

I would rather have kept away from this hunt; for methinks it ill beseems a man under a misfortune such as mine to consort with his happier compeers; and besides, I have no heart to it. On many grounds I had stayed behind; but, as thou urgest it, and I am bound to pleasure thee (for truly it does behove me to requite thy good offices), I am content to do as thou wishest. For thy son, whom thou givest into my charge, be sure thou shalt receive him back safe and sound, so far as depends upon a guardian's carefulness."

43. Thus assured, Crœsus let them depart, accompanied by a band of picked youths, and well provided with dogs of chase. When they reached Olympus, they scattered in quest of the animal; he was soon found, and the hunters, drawing round him in a circle, hurled their weapons at him. Then the stranger, the man who had been purified of blood, whose name was Adrastus, he also hurled his spear at the boar, but missed his aim, and struck Atys. Thus was the son of Crœsus slain by the point of an iron weapon, and the warning of the vision was fulfilled. Then one ran to Sardis to bear the tidings to the king, and he came and informed him of the combat and of the fate that had befallen his son.

44. If it was a heavy blow to the father to learn that his child was dead, it yet more strongly affected him to think that the very man whom he himself once purified had done the deed. In the violence of his grief he called aloud on Jupiter Catharsius,¹ to be a witness of what he had suffered at the stranger's hands. Afterwards he invoked the same god as Jupiter Ephistius and Hetæreus—using the one term because he had unwittingly harboured in his house the man who had now slain his son; and the other, because the stranger, who had been sent as his child's guardian, had turned out his most cruel enemy.

45. Presently the Lydians arrived, bearing the body of the youth, and behind them followed the homicide. He took his stand in front of the corse, and, stretching forth his hands to Crœsus, delivered himself into his power with earnest entreaties that he would sacrifice him upon the body of his son—"his

¹ Jupiter was Catharsius, "the god of purifications," not on account of the resemblance of the rites of purification with those of Jupiter *Μεταχθιος*, but simply in the same way that he was Ephistius and Hetæreus, god of hearths, and of companionship, because he presided over all occasions of obligation between man and man, and the purified person contracted an obligation towards his purifier.

former misfortune was burthen enough; now that he had added to it a second, and had brought ruin on the man who purified him, he could not bear to live." Then Cræsus, when he heard these words, was moved with pity towards Adrastus, notwithstanding the bitterness of his own calamity; and so he answered, "Enough, my friend; I have all the revenge that I require, since thou givest sentence of death against thyself. But in sooth it is not thou who hast injured me, except so far as thou hast unwittingly dealt the blow. Some god is the author of my misfortune, and I was forewarned of it a long time ago." Cræsus after this buried the body of his son, with such honours as befitted the occasion. Adrastus, son of Gordias, son of Midas, the destroyer of his brother in time past, the destroyer now of his purifier, regarding himself as the most unfortunate wretch whom he had ever known, so soon as all was quiet about the place, slew himself upon the tomb. Cræsus, bereft of his son, gave himself up to mourning for two full years.

46. At the end of this time the grief of Cræsus was interrupted by intelligence from abroad. He learnt that Cyrus, the son of Cambyses, had destroyed the empire of Astyages, the son of Cyaxares; and that the Persians were becoming daily more powerful. This led him to consider with himself whether it were possible to check the growing power of that people before it came to a head. With this design he resolved to make instant trial of the several oracles in Greece, and of the one in Libya.¹ So he sent his messengers in different directions, some to Delphi, some to Abæ in Phocis, and some to Dodôna; others to the oracle of Amphiaraüs; others to that of Trophonius; others, again, to Branchidæ in Milesia.² These were the Greek oracles which he consulted. To Libya he sent another embassy, to consult the oracle of Ammon. These messengers were sent to test the knowledge of the oracles, that, if they were found really to return true answers, he might send a second time, and inquire if he ought to attack the Persians.

47. The messengers who were despatched to make trial of the oracles were given the following instructions: they were to keep count of the days from the time of their leaving Sardis, and, reckoning from that date, on the hundredth day they were to

¹ "The one in Libya" (Africa)—that of Ammon, because Egypt was regarded by Herodotus as in Asia, not in Africa.

² The oracle at Abæ seems to have ranked next to that at Delphi. The Orientals do not appear to have possessed any indigenous oracles.

consult the oracles, and to inquire of them what Crœsus the son of Alyattes, king of Lydia, was doing at that moment. The answers given them were to be taken down in writing, and brought back to him. None of the replies remain on record except that of the oracle at Delphi. There, the moment that the Lydians entered the sanctuary,¹ and before they put their questions, the Pythoness thus answered them in hexameter verse:—

I can count the sands, and I can measure the ocean;
I have ears for the silent, and know what the dumb man meaneth;
Lo! on my sense there striketh the smell of a shell-covered tortoise,
Boiling now on a fire, with the flesh of a lamb, in a cauldron,—
Brass is the vessel below, and brass the cover above it.

48. These words the Lydians wrote down at the mouth of the Pythoness as she prophesied, and then set off on their return to Sardis. When all the messengers had come back with the answers which they had received, Crœsus undid the rolls, and read what was written in each. Only one approved itself to him, that of the Delphic oracle. This he had no sooner heard than he instantly made an act of adoration, and accepted it as true, declaring that the Delphic was the only really oracular shrine, the only one that had discovered in what way he was in fact employed. For on the departure of his messengers he had set himself to think what was most impossible for any one to conceive of his doing,² and then, waiting till the day agreed on came, he acted as he had determined. He took a tortoise and a lamb, and cutting them in pieces with his own hands, boiled them both together in a brazen cauldron, covered over with a lid which was also of brass.

49. Such then was the answer returned to Crœsus from Delphi. What the answer was which the Lydians who went to the shrine of Amphiaraüs and performed the customary rites, obtained of the oracle there, I have it not in my power to mention, for there is no record of it. All that is known is, that

¹ The μέγαρον was the "inner shrine," the sacred chamber where the oracles were given.

² It is impossible to discuss such a question as the nature of the ancient oracles, which has had volumes written upon it, within the limits of a note. I will only observe that in forming our judgment on the subject, two points should be kept steadily in view: (1) the fact that the Pythoness whom St. Paul met with on his first entrance into European Greece, was *really* possessed by an evil spirit, which St. Paul cast out, thereby depriving her masters of all their hopes of gain (Acts xvi. 16-19): and (2) the phenomena of Mesmerism. In one or other of these, or in both of them combined, will be found the simplest, and probably the truest explanation, of all that is really marvellous in the responses of the oracles.

Gratitude of Cræsus

Cræsus believed himself to have found there also an oracle which spoke the truth.

50. After this Cræsus, having resolved to propitiate the Delphic god with a magnificent sacrifice, offered up three thousand of every kind of sacrificial beast, and besides made a huge pile, and placed upon it couches coated with silver and with gold, and golden goblets, and robes and vests of purple; all which he burnt in the hope of thereby making himself more secure of the favour of the god. Further he issued his orders to all the people of the land to offer a sacrifice according to their means. When the sacrifice was ended, the king melted down a vast quantity of gold, and ran it into ingots, making them six palms long, three palms broad, and one palm in thickness. The number of ingots was a hundred and seventeen, four being of refined gold, in weight two talents and a half; the others of pale gold, and in weight two talents. He also caused a statue of a lion to be made in refined gold, the weight of which was ten talents. At the time when the temple of Delphi was burnt to the ground,¹ this lion fell from the ingots on which it was placed; it now stands in the Corinthian treasury, and weighs only six talents and a half, having lost three talents and a half by the fire.

51. On the completion of these works Cræsus sent them away to Delphi, and with them two bowls of an enormous size, one of gold, the other of silver, which used to stand, the latter upon the right, the former upon the left, as one entered the temple. They too were moved at the time of the fire; and now the golden one is in the Clazomenian treasury, and weighs eight talents and forty-two minæ; the silver one stands in the corner of the ante-chapel, and holds six hundred amphoræ. This is known, because the Delphians fill it at the time of the Theophanía.² It is said by the Delphians to be a work of Theodore the Samian,³ and I think that they say true, for assuredly it is the work of no common artist. Cræsus sent also four silver casks, which are in the Corinthian treasury, and two lustral vases, a golden and a silver one. On the former is inscribed the

¹ Vide infra, ii. 180, v. 62. It was burnt accidentally.

² Both in Julius Pollux and in Philostratus there is mention of the Theophanía, as a festival celebrated by the Greeks. No particulars are known of it.

³ Pausanias ascribed to Theodore of Samos the invention of casting in bronze, and spoke of him also as an architect (iii. xii. § 8; viii. xiv. § 5). Pliny agreed with both statements (Nat. Hist. xxxv. 12).

The History of Herodotus

BOOK I.

name of the Lacedæmonians, and they claim it as a gift of theirs, but wrongly, since it was really given by Cræsus. The inscription upon it was cut by a Delphian, who wished to please the Lacedæmonians. His name is known to me, but I forbear to mention it. The boy, through whose hand the water runs, is (I confess) a Lacedæmonian gift, but they did not give either of the lustral vases. Besides these various offerings, Cræsus sent to Delphi many others of less account, among the rest a number of round silver basins. Also he dedicated a female figure in gold, three cubits high, which is said by the Delphians to be the statue of his baking-woman; and further, he presented the necklace and the girdles of his wife.

52. These were the offerings sent by Cræsus to Delphi. To the shrine of Amphiaraus, with whose valour and misfortune he was acquainted,¹ he sent a shield entirely of gold, and a spear, also of solid gold, both head and shaft. They were still existing in my day at Thebes, laid up in the temple of Ismenian Apollo.

53. The messengers who had the charge of conveying these treasures to the shrines, received instructions to ask the oracles whether Cræsus should go to war with the Persians, and if so, whether he should strengthen himself by the forces of an ally. Accordingly, when they had reached their destinations and presented the gifts, they proceeded to consult the oracles in the following terms:—"Cræsus, king of Lydia and other countries, believing that these are the only real oracles in all the world, has sent you such presents as your discoveries deserved, and now inquires of you whether he shall go to war with the Persians, and if so, whether he shall strengthen himself by the forces of a confederate." Both the oracles agreed in the tenor of their reply, which was in each case a prophecy that if Cræsus attacked the Persians, he would destroy a mighty empire, and a recommendation to him to look and see who were the most powerful of the Greeks, and to make alliance with them.

54. At the receipt of these oracular replies Cræsus was overjoyed, and feeling sure now that he would destroy the empire of the Persians, he sent once more to Pytho, and presented to the Delphians, the number of whom he had ascertained, two gold staters apiece.² In return for this the Delphians granted to

¹ For the story of Amphiaraus, cf. Pausan. i. 34, ii. 13, § 6. Æschylus Sept. contr. Th. 564 et seqq. The "misfortune" is his being engulfed near Orôpus, or (as some said) at Harma in Bœotia.

² For the value of the stater, see note on Book vii. ch. 28.

Sparta and Athens

Crœsus and the Lydians the privilege of precedency in consulting the oracle, exemption from all charges, the most honourable seat at the festivals, and the perpetual right of becoming at pleasure citizens of their town.

55. After sending these presents to the Delphians, Crœsus a third time consulted the oracle, for having once proved its truthfulness, he wished to make constant use of it. The question whereto he now desired an answer was—"Whether his kingdom would be of long duration?" The following was the reply of the Pythoness:—

Wait till the time shall come when a mule is monarch of Media;
Then, thou delicate Lydian, away to the pebbles of Hermus;
Haste, oh! haste thee away, nor blush to behave like a coward.

56. Of all the answers that had reached him, this pleased him far the best, for it seemed incredible that a mule should ever come to be king of the Medes, and so he concluded that the sovereignty would never depart from himself or his seed after him. Afterwards he turned his thoughts to the alliance which he had been recommended to contract, and sought to ascertain by inquiry which was the most powerful of the Grecian states. His inquiries pointed out to him two states as pre-eminent above the rest. These were the Lacedæmonians and the Athenians, the former of Doric the latter of Ionic blood. And indeed these two nations had held from very early times the most distinguished place in Greece, the one being a Pelasgic the other a Hellenic people, and the one having never quitted its original seats, while the other had been excessively migratory; for during the reign of Deucalion, Phthiôtis was the country in which the Hellenes dwelt, but under Dorus, the son of Hellen, they moved to the tract at the base of Ossa and Olympus, which is called Histiaëôtis; forced to retire from that region by the Cadmeians,¹ they settled, under the name of Macedni, in the chain of Pindus. Hence they once more removed and came to Dryopis; and from Dryopis having entered the Peloponnese in this way, they became known as Dorians.

57. What the language of the Pelasgi was I cannot say with any certainty. If, however, we may form a conjecture from the tongue spoken by the Pelasgi of the present day,—those,

¹ The Cadmeians were the Græco-Phœnician race (their name merely signifying "the Easterns"), who in the ante-Trojan times, occupied the country which was afterwards called Bœotia. Hence the Greek tragedians, in plays of which ancient Thebes is the scene, invariably speak of the Thebans as *Καδμείας*, *Καδμείος* λέως.

for instance, who live at Creston above the Tyrrhenians, who formerly dwelt in the district named Thessaliôtis, and were neighbours of the people now called the Dorians,—or those again who founded Placia and Scylacé upon the Hellespont, who had previously dwelt for some time with the Athenians,¹—or those, in short, of any other of the cities which have dropped the name but are in fact Pelasgian; if, I say, we are to form a conjecture from any of these, we must pronounce that the Pelasgi spoke a barbarous language. If this were really so, and the entire Pelasgic race spoke the same tongue, the Athenians, who were certainly Pelasgi, must have changed their language at the same time that they passed into the Hellenic body; for it is a certain fact that the people of Creston speak a language unlike any of their neighbours, and the same is true of the Placianians, while the language spoken by these two people is the same; which shows that they both retain the idiom which they brought with them into the countries where they are now settled.

58. The Hellenic race has never, since its first origin, changed its speech. This at least seems evident to me. It was a branch of the Pelasgic, which separated from the main body, and at first was scanty in numbers and of little power; but it gradually spread and increased to a multitude of nations, chiefly by the voluntary entrance into its ranks of numerous tribes of barbarians. The Pelasgi, on the other hand, were, as I think, a barbarian race which never greatly multiplied.

59. On inquiring into the condition of these two nations, Crœsus found that one, the Athenian, was in a state of grievous oppression and distraction under Pisistratus, the son of Hippocrates, who was at that time tyrant of Athens. Hippocrates, when he was a private citizen, is said to have gone once upon a time to Olympia to see the games, when a wonderful prodigy happened to him. As he was employed in sacrificing, the cauldrons which stood near, full of water and of the flesh of the victims, began to boil without the help of fire, so that the water overflowed the pots. Chilon the Lacedæmonian, who happened to be there and to witness the prodigy, advised Hippocrates, if he were unmarried, never to take into his house a wife who could bear him a child; if he already had one, to send her back to her friends; if he had a son, to disown him. Chilon's advice did not at all please Hippocrates, who disregarded it, and some

¹ Vide *infra*, vi. 137.

Pisistratus

time after became the father of Pisistratus. This Pisistratus, at a time when there was civil contention in Attica between the party of the Sea-coast headed by Megacles the son of Alcmaeon, and that of the Plain headed by Lycurgus, one of the Aristolaïds, formed the project of making himself tyrant, and with this view created a third party.¹ Gathering together a band of partisans, and giving himself out for the protector of the Highlanders, he contrived the following stratagem. He wounded himself and his mules, and then drove his chariot into the market-place, professing to have just escaped an attack of his enemies, who had attempted his life as he was on his way into the country. He besought the people to assign him a guard to protect his person, reminding them of the glory which he had gained when he led the attack upon the Megarians, and took the town of Nisæa,² at the same time performing many other exploits. The Athenians, deceived by his story, appointed him a band of citizens to serve as a guard, who were to carry clubs instead of spears, and to accompany him wherever he went. Thus strengthened, Pisistratus broke into revolt and seized the citadel. In this way he acquired the sovereignty of Athens, which he continued to hold without disturbing the previously existing offices or altering any of the laws. He administered the state according to the established usages, and his arrangements were wise and salutary.

60. However, after a little time, the partisans of Megacles and those of Lycurgus agreed to forget their differences, and united to drive him out. So Pisistratus, having by the means described first made himself master of Athens, lost his power again before it had time to take root. No sooner, however, was he departed than the factions which had driven him out quarrelled anew, and at last Megacles, wearied with the struggle, sent a herald to Pisistratus, with an offer to re-establish him on the throne if he would marry his daughter. Pisistratus consented, and on these terms an agreement was concluded between the two, after which they proceeded to devise the mode of his restoration. And here the device on which they hit was the silliest that I find on record, more especially considering that

¹ There can be no doubt that these local factions must also have been political parties.

² Plutarch mentions a war between Athens and Megara, under the conduct of Solon, in which Pisistratus was said to have distinguished himself (Solon. c. 8), as having occurred before Solon's legislation, *i.e.* before B.C. 594.