane laws into his cities, left any fame of himself. Alcetas was the son of Tharrhyphas, Arybas of Alcetas, and of Arybas and Troas his queen, Aeacides; he married Phthia, the daughter of Menon, the Thessalian, a man of note at the time of the Lamiac war, and of highest command in the confederate army next to Leosthenes. To Aeacides were born of Phthia, Deidamia and Troas, daughters, and Pyrrhus, a son.

The Molossians, afterwards falling into factions and expelling Aeacides, brought in the sons of Neoptolemus, and such friends of Aeacides as they could take were all cut off; Pyrrhus, yet an infant, and searched for by the enemy, had been stolen away and carried off by Androclides and Angelus; who, however, being obliged to take with them a few servants, and women to nurse the child, were much impeded and retarded in their flight, and when they were now overtaken, they delivered the infant to Androcleon, Hippias, and Neander, faithful and able young fellows, giving them in charge to make for Megara, a town of Macedon, with all their might, while they themselves, partly by entreaty, and partly by force, stopped the course of the pursuers till late in the evening. At last, having hardly forced them back, they joined those who had the care of Pyrrhus; but the sun being already set, at the point of attaining their object they suddenly found themselves cut off from it. For on reaching the river that runs by the city they found it looking formidable and rough, and endeavouring to pass over, they discovered it was not fordable; late rains having heightened

the water and made the current violent. The darkness of the night added to the horror of all, so that they durst not venture of themselves to carry over the child and the women that attended it; but, perceiving some of the country people on the other side, they desired them to assist their passage, and showed them Pyrrhus, calling out aloud, and importuning them. They, however, could not hear for the noise and roaring of the water. Thus time was spent while those called out, and the others did not understand what was said, till one recollecting himself, stripped off a piece of bark from an oak, and wrote on it with the tongue of a buckle, stating the necessities and the fortunes of the child, and then rolling it about a stone, which was made use of to give force to the motion, threw it over to the other side, or, as some say, fastened it to the end of a javelin, and darted it over. When the men on the other shore read what was on the bark, and saw how time pressed, without delay they cut down some trees, and lashing them together, came over to them. And it so fell out, that he who first got ashore, and took Pyrrhus in his arms, was named Achilles, the rest being helped over by others as they came to hand.

Thus being safe, and out of the reach of pursuit, they addressed themselves to Glaucias, then King of the Illyrians, and finding him sitting at home with his wife, they laid down the child before them. The king began to weigh the matter, fearing Cassander, who was a mortal enemy of Aeacides, and, being in deep consideration, said nothing for a long time; while Pyrrhus, crawling about on the ground, gradually got near and laid hold with his hand upon the king's robe, and so helping himself upon his feet against the knees of Glaucias first moved laughter, and then pity, as a little, humble, crying petitioner. Some say he did not throw himself before Glaucias, but catching hold of an altar of the gods, and spreading his hands about it, raised himself up by that; and that Glaucias took the act as an omen. At present, therefore, he gave Pyrrhus into the charge of his wife, commanding he should be brought up with his own children; and a little later, the enemies sending to demand him, and Cassander himself offering two hundred talents, he would not deliver him up; but when he was twelve years old, bringing him with an army into Epirus, made him king. Pyrrhus in the air of his face had something more of the terrors than of the augustness of kingly power; he had not a regular set of upper teeth, but in the place of them one continued bone, with small lines marked on it, resembling the divisions of a row of teeth. It was a general belief he could cure the spleen by sacrificing a white cock and gently pressing with his right foot on the spleen of the persons

as they lay down on their backs, nor was any one so poor or inconsiderable as not to be welcome, if he desired it, to the benefit of his touch. He accepted the cock for the sacrifice as a reward, and was always much pleased with the present. The large toe of that foot was said to have a divine virtue; for after his death, the rest of the body being consumed, this was found unhurt, and untouched by the fire. But of these things hereafter.

Being now about seventeen years old, and the government in appearance well settled, he took a journey out of the kingdom to attend the marriage of one of Glaucias's sons, with whom he was brought up; upon which opportunity the Molossians again rebelling, turned out all of his party, plundered his property, and gave themselves up to Neoptolemus. Pyrrhus having thus lost the kingdom, and being in want of all things, applied to Demetrius, the son of Antigonus, the husband of his sister Deidamia, who, while she was but a child, had been in name the wife of Alexander, son of Roxana, but their affairs afterwards proving unfortunate, when she came to age, Demetrius married her. At the great battle of Ipsus, where so many kings were engaged, Pyrrhus, taking part with Demetrius, though yet but a youth, routed those that encountered him, and highly signalized himself among all the soldiery; and afterwards, when Demetrius's fortunes were low, he did not forsake him then, but secured for him the cities of Greece with which he was intrusted; and upon articles of agreement being made between Demetrius and Ptolemy, he went over as an hostage for him into Egypt, where both in hunting and other exercises he gave Ptolemy an ample proof of his courage and strength. Here observing Berenice in greatest power, and of all Ptolemy's wives highest in esteem for virtue and understanding, he made his court principally to her. He had a particular art of gaining over the great to his own interest, as on the other hand he readily overlooked such as were below him; and being also wellbehaved and temperate in his life, among all the young princes then at court he was thought most fit to have Antigone for his wife, one of the daughters of Berenice by Philip, before she married Ptolemy.

After this match, advancing in honour, and Antigone being a very good wife to him, having procured a sum of money, and raised an army, he so ordered matters as to be sent into his kingdom of Epirus, and arrived there to the great satisfaction of many, from their hate to Neoptolemus, who was governing in a violent and arbitrary way. But fearing lest Neoptolemus should enter into alliance with some neighbouring princes, he came to terms and friendship with him, agreeing that they should share the

government between them. There were people, however, who, as time went on, secretly exasperated them, and fomented jealousies between them. The cause chiefly moving Pyrrhus is said to have had this beginning. It was customary for the kings to offer sacrifice to Mars at Passaro, a place in the Molossian country, and that done to enter into a solemn covenant with the Epirots; they to govern according to law, these to preserve the government as by law established. This was performed in the presence of both kings, who were there with their immediate friends, giving and receiving many presents; here Gelo, one of the friends of Neoptolemus, taking Pyrrhus by the hand, presented him with two pair of draught oxen. Myrtilus, his cup-bearer, being then by, begged these of Pyrrhus, who not giving them to him, but to another, Myrtilus extremely resented it, which Gelo took notice of, and, inviting him to a banquet (amidst drinking and other excesses, as some relate, Myrtilus being then in the flower of his youth), he entered into discourse, persuading him to adhere to Neoptolemus, and destroy Pyrrhus by poison. Myrtilus received the design, appearing to approve and consent to it, but privately discovered it to Pyrrhus, by whose command he recommended Alexicrates, his chief cup-bearer, to Gelo, as a fit instrument for their design, Pyrrhus being very desirous to have proof of the plot by several evidences. So Gelo, being deceived, Neoptolemus, who was no less deceived, imagining the design went prosperously on, could not forbear, but in his joy spoke of it among his friends, and once at an entertainment at his sister Cadmea's talked openly of it, thinking none heard but themselves. Nor was any one there but Phaenarete the wife of Samon, who had the care of Neoptolemus's flocks and herds. She, turning her face towards the wall upon a couch, seemed fast asleep, and having heard all that passed, unsuspected, next day came to Antigone, Pyrrhus's wife, and told her what she had heard Neoptolemus say to his sister. On understanding which Pyrrhus for the present said little, but on a sacrifice day, making an invitation for Neoptolemus, killed him; being satisfied before that the great men of the Epirots were his friends, and that they were eager for him to rid himself of Neoptolemus, and not to content himself with a mere petty share of the government, but to follow his own natural vocation to great designs, and now when a just ground of suspicion appeared, to anticipate Neoptolemus by taking him off first.

In memory of Berenice and Ptolemy he named his son by Antigone, Ptolemy, and having built a city in the peninsula of Epirus, called it Berenicis. From this time he began to revolve

many and vast projects in his thoughts; but his first special hope and design lay near home, and he found means to engage himself in the Macedonian affairs under the following pretext. Of Cassander's sons, Antipater, the eldest, killed Thessalonica, his mother, and expelled his brother Alexander, who sent to Demetrius entreating his assistance, and also called in Pyrrhus; but Demetrius being retarded by multitude of business, Pyrrhus, coming first, demanded in reward of his service the districts called Tymphaea and Parauaea in Macedon itself and of their new conquests, Ambracia, Acarnania, and Amphilochia. The young prince giving way, he took possession of these countries, and secured them with good garrisons, and proceeded to reduce for Alexander himself other parts of the kingdom which he gained from Antipater. Lysimachus, designing to send aid to Antipater, was involved in much other business, but knowing Pyrrhus would not disoblige Ptolemy, or deny him anything, sent pretended letters to him as from Ptolemy, desiring him to give up his expedition, upon the payment of three hundred talents to him by Antipater. Pyrrhus, opening the letter, quickly discovered the fraud of Lysimachus; for it had not the accustomed style of salutation, "The father to the son, health," but "King Ptolemy to Pyrrhus, the king, health;" and reproaching Lysimachus, he notwithstanding made a peace, and they all met to confirm it by a solemn oath upon sacrifice. A goat, a bull, and a ram being brought out, the ram on a sudden fell dead. The others laughed, but Theodotus the prophet forbade Pyrrhus to swear, declaring that Heaven by that portended the death of one of the three kings, upon which he refused to ratify the peace.

The affairs of Alexander being now in some kind of settlement, Demetrius arrived, contrary, as soon appeared, to the desire and indeed not without the alarm of Alexander. After they had been a few days together, their mutual jealousy led them to conspire against each other; and Demetrius, taking advantage of the first occasion, was beforehand with the young king, and slew him, and proclaimed himself King of Macedon. There had been formerly no very good understanding between him and Pyrrhus; for besides the inroads he made into Thessaly, the innate disease of princes, ambition of greater empire, had rendered them formidable and suspected neighbours to each other, especially since Deidamia's death; and both having seized Macedon, they came into conflict for the same object, and the difference between them had the stronger motives. Demetrius having first attacked the Aetolians and subdued them, left Pantauchus there with a considerable army,

and marched direct against Pyrrhus, and Pyrrhus, as he thought, against him; but by mistake of the ways they passed by one another, and Demetrius falling into Epirus wasted the country, and Pyrrhus, meeting with Pantauchus, prepared for an engagement. The soldiers fell to, and there was a sharp and terrible conflict, especially where the generals were. Pantauchus, in courage, dexterity, and strength of body, being confessedly the best of all Demetrius's captains, and having both resolution and high spirit, challenged Pyrrhus to fight hand to hand; on the other side Pyrrhus, professing not to yield to any king in valour and glory, and esteeming the fame of Achilles more truly to belong to him for his courage than for his blood, advanced against Pantauchus through the front of the army.

First they used their lances, then came to a close fight, and managed their swords both with art and force; Pyrrhus receiving one wound, but returning two for it, one in the thigh and the other near the neck repulsed and overthrew Pantauchus, but did not kill him outright, as he was rescued by his friends. But the Epirots exulting in the victory of their king, and admiring his courage, forced through and cut in pieces the phalanx of the Macedonians, and pursuing those that fled, killed many, and took five thousand prisoners.

This fight did not so much exasperate the Macedonians with anger for their loss, or with hatred to Pyrrhus, as it caused esteem and admiration of his valour, and great discourse of him among those that saw what he did, and were engaged against him in the action. They thought his countenance, his swiftness, and his motions expressed those of the great Alexander, and that they beheld here an image and resemblance of his rapidity and strength in fight; other kings merely by their purple and their guards, by the formal bending of their necks and lofty tone of their speech, Pyrrhus only by arms and in action, represented Alexander. Of his knowledge of military tactics and the art of a general, and his great ability that way, we have the best information from the commentaries he left behind him. Antigonus, also, we are told, being asked who was the greatest soldier, said, "Pyrrhus, if he lives to be old," referring only to those of his own time; but Hannibal of all great commanders esteemed Pyrrhus for skill and conduct the first, Scipio the second, and himself the third, as is related in the life of Scipio. In a word, he seemed ever to make this all his thought and philosophy, as the most kingly part of learning: other curiosities he held in no account. He is reported, when asked at a feast whether he thought Python or Caphisias the best musician to have said, Polysperchon

was the best soldier, as though it became a king to examine and understand only such things. Towards his familiars he was mild and not easily incensed; zealous and even vehement in returning kindnesses. Thus when Aeropus was dead, he could not bear it with moderation, saying, he indeed had suffered what was common to human nature, but condemning and blaming himself, that by puttings off and delays he had not returned his kindness in time.

For our debts may be satisfied to the creditor's heirs, but not to have made the acknowledgment of received favours, while they to whom it is due can be sensible of it, afflicts a good and worthy nature. Some thinking it fit that Pyrrhus should banish a certain ill-tongued fellow in Ambracia, who had spoken very indecently of him, "Let him rather," said he, "speak against us here to a few, than rambling about to a great many." And others who in their wine had made reflections upon him, being afterward questioned for it, and asked by him whether they had said such words, on one of the young fellows answering. "Yes, all that, king: and should have said more if we had had more wine;" he laughed and discharged them. After Antigone's death, he married several wives to enlarge his interest and power. He had the daughter of Autoleon, King of the Paeonians, Bircenna, Bardyllis the Illyrian's daughter, Lanassa, daughter of Agathocles the Syracusan, who brought with her in dower the city of Corcyra, which had been taken by Agathocles. By Antigone he had Ptolemy, Alexander by Lanassa, and Helenus, his youngest son, by Bircenna: he brought them up all in arms, hot and eager youths, and by him sharpened and whetted to war from their very infancy. It is said, when one of them, while yet a child, asked him to which he would leave the kingdom, he replied, to him that had the sharpest sword, which indeed was much like that tragical curse of Oedipus to his sons: "Not by the lot decide, But within the sword the heritage divide."

So unsocial and wild-beast-like is the nature of ambition and cupidity.

After this battle Pyrrhus, returning gloriously home, enjoyed his fame and reputation, and being called "Eagle" by the Epirots, "By you," said he, "I am an eagle; for how should I not be such, while I have your arms as wings to sustain me?" A little after, having intelligence that Demetrius was dangerously sick, he entered on a sudden into Macedonia, intending only an incursion, and to harass the country; but was very near seizing upon all, and taking the kingdom without a blow. He marched as far as Edessa unresisted, great numbers deserting and coming in to him. This danger excited

Demetrius beyond his strength, and his friends and commanders in a short time got a considerable army together, and with all their forces briskly attacked Pyrrhus, who, coming only to pillage, would not stand a fight, but retreating, lost part of his army, as he went off, by the close pursuit of the Macedonians. Demetrius, however, although he had easily and quickly forced Pyrrhus out of the country, yet did not slight him, but having resolved upon great designs, and to recover his father's kingdom with an army of one hundred thousand men, and a fleet of five hundred ships, would neither embroil himself with Pyrrhus, nor leave the Macedonians so active and troublesome a neighbour; and since he had no leisure to continue the war with him, he was willing to treat and conclude a peace, and to turn his forces upon the other kings. Articles being agreed upon, the designs of Demetrius quickly discovered themselves by the greatness of his preparation. And the other kings, being alarmed, sent to Pyrrhus ambassadors and letters, expressing their wonder that he should choose to let his own opportunity pass by, and wait till Demetrius could use his; and whereas he was now able to chase him out of Macedon, involved in designs and disturbed, he should expect till Demetrius at leisure, and grown great, should bring the war home to his own door, and make him fight for his temples and sepulchres in Molossia; especially having so lately, by his means, lost Corcyra and his wife together. For Lanassa had taken offence at Pyrrhus for too great an inclination to those wives of his that were barbarians, and so withdrew to Corcyra, and desiring to marry some king, invited Demetrius, knowing of all the kings he was most ready to entertain offers of marriage; so he sailed thither, married Lanassa, and placed a garrison in the city. The kings having written thus to Pyrrhus, themselves likewise contrived to find Demetrius work, while he was delaying and making his preparations. Ptolemy, setting out with a great fleet, drew off many of the Greek cities. Lysimachus out of Thrace wasted the upper Macedon; and Pyrrhus, also taking arms at the same time, marched to Beroea, expecting, as it fell out, that Demetrius, collecting his forces against Lysimachus, would leave the lower country undefended. That very night he seemed in his sleep to be called by Alexander the Great, and approaching saw him sick abed, but was received with very kind words, and much respect, and promised zealous assistance. He making bold to reply, "How, sir, can you, being sick, assist me?" "With my name," said he, and mounting Nisaeon horse, seemed to lead the way. At the sight of this vision he was much assured, and with swift marches overrunning all the interjacent places, takes Beroea, and making his headquarters there, reduced

the rest of the country by his commanders. When Demetrius received intelligence of this, and perceived likewise the Macedonians ready to mutiny in the army, he was afraid to advance further, lest, coming near Lysimachus, a Macedonian king, and of great fame, they should revolt to him. So returning, he marched directly against Pyrrhus, as a stranger, and hated by the Macedonians. But while he lay encamped there near him, many who came out of Beroea infinitely praised Pyrrhus as invincible in arms, a glorious warrior, who treated those he had taken kindly and humanely. Several of these Pyrrhus himself sent privately, pretending to be Macedonians, and saying, now was the time to be delivered from the severe government of Demetrius by coming over to Pyrrhus, a gracious prince and a lover of soldiers. By this artifice a great part of the army was in a state of excitement, and the soldiers began to look every way about inquiring for Pyrrhus. It happened he was without his helmet, till understanding they did not know him, he put it on again, and so was quickly recognized by his lofty crest and the goat's horns he wore upon it. Then the Macedonians, running to him, desired to be told his password, and some put oaken boughs upon their heads, because they saw them worn by the soldiers about him. Some persons even took the confidence to say to Demetrius himself, that he would be well advised to withdraw and lay down the government. And he, indeed, seeing the mutinous movements of the army to be only too consistent with what they said, privately got away, disguised in a broad hat and a common soldier's coat. So Pyrrhus became master of the army without fighting, and was declared King of the Macedonians.

But Lysimachus now arriving, and claiming the defeat of Demetrius as the joint exploit of them both, and that therefore the kingdom should be shared between them, Pyrrhus, not as yet quite assured of the Macedonians, and in doubt of their faith, consented to the proposition of Lysimachus, and divided the country and cities between them accordingly. This was for the present useful, and prevented a war; but shortly after they found the partition not so much a peaceful settlement as an occasion of further complaint and difference. For men whose ambition neither seas, nor mountains, nor unpeopled deserts can limit, nor the bounds dividing Europe from Asia confine their vast desires, it would be hard to expect to forbear from injuring one another when they touch and are close together. These are ever naturally at war, envying and seeking advantages of one another, and merely make use of those two words, peace and war, like current coin, to serve

their occasions, not as justice but as expediency suggests, and are really better men when they openly enter on a war, than when they give to the mere forbearance from doing wrong, for want of opportunity, the sacred names of justice and friendship. Pyrrhus was an instance of this; for setting himself against the rise of Demetrius again, and endeavouring to hinder the recovery of his power, as it were from a kind of sickness, he assisted the Greeks, and came to Athens, where, having ascended the Acropolis, he offered sacrifice to the goddess, and the same day came down again, and told the Athenians he was much gratified by the goodwill and the confidence they had shown to him; but if they were wise he advised them never to let any king come thither again, or open their city gates to him. He concluded also a peace with Demetrius, but shortly after he was gone into Asia, at the persuasion of Lysimachus, he tampered with the Thessalians to revolt, and besieged his cities in Greece finding he could better preserve the attachment of the Macedonians in war than in peace, and being of his own inclination not much given to rest. At last, after Demetrius had been overthrown in Syria, Lysimachus, who had secured his affairs, and had nothing to do, immediately turned his whole forces upon Pyrrhus, who was in quarters at Edessa, and falling upon and seizing his convoy of provisions, brought first a great scarcity into the army; then partly by letters, partly by spreading rumours abroad, he corrupted the principal officers of the Macedonians, reproaching them that they had made one their master who was both a stranger and descended from those who had ever been servants to the Macedonians, and that they had thrust the old friends and familiars of Alexander out of the country. The Macedonian soldiers being much prevailed upon, Pyrrhus withdrew himself with his Epirots and auxiliary forces, relinquishing Macedon, just after the same manner he took it. So little reason have kings to condemn popular governments for changing sides as suits their interests, as in this they do but imitate them who are the great instructors of unfaithfulness and treachery; holding him the wisest that makes the least account of being an honest man.

Pyrrhus having thus retired into Epirus, and left Macedon, fortune gave him a fair occasion of enjoying himself in quiet, and peaceably governing his own subjects; but he who thought it a nauseous course of life not to be doing mischief to others, or receiving some from them, like Achilles, could not endure repose - "But sad and languished far, Desiring battle and the shout of war," - and gratified his inclination by the following pretext for

new troubles. The Romans were at war with the Tarentines, who, not being able to go on with the war, nor yet, through the foolhardiness and the viciousness of their popular speakers, to come to terms and give it up, proposed now to make Pyrrhus their general, and engage him in it, as of all the neighbouring kings the most at leisure, and the most skilful as a commander. The more grave and discreet citizens opposing these counsels, were partly overborne by the noise and violence of the multitude; while others, seeing this, absented themselves from the assemblies; only one Meton, a very sober man, on the day this public decree was to be ratified, when the people were now seating themselves, came dancing into the assembly like one quite drunk, with a withered garland and a small lamp in his hand, and a woman playing on a flute before him.

And as in great multitudes met at such popular assemblies no decorum can be well observed, some clapped him, others laughed, none forbade him, but called to the woman to play, and to him to sing to the company, and when they thought he was going to do so, "'Tis right of you, O men of Tarentum," he said, "not to hinder any from making themselves merry that have a mind to it, while it is yet in their power; and if you are wise, you will take out your pleasure of your freedom while you can, for you must change your course of life, and follow other diet when Pyrrhus comes to town." These words made a great impression upon many of the Tarentines, and a confused murmur went about that he had spoken much to the purpose; but some who feared they should be sacrificed if a peace were made with the Romans, reviled the whole assembly for so tamely suffering themselves to be abused by a drunken sot, and crowding together upon Meton, thrust him out. So the public order was passed and ambassadors sent into Epirus, not only in their own names, but in those of all the Italian Greeks, carrying presents to Pyrrhus, and letting him know they wanted a general of reputation and experience; and that they could furnish him with large forces of Lucanians, Messapians, Samnites, and Tarentines, amounting to twenty thousand horse, and three hundred and fifty thousand foot. This did not only quicken Pyrrhus, but raised an eager desire for the expedition in the Epirots.

There was one Cineas, a Thessalian, considered to be a man of very good sense, a disciple of the great orator Demosthenes, who, of all that were famous at that time for speaking well, most seemed, as in a picture, to revive in the minds of the audience the memory of his force and vigour of eloquence; and being always about Pyrrhus,

and sent about in his service to several cities, verified the saying of Euripides, that “ -the force of words Can do whate’er is done by conquering swords.” - And Pyrrhus was used to say, that Cineas had taken more towns with his words than he with his arms, and always did him the honour to employ him in his most important occasions. This person, seeing Pyrrhus eagerly preparing for Italy, led him one day when he was at leisure into the following reasonings: “The Romans, sir, are reported to be great warriors and conquerors of many warlike nations; if God permit us to overcome them, how should we use our victory?” “You ask,” said Pyrrhus, “a thing evident of itself. The Romans once conquered, there is neither Greek nor barbarian city that will resist us, but we shall presently be masters of all Italy, the extent and resources and strength of which any one should rather profess to be ignorant of than yourself.” Cineas after a little pause, “And having subdued Italy, what shall we do next?” Pyrrhus not yet discovering his intention, “Sicily,” he replied, “next holds out her arms to receive us, a wealthy and populous island, and easy to be gained; for since Agathocles left it, only faction and anarchy, and the licentious violence of the demagogues prevail.” “You speak,” said Cineas, “what is perfectly probable, but will the possession of Sicily put an end to the war?” “God grant us,” answered Pyrrhus, “victory and success in that, and we will use these as forerunners of greater things; who could forbear from Libya and Carthage then within reach, which Agathocles, even when forced to fly from Syracuse, and passing the sea only with a few ships, had all but surprised? These conquests once perfected, will any assert that of the enemies who now pretend to despise us, any one will dare to make further resistance?” “None,” replied Cineas, “for then it is manifest we may with such mighty forces regain Macedon, and make an absolute conquest of Greece; and when all these are in our power what shall we do then?” Said Pyrrhus, smiling, “We will live at our ease, my dear friend, and drink all day, and divert ourselves with pleasant conversation.” When Cineas had led Pyrrhus with his argument to this point: “And what hinders us now, sir, if we have a mind to be merry, and entertain one another, since we have at hand without trouble all those necessary things, to which through much blood and great labour, and infinite hazards and mischief done to ourselves and to others, we design at last to arrive?” Such reasonings rather troubled Pyrrhus with the thought of the happiness he was quitting, than any way altered his purpose, being unable to abandon the hopes of what he so much desired.

And first, he sent away Cineas to the Tarentines with three thousand men; presently after, many vessels for transport of horse, and galleys, and flat-bottomed boats of all sorts arriving from Tarentum, he shipped upon them twenty elephants, three thousand horse, twenty thousand foot, two thousand archers, and five hundred slingers. All being thus in readiness, he set sail, and being half-way over, was driven by the wind, blowing, contrary to the season of the year, violently from the north, and carried from his course, but by the great skill and resolution of his pilots and seamen, he made the land with infinite labour, and beyond expectation. The rest of the fleet could not get up, and some of the dispersed ships, losing the coast of Italy, were driven into the Libyan and Sicilian Sea; others, not able to double the cape of Japygium, were overtaken by the night; and, with a boisterous and heavy sea, throwing them upon a dangerous and rocky shore, they were all very much disabled except the royal galley. She, while the sea bore upon her sides, resisted with her bulk and strength, and avoided the force of it, till the wind coming about, blew directly in their teeth from the shore, and the vessel keeping up with her head against it, was in danger of going to pieces; yet on the other hand, to suffer themselves to be driven off to sea again, which was thus raging and tempestuous, with the wind shifting about every way, seemed to them the most dreadful of all their present evils. Pyrrhus, rising up, threw himself overboard. His friends and guards strove eagerly who should be most ready to help him, but night and the sea, with its noise and violent surge, made it extremely difficult to do this; so that hardly, when with the morning the wind began to subside, he got ashore, breathless and weakened in body, but with high courage and strength of mind resisting his hard fortune. The Messapians, upon whose shore they were thrown by the tempest, came up eagerly to help them in the best manner they could; and some of the straggling vessels that had escaped the storm arrived; in which were a very few horse, and not quite two thousand foot, and two elephants.

With these Pyrrhus marched straight to Tarentum, where Cineas, being informed of his arrival, led out the troops to meet him. Entering the town, he did nothing displeasing to the Tarentines, nor put any force upon them, till the ships were all in harbour, and the greatest part of the army got together; but then perceiving that the people, unless some strong compulsion was used to them, were not capable either of saving others or being saved themselves, and were rather intending, while he engaged for them in the field, to remain at home bathing and feasting themselves, he first shut up

the places of public exercise, and the walks, where, in their idle way, they fought their country's battles and conducted her campaigns in their talk; he prohibited likewise all festivals, revels, and drinking parties as unseasonable, and summoning them to arms, showed himself rigorous and inflexible in carrying out the conscription for service in the war. So that many, not understanding what it was to be commanded, left the town, calling it mere slavery not to do as they pleased. He now received intelligence that Laevinus, the Roman consul, was upon his march with a great army, and plundering Lucania as he went. The confederate forces were not come up to him, yet he thought it impossible to suffer so near an approach of an enemy, and drew out with his army, but first sent an herald to the Romans to know if before the war they would decide the differences between them and the Italian Greeks by his arbitrament and mediation. But Laevinus returning answer that the Romans neither accepted him as arbitrator nor feared him as an enemy, Pyrrhus advanced, and encamped in the plain between the cities of Pandosia and Heraclea, and having notice the Romans were near, and lay on the other side of the river Siris, he rode up to take a view of them, and seeing their order, the appointment of the watches, their method and the general form of their encampment, he was amazed, and addressing one of his friends next to him: "This order," said he, "Megacles, of the barbarians, is not at all barbarian in character; we shall see presently what they can do; and growing a little more thoughtful of the event, resolved to expect the arriving of the confederate troops. And to hinder the Romans, if in the meantime they should endeavour to pass the river, he planted men all along the bank to oppose them. But they, hastening to anticipate the coming up of the same forces which he had determined to wait for, attempted the passage with their infantry, where it was fordable, and with the horse in several places, so that the Greeks, fearing to be surrounded, were obliged to retreat, and Pyrrhus, perceiving this, and being much surprised, bade his foot officers draw their men up in line of battle, and continue in arms, while he himself with three thousand horse advanced, hoping to attack the Romans as they were coming over, scattered and disordered.

But when he saw a vast number of shields appearing above the water, and the horse following them in good order, gathering his men in a closer body, himself at the head of them, he began the charge, conspicuous by his rich and beautiful armour, and letting it be seen that his reputation had not outgone what he was able effectually to perform. While exposing his hands and body in the

fight, and bravely repelling all that engaged him, he still guided the battle with a steady and undisturbed reason, and such presence of mind, as if he had been out of the action and watching it from a distance, passing still from point to point, and assisting those whom he thought most pressed by the enemy. Here Leonnatus the Macedonian, observing one of the Italians very intent upon Pyrrhus, riding up towards him, and changing places as he did, and moving as he moved: "Do you see, sir," said he, "that barbarian on the black horse with white feet? he seems to be one that designs some great and dangerous thing, for he looks constantly at you, and fixes his whole attention, full of vehement purpose, on you alone, taking no notice of others. Be on your guard, sir, against him." "Leonnatus," said Pyrrhus, "it is impossible for any man to avoid his fate; but neither he nor any other Italian shall have much satisfaction in engaging with me." While they were in this discourse, the Italian, lowering his spear and quickening his horse, rode furiously at Pyrrhus, and run his horse through with his lance; at the same instant Leonnatus ran his through. Both horses falling, Pyrrhus's friends surrounded him and brought him off safe, and killed the Italian, bravely defending himself. He was by birth a Frentanian, captain of a troop, and named Oplacus.

This made Pyrrhus use greater caution, and now seeing his horse give ground, he brought up the infantry against the enemy, and changing his scarf and his arms with Megacles, one of his friends, and obscuring himself, as it were, in his, charged upon the Romans, who received and engaged him, and a great while the success of the battle remained undetermined; and it is said there were seven turns of fortune both of pursuing and being pursued. And the change of his arms was very opportune for the safety of his person, but had like to have overthrown his cause and lost him the victory; for several falling upon Megacles, the first that gave him his mortal wound was one Dexous, who, snatching away his helmet and his robe, rode at once to Laevinus, holding them up, and saying aloud he had killed Pyrrhus. These spoils being carried about and shown among the ranks, the Romans were transported with joy, and shouted aloud; while equal discouragement and terror prevailed among the Greeks, until Pyrrhus, understanding what had happened, rode about the army with his face bare, stretching out his hand to his soldiers, and telling them aloud it was he. At last, the elephants more particularly began to distress the Romans, whose horses, before they came near, nor enduring them, went back with their riders; and upon this, he commanded

the Thessalian cavalry to charge them in their disorder, and routed them with great loss. Dionysius affirms near fifteen thousand of the Romans fell; Hieronymus, no more than seven thousand. On Pyrrhus's side, the same Dionysius makes thirteen thousand slain, the other under four thousand; but they were the flower of his men, and amongst them his particular friends as well as officers whom he most trusted and made use of. However, he possessed himself of the Romans' camp which they deserted, and gained over several confederate cities, and wasted the country round about, and advanced so far that he was within about thirty-seven miles of Rome itself. After the fight many of the Lucanians and Samnites came in and joined him, whom he chid for their delay, but yet he was evidently well pleased and raised in his thoughts, that he had defeated so great an army of the Romans with the assistance of the Tarentines alone.

The Romans did not remove Laevinus from the consulship; though it is told that Caius Fabricius said, that the Epirots had not beaten the Romans, but only Pyrrhus, Laevinus; insinuating that their loss was not through want of valour but of conduct; but filled up their legions, and enlisted fresh men with all speed, talking high and boldly of war, which struck Pyrrhus with amazement. He thought it advisable by sending first to make an experiment whether they had any inclination to treat, thinking that to take the city and make an absolute conquest was no work for such an army as his was at that time, but to settle a friendship, and bring them to terms, would be highly honourable after his victory. Cineas was despatched away, and applied himself to several of the great ones, with presents for themselves and their ladies from the king; but not a person would receive any, and answered, as well men as women, that if an agreement were publicly concluded, they also should be ready, for their parts, to express their regard to the king. And Cineas, discoursing with the senate in the most persuasive and obliging manner in the world, yet was not heard with kindness or inclination, although Pyrrhus offered also to return all the prisoners he had taken in the fight without ransom, and promised his assistance for the entire conquest of all Italy, asking only their friendship for himself, and security for the Tarentines, and nothing further. Nevertheless, most were well inclined to a peace, having already received one great defeat and fearing another from an additional force of the native Italians, now joining with Pyrrhus. At this point Appius Claudius, a man of great distinction, but who, because of his great age and loss of sight, had declined the fatigue of public business, after these propositions had been made by the

king, hearing a report that the senate was ready to vote the conditions of peace, could not forbear, but commanding his servants to take him up, was carried in his chair through the forum to the senate-house. When he was set down at the door, his sons and sons-in-law took him up in their arms, and, walking close round about him, brought him into the senate. Out of reverence for so worthy a man, the whole assembly was respectfully silent.

And a little after raising up himself: "I bore," said he, "until this time, the misfortune of my eyes with some impatience, but now while I hear of these dishonourable motions and resolves of yours, destructive to the glory of Rome, it is my affliction, that being already blind, I am not deaf too. Where is now that discourse of yours that became famous in all the world, that if he, the great Alexander, had come into Italy, and dared to attack us when we were young men, and our fathers, who were then in their prime, he had not now been celebrated as invincible, but either flying hence, or falling here, had left Rome more glorious? You demonstrate now that all that was but foolish arrogance and vanity, by fearing Molossians and Chaonians, ever the Macedonian's prey, and by trembling at Pyrrhus who was himself but a humble servant to one of Alexander's life-guard, and comes here, not so much to assist the Greeks that inhabit among us, as to escape from his enemies at home, a wanderer about Italy, and yet dares to promise you the conquest of it all by that army which has not been able to preserve for him a little part of Macedon. Do not persuade yourselves that making him your friend is the way to send him back, it is the way rather to bring over other invaders from thence, contemning you as easy to be reduced, if Pyrrhus goes off without punishment for his outrages on you, but, on the contrary, with the reward of having enabled the Tarentines and Samnites to laugh at the Romans." When Appius had done, eagerness for the war seized on every man, and Cineas was dismissed with this answer, that when Pyrrhus had withdrawn his forces out of Italy, then, if he pleased, they would treat with him about friendship and alliance, but while he stayed there in arms, they were resolved to prosecute the war against him with all their force, though he should have defeated a thousand Laevinuses.

It is said that Cineas, while he was managing this affair, made it his business carefully to inspect the manners of the Romans, and to understand their methods of government, and having conversed with their noblest citizens, he afterwards told Pyrrhus, among other things, that the senate seemed to him an assembly of kings, and as for the people, he feared lest it might prove that they were

fighting with a Lernaean hydra, for the consul had already raised twice as large an army as the former, and there were many times over the same number of Romans able to bear arms.

Then Caius Fabricius came in embassy from the Romans to treat about the prisoners that were taken, one whom Cineas had reported to be a man of highest consideration among them as an honest man and a good soldier, but extremely poor. Pyrrhus received him with much kindness, and privately would have persuaded him to accept of his gold, not for any evil purpose, but calling it a mark of respect and hospitable kindness. Upon Fabricius's refusal, he pressed him no further, but the next day, having a mind to discompose him, as he had never seen an elephant before, he commanded one of the largest, completely armed, to be placed behind the hangings, as they were talking together. Which being done, upon a sign given, the hanging was drawn aside, and the elephant, raising his trunk over the head of Fabricius, made an horrid and ugly noise. He, gently turning about and smiling, said to Pyrrhus, "Neither your money yesterday, nor this beast to-day, makes any impression upon me." At supper, amongst all sorts of things that were discoursed of, but more particularly Greece and the philosophers there, Cineas, by accident, had occasion to speak of Epicurus, and explained the opinions his followers hold about the gods and the commonwealth, and the objects of life, placing the chief happiness of man in pleasure, and declining public affairs as an injury and disturbance of a happy life, removing the gods afar off both from kindness or anger, or any concern for us at all, to a life wholly without business and flowing in pleasures. Before he had done speaking, "O Hercules!" Fabricius cried out to Pyrrhus, "may Pyrrhus and the Samnites entertain themselves with this sort of opinions as long as they are in war with us." Pyrrhus, admiring the wisdom and gravity of the man, was the more transported with desire of making friendship instead of war with the city, and entreated him, personally, after the peace should be concluded, to accept of living with him as the chief of his ministers and generals. Fabricius answered quietly, "Sir, this will not be for your advantage, for they who now honour and admire you, when they have had experience of me, will rather choose to be governed by me than by you." Such was Fabricius. And Pyrrhus received his answer without any resentment or tyrannic passion; nay, among his friends he highly commended the great mind of Fabricius, and intrusted the prisoners to him alone, on condition that if the senate should not vote a peace, after they had conversed with their friends and celebrated the festival of Saturn, they should

be remanded. And, accordingly, they were sent back after the holidays; it being decreed pain of death for any that stayed behind.

After this Fabricius taking the consulate, a person came with a letter to the camp written by the king's principal physician, offering to take off Pyrrhus by poison, and so end the war without further hazard to the Romans, if he might have a reward proportionable to his service. Fabricius, hating the villainy of the man, and disposing the other consul to the same opinion, sent despatches immediately to Pyrrhus to caution him against the treason. His letter was to this effect: "Caius Fabricius and Quintus Aemilius consuls of the Romans, to Pyrrhus the king, health. You seem to have made an ill-judgement both of your friends and enemies; you will understand by reading this letter sent to us, that you are at war with honest men, and trust villains and knaves. Nor do we disclose this to you out of any favour to you, but lest your ruin might bring a reproach upon us, as if we had ended the war, by treachery, as not able to do it by force." When Pyrrhus had read the letter and made inquiry into the treason, he punished the physician, and as an acknowledgment to the Romans sent to Rome the prisoners without ransom, and again employed Cineas to negotiate a peace for him. But they, regarding it as at once too great a kindness from an enemy, and too great a reward for not doing an ill thing to accept their prisoners so, released in return an equal number of the Tarentines and Samnites, but would admit of no debate of alliance or peace until he had removed his arms and forces out of Italy, and sailed back to Epirus with the same ships that brought him over. Afterwards, his affairs demanding a second fight, when he had refreshed his men, he decamped, and met the Romans about the city Asculum, where, however, he was much incommoded by a woody country unfit for his horse, and a swift river, so that the elephants, for want of sure treading, could not get up with the infantry. After many wounded and many killed, night put an end to the engagement. Next day, designing to make the fight on even ground, and have the elephants among the thickest of the enemy, he caused a detachment to possess themselves of those incommodious grounds, and, mixing slingers and archers among the elephants, with full strength and courage, he advanced in a close and well-ordered body. The Romans, not having those advantages of retreating and falling on as they pleased, which they had before, were obliged to fight man to man upon plain ground, and, being anxious to drive back the infantry before the elephants could get up, they fought fiercely with their swords among the Macedonian spears, not sparing themselves, thinking only to

wound and kill, without regard to what they suffered. After a long and obstinate fight, the first giving ground is reported to have been where Pyrrhus himself engaged with extraordinary courage; but they were most carried away by the overwhelming force of the elephants, not being able to make use of their valour, but overthrown as it were by the irruption of a sea or an earthquake, before which it seemed better to give way than to die without doing anything, and not gain the least advantage by suffering the utmost extremity, the retreat to their camp not being far. Hieronymus says there fell six thousand of the Romans, and of Pyrrhus's men, the king's own commentaries reported three thousand five hundred and fifty lost in this action. Dionysius, however, neither gives any account of two engagements at Asculum, nor allows the Romans to have been certainly beaten, stating that once only after they had fought till sunset, both armies were unwillingly separated by the night, Pyrrhus being wounded by a javelin in the arm, and his baggage plundered by the Samnites, that in all there died of Pyrrhus's men and the Romans above fifteen thousand. The armies separated; and, it is said, Pyrrhus replied to one that gave him joy of his victory that one other such would utterly undo him. For he had lost a great part of the forces he brought with him, and almost all his particular friends and principal commanders; there were no others there to make recruits, and he found the confederates in Italy backward.

On the other hand, as from a fountain continually flowing out of the city, the Roman camp was quickly and plentifully filled up with fresh men, not at all abating in courage for the loss they sustained, but even from their very anger gaining new force and resolution to go on with the war.

Among these difficulties he fell again into new hopes and projects distracting his purposes. For at the same time some persons arrived from Sicily, offering into his hands the cities of Agrigentum, Syracuse, and Leontini, and begging his assistance to drive out the Carthaginians and rid the island of tyrants; and others brought him news out of Greece that Ptolemy, called Ceranus, was slain in a fight, and his army cut in pieces by the Gauls, and that now, above all others, was his time to offer himself to the Macedonians, in great need of a king. Complaining much of fortune for bringing him so many occasions of great things all together at a time, and thinking that to have both offered to him was to lose one of them, he was doubtful, balancing in his thoughts. But the affairs of Sicily seeming to hold out the greater prospects, Africa lying so near, he turned himself to them, and presently despatched away Cineas, as

he used to do, to make terms beforehand with the cities. Then he placed a garrison in Tarentum, much to the Tarentines' discontent, who required him either to perform what he came for, and continue with them in a war against the Romans, or leave the city as he found it.

He returned no pleasing answer, but commanded them to be quiet and attend his time, and so sailed away. Being arrived in Sicily, what he had designed in his hopes was confirmed effectually, and the cities frankly surrendered to him; and wherever his arms and force were necessary, nothing at first made any considerable resistance. For advancing with thirty thousand foot, and twenty-five hundred horse, and two hundred ships, he totally routed the Phoenicians, and overran their whole province, and Eryx being the strongest town they held, and having a great garrison in it, he resolved to take it by storm. The army being in readiness to give the assault, he put on his arms, and coming to the head of his men made a vow of plays and sacrifices in honour to Hercules, if he signalized himself in that day's action before the Greeks that dwelt in Sicily, as became his great descent and his fortunes. The sign being given by sound of trumpet, he first scattered the barbarians with his shot, and then brought his ladders to the wall, and was the first that mounted upon it himself, and, the enemy appearing in great numbers, he beat them back; some he threw down from the walls on each side, others he laid dead in a heap round about him with his sword, nor did he receive the least wound, but by his very aspect inspired terror in the enemy; and gave a clear demonstration that Homer was in the right, and pronounced according to the truth of fact, that fortitude alone, of all the virtues, is wont to display itself in divine transports and frenzies. The being taken, he offered to Hercules most magnificently, and exhibited all varieties of shows and plays.

A sort of barbarous people about Messena, called Mamertines, gave much trouble to the Greeks, and put several of them under contribution. These being numerous and valiant (from whence they had their name, equivalent in the Latin tongue to warlike,¹) he first intercepted the collectors of the contribution money, and cut them off, then beat them in open fight, and destroyed many of their places of strength. The Carthaginians being now inclined to composition, and of¹ Mamers being another and older form for Mars. The Mamertines were descended from Campanian or Oscan mercenaries and spoke a kind of Latin.

fering him a round sum of money, and to furnish him with shipping, if a peace were concluded, he told them plainly, aspiring

still to greater things, there was but one way for a friendship and right understanding between them, if they, wholly abandoning Sicily, would consent to make the African sea the limit between them and the Greeks. And being elevated with his good fortune, and the strength of his forces, and pursuing those hopes in prospect of which he first sailed thither, his immediate aim was at Africa; and as he had abundance of shipping, but very ill equipped, he collected seamen, not by fair and gentle dealing with the cities, but by force in a haughty and insolent way, and menacing them with punishments. And as at first he had not acted thus, but had been unusually indulgent and kind, ready to believe, and uneasy to none; now of a popular leader becoming a tyrant by these severe proceedings, he got the name of an ungrateful and a faithless man. However, they gave way to these things as necessary, although they took them very ill from him; and especially when he began to show suspicion of Thoenon and Sosistratus, men of the first position in Syracuse, who invited him over into Sicily, and when he was come, put the cities into his power, and were most instrumental in all he had done there since his arrival, whom he now would neither suffer to be about his person, nor leave at home; and when Sosistratus out of fear withdrew himself, and then he charged Thoenon, as in a conspiracy with the other, and put him to death, with this all his prospects changed, not by little and little, nor in a single place only, but a mortal hatred being raised in the cities against him, some fell off to the Carthaginians, others called in the Mamertines. And seeing revolts in all places, and desires of alteration, and a potent faction against him, at the same time he received letters from the Samnites and Tarentines, who were beaten quite out of the field, and scarce able to secure their towns against the war, earnestly begging his help. This served as a colour to make his relinquishing Sicily no flight, nor a despair of good success; but in truth not being able to manage Sicily, which was as a ship labouring in a storm, and willing to be out of her, he suddenly threw himself over into Italy.

It is reported that at his going off he looked back upon the island, and said to those about him, "How brave a field of war do we leave, my friends, for the Romans and Carthaginians to fight in," which, as he then conjectured, fell out indeed not long after. When he was sailing off, the barbarians having conspired together, he was forced to a fight with the Carthaginians in the very road, and lost many of his ships; with the rest he fled into Italy. There, about one thousand Mamertines, who had crossed the sea a little before,

though afraid to engage him in open field, setting upon him where the passages were difficult, put the whole army in confusion. Two elephants fell, and a great part of his rear was cut off. He, therefore, coming up in person, repulsed the enemy, but ran into great danger among men long trained and bold in war. His being wounded in the head with a sword, and retiring a little out of the fight, much increased their confidence, and one of them advancing a good way before the rest, large of body and in bright armour, with an haughty voice challenged him to come forth if he were alive. Pyrrhus, in great anger, broke away violently from his guards, and, in his fury, besmeared with blood, terrible to look upon, made his way through his own men, and struck the barbarian on the head with his sword such a blow, as with the strength of his arm, and the excellent temper of the weapon, passed downward so far that his body being cut asunder fell in two pieces. This stopped the course of the barbarians, amazed and confounded at Pyrrhus, as one more than man; so that continuing his march all the rest of the way undisturbed, he arrived at Tarentum with twenty thousand foot and three thousand horse, where, reinforcing himself with the choicest troops of the Tarentines, he advanced immediately against the Romans, who then lay encamped in the territories of the Samnites, whose affairs were extremely shattered, and their counsels broken, having been in many fights beaten by the Romans. There was also a discontent amongst them at Pyrrhus for his expedition into Sicily, so that not many came in to join him.

He divided his army into two parts, and despatched the first into Lucania to oppose one of the consuls there, so that he should not come in to assist the other; the rest he led against Manius Curius, who had posted himself very advantageously near Beneventum, and expected the other consul's forces, and partly because the priests had dissuaded him by unfavourable omens, was resolved to remain inactive. Pyrrhus, hastening to attack these before the other could arrive, with his best men, and the most serviceable elephants, marched in the night toward their camp. But being forced to go round about, and through a very woody country, their lights failed them, and the soldiers lost their way. A council of war being called, while they were in debate, the night was spent, and, at the break of day, his approach, as he came down the hills, was discovered by the enemy, and put the whole camp into disorder and tumult. But the sacrifices being auspicious, and the time absolutely obliging them to fight, Manius drew his troops out of the trenches, and attacked the vanguard, and, having routed them all, put the whole army into consternation, so that many were cut off and some of the

elephants taken. This success drew on Manius into the level plain, and here, in open battle, he defeated part of the enemy; but, in other quarters, finding himself overpowered by the elephants and forced back to his trenches, he commanded out those who were left to guard them, a numerous body, standing thick at the ramparts, all in arms and fresh. These coming down from their strong position, and charging the elephants, forced them to retire; and they in the flight turning back upon their own men, caused great disorder and confusion, and gave into the hands of the Romans the victory and the future supremacy. Having obtained from these efforts, and these contests, the feeling as well as the fame of invincible strength, they at once reduced Italy under their power, and not long after Sicily too.

Thus fell Pyrrhus from his Italian and Sicilian hopes, after he had consumed six years in these wars, and though unsuccessful in his affairs, yet preserved his courage unconquerable among all these misfortunes, and was held, for military experience, and personal valour and enterprise, much the bravest of all the princes of his time, only what he got by great actions he lost again by vain hopes, and by new desires of what he had not, kept nothing of what he had. So that Antigonus used to compare him to a player with dice, who had excellent throws, but knew not how to use them. He returned into Epirus with eight thousand foot and five hundred horse, and for want of money to pay them, was fain to look out for a new war to maintain the army. Some of the Gauls joining him, he invaded Macedonia, where Antigonus, son of Demetrius, governed, designing merely to plunder and waste the country. But after he had made himself master of several towns, and two thousand men came over to him, he began to hope for something greater, and adventured upon Antigonus himself, and meeting him at a narrow passage, put the whole army in disorder. The Gauls, who brought up Antigonus's rear, were very numerous and stood firm, but after a sharp encounter, the greatest part of them were cut off, and they who had the charge of the elephants being surrounded every way, delivered up both themselves and the beasts, Pyrrhus, taking this advantage, and advising more with his good fortune than his reason, boldly set upon the main body of the Macedonian foot, already surprised with fear, and troubled at the former loss. They declined any action or engagement with him; and he, holding out his hand and calling aloud both to the superior and under officers by name, brought over the foot from Antigonus, who, flying away secretly, was only able to retain some of the seaport towns. Pyrrhus, among all these kindnesses of fortune,

thinking what he had effected against the Gauls the most advantageous for his glory, hung up their richest and goodliest spoils in the temple of Minerva Itonis, with this inscription: "Pyrrhus, descendant of Molossian kings, These shields to thee, Itonian goddess, brings, Won from the valiant Gaul when in the fight Antigonus and all his host took flight; 'Tis not to-day or yesterday alone That for brave deeds the Aeacidae are known."

After this victory in the field, he proceeded to secure the cities, and having possessed himself of Aegae, beside other hardships put upon the people there, he left in the town a garrison of Gauls, some of those in his own army, who being insatiably desirous of wealth, instantly dug up the tombs of the kings that lay buried there, and took away the riches, and insolently scattered about their bones.

Pyrrhus, in appearance, made no great matter of it, either deferring it on account of the pressure of other business, or wholly passing it by, out of fear of punishing those barbarians; but this made him very ill spoken of among the Macedonians, and his affairs being yet unsettled and brought to no firm consistence, he began to entertain new hopes and projects, and in raillery called Antigonus a shameless man, for still wearing his purple and not changing it for an ordinary dress; but upon Cleonymus, the Spartan, arriving and inviting him to Lacedaemon, he frankly embraced the overture. Cleonymus was of royal descent, but seeming too arbitrary and absolute, had no great respect nor credit at home; and Areus was king there. This was the occasion of an old and public grudge between him and the citizens; but, beside that, Cleonymus, in his old age, had married a young lady of great beauty and royal blood, Chilonis, daughter of Leotychides, who, falling desperately in love with Acrotatus, Areus's son, a youth in the flower of manhood, rendered this match both uneasy and dishonourable to Cleonymus, as there was none of the Spartans who did not very well know how much his wife slighted him; so these domestic troubles added to his public discontent. He brought Pyrrhus to Sparta with an army of twenty-five thousand foot, two thousand horse, and twenty-four elephants. So great a preparation made it evident to the whole world that he came, not so much to gain Sparta for Cleonymus, as to take all Peloponnesus for himself, although he expressly denied this to the Lacedaemonian ambassadors that came to him at Megalopolis, affirming he came to deliver the cities from the slavery of Antigonus, and declaring he would send his younger sons to Sparta, if he might, to be brought up in Spartan habits, that so they might be better bred than all other kings. With these pretensions amusing those who came to

meet him in his march, as soon as ever he entered Laconia he began to plunder and waste the country, and on the ambassadors complaining that he began the war upon them before it was proclaimed: "We know," said he, "very well that neither do you Spartans, when you design anything, talk of it beforehand." One Mandroclidas, then present, told him, in the broad Spartan dialect: "If you are a god, you will do us no harm, we are wronging no man; but if you are a man, there may be another stronger than you.

He now marched away directly for Lacedaemon, and being advised by Cleonymus to give the assault as soon as he arrived, fearing, as it is said, lest the soldiers, entering by night, should plunder the city, he answered, they might do it as well next morning, because there were but few soldiers in town, and those unprovided against his sudden approach, as Areus was not there in person, but gone to aid the Gortynians in Crete. And it was this alone that saved the town, because he despised it as not tenable, and so imagining no defence would be made, he sat down before it that night. Cleonymus's friends, and the Helots, his domestic servants, had made great preparation at his house, as expecting Pyrrhus there at supper. In the night the Lacedaemonians held a consultation to ship over all the women into Crete, but they unanimously refused, and Archidamia came into the senate with a sword in her hand, in the name of them all, asking if the men expected the women to survive the ruins of Sparta. It was next resolved to draw a trench in a line directly over against the enemy's camp, and, here and there in it, to sink wagons in the ground, as deep as the naves of the wheel, that, so being firmly fixed, they might obstruct the passage of the elephants. When they had just begun the work, both maids and women came to them, the married women with their robes tied like girdles round their underfrocks, and the unmarried girls in their single frocks only, to assist the elder men at the work. As for the youth that were next day to engage, they left them to their rest, and undertaking their proportion, they themselves finished a third part of the trench which was in breadth six cubits, four in depth, and eight hundred feet long, as Phylarchus says; Hieronymus makes it somewhat less. The enemy beginning to move by break of day, they brought their arms to the young men, and giving them also in charge the trench, exhorted them to defend and keep it bravely, as it would be happy for them to conquer in the view of their whole country, and glorious to die in the arms of their mothers and wives, falling as became Spartans. As for Chilonis, she retired with a halter about

her neck, resolving to die so rather than fall into the hands Cleonymus, if the city were taken.

Pyrrhus himself, in person, advanced with his foot to force through the shields of the Spartans ranged against him, and to get over the trench, which was scarce passable, because the looseness of the fresh earth afforded no firm footing for the soldiers. Ptolemy, his son, with two thousand Gauls, and some choice men of the Chaonians, went around the trench, and endeavoured to get over where the wagons were. But they, being so deep in the ground, and placed close together, not only made his passage, but also the defence of the Lacedaemonians, very troublesome. Yet now the Gauls had got the wheels out of the ground, and were drawing off the wagons toward the river, when young Acrotatus, seeing the danger, passing through the town with three hundred men, surrounded Ptolemy undiscerned, taking the advantage of some slopes of the ground, until he fell upon his rear, and forced him to wheel about. And thrusting one another into the ditch, and falling among the wagons, at last with much loss, not without difficulty, they withdrew. The elderly men and all the women saw this brave action of Acrotatus, and when he returned back into the town to his first post, all covered with blood and fierce and elate with victory, he seemed to the Spartan women to have become taller and more beautiful than before, and they envied Chilonis so worthy a lover. And some of the old men followed him, crying aloud, "Go on, Acrotatus, be happy with Chilonis, and beget brave sons for Sparta." Where Pyrrhus himself fought was the hottest of the action and many of the Spartans did gallantly, but in particular one Phyllius signalized himself, made the best resistance, and killed most assailants; and when he found himself ready to sink with the many wounds he had received, retiring a little out of his place behind another, he fell down among his fellow-soldiers, that the enemy might not carry off his body. The fight ended with the day, and Pyrrhus, in his sleep, dreamed that he drew thunderbolts upon Lacedaemon, and set it all on fire, and rejoiced at the sight; and waking, in this transport of joy, he commanded his officers to get all things ready for a second assault, and relating his dream among his friends, supposing it to mean that he should take the town by storm, the rest assented to it with admiration, but Lysimachus was not pleased with the dream, and told him he feared lest as places struck with lightning are held sacred, and not to be trodden upon, so the gods might by this let him know the city should not be taken. Pyrrhus replied, that all these things were but idle talk, full of uncertainty, and only fit to amuse the vulgar; their thought, with

their swords in their hands, should always be- “The one good omen is King Pyrrhus’s cause,” - and so got up, and drew out his army to the walls by break of day. The Lacedaemonians, in resolution and courage, made a defence even beyond their power; the women were all by, helping them to arms, and bringing bread and drink to those that desired it, and taking care of the wounded. The Macedonians attempted to fill up the trench, bringing huge quantities of materials and throwing them upon the arms and dead bodies, that lay there and were covered over. While the Lacedaemonians opposed this with all their force, Pyrrhus, in person, appeared on their side of the trench and wagons, pressing on horseback toward the city, at which the men who had that post calling out, and the women shrieking and running about, while Pyrrhus violently pushed on, and beat down all that disputed his way, his horse received a shot in the belly from a Cretan arrow, and, in his convulsions as he died, threw off Pyrrhus on slippery and steep ground. And all about him being in confusion at this, the Spartans came boldly up, and making good use of their missiles, forced them off again. After this Pyrrhus, in other quarters also, put an end to the combat, imagining the Lacedaemonians would be inclined to yield, as almost all of them were wounded, and very great numbers killed outright; but the good fortune of the city, either satisfied with the experiment upon the bravery of the citizens, or willing to prove how much even in the last extremities such interposition may effect, brought, when the Lacedaemonians had now but very slender hopes left, Aminias, the Phocian, one of Antigonus’s commanders, from Corinth to their assistance, with a force of mercenaries; and they were no sooner received into the town, but Areus, their king, arrived there himself, too, from Crete, with two thousand men more. The women upon this went all home to their houses, finding it no longer necessary for them to meddle with the business of the war; and they also were sent back, who, though not of military age, were by necessity forced to take arms, while the rest prepared to fight Pyrrhus.

He, upon the coming of these additional forces, was indeed possessed with a more eager desire and ambition than before to make himself master of the town; but his designs not succeeding, and receiving fresh losses every day, he gave over the siege, and fell to plundering the country, determining to winter thereabout.

But fate is unavoidable, and a great feud happening at Argos between Aristetas and Aristippus, two principal citizens, after Aristippus had resolved to make use of the friendship of Antigonus, Aristetas to anticipate him invited Pyrrhus thither.

And he always revolving hopes upon hopes, and treating all his successes as occasions of more, and his reverses as defects to be amended by new enterprises, allowed neither losses nor victories to limit him in his receiving or giving trouble, and so presently went for Argos. Areus, by frequent ambushes, and seizing positions where the ways were most unpracticable, harassed the Gauls and Molossians that brought up the rear. It had been told Pyrrhus by one of the priests that found the liver of the sacrificed beast imperfect that some of his near relations would be lost; in this tumult and disorder of his rear, forgetting the prediction, he commanded out his son Ptolemy with some of his guards to their assistance, while he himself led on the main body rapidly out of the pass. And the fight being very warm where Ptolemy was (for the most select men of the Lacedaemonians, commanded by Evalcus, were there engaged), one Oryssus of Aptaera in Crete, a stout man and swift of foot, running on one side of the young prince, as he was fighting bravely, gave him a mortal wound and slew him. On his fall those about him turned their backs, and the Lacedaemonian horse, pursuing and cutting off many, got into the open plain, and found themselves engaged with the enemy before they were aware, without their infantry; Pyrrhus, who had received the ill news of his son, and was in great affliction, drew out his Molossian horse against them, and charging at the head of his men, satiated himself with the blood and slaughter of the Lacedaemonians, as indeed he always showed himself a terrible and invincible hero in actual fight, but now he exceeded all he had ever done before in courage and force. On his riding his horse up to Evalcus, he by declining a little to one side, had almost cut off Pyrrhus's hand in which he held the reins, but lighting on the reins, only cut them; at the same instant Pyrrhus, running him through with his spear, fell from his horse, and there on foot as he was proceeded to slaughter all those choice men that fought about the body of Evalcus; a severe additional loss to Sparta, incurred after the war itself was now at an end, by the mere animosity of the commanders. Pyrrhus having thus offered, as it were, a sacrifice to the ghost of his son, and fought a glorious battle in honour of his obsequies, and having vented much of his pain in action against the enemy, marched away to Argos. And having intelligence that Antigonus was already in possession of the high grounds, he encamped about Nauplia, and the next day despatched a herald to Antigonus calling him a villain, and challenging him to descend into the plain field and fight with him for the kingdom. He answered, that his conduct should be measured by times as well as by arms, and that if Pyrrhus had no leisure to live, there were ways

enough open to death. To both the kings, also, came ambassadors from Argos, desiring each party to retreat, and to allow the city to remain in friendship with both, without falling into the hands of either. Antigonus was persuaded, and sent his son as a hostage to the Argives; but Pyrrhus, although he consented to retire, yet, as he sent no hostage, was suspected. A remarkable portent happened at this time to Pyrrhus; the heads of the sacrificed oxen, lying apart from the bodies, were seen to thrust out their tongues and lick up their own gore. And in the city of Argos, the priestess of Apollo Lycius rushed out of the temple, crying she saw the city full of carcasses and slaughter, and an eagle coming out to fight, and presently vanishing again.

In the dead of the night, Pyrrhus, approaching the walls, and finding the gate called Diamperes set open for them by Aristeades, was undiscovered long enough to allow all his Gauls to enter and take possession of the market-place. But the gate being too low to let in the elephants, they were obliged to take down the towers which they carried on their backs, and put them on again in the dark and in disorder, so that time being lost, the city took the alarm, and the people ran, some to Aspis the chief citadel, and other places of defence, and sent away to Antigonus to assist them. He, advancing within a short distance, made an halt, but sent in some of his principal commanders, and his son with a considerable force.

Areus came thither, too, with one thousand Cretans, and some of the most active men among the Spartans, and all falling on at once upon the Gauls, put them in great disorder. Pyrrhus, entering in with noise and shouting near the Cylarabis, when the Gauls returned the cry, noticed that it did not express courage and assurance, but was the voice of men distressed, and that had their hands full. He, therefore, pushed forward in haste the van of his horse that marched but slowly and dangerously, by reason of the drains and sinks of which the city is full. In this night engagement there was infinite uncertainty as to what was being done, or what orders were given; there was much mistaking and struggling in the narrow streets; all generalship was useless in that darkness and noise and pressure; so both sides continued without doing anything, expecting daylight. At the first dawn, Pyrrhus, seeing the great citadel Aspis full of enemies, was disturbed, and remarking, among a variety of figures dedicated in the market-place, a wolf and a bull of brass, as it were ready to attack one another, he was struck with alarm, recollecting an oracle that formerly predicted fate had determined his death when he should see a wolf fighting

with a bull. The Argives say these figures were set up in record of a thing that long ago had happened there. For Danaus, at his first landing in the country, near the Pyramia in Thyreatis, as he was on his way towards Argos, espied a wolf fighting with a bull, and conceiving the wolf to represent him (for this stranger fell upon a native as he designed to do), stayed to see the issue of the fight, and the wolf prevailing, he offered vows to Apollo Lycius, and thus made his attempt upon the town, and succeeded; Gelanor, who was then king, being displaced by a faction. And this was the cause of dedicating those figures.

Pyrrhus, quite out of heart at this sight, and seeing none of his designs succeed, thought best to retreat, but fearing the narrow passage at the gate, sent to his son Helenus, who was left without the town with a great part of his forces, commanding him to break down part of the wall, and assist the retreat if the enemy pressed hard upon them. But what with haste and confusion, the person that was sent delivered nothing clearly; so that quite mistaking, the young prince with the best of his men and the remaining elephants marched straight through the gates into the town to assist his father. Pyrrhus was now making good his retreat, and while the market-place afforded them ground enough both to retreat and fight, frequently repulsed the enemy that bore upon him. But when he was forced out of that broad place into the narrow street leading to the gate, and fell in with those who came the other way to his assistance, some did not hear him call out to them to give back, and those who did, however eager to obey him, were pushed forward by others behind, who poured in at the gate. Besides, the largest of his elephants falling down on his side in the very gate, and lying roaring on the ground, was in the way of those that would have got out. Another of the elephants already in the town, called Nicon, striving to take up his rider, who, after many wounds received, was fallen off his back, bore forward upon those that were retreating, and, thrusting upon friends as well as enemies, tumbled them all confusedly upon one another, till having found the body, and taken it up with his trunk, he carried it on his tusks, and, returning in a fury, trod down all before him. Being thus pressed and crowded together, not a man could do anything for himself, but being wedged, as it were, together into one mass, the whole multitude rolled and swayed this way and that altogether, and did very little execution either upon the enemy in their rear, or on any of them who were intercepted in the mass, but very much harm to one another. For he who had either drawn his sword or directed his lance could neither restore it again, nor put his sword up; with

these weapons they wounded their own men, as they happened to come in the way, and they were dying by mere contact with each other.

Pyrrhus, seeing this storm and confusion of things, took off the crown he wore upon his helmet, by which he was distinguished, and gave it to one nearest his person, and trusting to the goodness of his horse, rode in among the thickest of the enemy, and being wounded with a lance through his breastplate, but not dangerously, nor indeed very much, he turned about upon the man who struck him, who was an Argive, not of any illustrious birth, but the son of a poor old woman; she was looking upon the fight among other women from the top of a house, and perceiving her son engaged with Pyrrhus, and affrighted at the danger he was in, took up a tile with both hands and threw it at Pyrrhus. This falling on his head below the helmet, and bruising the vertebrae of the lower part of the neck, stunned and blinded him; his hands let go the reins, and sinking down from his horse he fell just by the tomb of Licymnius. The common soldiers knew not who it was; but one Zopyrus, who served under Antigonus, and two or three others running thither, and knowing it was Pyrrhus, dragged him to a doorway hard by, just as he was recovering a little from the blow. But when Zopyrus drew out an Illyrian sword, ready to cut off his head, Pyrrhus gave him so fierce a look that, confounded with terror, and sometimes his hands trembling and then again endeavouring to do it, full of fear and confusion, he could not strike him right, but cutting over his mouth and chin, it was a long time before he got off the head.

By this time what had happened was known to a great many, and Alcyoneus hastening to the place, desired to look upon the head, and see whether he knew it, and taking it in his hand rode away to his father, and threw it at his feet, while he was sitting with some of his particular favourites. Antigonus, looking upon it, and knowing it, thrust his son from him, and struck him with his staff, calling him wicked and barbarous, and covering his eyes with his robe shed tears, thinking of his own father and grandfather, instances in his own family of the changefulness of fortune, and caused the head and body of Pyrrhus to be burned with all due solemnity. After this, Alcyoneus, discovering Helenus under a mean disguise in a threadbare coat, used him very respectfully, and brought him to his father.

When Antigonus saw him, "This, my son," said he, "is better; and yet even now you have not done wholly well in allowing these

clothes to remain, to the disgrace of those who it seems now are the victors.” And treating Helenus with great kindness, and as became a prince, restored him to his kingdom of Epirus, and gave the same obliging reception to all Pyrrhus’s principal commanders, his camp and whole army having fallen into his hands.

THE END