

**STORIES OF THE EAST
FROM HERODOTUS**



DARIUS

**STORIES OF THE EAST
FROM HERODOTUS**

BY

ALFRED J. CHURCH

*with illustrations from
Ancient Frescoes and Sculptures*

**YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS
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TO
WILLIAM AND MARIA OVEREND,
KINDEST OF FRIENDS,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.

PREFACE

In these stories I have kept as close to my original as I could, but I do not profess to have translated it. Of course, nothing like criticism or correction has been attempted.

I should be sorry that readers who are not acquainted with the work of the "Father of History" should carry away from this book the impression that he is nothing more than a credulous and gossiping teller of stories. That he was often deceived, and that he writes with a simplicity which is quite remote from our ways of thinking, is manifest; but those who know him best are aware that he was nevertheless a shrewd and painstaking observer, whose credit has been distinctly increased by the discoveries of modern times.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my relative, Miss E. L. Seeley, for the pains which she has bestowed on the illustrations to this volume.

HADLEY GREEN,

September 30, 1880

CONTENTS

I. THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS	1
II. CRÆSUS, WISHING TO MAKE WAR AGAINST THE PERSIANS, CONSULTETH THE ORACLES.....	14
III. KING CRÆSUS IS DEFEATED AND THE CITY OF SARDIS IS TAKEN ..	23
IV. CRÆSUS IS SAVED FROM DEATH. OF LYDIA, THE LYDIANS, AND OF CERTAIN GREEKS THAT DWELT IN ASIA	33
V. THE BIRTH AND BRINGING UP OF CYRUS	47
VI. CYRUS OVERTHROWETH ASTYAGES AND TAKETH THE KINGDOM TO HIMSELF	57
VII. THE CITY OF BABYLON, CYRUS TAKETH IT.....	66
VIII. CYRUS MAKETH WAR AGAINST THE MASSAGETÆ, AND DIETH.....	75

IX. OF THE MANNERS OF THE EGYPTIANS	83
X. OF CERTAIN KINGS OF EGYPT	99
XI. OF CERTAIN OTHER KINGS OF EGYPT	110
XII. THE PERSIANS CONQUER EGYPT ...	128
XIII. CAMBYSES MAKETH WAR UPON THE NATIONS ROUND ABOUT, IS STRICKEN WITH MADNESS, AND SO DIETH	140
XIV. THE FALSE SMERDIS IS SLAIN.....	159
XV. THE KINGDOM OF DARIUS	172
XVI. BABYLON REBELLETH AGAINST THE KING, AND IS TAKEN	179
XVII. KING DARIUS MAKETH WAR UPON THE SCYTHIANS.....	186
XVIII. OF THE SCYTHIANS AND OTHER NATIONS	200

CHAPTER I

THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS

CRÆSUS, the son of Alyattes, began to reign over Lydia, being thirty and five years old. This Cræsus made war upon all the Greeks that dwelt in the western parts of Asia, seeking some occasion of quarrel with every city. And if he could find some great matter, he used it gladly; but if not, a little thing would serve his turn. Now, the first of all the cities which he fought against was Ephesus; and when the Ephesians were besieged by him they offered their city as an offering to the goddess Artemis, fastening a rope to the wall from her temple. (The space between the temple and the wall was seven furlongs.) All the cities of the Greeks that are on the mainland did Cræsus subdue, so that they paid tribute to him. And when he had ended this business, he purposed in his heart to build ships, and to make war on the Greeks that dwelt in the islands. But when all things were now ready for the building of the ships, there came to Sardis a certain Greek, a man renowned for wisdom. Some say that this Greek was Bias, the wise man of Priene, and some that he was Pittacus of Mitylene. This Greek caused Cræsus to cease from his shipbuilding, for when the King would know whether

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

he had any news from Greece, he said to him, "O King, the islanders are buying ten thousand horses, that they may set riders upon them, and so march against thee and thy city of Sardis." When Crœsus heard this he was glad, hoping that the man spake truth, and said, "Now may the Gods put this into the hearts of the islanders, that they should make war with horses against the sons of the Lydians." Then the Greek answered and said, "O King, I see that thou prayest with all thy heart that thou mayest find the islanders coming against thee here on the mainland with horses, and verily thou doest well. What then dost thou think that the islanders pray for now that they know thee to be building ships? Surely that they may find the Lydians coming against them on the sea, that so they may take vengeance on thee for their brethren on the mainland, whom thou hast brought into slavery." This saying pleased King Crœsus mightily; and because the Greek seemed to him to speak truly, he ceased straightway from his shipbuilding, and made alliance with the Greeks that dwelt in the islands.

Now after certain years, when all Asia that lieth to the westward of the river Halys had been subdued by Crœsus (only Lydia and Cilicia were not subdued), and his kingdom flourished with great wealth and honour, there came to Sardis all the wise men of the Greeks, as many as there were in those days. But the greatest of all that came was Solon of Athens. This Solon had made laws for the Athenians, for they would have him make them, and afterwards he dwelt abroad for ten years. And he said that he did this that he might see foreign countries; but in truth he departed that he might not

THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS

be compelled to change any of the laws that he had made. For the Athenians themselves could not change any, having bound themselves with great oaths to Solon, that they would live for the space of ten years under the laws which he had made for them.

Solon therefore came to Sardis, and Cræsus entertained him in his palace. And on the third or fourth day after his coming the King commanded his servants that they should show Solon all the royal treasures. So the servants showed him all the things that the King possessed, a very great store of riches. And when he had seen everything and considered it, and a fitting time was come, the King said to him, "Man of Athens, I have heard much of thee in time past, of thy wisdom and of thy journeyings to and fro, for they say that thou wanderest over many lands, seeking for knowledge. I have therefore a desire to ask of thee one question: 'Whom thinkest thou to be the happiest of all the men that thou hast seen?'" And this he said hoping that Solon would answer, "Thou, O King, art the happiest man that I have seen." But Solon flattered him not a whit, but spake the truth, saying, "O King, the happiest man that I have seen was Tellus the Athenian." Then Cræsus, marvelling much at these words, said, "And why thinkest thou that Tellus the Athenian was the happiest of men?" Then Solon answered, "Tellus saw his country in great prosperity, and he had children born to him that were fair and noble, and to each of these also he saw children born, of whom there died not one. Thus did all things prosper with him in life, as we count prosperity, and the end of his days also was great and

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

glorious; for when the Athenians fought with certain neighbours of theirs in Eleusis, he came to the help of his countrymen against their enemies, and put these to flight, and so died with great honour; and the whole people of the Athenians buried him in the same place wherein he fell, and honoured him greatly.”

But when Solon had ended speaking to the King of Tellus, how happy he was, the King asked him again, “Whom, then, hast thou seen that was next in happiness to this Tellus?” For he thought to himself, “Surely now he will give me the second place.” Then Solon said, “I judge Cleobis and Biton to have been second in happiness to Tellus.”

Cleobis and Biton were youths of the city of Argos. They had a livelihood such as sufficed them; and their strength was greater than that of other men. For not only did they win prizes of strength, but also they did this thing that shall now be told. The men of Argos held a feast to Heré, who hath a great and famous temple in their city; and it must needs be that the mother of the two young men, being priestess of Heré, should be drawn in a waggon from the city to the temple; but the oxen that should have drawn the waggon were not yet come from the fields. Then, as the time pressed and the matter was urgent, the young men harnessed themselves to the waggon and dragged it, and their mother the priestess sat upon it. And the space for which they dragged it was forty and five furlongs; and so they came to the temple. And when they had done this in the eyes of all the assembly, there befell them such a death that nothing could be more to be desired;

THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS

the Gods, indeed, making it manifest that it is far better for a man to die than to live. For indeed the thing fell out thus. When all the people of Argos came about the woman and her sons, and the men praised the youths for their great strength, and the women praised the mother that she had borne such noble sons, the mother in the joy of her heart stood before the image and prayed that the goddess would give to her sons, even Cleobis and Biton, that which the Gods judge it best for a man to have. And when the priestess had so prayed, and the young men had offered sacrifice, and made merry with their companions, they lay down to sleep in the temple, and woke not again, but so ended their days. And the men of Argos commanded the artificers that they should make statues of the young men, and these they offered to the god at Delphi.

But when Solon thus gave the second place of happiness to these young men, King Cræsus was very wroth, and said, "Man of Athens, thou countest my happiness as nothing worth, not deeming me fit to be compared even with common men." Then Solon made answer, "O Cræsus, thou askest me about mortal life to say whether it be happy or no, but I know that the Gods are jealous and apt to bring trouble upon men. I know also that if a man's years be prolonged he shall see many things that he would fain not see, aye, and suffer many things also. Now I reckon that the years of a man's life are threescore and ten, and that in these years there are twenty and five thousand days and two hundred. For this is the number, if a man reckon not the intercalated month. But if he reckon this, seeing that in

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

threescore and ten years are thirty and five such months, and the days of these months are one thousand and fifty, then the whole sum of the days of a man's life is twenty and six thousand two hundred and fifty. Now of these days, being so many, not one bringeth to a man things like to those which another hath brought. Wherefore, O King, the whole life of man is full of chance. I see indeed that thou hast exceeding great wealth and art king of many men. But as to that which thou askest of me, I call thee not happy, till I shall know that thou hast ended thy days prosperously. For the man that hath exceeding great riches is in no wise happier than he that hath sufficient only for the day, unless good fortune also remain with him, and give him all things that are to be desired, even unto the end of his days. For many men that are wealthy beyond measure are nevertheless unhappy, and many that have neither poverty nor riches have yet great happiness, and he that is exceeding rich and unhappy withal, excelleth him that hath moderate possessions with happiness in two things only, but the other excelleth in many things. For the first hath the more strength to satisfy the desires of his soul, and also to bear up against any misfortune that cometh upon him; but the second hath not this strength; and indeed he needeth it not, for his good fortune keepeth such things far from him. Also he is whole in body, and of good health, neither doth misfortune trouble him, and he hath good children, and is fair to look upon. And if, over and above these things, he also end his life well, then I judge him to be the happy man whom thou seekest. But till he die, so long do I hold my

THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS

judgment, and call him not happy indeed, but fortunate. It is impossible also that any man should comprehend in his life all things that be good. For even as a country sufficeth not for itself nor produceth all things, but hath certain things of its own and receiveth certain from others, and as that country which produceth the most is counted the best, even so is it with men, for no man's body sufficeth for all things, but hath one thing and lacketh another. Whosoever, O King, keepeth ever the greatest store of things, and so endeth his life in a seemly fashion, this man deserveth in my judgment to be called happy. But we must needs regard the end of all things, how they shall turn out; for the Gods give to many men some earnest of happiness, but yet in the end overthrow them utterly.

These were the words of Solon. But they pleased not King Cræsus by any means. Therefore the King made no account of him, and dismissed him as being a foolish and ignorant person, seeing that he took no heed of the blessings that men have in their hands, bidding them always have regard unto their end.

Now it came to pass after Solon had departed from Sardis that there came great wrath from the Gods upon King Cræsus, and this, doubtless, because he judged himself to be the happiest of all men. And it happened in this wise. He saw a vision in his sleep, that told him of the trouble that should come upon him with respect to his son. For the King had two sons; but the one was afflicted of the Gods, being dumb from his birth, but the other far surpassed his equals of age in all things. And the name of this son was Atys. Now the vision that

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

he saw in his sleep showed him that Atys should be smitten with a spear-point of iron, and so die. Therefore when he woke from his sleep and considered the matter, being much terrified by the dream, he sought how he might best keep his son from this peril. First, then, he married him to a wife; and next, he suffered him not to go forth any more to battle, though he had been wont aforetime to be the captain of the host; and, besides all this, he took away all javelins and spears, and such like things that men are wont to use in battle, from the chambers of the men, and stored them elsewhere, lest perchance one of them should fall from its place where it hung upon the wall and give the youth a hurt.

Now it chanced that while the matter of the young man's marriage was in hand, there came to Sardis a certain stranger, upon whom there had come the great trouble of blood-guiltiness. The man was a Phrygian by birth, and of the royal house: and he came into the palace of Cræsus, after the custom of that country, and sought for one that should cleanse him from his guilt; and Cræsus cleansed him. (Now the manner of cleansing is the same, for the most part, among the Lydians as it is among the Greeks.) And when the King had done for him according to all that was prescribed in the law, he would fain know who he was, and whence he had come. Wherefore, he asked him, saying, "My friend, who art thou? and from what city of Phrygia—for that thou art a Phrygian I know—art thou come, taking sanctuary at my hearth? And what man or woman didst thou slay?" And the man answered, "O King, I am the son of Gordias, the son of Midas, and my name

THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS

is Adrastus, and I slew my own brother, not wittingly. For this cause am I come to thee, for my father drove me out from my home, and I am utterly bereft of all things." To this King Cræsus made reply, "Thou art the son of friends, and to a friend art thou come. Verily as long as thou abidest here thou shalt lack for nothing that I can give thee. And as for thy trouble, it will be best for thee to bear it as easily as may be." So the man lived thenceforth in the King's palace.

Now about this time there was a mighty wild boar in Olympus, that is a mountain of Mysia. It had its den in the mountain, and going out thence did much damage to the possessions of the Mysians; and the Mysians had often sought to slay him, but harmed him not at all, but rather received harm themselves. At the last they sent messengers to the King; who stood before him, and said, "O King, a mighty monster of a wild boar hath his abode in our country and destroyeth our possessions, and though we would fain kill him we cannot. Now therefore we pray thee that thou wilt send thy son, and chosen youths with him, and dogs for hunting, that they may go with us, and that we may drive this great beast out of our land." But when they made this request Cræsus remembered the dream which he had dreamed, and said, "As to my son, talk no more about him, for I will by no means let him go, seeing that the youth is newly married to a wife, and careth now for other things. But chosen youths of the Lydians shall go with you, and all the hunting dogs that I have; and I will bid them do their utmost to help you, that ye may drive this wild beast out of your land." This was the King's answer;

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

and the Mysians were fain to be content with it. But in the meanwhile the youth came in, for he had heard what the Mysians demanded of his father; and he spake to the King, saying, "O my father, I was wont aforetime to win for myself great credit and honour going forth to battle and to hunting. But now thou forbiddest me both the one and the other, not having seen any cowardice in me or lack of spirit. Tell me, my father, what countenance can I show to my fellows when I go to the market, or when I come from thence? What manner of man do I seem to be to my countrymen? and what manner of man to the wife that I have newly married? What thinketh she of her husband? Let me therefore go to this hunting, or, if not, prove to me that it is better for me to live as I am living this day." To this Crœsus made answer, "My son, I have seen no cowardice or baseness or any such thing in thee; but there appeared to me a vision in my sleep, and it stood over me and said that thy days should be few, for that thou shouldest die being smitten by a spear-point of iron. For this reason I made this marriage for thee, and send thee not forth on such occasions as I was wont to send thee on, keeping thee under guard, if so be that I may shield thee from thy fate at the least so long as I shall live. For thou art now my only son, for of him whom the Gods have afflicted, making him dumb, I take no count." To this the young man made answer, "Thou hast good reason, my father, to keep guard over me, seeing that thou hast had such a dream concerning me; yet I will tell thee a thing that thou hast not understood nor comprehended in the dream. Thou sayest that the vision told thee that

THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS

I should perish by a spear-point of iron. Consider now, therefore, what hands hath a wild boar and what spear-point of iron, that thou shouldest fear for me? For if indeed the vision had said that I should perish by a tooth, or by any other thing that is like to a tooth, then thou mightest well do what thou doest; but seeing that it spake of a spear-point, not so. Now, therefore, that we have not to do battle with men, but with beasts, I pray thee that thou let me go." Then said King Cræsus, "It is well said, my son; as to the dream, thou hast persuaded me. Therefore I have changed my purpose, and suffer thee to go to this hunting." When he had said this, he sent for Adrastus the Phrygian; and when the man was come into his presence, he spake, saying, "Adrastus, I took thee when thou wast afflicted with a grievous trouble, though indeed with this I upbraid thee not, and I cleansed thee from thy guilt, and received thee into my palace, and sustained thee without any cost of thine. Now, therefore, it is well that thou shouldest make me some return for all these benefits. I would make thee keeper of my son now that he goeth forth to this hunting, if it should chance that any robbers or such folk should be found on the way to do him hurt. Moreover, it becometh thee, for thine own sake, to go on an errand from which thou mayest win renown; for thou art of a royal house and art besides valiant and strong." To this Adrastus made answer, "O King, I had not indeed gone to this sport but for thy words. For he to whom such trouble hath come as hath come to me should not company with happy men; nor indeed hath he the will to do it. But now, as thou art earnest in this

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

matter, I must needs yield to thy request. Therefore I am ready to do as thou wilt; be sure, therefore, that I will deliver thee thy son, whom thou biddest me keep, safe and unhurt, so far as his keeper may so do." So the young men departed, and chosen youths with them, and dogs for hunting. And when they were come to the mountain of Olympus they searched for the wild boar, and when they had found it, they stood in a circle about it, and threw their spears at it. And so it fell out that this stranger, the same that had been cleansed from the guilt of manslaying, whose name was Adrastus, throwing his spear at the wild boar and missing his aim, smote the son of Crœsus. And the youth died of the wound, so that the vision of the King was fulfilled, that he should die by a spear-point. And straightway there ran one to tell the thing to Crœsus. And when he had come to Sardis, he told the King how they had fought with the wild boar, and how his son had died.

Crœsus was very grievously troubled by the death of his son; and this the more because he had been slain by the man whom he had himself cleansed from the guilt of blood. And in his great grief he cried out very vehemently against the Gods, and specially against Zeus, the god of cleansing, seeing that he had cleansed this stranger, and now suffered grievous wrong at his hands. He reproached him also as the god of hospitality and of friendship—of hospitality, because he had entertained this man, and knew not that he was entertaining the slayer of his own son; and of friendship, because he had sent him to be a keeper and friend to his son, yet had found him to be an enemy and destroyer. And when

THE STORY OF KING CRÆSUS

he had done speaking there came Lydians bearing the dead body of the young man, and the slayer followed behind. So soon, therefore, as the man was come into the presence of the King, he gave himself up, stretching forth his hands, and bidding the King slay him on the dead body. And he spake of the dreadful deed that he had done before, and that now he had added to it a worse thing, bringing destruction on him that had cleansed him; and he cried out that he was not fit to live. But when Cræsus heard him speak, he pitied him, for all that he was in grievous trouble of his own, and spake to him, "I have had from thee, O my friend, all the vengeance that I need, seeing that thou hast pronounced sentence of death against thyself. But indeed thou art not the cause of this trouble, save only that thou hast brought it to pass unwittingly; some god is the cause, the same that long since foretold to me this very thing that hath now befallen me." So Cræsus buried his son with all due rites. But Adrastus the son of Gordias the son of Midas, that had been the slayer of his own brother, and had now slain the son of him that had cleansed him, waited behind till all men had left the sepulchre, and then slew himself upon it; for he knew that of all the men in the world he was the most unhappy.

CHAPTER II

CRÆSUS, WISHING TO MAKE WAR AGAINST THE PERSIANS, CONSULTETH THE ORACLES

FOR the space of two years did King Cræsus sit sorrowing for his son. But in the third year his thoughts were turned to other matters. For he heard that the kingdom of Astyages the son of Cyaxares had been overthrown by Cyrus the son of Cambyses, and that the power of the Persians increased day by day. For which reason it seemed good to him that he should prevent this people, if by any means he could, before they should become too mighty for him. And so soon as he had conceived this purpose in his heart, he made trial of all the oracles that are both in Europe and in Asia, sending messengers to Delphi, and to Abæ that belongeth to Phocis, and to Dodona. Also he sent to the oracles of Amphiaræus, and of Trophonius, and of Branchidæ that is in Miletus. These are the oracles in the land of Greece of which he sent to enquire, and in Libya he sent to the oracle of Hammon. First he sent to make trial of all these whether they should be found to know the truth about a certain thing, purposing that if they should be so found he

CRÆSUS CONSULTETH THE ORACLES

would send to them yet again and enquire whether he should take it in hand to make war against the Persians. Now he had given commandment to the messengers whom he sent to make trial of the oracles, that they should reckon the days diligently from the day whereon they set out from Sardis, and that on the hundredth day they should enquire of the oracles, saying, "What doth Cræsus the son of Alyattes, king of Lydia, chance to be doing this day?" and that they should write down the words of the oracle and bring them back to him. Now what the other oracles answered no man knows; but at Delphi, so soon as the Lydians were come into the temple to enquire of the god, the Pythia, for so they call the priestess that uttereth the mind of the god, spake, saying—

"I know the number of the sand,
I know the measures of the sea;
The dumb man's speech I understand,
Though nought he say, 'tis clear to me.
I smell a savour new and sweet;
Strange is the feast the Lydians keep;
Mingled in brazen caldron meet
The tortoise flesh and flesh of sheep;
Around the burning embers glow,
With brass above and brass below."

These words the Lydians wrote down from the mouth of the Pythia, and so departed, and went their way to Sardis. The other messengers also came, bringing with them the oracles that had been delivered to them. Then the King opened each and read the writing; and not one of them pleased him. But when he knew the answer that

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

had been brought from Delphi, forthwith he prayed and received it with reverence, for he judged that there was no true oracle in the world save that of Delphi only, seeing that it had discovered the very thing that he was doing. For after that he had sent his messengers to the oracles, when the appointed day was come, he devised this device. He imagined something that could not, he thought, by any means be discovered; for he chopped up together the flesh of a tortoise and the flesh of a lamb, and cooked them himself in a brazen caldron, upon which he had put a lid of brass. This was the answer that came to Crœsus from Delphi; but as to the oracle of Amphiaraüs, the answer that it made to the messengers when they had duly enquired of it no man knows, yet did Crœsus think that this also was a true oracle.

Here shall be told the story of Alcmæon of Athens, to whom Crœsus sent bidding him come to Sardis, for that he had helped the King's messengers when they enquired of the god at Delphi, furthering their business with all diligence. And when Alcmæon was come, the King said to him that he should be permitted to go into his treasury, and take therefrom for himself all the gold that he could carry on his body. Then Alcmæon prepared himself for this business. First he clothed himself with a tunic, in which he made a great fold for a pocket; and next he got him the widest and biggest boots that he could find, and so went into the treasury. And lighting on a heap of dust of gold he filled his boots with it as much as they would contain, even up to his knees; and also the fold of his tunic he filled with gold; also into his hair he put so much of the dust as it

CRÆSUS CONSULTETH THE ORACLES

would contain. Other gold he took into his mouth, and so made his way out of the treasury, but scarcely could he drag his boots after him; and indeed he seemed like to anything rather than to a man, for his mouth was filled out and swollen beyond all a man's semblance. And when Cræsus saw him he laughed, and gave him all that gold and as much more. This was the beginning of the wealth of the house of Alcmaeon.

After this King Cræsus sought to propitiate the god that was in Delphi with many and great sacrifices. For first he sacrificed three thousand beasts of all such as it is lawful to offer to the Gods, and next he builded up a great pile of couches that were covered with gold and silver, and of cups of gold, and of purple garments and tunics, and set fire to the pile, for he thought that by so doing he should make the god a friend to him. And he gave commandment to the Lydians that they should sacrifice in like manner every one of them such things as they had. And when this sacrifice was ended, he melted a great store of gold, and made bricks of it. Of these the bigger sort were six hand-breadths in length, and the smaller three hand-breadths, and all of them a hand-breadth in height. There were one hundred and sixteen of these bricks in all, four of them being of pure gold, and weighing each one talent and half a talent, and the rest of gold that was mixed with alloy; these weighed two talents to the brick. Also he made the image of a lion of pure gold, ten talents in weight. This lion, when the temple of Delphi was burnt, fell down from the bricks (for it had been set up on them);

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

and now it lieth in the treasury of the Corinthians, and weigheth seven talents and half a talent.

When Crœsus had finished casting these bricks, he sent them to Delphi and other things with them; to wit, two very great mixing bowls, of gold the one, and of silver the other. The bowl of gold lieth now in the treasury of the Corinthians, being in weight four talents and half a talent and twelve ounces. And the silver bowl lieth in the corner of the ante-chamber. It holdeth six hundred firkins; and the Delphians mix wine in it at the feast of the Showing of the Images. Also he sent four silver casks, that stand now in the treasury of the Corinthians, and two vessels for sprinkling water, of gold the one and of silver the other. On the gold bowl are written these words: "This the Lacedæmonians offered to the god." But these words are not true, for a certain man of Delphi (whose name, though it be known, shall not be mentioned in this place) engraved them, thinking to please the Lacedæmonians. Yet the boy, through whose hand the water flows, is an offering of the Lacedæmonians, but of the vessels themselves neither the one nor the other. Other offerings of no great account did Crœsus send to Delphi. Yet of one must mention be made; to wit, the golden statue of a woman three cubits in height. This the men of Delphi affirm to be the likeness of the bread-cutter of King Crœsus. Also the King offered to the god the necklace of his wife and her girdles also. He sent gifts likewise to the temple of Amphiaraüs.

Now Crœsus gave commandment to the Lydians that carried these offerings for him to Delphi and to

CRÆSUS CONSULTETH THE ORACLES

the temple of Amphiaraüs, that they should enquire of the oracles whether or no he should make war against the Persians, and whether he should seek to gain for himself any allies that should help him. So when the Lydians that had been sent on this errand were come, they enquired of the oracles, saying, "Cræsus, king of the Lydians, and of other nations, holding these to be the only truth-speaking oracles that are among men, sendeth to you gifts that are worthy of your wisdom, and would now enquire of you whether he shall make war against the Persians, and also in what nations he shall seek for allies for himself." These are the things that the messengers of Cræsus enquired of the oracles, and the two agreed together in their answers; for first they said, "If Cræsus make war against the Persians, he shall bring to the ground a great empire," and next they counselled him to find out who of the Greeks were the most powerful at that season, and to make them his allies. This answer rejoiced the King exceedingly, for he made sure that he should bring the empire of Cyrus and the Persians to the ground. Wherefore he sent again to Delphi, and gave to every man two gold pieces, having first enquired how many men there were in the city; for which bounty the people of Delphi gave ill return to him and all other Lydians that they should have first approach to the oracle, and should be free of tribute, and should have the chief seat at feasts and games. Also that any man of Lydia might, if he so willed, be free of the city of Delphi.

After he had bestowed this bounty on the men of Delphi, Cræsus enquired of the oracle the third time; for

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

now that he had assured himself that it spake the truth, he was instant in using of it. Therefore he enquired of it again; and this time he would fain know whether his kingdom should remain for many years. To this the oracle answered these words—

“Man of Lydia, when the mule
O'er the Medians' land shall rule,
Think of name and fame no more,
Fly by Hermus' stony shore.”

And Crœsus, when he heard these words, was yet more exceedingly delighted, for he said to himself, “Surely now a mule shall never be king of the Medes in the place of a man. Wherefore this kingdom shall abide to me and my children after me for ever.” After this he enquired what city of the Greeks was the most powerful at that season; and he found that there were two cities excelling in strength; to wit, Athens and Sparta, but that of these the city of Athens was much troubled by strife within itself, but that Sparta was prosperous exceedingly, and had of late years subdued unto itself the greater part of the island of Pelops, in which island it is. For these causes he sent messengers to Sparta with gifts, who spake after this manner, “Crœsus, king of Lydia and of other nations, hath sent us, saying, ‘Men of Lacedæmon, the god, even Apollo, hath commanded me that I should make to myself friends of the Greeks, whomsoever I should find to be the strongest. Now, therefore, seeing that I find you to be the chiefest people in Greece, I do the bidding of the oracle, and come to you, and would have you for my friends and

CRÆSUS CONSULTETH THE ORACLES

allies in all honesty and good faith.’” These words King Cræsus spake by the mouth of his messengers. And the thing pleased the Lacedæmonians well, for they also had heard the words of the oracle; and they made a treaty with Cræsus, and confirmed their friendship and alliance with an oath. And indeed there had been certain kindnesses done to their city by King Cræsus aforetime. For they had sent messengers to Sardis to buy gold for a certain statue that they would make; but when they sought to buy it, Cræsus gave it to them for a gift. For this cause the Lacedæmonians made alliance with Cræsus; also they were well pleased that he had chosen them out of all the Greeks to be his friends. So they made themselves ready to help him when he should call upon them; and they prepared a mixing bowl of brass, wrought on the outside of it with divers figures of beasts about the brim. This bowl held three hundred firkins; and the Lacedæmonians thought fit to give it to Cræsus in return for the things that he had given to them. Now the bowl came never to Sardis; but as to why it came not some say one thing and some say another. The Lacedæmonians say indeed that when the men that had charge of it were near to the island of Samos, the Samians came forth with ships of war, and assailed them, and took away the bowl from them. But the men of Samos say that they who had charge of it, when they found that the time had passed, Sardis being now taken by Cyrus, sold the bowl in Samos, and that certain persons bought it and offered it for an offering in the temple of Heré. Perchance the truth of the matter is this, that the men sold it indeed, yet affirmed when

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

they were returned to Sparta that the Samians had taken it by force. And this is the story of the bowl.

After these things Crœsus marched with a great army into the land of Cappadocia, not reading the oracle aright, but hoping that he should bring to the ground the power of Cyrus and the Persians. And while he was yet making preparations for war there came to him a certain man of Lydia whose name was Sandanis. The man had been before accounted wise, but thenceforth had such renown for wisdom among the Lydians as had none beside. The man spake thus, "O King, the men against whom thou art preparing to make war have tunics of leather, and all their other garments also are of leather, and for food they have not what they would but what they can get, and the country wherein they dwell is rocky and barren. Also they use not wine, but drink water only; nor have they figs to eat, nor indeed any good thing, If therefore, O King, thou shalt conquer these men, what wilt thou take from them, for indeed they have nothing. But if they should prevail over thee, think what good things thou wilt lose. For when they have once tasted our good things they will hold fast by them, nor wilt thou drive them away. As for me, I thank the Gods that they have not put it into the hearts of the Persians to march against the land of Lydia." For it was so that the Persians before they conquered the Lydians had no good things of their own. For all that Sandanis prevailed not with King Crœsus to turn him from his purpose.

CHAPTER III

KING CRÆSUS IS DEFEATED AND THE CITY OF SARDIS IS TAKEN

KING CRÆSUS, being steadfastly purposed to make war with the Persians, marched into the land of the Cappadocians, wherein is the river Halys, being the boundary between his kingdom and the kingdom of Cyrus. Now the reasons that King Cræsus had for making war were these. First, he desired to enlarge the borders of his dominion, adding thereto the land of the Persians; and next, he had it in his heart to avenge upon Cyrus his sister's husband Astyages; for Cyrus had subdued him, and taken from him his kingdom, as shall be told hereafter. But how it came to pass that Cræsus was brother-in-law to Astyages shall be told at this present. Certain families of the wandering Scythians, being at variance with their own people, fled into the land of the Medes, the king of the Medes in those days being Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes. This Cyaxares at the first dealt kindly with these Scythians, as being men who were suppliants for his grace. And indeed he made so much of them that he put with them certain

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

children who should learn their language and the art of shooting with the bow, in which they excel. Now the Scythians were wont to go hunting every day, and failed not to bring home venison; but after a while, on a certain day it chanced that they brought home nothing. And when King Cyaxares saw them returning with empty hands he was wroth with them, and entreated them shamefully, being indeed a man of violent temper. Then the Scythians bethought them how they might avenge themselves for this dishonour; whereupon they took one of the children whom they were teaching, and cut him into pieces, and dressed the flesh as they were wont to dress the venison which they took in hunting, and gave it to the King as if it were some wild beast which they had slain. But so soon as they had given it they fled to Alyattes at Sardis; and Cyaxares and his guests eat of the meat which had been prepared in this fashion. Now when the King heard how the Scythians had dealt with him, he sent to Alyattes and demanded that they should be given over to him for punishment, but Alyattes would not. After this there was war between the Lydians and the Medes for five years; and in this war the Lydians oftentimes had the advantage, and the Medes also oftentimes. But when they had fought against each other with equal fortune for five years, it so befell that in the sixth year, when they joined battle for the first time, the day became dark as the night. And this change of day into night Thales of Miletus had foretold, and indeed had appointed for it the selfsame year wherein it happened. But when the Lydians and the Medes saw what had befallen, they were the more

KING CRÆSUS IS DEFEATED

eager to make peace the one with the other; and they that brought about this agreement were Syennesis of Cilicia, and Labynetus of Babylon. These caused that the two kings should make a treaty the one with the other, and should confirm it with an oath. Moreover, they made a covenant that Alyattes should give his daughter Aryenis to the son of Cyaxares to wife, and this son was Astyages; for they knew that such treaties stand not firm without there be some bond by which they that make them are bound. As for these nations they make oaths in the same fashion as do the Greeks; only they add this, that they make a cutting upon their arms, and they lick up the blood each man from the arm of the other.

When Cræsus with his army was come to the river Halys, he was in great doubt how he should cross it. But Thales of Miletus, who chanced to be in the camp of the King, contrived a device by which it was done. For he caused that the river, which before had flowed on the left hand of the army, should flow upon the right hand. And this he did by digging a deep ditch into which the river was turned before it came to the place where the army was encamped; and this, being made of the shape of a crescent, was carried in the rear of the army, and so was brought again into the river. Thus was the stream of the Halys divided between the river and the ditch; and being divided it could easily be crossed. Some stories say that the river was wholly dried up, all the water flowing into the ditch. But this is altogether incredible, for if the whole river had been turned into the ditch, how could King Cræsus with his army have

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

crossed it when he returned from the battle with Cyrus to Sardis? And indeed it is scarcely to be believed that the river was so turned, though this story be commonly told among the Greeks, who say that there were no bridges over the Halys in those days, but rather it is to be believed that there were bridges, and that the King led his army across by them.

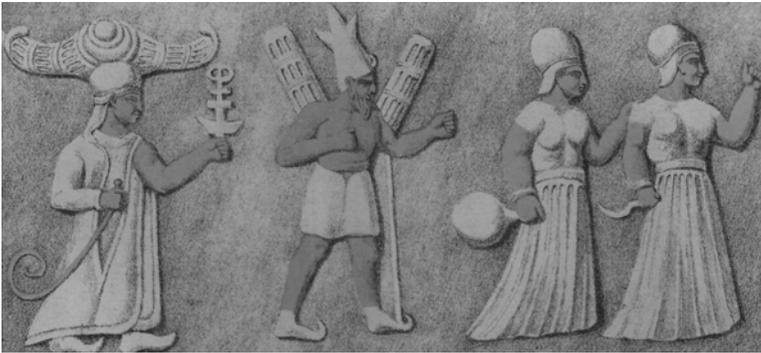
When Crœsus had crossed the Halys he came to a city of Cappadocia that was called Pterium; and this Pterium was the biggest and strongest city of those parts, lying as near as may be over against Sinope, which is on the Black Sea. This city Crœsus took by assault, and sold all the dwellers therein for slaves, and took also all the towns thereof, and removed out of the place where they dwelt all the people, though indeed they had done him no wrong. When Cyrus heard that King Crœsus was come against him, he also gathered his army together and went to meet him, taking with him as many as dwelt on the way by which he marched. But before that he set out he sent out heralds to the Ionians, bidding them revolt from Crœsus, whom indeed they served unwillingly; but the Ionians would not hearken to him. Cyrus therefore came up and pitched his camp over against the camp of the Lydians, which was near to the city of Pterium; and after a while the two kings joined battle. And the battle waxed hot, and many were slain on both sides, but neither gained the advantage; and when it was night they separated perforce. But Crœsus was ill content with the number of his army, for it was less by many thousands than the army of Cyrus. For which reason on the next day, seeing that Cyrus came

KING CRÆSUS IS DEFEATED

not forth from his camp to assail him, he departed with all haste, returning to Sardis, for he had it in his mind to call the Egyptians to his help, according to his covenant with them, for he had made alliance with Amasis king of Egypt before he made alliance with the Lacedæmonians. Also he would send for help to the men of Babylon, for with these also he had alliance; and in those days Labynetus was king of Babylon. Lastly he sent a summons to the Lacedæmonians that they should send an army to him at the appointed time. For his purpose was that he should gather together all these his allies, and should also collect as great an army as might be of his own people, and so, when the winter was past, and the spring was come again, should march against the Persians. Having therefore these thoughts in his heart, so soon as he came to Sardis he sent heralds to Babylon, and to Egypt, and to Sparta, saying that they should send each of them an army to him at Sardis in the fifth month from that time; but as for the soldiers that he had hired with money, these he sent away, suffering them to be altogether scattered, for it did not so much as enter his thoughts that Cyrus, seeing that he had not done more than fight with him on equal terms, would march against Sardis. Now while he was busy considering these things there befell this marvel, that the whole space before the city was filled with serpents, and that so soon as the serpents were seen there the horses, leaving their accustomed pasture, fell to and devoured them. This thing Cræsus held to be a portent, as indeed it was; and straightway he sent messengers to Telmessus, where there are those that interpret such

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

things. But these messengers, though indeed they went to Telmessus and heard from the interpreters what the meaning of this portent might be, were not able to show the matter to the King; for before that they came back to Sardis King Crœsus had been vanquished and taken prisoner. But the meaning of the portent according to the interpreters of Telmessus was this, "Let Crœsus look to see an army of strangers in his land; and let him know that when this army is come to his land it will subdue the inhabitants thereof; for the serpent is a son of the land, but the horse is a stranger and an enemy." This was the answer of the interpreters of Telmessus; and they made it when Crœsus was already vanquished, but they knew nothing of that which had befallen Sardis and the king thereof.



SCULPTURES FROM PTERIUM, A CITY DESTROYED
BY CRÆSUS.

But so soon as Crœsus had departed after the battle at Pterium, Cyrus, knowing that he had it in his thought to scatter his army, judged that he should do well if he marched straightway against Sardis before that the Lydians could gather themselves together against him

KING CRÆSUS IS DEFEATED

a second time. And this thing he did without delay. For he marched into the land of Lydia with all haste; nor did Cræsus receive any message of his coming before that he saw the King himself with his army. Then was Cræsus sorely perplexed, for the matter had turned out wholly against his expectations. Nevertheless he took heart and led out the Lydians to battle. And indeed in those days there was not in the whole land of Asia any nation that was more stalwart and valiant than the nation of the Lydians. The people were accustomed to fight from horseback, carrying long spears, nor were there any horsemen more skilful. The Lydians therefore and the Persians were arrayed one against the other in the plain that lieth before Sardis, and this plain is very great and wholly bare of trees. But when Cyrus saw the array of the Lydians he was afraid of their horsemen, so many and well equipped were they. Then a certain Mede, Harpagus by name, counselled him what he should do, and Cyrus hearkened to him. He took all the camels that followed his army, carrying victuals and baggage, and taking their burdens from them, set riders upon them, arming all of them as horsemen. And having so furnished the camels, he commanded that they should go before his army against the horsemen of Cræsus. And behind the camels he put the foot soldiers, and behind the foot soldiers the horsemen. And when the whole army was drawn up in battle array, he straightway commanded them that they should slay all else of the Lydians, who might fall in their way, but that Cræsus himself they should not slay, not even if he should defend himself when they laid hands upon him. Now

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

the reason why he set the camels in array against the horsemen was this. The horse is sore afraid of the camel, and cannot endure to look upon the shape of the beast or to smell the smell. For this cause therefore he used this device, that the King of the Lydians might find no gain from his horsemen, by whom he hoped that he should win a great victory. And indeed so soon as ever the two armies had joined battle, and the horses smelled the smell of the camels and saw them, they turned and fled. So was Crœsus utterly disappointed of his hope. Nevertheless the Lydians bare themselves bravely; for when they saw what had befallen them, they leapt from their horses and fought with the Persians on foot. But after a while, when many had been slain on both sides, the Lydians were driven into their city, and were besieged therein by the Persians.

Now it seemed to Crœsus that the siege would be of many months. Therefore he sent again other messengers to his allies saying that, whereas he had before bidden them to assemble themselves at Sardis in the fifth month, there was now need that they should come with all the speed that might be, for that the King was besieged. Now of the other allies nothing need be said; but as to the Lacedæmonians, when the messengers of Crœsus came to them, they were at variance with their neighbours, the men of Argos. Notwithstanding, they made all haste to come to the help of the King; and were indeed ready to set forth, with ships duly furnished, when there came to them tidings that the city of Sardis was taken and Crœsus led into captivity. When they

KING CRÆSUS IS DEFEATED

heard this they changed their purpose and went not; nevertheless they thought it a grievous thing.

Now the taking of Sardis was in this wise. On the fourteenth day after the beginning of the siege, Cyrus sent horsemen throughout his army, saying that he would give great gifts to the man who should first mount upon the wall. But when the whole army had attacked the city, and prevailed nothing, a certain Mardian, whose name was Hyrœades, desisted not as did the others, but made his attempt on a certain part of the citadel where no sentinels were set. And none were set because no man had any fear that the citadel could be taken from this quarter, for the place was very steep. And this indeed was the only part of the citadel to which Meles, who had been king of Sardis in old time, had not caused the lion's cub to be carried. Now the story of the lion's cub is this. A woman in Sardis brought forth a young lion, and the interpreters of Telmessus said, "If thou carry the young lion round about its wall, no man shall take Sardis." So Meles caused them to carry the cub round about the wall wherever it could be attacked, but of this place he took no account, so steep was it and hard of access. Now Hyrœades had seen on the day before that a certain Lydian had come down by this place after a helmet that had rolled down from the top, and had fetched the helmet, and so returned. And having seen this thing he bare it in mind; and the next day he climbed up the same way, and many Persians after him. So Sardis was taken and all the city plundered. As to the King himself, there befell this thing that shall now be told. He had a son, of whom indeed mention

STORIES OF THE EAST FROM HERODOTUS

has been made before. A goodly youth he was in all other respects, but he was dumb. Now in the days of his prosperity Crœsus, having done many other things that the youth might be healed of his infirmity, sent also messengers to the oracle of Delphi to enquire of the god. To these the Pythia made answer in these words—

“O king of many lands, the thought
Thou keepest in thy heart is vain:
The help with many prayers besought
Think not to ask of heaven again;
For ill the day and full of fear
That first thy dumb child’s voice shall hear.”

Now it came to pass that when the Persians were taking the citadel, one of them made as if he would have slain Crœsus, not knowing who he was. And Crœsus, though he saw the man coming against him, heeded him not, so great was his trouble; for he thought that it would be well for him to die. But the youth, that had been dumb all his days, when he saw the Persian about to strike, by reason of his fear and of the instant necessity of the thing, cried out, saying, “Fellow, slay not King Crœsus.” Thus did he speak for the first time; but afterwards, for the rest of his life, he spake even as other men.