

Greece PART 2 EXTRA Readings

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27

The Golden Age

WHEN we were talking about the Stone Age and the Bronze Age, I told you that later we should also hear of a Golden Age.

Well, we have come to the Golden Age now. This doesn't mean that people at this time used things made of gold, nor that they had a great deal of gold money. It means—well, let us see what sort of a time it was, and then you can tell what it means.

After the wars with Persia, Athens seemed to have been cheered up by her victory to do wonderful things, and the next fifty years after the Persians were driven out of Greece—that is, 480 to 430 B.C.—were the most wonderful years in the history of Greece, and perhaps the most wonderful years in the history of Europe.

Athens had been burned down by Xerxes. At the time it happened this seemed like a terrible misfortune. But it wasn't. The people set to work and built a much finer and much more beautiful city than the old one had been.

Now, the chief person in Athens at this time was a man named Pericles.¹ He was not a king nor a ruler, but he was so very wise and such a wonderful speaker and such a popular leader that he was able to make the Athenians do as he thought best. He was like the popular captain of a football or soccer team who is a fine player himself and makes fine players of all the others on his team. Athens was his team, and he

trained it so well that all the players were tops in their positions. Some people became great artists. Some people became great writers. Others still became great *philosophers*. Do you know what philosophers are? They are wise men and women who know a great deal and love knowledge.

The artists built many beautiful buildings, theaters, and temples. They made wonderful statues of the Greek gods and goddesses and placed them on the buildings and about the city.

The philosophers taught the people how to be wise and good.

The writers composed fine poems and plays. The plays were not like those we have nowadays but were all about the doings of the gods and goddesses.

The theaters were not like those we have nowadays, either. They were always out of doors, usually on the side of a hill, where a grandstand could be built facing the stage. There was little or no scenery, and instead of an orchestra of musicians, there was a chorus of singers to accompany the actors. The actors wore false faces or masks to show what their feelings were, a *comic* mask with a grinning face when they wanted to be funny and a *tragic* mask with a sorrowful face when they wanted to seem sad.

Perhaps you have seen pictures of these masks, for in the decorations of our own theaters these same comic and tragic masks are sometimes used.



Tragic and comic masks

Athens had been named after the goddess Athena, who was supposed to watch out for and look after the city. The Athenians thought she should have a special temple. Accordingly, they built one to her on the top of a hill called the Acropolis.² This temple they called in her honor



The Parthenon

the Parthenon,³ meaning the *maiden*, one of the names by which she was known.

The Parthenon is considered by some people to be the most beautiful building in the world, although as you see by the picture, as it is today, it is now in ruins. In the center of this temple was a huge statue of Athena made of gold and ivory by a sculptor named Phidias.⁴ We are told that it was the most beautiful statue in the world as the Parthenon was the most beautiful building, but it has completely disappeared, and no one knows what became of it. One might guess, however, that the gold and ivory tempted thieves, who may have stolen it piece by piece.

Phidias made many other statues on the outside of the Parthenon, but most of these have been carried away and put in museums or have been lost or destroyed.

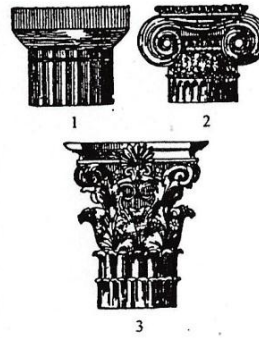
This statue of Athena and the other sculptures on the Parthenon made Phidias so famous that he was asked to make a statue of Zeus to be placed at Olympia, where the Olympic Games were held. The statue of Zeus was finer even than the one he had made of Athena and was so splendid that it was called one of the Seven Wonders of the World. You remember the pyramids of Egypt and the Hanging Gardens of Babylon were two others of the Seven Wonders. It is interesting that each of these three Wonders was located in a different continent. Can you tell which was in Africa, which in Asia, and which in Europe?

Phidias has been called the greatest sculptor who ever lived, but he did a thing which the Greeks considered a crime and would not forgive. We do not see anything so terribly wrong in what he did, but the Greeks' idea of right and wrong was different from ours. This is what he did. On the shield of the statue of Athena that he had made, Phidias carved a picture of himself and also one of his friend Pericles. It was merely a part of the decoration of the shield, and hardly anyone would have noticed it. But according to the Greek notion, it was a sacrilege to make a picture of a human being on a statue of a goddess. When the Athenians found out what Phidias had done, they threw him into prison, and there he died.

The Greeks used different kinds of columns on their buildings, and these columns are used in many public and in some private buildings today. I'll tell you what each kind is like; then see how many you can find.

The Parthenon was built in a style called *Doric*.⁵

The top of the column is called the capital, and the capital of the Doric column is shaped like a saucer with a square cover on top of it. There was no base or block at the bottom of the column. It rested directly on the floor. As the Doric column is so plain



1. Doric 2. Ionic 3. Corinthian

and strong-looking, it was called the man's style.

The second style is called *Ionic*.⁶

The capital of the Ionic column has a base, and the capital has ornaments like curls underneath the square top, and the column has a base.

As this column is more slender and more ornamental than the Doric, it was called the woman's style.

The third style is called *Corinthian*.⁷

The capital of the Corinthian column is higher than either of the other two and still more ornamental. It is said that the architect who first made this column got his idea for its capital from seeing a basketful of toys that had been placed on a child's grave as was the custom instead of flowers. The basket had been covered

with a slab, and the leaves of the thistle called the acanthus had grown up around the basket. It looked so pretty that the architect thought it would make a beautiful capital for a column, and so he copied it.

I asked some boys which one could find the most columns. The next day one boy said he had seen two Ionic columns, one on each side of the door of his house. The second had seen ten Doric columns on the savings bank. But the third said he had seen 138 Corinthian columns.

"Where on earth did you see so many?" I asked. "I counted the lampposts from my house to the school," he said. "They were kind of Corinthian columns."

One of the friends of Pericles was a man named Herodotus.⁸ He wrote in Greek the first history of the world. For this reason Herodotus is called the Father of History, and someday if you study Greek you may read what he wrote in his own language. Of course, at that time there was very little history to write. What has happened since *hadn't* happened then. He wrote about Egypt and other parts of the ancient world. He wrote about places so far away that most Greeks had never visited them. One was Kush,⁹ in Africa way south of Egypt. Mostly Herodotus's history was a story of the wars with Persia, which I have just told you about.

In those days every once in a while a terrible contagious disease, called a *plague*, would break out, and people would be taken sick and die by the thousands, for the doctors knew very little about the plague or how to cure it. Such a plague came upon Athens, and the Athenians died like poi-

soned flies. Pericles himself nursed the sick and did all he could for them, but finally he, too, was taken sick with plague and died. This happened at Pericles.

the very end of the Golden Age, which has been called in honor of its greatest man, the Age of Pericles.

When Greek Meets Greek

THE Golden Age, when Athens was so wonderful, lasted for only fifty years.

Why, do you suppose, did it stop at all?

It stopped chiefly because of a fight.

This time, however, the fight was not between Greece and someone outside, as in the Persian Wars. The fight was between two cities that had before this been more or less friendly—mostly less—between Sparta and Athens. It was a family quarrel between Greeks. The fight was all because one of these cities—Sparta—was jealous of the other—Athens.

The Spartans, as you know, were fine soldiers. The Athenians were fine soldiers, too. But ever since Themistocles had beaten the Persians at Salamis with the ships he had built, Athens had had a fine fleet as well, and Sparta had no fleet. Furthermore, Athens had become the most beautiful and most cultured city in the whole world.

Sparta did not care much about Athens's beautiful buildings and her education and culture and that sort of thing; that did not interest Sparta. What did make Sparta jealous was Athen's fleet. Sparta was inland, not on nor near the seashore as Athens was; so Sparta could not have a fleet at all. That city did not intend, however, to let Athens get ahead; therefore, on one excuse or another, Sparta

with all of *its* neighbors started a war against Athens with all of *its* neighbors.

Sparta was in a part of Greece that was called by the hard name, the Peloponnesus. In those days, people did not think this a hard name, for they were as familiar with it as you are with such a name as Massachusetts, for instance, which would seem just as hard to a Greek as Peloponnesus does to you. This war between Athens and Sparta was, therefore, called the Peloponnesian¹ War from the fact that it was not only Sparta but all of the Peloponnesus that fought against Athens.

We think a war lasts entirely too long if it lasts four or five years, but the Peloponnesian War lasted twenty-seven years! There is a saying, "When Greek meets Greek then comes a tug of war!" which means to say, "When two equal fighters such as Athens and Sparta, both Greek, meet each other in battle, who knows how it will end?"

I am not going to tell you about all the battles that took place during these twenty-seven years, but at the end of this long and bloody war, both cities were tired and worn out, and the glory of Athens was gone. Although Sparta was ahead, neither city ever amounted to much afterward. The Peloponnesian War ruined them both. That's the way war does!

All during the Peloponnesian War there was a man in Athens by the name of Socrates² who, many think, was one of the wisest and best men who ever lived. He was called a philosopher and went about the city teaching the people what was right and what they ought to do. But instead of actually *telling* the people what he thought was right, he asked them ques-

tions which made them see what was right. In this way, chiefly by asking questions, he led people to find out for themselves what he wanted them to know. This kind of teaching, simply by asking questions, has ever since been called Socratic.

Socrates had a snub nose and was bald and quite ugly, and yet he was very popular with the Athenians, which may seem strange, for the Athenians loved beautiful faces and beautiful figures and beautiful things, and Socrates was anything but beautiful. It must have been the beauty of Socrates's character that made them forget his ugliness, as I know some boys and girls who think their teacher is perfectly beautiful and just because she is so good and kind they love her, although she is really not pretty at all.

Socrates had a wife named Xantippe.³ She had a bad temper and was the worst kind of a grouch. She thought Socrates was wasting his time, that he was a loafer, as he did no work that brought in any money. One day she scolded him so loudly that he left the house, whereupon she threw a bucket of water on him. Socrates, who never answered back, merely remarked to himself:

"After thunder, rain may be expected."

Wise Men and Otherwise

Socrates didn't believe in all the Greek gods, Zeus, Aphrodite, and the rest, but he was careful not to say so himself, for the Greeks were very particular that no one should say or do anything against their gods. Phidias, you remember, was thrown into prison for merely putting his picture on the shield of the goddess Athena, and one would have been put to death for teaching young men not to believe in the gods.

At last, however, Socrates, as he had feared he would be, was charged with not believing in the Greek gods and with teaching others not to believe in them. For this he was condemned to death. He was ordered to drink a cup of hemlock, which was a deadly poison. Socrates's pupils, or disciples, as they were then called, tried to have him refuse to drink the cup, but he would not disobey the order; and so, when he was nearly seventy years old, with all his disciples around him, he drank the cup of hemlock and died.

Although Socrates lived many hundreds of years ago, he believed and taught some things that people today also believe.

One of these things he believed was that each of us has inside a *conscience*, which tells us what is right and what is wrong; we don't have to read from a book or be told by another what is right or what is wrong.

Another thing he taught was that there is a life after death and that when we die our souls live on.

No wonder he was not afraid himself to die!

HAVE you ever been playing in your yard when a strange boy who had been watching from the other side of the fence asked to be let into the game, saying he would show you how to play? You didn't want him around, and you didn't want him in, but somehow or other he got in and was soon bossing everybody else.

Well, there was a man named Philip who lived north of Greece, and he had been watching Sparta and Athens—not playing but fighting—and he wanted to get into the game. Philip was king of a little country called Macedonia,¹ but he thought he would like to be king of Greece also, and it seemed to him a good time, when Sparta and Athens were down and out after the Peloponnesian War, to step in and make himself king of that country. Philip was a great fighter, but he didn't want to fight Greece unless he had to. He wanted to be made king peaceably, and he wanted Greece to do it willingly. He thought up a scheme to bring this about, and this was his scheme.

He knew, as you do, how the Greeks hated the Persians, whom they had driven out of their country over a hundred years before. Although the Persian Wars had taken place so long ago, the Greeks had never forgotten the bravery of their forefathers and the tales of their victories over the Persians. These stories had been told them over and over by their par-

ents and grandparents, and they loved to read and reread them in Herodotus's history of the world.

So Philip said to the Greeks, "Your ancestors drove the Persians out of Greece, to be sure, but the Persians went back to their country, and you didn't go after them and punish them as you should have done. You didn't try to get even with them. Why don't you go over to Persia and conquer it now, and make the Persians pay for what they did to you?"

Then he slyly added, "Let me help you. I'll lead you against them."

No one seemed to see through Philip's scheme—nobody except one man. This man was an Athenian named Demosthenes.²

Demosthenes, when he was a boy, had decided that he would someday be a great speaker or orator, just as you might say you are going to be a doctor, or an aviator, or a teacher when you grow up.

Demosthenes had picked the one profession which by nature he was worst fitted for. In the first place, he had such a very soft, weak voice that one could hardly hear him. Besides, this, he stammered very badly and could not recite even a short poem without hesitating and stumbling so that people laughed at him. It seemed absurd, therefore, that he should aim to be a great speaker.

But Demosthenes practiced and *practiced* and *practiced* by himself. He went down on the seashore and put pebbles in his mouth to make it more difficult to speak clearly. Then he spoke to the roaring waves, making believe that he was addressing an angry crowd, who were trying to drown the sound of his voice, so that he would have to speak very loud indeed.

At last, by keeping constantly at it, Demosthenes did become a very great speaker. He spoke so wonderfully that he could make his audience laugh or make them cry whenever he wanted to, and he could persuade them to do almost anything he wished.

Now, Demosthenes was the man who saw through Philip's scheme for conquering Persia. He knew that Philip's real aim was to become king of Greece. So he made twelve speeches against him. These speeches were known as *Philippics*,³ as they were against Philip. So famous were they that even today we call a speech that bitterly attacks anyone a *Philippic*.

The Greeks who heard Demosthenes were red-hot against Philip while they listened to him. But as soon as they got away from the sound of Demosthenes's words, the same Greeks became lukewarm and did nothing to stop Philip.

At last, in spite of everything that Demosthenes had said, Philip had his way and became king over all Greece.

Before, however, he could start out, as he had promised, to conquer Persia, he was killed by one of his own men, so that he was unable to carry out his plan.

Philip had a son named Alexander. Alexander was only twenty years old, but when his father died he became king of Macedonia and also of Greece.

When Alexander was a mere child, he saw some men trying without success to tame a young and very wild horse that shied and reared in the air so that no one was able to ride it. Alexander asked to be allowed

to try to ride the animal. Alexander's father made fun of his son for wanting to attempt what those older than he had been unable to do, but at last gave his consent.

Now, Alexander had noticed what the others, although much older, had not noticed. The horse seemed to be afraid of its own shadow, for young colts are easily frightened by anything dark and moving, as some children are afraid of the dark at night.

Alexander turned the horse around facing the sun, so that its shadow would be behind, out of sight. He then mounted the animal and, to the amazement of all, rode off without any further trouble.

His father was delighted at his son's cleverness and gave him the horse as a reward. Alexander named the horse Bucephalus⁴ and became so fond of him that when the horse died Alexander built a monument to him and named several cities after him.

Now, Alexander was a wonderful boy, but he had such a wonderful teacher named Aristotle⁵ that some people think part, at least, of his greatness was due to the teacher.

Aristotle was probably the greatest teacher who ever lived. If there were more great teachers like Aristotle, it seems likely there would have been more great pupils like Alexander.

Aristotle wrote books about all sorts of things—books about the stars called astronomy, books about animals called zoology, and books on other subjects that you probably have never even heard of, such as psychology and politics.

For hundreds of years these books that Aristotle wrote were the schoolbooks that boys and girls studied, and for many years they were the *only* schoolbooks. Nowadays, schoolbooks usually change every few years after they are written. See how remarkable it was that Aristotle's schoolbooks should have been used for so long a time.

Aristotle had been taught by a man named Plato, who was also a great teacher and philosopher. Plato had been a pupil of Socrates, so that Aristotle was a kind of *grand-pupil* of Socrates. You have heard of the Wise Men of the East. These were the three Wise Men of Greece.

SOCRATES,
PLATO,
ARISTOTLE.

Some day you may read what they wrote or said over two thousand years ago.

A Boy King

WHEN you are twenty years old, what do you think you will be doing?

Will you be attending college?

Will you be working, or what?

When Alexander was twenty, he was king of both Macedonia and Greece. But Macedonia and Greece were entirely too small for this wonderful young man. He wanted to rule a much bigger country; in fact, he thought he would like to rule the whole world; that was all—nothing more.

So Alexander went right ahead with his father's plan to conquer Persia. The time had come to pay back Persia for that last invasion one hundred and fifty years before.

He got together an army and crossed the Hellespont into Asia and won battle after battle against the first Persian armies that went out to stop him.

He kept moving on, for Persia was a vast empire.

Soon he came to a town where in a temple there was kept a rope tied into a very farfamed and puzzling knot. It was called the Gordian¹ Knot, and it was very famous because the oracle had said that whoever should undo this knot would conquer Persia. No one had ever been able to untie it.

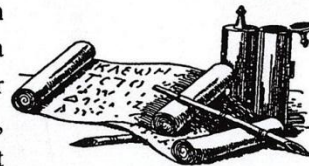
When Alexander heard the story, he went to the temple and took a look at the knot. He saw at once that it would be impossible to untie it, so, instead of even trying, as others had done, he drew his sword and with one stroke cut the knot in two.

Now when a person settles something difficult, not by fussing with it as one untangles a snarl, but at a single stroke, cutting through all difficulties, we say he "cuts the Gordian Knot."

From that time on, Alexander conquered one city after another and never lost any battle of importance until he had conquered the whole of Persia.

He then went into Egypt, which belonged to Persia at that time, and conquered that country, too. To celebrate this victory, he founded a town near the mouth of the Nile and named it after himself, Alexandria. He started there a great library that later grew to be so big that there were said to be five hundred thousand books in it—that is, half a million—and was the largest library of ancient times. The books were not like those in the library of Ashurbanipal nor the kind we have now, of course, because printing had not been invented. They were every one of them written by hand, and not on pages, but on long sheets which were rolled up on sticks to form a scroll.

In the harbor of Alexandria was a little island called Pharos,² and on this island some years later was built a remarkable lighthouse named for the island, the Pharos. It was really a building more like a modern skyscraper with a tower. It was over thirty stories high, which seemed most remarkable at that time when most buildings were only one or two stories high, and its light could be seen for many miles. The Pharos of Alexandria was called one of



A scroll, pens, and ink

the Seven Wonders of the World. You have already heard of three others, so this makes the fourth.

Alexandria grew, in the course of time, to be the largest and most important seaport of the ancient world. Now, however, the Pharos and the library and all the old buildings have long since disappeared.

Alexander did not stay very long in any one place. He was restless. He wanted to keep on the move. He wanted to see new places and to conquer new people. He almost forgot his own little country of Macedonia and Greece. Instead of being homesick, however, as almost any one would have been, he kept going farther and farther away from home all the time. We should call such a man an adventurer or an explorer, as well as a great general. Alexander kept on conquering and didn't stop conquering until he had reached far-off India.

There in India his army, which had stayed on with him all the way, became homesick and wanted to go back. They had been away from home for more than ten years and were so far off that they were afraid they would never get back.

Alexander was now only thirty years old, but he was called Alexander the Great, for he was ruler of the whole world—at least, most of it that was then known to most Greeks, except Italy, which was still only a collection of little, unimportant towns at that time. When Alexander found there were no more countries left for him to conquer, he was so disappointed that he wept!

At last, when there was nothing more to conquer, he agreed to do what his army begged him and started slowly back toward Greece.

He got as far as Babylon, the city once so large and so magnificent. There he celebrated with a feast, but while feasting and drinking he suddenly died. He never reached Greece.

This was in 323 B.C. when he was but 33 years old. You can remember these figures easily, for they are all 3's except the middle figure in the date, which is one less than 3.

Alexander the Great had conquered the largest country that had ever been under the rule of one man, and yet this was not the only reason we call him *the Great*.

He was not only a great ruler and a great general, but—this may surprise you—he was also a great teacher. Aristotle had taught him to be that.

Alexander taught the Greek language to the people he conquered so that they could read Greek books. He taught them about Greek sculpture and painting. He taught them the wise sayings of the Greek philosophers, Socrates and Plato and his own teacher, Aristotle. He trained

the people in athletics as the Greeks did for their Olympic Games.

Alexander had married a beautiful Persian woman named Roxana,³ but their only child was still a baby, not born until after his father's death; so when the great king died there was no one to rule after him. He had told his generals before he died that the strongest one of them should be the next ruler; they must fight it out among themselves.

His generals did fight to see who should win, and finally four of them who were victorious decided to divide up this great empire and each have a share.

One of his generals was named Ptolemy I,⁴ and he took Egypt as his share and ruled well; but the others did not amount to much, and after a while their shares became unimportant and went to pieces. Like a toy balloon which stretches and stretches as you blow it up, Alexander's empire grew bigger and bigger until—all of a sudden—*pop*—nothing was left but the pieces.