THE
HISTORY OF AGATHOCLES
361- 289 BC

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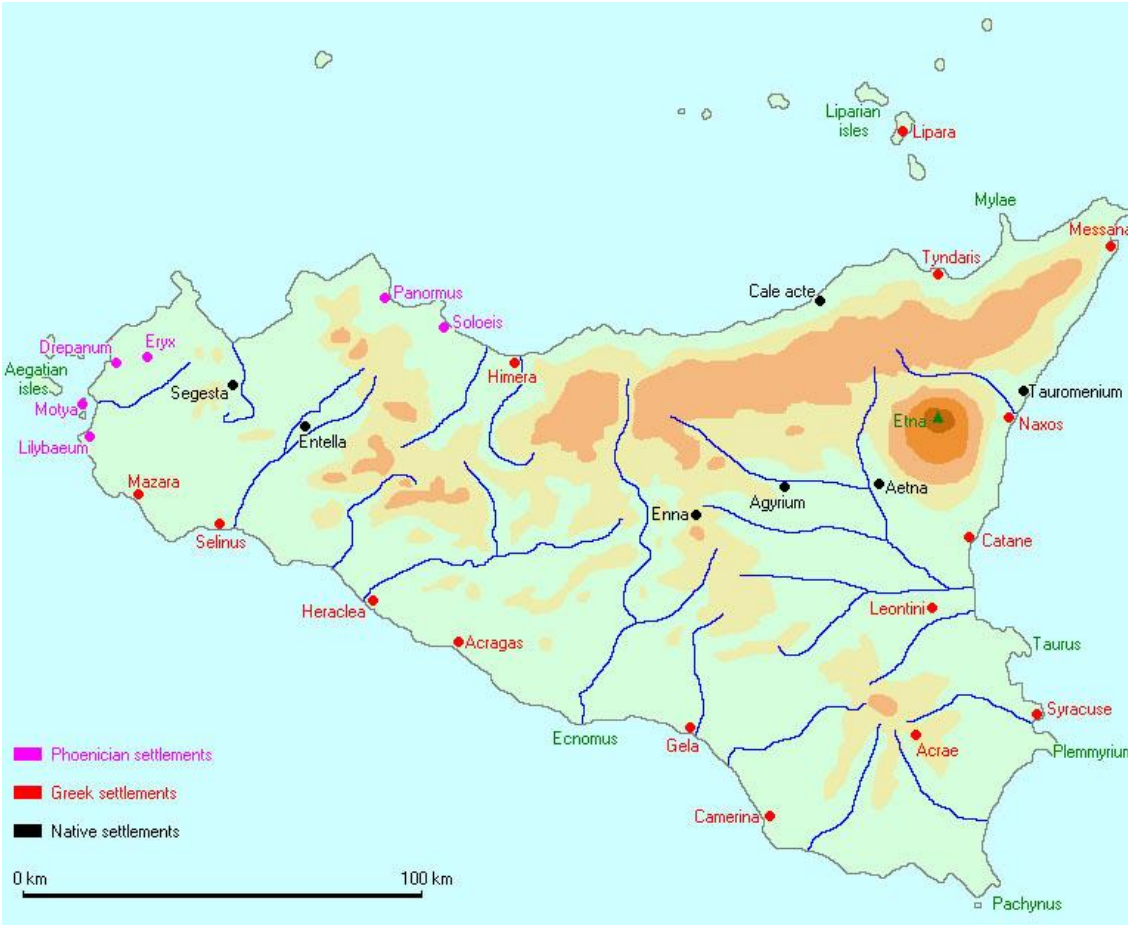


CHAPTER I.

AGATHOCLES AS AN ADVENTURER.

1.

Story of Agathocles' Birth and Childhood.

The greatness of Agathocles was a thing at which the world was astonished. Living in an age of great men he gained by his own mighty deeds such a hold over men's minds as few of his fellow-princes ever won. To those coming after it seemed as if his life had been a fable and a wonder; and it is the crowning proof of the fame of Agathocles that legend tells anew in his honour the ancient tale of the birth of Cyrus.

Diodorus thus relates:

"Carcinus of Rhegium had been banished from his home and settled at Thermae, the town being at. that time under Carthage. There he became the lover of a woman of the place, and afterwards was troubled by dreams as to the child which should be born unto him. He therefore charged some Carthaginian envoys, who were going to Delphi, to ask the god about the babe. They carefully carried out his bidding, and the answer was, that the young child would be the cause of great ills to the Carthaginians and to all Sicily. Then Carcinus, hearing this and fearing the Carthaginians, cast out his babe openly and set watchers by it that it should die. But after some days, as the babe lived on, the guards grew heedless. Then came the mother by night, and took up the child by stealth and carried him away, not to her home, for fear of her husband, but to her brother Heracleides; and she called the child Agathocles, after her own father. And the child grew up at Heracleides' house, and he was comely to look upon and strong in frame beyond his years.

"Now when the boy was seven years old, Carcinus was bidden of Heracleides to a sacrifice, and seeing Agathocles playing with some of his playmates, he wondered at his strength and beauty. And his wife said that their son would now have been that age, if he had lived; whereupon Carcinus repented of his deed and wept without ceasing. Then his wife, seeing that her husband's mood was favourable to what she had done, told him the whole truth. And he heard her with joy and took back his son. But fearing the Carthaginians he moved to Syracuse with all his house; and being needy he taught Agathocles the potter's craft, while Agathocles was still a lad. It was about that time that Timoleon of Corinth, after smiting the Carthaginians at the Crimisus, gave the citizenship of Syracuse to any that wished it. And Carcinus, being enrolled with Agathocles, lived a short time longer, and then died. And Agathocles' mother set up a stone likeness of her son in a shrine, and a swarm of bees settled upon the image and made honey on the hips. And when this token was told to those who were learned in such things, they all said that Agathocles would come to great glory, and this indeed came to pass."

Beside this legend the sober account of Justin must be set:

"Agathocles, tyrant of Sicily, who succeeded to the greatness of the elder Dionysius, reached the rank of a prince from a base and mean origin. He was born in Sicily, the son of a potter, and his boyhood was not more respectable than his birth.... Some time afterwards he moved to Syracuse, and was enrolled among the burgesses, but for a long time had no reputation."

A remark of Polybius on the same subject is also worth quoting:

"Agathocles, as Timaeus scoffingly says, was originally a potter and, leaving the wheel, the clay and the smoke, he came as a young man to Syracuse."

It has already been seen that Timaeus was the original source of the account that made Agathocles a potter; and such a statement from so unfriendly an authority is not to be taken without suspicion. Polybius himself (who after all lived much nearer to the time of Agathocles than our other historians) does not seem to believe it. Again so far from Agathocles' family being of low estate, they are presently seen on the best of terms with the nobles of Syracuse; Agathocles himself becomes the chosen friend of the wealthy Damas, and ends by marrying his widow, while Agathocles' brother holds high command in the Syracusan army.

When Agathocles forsook the side of the oligarchs to become a popular leader and a popular tyrant, it was natural for his enemies to cast discredit on his birth, and I to find shameful causes for his quick rise to power. This; is in fact the spirit of Justin's account.

Of course it is easy to compromise the question by saying that Agathocles' father was a master-potter who for safety in time of party-strife or for hope of gain moved his workshop from Rhegium to Thermae and thence to Syracuse. But even so he would hardly have been a welcome friend to the Syracusan nobles. On the whole, considering how easily the story of Agathocles' trade could have been made up, and how ready the world has always been to improve on tales of that kind, the modern reader must incline to disbelief.

Still less ground is there for taking seriously the picturesque details of Agathocles' childhood. The asking of the Delphic oracle, the recognition-scene, the token of the bees, are all essential parts of the legend, and probably have no historical foundation.

Undoubtedly Agathocles was born at Thermae, but whether his father really came from Rhegium or whether Agathocles' later relations with that city led to the invention of this detail is uncertain. Even the name of Agathocles' father is not altogether above suspicion.

The names of several of Agathocles' sons and grandsons are known, and it is strange that not one of them should be called after Carcinus, the founder of the house. Diodorus himself seems to be at pains to account for this departure from custom in making Agathocles' mother name him after her own father. He also gives Heracleides as her brother, and this was the name of one of Agathocles' sons. It is not easy to believe that such a matriarchal system of names can have been in use in the fourth century; and the truth may be that Diodorus, in trying to make the legend more reasonable, has mistaken the father's side for the mother's in Agathocles' ancestry. In so doing he did not trouble to correct the doubtful expression that he had already used about Agathocles' mother in calling her a "woman of the place." Was she a Greek or a Carthaginian?

The legend very likely made her a Carthaginian, for otherwise there is no possible sense in her concern in the Carthaginian embassy to Delphi; but Diodorus, though he gave her father and brother Greek names, seems hardly aware that he has made her into a Greek also.

In reality the supposed Punic descent of Agathocles, and the hint that his mother and father were living out of regular wedlock, are no more to be believed than the rest of the myth. It is therefore quite possible that Heracleides was not the foster-father but the real father of Agathocles, so that the prince took his name from his paternal grandfather. In this way the family-tree would bear a more reasonable aspect. But the whole matter must remain uncertain and it is not worth while discussing it further.

The tale of the bees seems to be a modified form of part of the Cyrus-legend. Cyrus was said to have been suckled by a bitch, as Romulus was by a wolf. Only with Agathocles the miracle is given a more rational turn by the exchange of the man for his statue—so

that the bees which feed the living Hiero are only allowed to make honey on the stone Agathocles.

2.

State of the West.

The year of Agathocles' birth was 361. Before the historical account of his acts at Syracuse begins, it will be well to review shortly the condition of the states with which he afterwards had dealings.

ITALY. The parties concerned in the great struggle between Rome and Samnium had definitely taken sides. Rome had found allies in Lucania and Apulia, and thus harassed her foes continually in the rear. The Lucanians were the natural enemies of the Tarentines and other south Italian Greeks, and hence the latter tended to support the Samnites. But in the fourth century the strength and greatness of Tarentum were lost, and love of ease hindered her from sharing worthily in the great encounter which she might perhaps have decided. Her only known act during the second Samnite war was a feeble attempt at peacemaking after the disaster of the Caudine Forks; to this offer Rome would not listen. Otherwise Tarentum cared only for her own comfort, and while the Lucanians were busy with the Samnites she was the more likely to be left in peace. On the other hand when the Samnite war slumbered, Lucania was free once more to harry her southern neighbours, and Tarentum then resorted to outside aid to keep out the raiders.

Thus in 338, when Rome and Samnium were at peace, Archidamus, king of Sparta, had fought in vain against the Lucanians. Again about 334 Alexander the Molossian helped Tarentum against the Lucanians, who were then in league with the Samnites. At that time Rome was too much taken up with the Latins to do anything in south Italy; and she made a treaty with Alexander. His championship was more effective, and, even after his. murder in 331—0, Tarentum was able to keep back the Lucanians, and in 327 the outbreak of the second Samnite war drew off their forces to the north. What has been said of Tarentum applies also to the other Greek states in Italy, which usually sided with her when a deliverer was in the field. The Bruttian league, which had at one time threatened to drive the Greeks out of Italy, was much less dangerous after the campaigns of Alexander of Molossia, although the native tribes were sometimes troublesome to their near neighbours.

The years following Alexander's death were a time of respite for the Greeks in Italy. Rome was already the leading power in the country; but until the Samnites were crushed, the south of the peninsula was no more to her than a field for intrigue. She had no fixed policy of enmity against the Greek states, for Naples and other Campanian cities were already among her allies;—but any useful friend would have been welcome to her. If Rome did not then hope to bring all Italy under her sway, still less did she dream of embroiling herself in Sicilian politics or of becoming a Mediterranean power. Her fleet scarcely existed, and her treaty with Carthage, the mistress of the sea, was a confession that Rome's ambition did not overstep her own shores.

Meanwhile the Greek cities were disunited, and the usual party bickerings took up most of their strength. There was no common aim or fixed policy: and therefore the cities were bound to become the prize of the strongest power,—Rome, Samnium, or a conqueror from Old Greece, as the case might be. The Italiots were no longer masters of their own destiny.

Carthage had been inactive after her great disaster at the Crimisus, which led to the peace with Timoleon. In spite of the cruel death of Hanno in 343, the strife of parties was only temporarily at rest, and fresh troubles soon broke out. Timoleon had left Carthage mistress at sea, so that she could renew her attack on Greek Sicily, as soon as it suited her. Her commercial treaty with Rome, renewed in 348, showed her naval superiority, but was of no immediate political importance.

The GREEK East.

The years of Agathocles' youth were the time of the rise of Macedonia, and the establishment of the new order, where the kingdom replaced the city as the unit of power. At the same time the depression of Greece under the Macedonian rule led men to look westward for a wider field for ambition and conquest,— and many deliverers, of whom Timoleon himself was the type, set out to fight for the Greek cause against the Italians and the Carthaginians. This was a direct effect of the Macedonian overlordship. With the course of Greek history itself Sicily was little concerned. The wars of Alexander and the strife following his death did not touch her: and it was not for many years yet that Sicily took her place among the Hellenistic kingdoms. But still the conquests of Alexander and the advance of military spirit and tactics in his time must have had some effect upon movements in the west. There indeed the work had been partly forestalled by Dionysius I., whose imperial policy and standing armies were far in front of the conceptions of his own age. Sicily, it may fairly be said, always afforded the materials out of which a great power could be made. She had only to wait for her leader.

One of Alexander's unfulfilled plans had been the conquest of Libya and Carthage, and although his death relieved the city from her worst fears, so grand a project cannot have been altogether forgotten. It will be seen hereafter that Agathocles began and almost achieved an enterprise of the same kind: and Ophelias, one of the most ambitious of Alexander's followers, had hopes of winning fame in that quarter also. What Alexander planned, it was open to any daring soldier to attempt.

SICILY.

It remains to speak of Sicily herself. Although Timoleon's work of restoring the old freedom of the city-states might seem at first sight to be a setback towards a condition of things that the Greek world had outgrown, it must be remembered that in the distracted state of the country immediate deliverance followed by rest was the most pressing need. Timoleon did not come to found an empire. He had quite a clear notion of the government which he thought best suited to Sicily. The cities were to enjoy their full freedom in peace time under a moderate republican rule. If a great war threatened, the Greeks were to unite under another deliverer from Corinth.

If all things had fallen out as Timoleon wished, the welfare of Sicily might never have been wrecked. But, as it happened, the turn of fortune set against his plans. The new republican governments soon lost their moderation; the cities would not live in peace, but began once more to make war on one another or within their own walls. They refused to unite when the danger of invasion came, and the deliverer from Corinth failed to deliver.

Thus the work of Timoleon was soon undone; but still he had tided Sicily over her worst peril, and to his settlement are due not only the twenty years peace following his death, but also, to a great degree, the wealth of the island in the later years of Agathocles. For the tyrant reaped what the deliverer had sown.

These matters will become clear if the state of Sicily be observed more in detail.

Timoleon after the deliverance of Sicily from foemen and usurpers had taken every care to ensure the lasting peace and safety of the island. He left Syracuse to be the leader but no longer the mistress of the Greek cities; although it is now almost impossible to tell which states were put under her overlordship, and which were merely in alliance with her. Gela and Acragas had been built up by Timoleon, and with Acragas Syracuse is soon found at war. Messena also appears later as a free city holding out against Agathocles. Camarina again, received fresh settlers from Timoleon. On the other hand he made the Agyrians citizens of Syracuse, and moved thither the whole people of Leontini, although that town is later seen once more independent. The leading position of Syracuse is shown by the part which she afterwards took in helping Croton against the Bruttians, and thus acting as champion of the Greek cause. But it can hardly be doubted that the other Greek cities, of which no special mention is made, had their full liberties given back, and they seem to have profited by later strife to break loose from the Syracusan league.

There can be no question but that the years of more or less unbroken peace following Timoleon's settlement led to a renewal of wealth and prosperity among the Siceliots; and Diodorus gives a glowing picture of the happy time which now set in. "Altogether the restoration of peace throughout Sicily by Timoleon led to a great increase of prosperity among the cities. For many years, owing to the strife and civil wars and the constant rise of tyrants, the cities were empty of indwellers and the fields lay fallow from want of tillage, and yielded no cultivated crops. But now from the number of settlers and the long peace that had set in, the fields were once more brought under cultivation by fresh tillage, and bore all kinds of crops in plenty. The Sicilian Greeks sold their produce to the merchants at a profit, and their own wealth grew fast. A sign of the ample means which they won in this way, was the number of grand monuments set up about that time."

For all this, it is clear that the old policy of disunion still held the field, so that the first strong power that should appear in the west was not likely to be met by any properly concerted measures.

The Syracusan commons were given back their power at home, but the unruliness of the mob was checked by the awe of a new office. The high-priest of Olympian Zeus became the chief magistrate in the state. Chosen yearly from among three clans to this lofty place of civil and religious dignity, he was expected to be beyond the fear of popular clamour, while the sacred nature of his function, disqualifying for leadership in the field, kept far from him the desire or at least the means of grasping unlawful power.

The authority of the generals did not go beyond the army itself; they held a joint command and were popularly elected. But as divided counsels are fatal in a great war, it was laid down by Timoleon that whenever a barbarian foe was threatening, a general should be sought from Corinth.

Every care had thus been taken to ward off the danger of another tyranny; and indeed the tyranny did not come until a long course of party strife had cleared the way. It was from an oligarchic faction that the state-fabric of Timoleon had its first blow. Some of the richest and foremost men in Syracuse formed themselves into a political club called the Six Hundred; and this body soon became the chief power in the state. Of the steps by which the nobles usurped this position we are quite uninformed. In name the commonwealth lived on unchanged, but the leaders of the Six Hundred, among whom Heracleides and Sosistratus were the greatest, could fill the offices of peace and war with their own creatures, and guided the policy of Syracuse as they pleased. The behaviour of this cabal was high-handed and selfish, but the government seems to have been carried on in a vigorous manner, so that the position of Syracuse among the Greek cities was kept up.

3
Agathocles' first Doings at Syracuse.

Agathocles was eighteen years old when Timoleon issued his invitation for the re-peopling of Syracuse; his proposals attracted numbers of settlers from all over the Greek world; and among the newcomers was Agathocles' father. It was no doubt the desire of belonging to the greatest city in Sicily, and not fear of the Carthaginians, as Diodorus says, that led him to move. He took with him Antander, his elder son, and Agathocles his younger, and all three were enrolled among the Syracusan burgesses in the year 343.

Agathocles' father died soon after.

At the time of the resettling of Syracuse, the warfare in Sicily was by no means at an end; and there is reason to believe that Agathocles' first active service was in the ranks of Timoleon's army. Justin says that the first campaign of Agathocles, in which he gave signal proof of his valour, was fought against the men of Aetna. This can hardly be other than the war of 339, when Timoleon marched against the Campanian soldiers entrenched in Aetna and smote them. Agathocles, it is said, was conspicuous for his bodily strength; he wore a harness that no other man could carry and used weapons too heavy for any of his mates'.

His warlike valour was seconded by political influence, which under an oligarchic government would naturally be essential to success. Although Agathocles' own feelings leaned rather towards the popular party, he entered active life as a servant of the nobles.

His chief hopes in these early years were for glory in war, and he was fortunate in finding a patron who could help him; for on the whole it would seem that the ruling oligarchy stood for the cause of the old burgesses of Syracuse as against newcomers such as Agathocles. The patron's name was Damas, and he must have been on good terms with the Six Hundred if not among their number. It is quite possible that some hereditary friendship was the reason that led this wealthy and distinguished man to take up the cause of the two brothers from Thermae, although Diodorus speaks as if Agathocles' personal qualities were his only recommendation. Damas seems to have made a close friend of the young soldier, and the two men went to the war against Acragas together: Damas as general, Agathocles as an inferior officer. But when one of the Captains-of-thousands fell in battle, the influence of Damas gained the vacant commission for his friend.

This war against Acragas is mentioned quite casually by Diodorus, and it is not known when or why it was fought. Possibly the Six Hundred wished to send help to the oligarchs in that city, as they afterwards did in the case of Croton and Rhegium. Of the result of the campaign we are also uninformed.

Damas died not long after, and Agathocles married his widow, thus becoming one of the richest men in Syracuse.

The next war was waged in Italy, the Syracusans sending a large force to help Croton against the Bruttians, who were beleaguering the city. Antander was one of the generals, and Agathocles himself had been re-elected a Captain of a thousand. It is possible that Heracleides and Sosistratus also took the field. The date of the war is not known; but in the life-time of Alexander the Molossian Croton would not have needed help from Syracuse. Alexander was killed in 330, after which date the present war should accordingly be placed.

The Syracusan army fought well, and seems to have freed proton from danger, though peace was not made with the Bruttians until 317.

Agathocles himself did many doughty deeds, but the oligarchic leaders began to grow jealous and withheld from him the meed of his prowess. Enraged by this injustice and perhaps by intrigues of the commanders in favour of the oligarchic party in Croton, Agathocles forsook his partisans and became the bitter and desperate foe of the nobles' cause.

The misunderstanding had doubtless been growing for some time, and Agathocles, who had served under Sosistratus rather as a patriot than a political follower, hoped to find allies among the commons, for whose leadership his own ready tongue and bold address thoroughly fitted him.

He began by impeaching Sosistratus and his followers on the charge of high treason. The case was heard in the assembly, but either the popular party was too weak to take action or else it failed to recognise its new leader in Agathocles. Anyhow the charge fell to the ground, and Agathocles was forced to leave Syracuse altogether.

Nor was this all. Sosistratus carried a decree of banishment against the friends of Agathocles, and a thousand men were obliged to make their way out of the city. An escort of horse and foot was sent with them, and on the road the soldiers, by the secret bidding of Sosistratus, fell on the exiles, taking or slaying a great number. The rest were doomed to death by proclamation.

The way to undisguised oligarchy was now clear. Sosistratus had all the outlaws' wealth escheated, and used it to hire a body of Greek and foreign spearmen, some of them evil-doers taken from the quarries: with this force the Six Hundred could keep the whole government of Syracuse in their own hands.

4.

Agathocles' First Exile.

c. 326—322 BC

Agathocles gathered such forces as he could from the downfall of his party, and began a run of wild adventures in Italy. His first attempt was a surprise attack on Croton, no doubt in league with the banished democrats of that city. The stroke however was a failure; the exiles were routed and Agathocles with a few survivors fled to Tarentum.

There he was thankful for a commission among the hired soldiers, for the Tarentines, as always, were readier to declare war than to wage it.

Against the foemen of Tarentum, no doubt as usual the Lucanians, Agathocles did many deeds of great daring. But soon he was suspected of plotting against the government, and was discharged from the army. Or it may be that the oligarchic party, which in Tarentum stood for peace with her Italian neighbours, as later for friendship with Rome, now gained the upper hand, and got rid of Agathocles as no longer needed for active service.

He was not however long idle, but soon found himself at the head of a strong body of outlaws, democratic exiles in fact from various parts of Italy and Sicily. Rhegium was being besieged by the forces of Sosistratus' oligarchy, and Agathocles marched to its relief. Of the course of the war on land, which may have been accompanied by some roving cruises on the part of Agathocles' men, no account has come down. But the result is certain. The oligarchs lost not only their hope of taking Rhegium, but even their position in Syracuse itself. They fled from the city, and Agathocles came home the leader of the restored and triumphant democracy.

5.
Agathocles under the Democracy.
c. 322—319 BC

Although the popular government was set up, Agathocles was by no means free from difficulty and opposition. A charge of piracy indeed, no doubt brought against him by friends of the nobles, fell to the ground. This political case for which the events of the last war may well have afforded a pretext, merely shows the comparative strength of the two parties at the time. Agathocles, who was likely enough to have preyed on his enemies' ships if he had had the chance, was bound to be acquitted as long as the democrats had the upper hand.

The real danger however was from outside. Not only had the nobles raised a strong force of their own, but Carthage had an army in Sicily taking the oligarchic side.

The Carthaginian government had at last learned that the old policy of fire and sword only served to rouse the Greeks to heroic defence. Now a craftier plan of stirring up discord among her foes afforded Carthage a better hope of widening her own influence. All the feelings of the Punic senate were bound to be on the nobles' side, and it was in their cause that the invading army was acting,

Of the war which followed very little is known. Diodorus merely says that great forces were pitted against each other, and that Agathocles filled all kinds of posts with unfailing valour and resource.

In one case only has a detailed account reached us, telling of a night attack on Gela attempted by Agathocles and of his hairbreadth escape from the oligarchs who held the city. Diodorus relates this as follows,—

"Agathocles broke into the town with 1000 men. But Sosistratus' followers met him with a large and well-ordered force, and turned the party to flight, slaying 400. The rest were trying to escape through a narrow place, and had given up hope of safety, when Agathocles unexpectedly saved them. He had fought heroically himself and was wounded seven times, nearly fainting from loss of blood. Then as the foe pressed on he ordered the buglers to go to two different parts of the wall and sound for battle. This was quickly done, and the attacking army from Gela could not see the truth in the darkness, but thought that a fresh force from Syracuse was about to fall on them from two sides. They therefore gave up pursuit and parting into two bodies, ran in the direction of the call. Meanwhile Agathocles' men won a respite and made good their escape into the trench."

The foregoing feat must be taken rather as an example of the resource and bravery of Agathocles than as a weighty event in itself. The issue of the war would hardly have turned on an attack made with only a thousand men. How the war ended is not told, but the upshot must have been failure for the democrats. Gela did not fall, and Agathocles' own credit was shaken.

The Syracusan democrats seem to have been ill pleased with Agathocles and his conduct of the war. For this reason and perhaps because the danger from Carthage was greater than would appear from extant authorities, it was thought fitting to use the last resort of Timoleon's constitution, in seeking from Corinth a dictator and a peacemaker. This at least seems the only possible explanation of the next events. One Acestorides came from Corinth and was voted full powers. Of most of his acts we have no knowledge; he does not seem to have fought against the Carthaginians, but rather tried to reconcile the parties in Syracuse. No doubt all peaceable citizens were

weary of the strife, and the commons were quite ready to throw over Agathocles for the sake of quiet. At any rate the banished nobles came home, and Agathocles fled almost alone into the midlands.

A romantic tale was afterwards told of his escape. Acestorides, says Diodorus, wished to murder Agathocles on the road, but Agathocles guessed his plan and outwitted him. He took the slave most like himself in height and looks, gave him his horse to ride and his harness to wear, and sent him out along the highway. Agathocles himself put on beggar's rags and slunk away over pathless places. Now they that came to do the murder judged that the slave was Agathocles; for in the darkness they could not tell the truth. They therefore slew the slave, while the master escaped.

This story, like so many others, is meant to show the cunning and resource of Agathocles in the sorest straits; it cannot be taken as serious history. It is likely enough that Agathocles feared an attempt on his life; but it can hardly be believed that Acestorides ever made it. For one thing if the Syracusans did not object to the banishment of Agathocles, they would certainly, had Acestorides so demanded, have allowed his death-sentence in fair trial. Secondly, it must be believed that a man chosen to be a peacemaker at a political crisis, would have borne too high a character to have stooped to murder. Agathocles did perhaps escape in disguise, but the other details were probably added to give point to the story.

The flight of Agathocles was naturally followed by the recall of Sosistratus with his party, and by peace with Carthage. The constitution of Timoleon was doubtless restored in outward form, while the reality of power rested with the nobles.

6.

Agathocles' Second Exile.

319 (?)—317 BC

Agathocles had now made two attempts at gaining a leading place in Syracuse; the first had been thwarted by the jealousy of the nobles, and the second had miscarried through the weakness or moderation of the commons. Now he found himself once more friendless and a wanderer; and it is no wonder that he should have forsworn his old allies, and sought help among his country's foes for plans which henceforward were purely selfish.

The smaller cities of Sicily, chafing under the overlordship of Syracuse, were not unwilling to make war against her under the command of Agathocles. At Morgantina, his first place of shelter, he was quickly chosen an officer in the army and soon promoted to the rank of general. He then took Leontini, and it seems likely that many cities were emboldened by this stroke to rise against their mistress. Syracuse herself was threatened with invasion; but now stoutly guarded by Hamilcar's Carthaginian troops, she defied the attack of Agathocles. The latter, finding himself outnumbered, was obliged to give up the attempt, and resolved to try more peaceful means of settlement. He sent envoys to Hamilcar, begging him to mediate between himself and the Syracusans, and assuring Hamilcar of his own good offices in return for so marked a service.

This offer was instantly accepted. Hamilcar came forward as peacemaker between the Syracusans and the partisans of Agathocles, and the war was at an end. This sudden change of front on Hamilcar's part is one of the strangest events of the times, and it is worth considering what led him to make it.

It is well known that the ruling oligarchy at Carthage was always confronted with an opposition. This party was never effective without a strong leader, but when such arose there was bound to be some unrest. Either the nobles were forced into a forward policy of conquest by the election of popular soldiers to high commands, or the people's favourite, after the failure of lawful means, would be led to plot the overthrow of the government. To an able general the temptation was strong; the authorities at home were jealous, and if the war miscarried, he was likely to pay for their mismanagement with his life. If he shrank from being a scapegoat, he was forced to turn traitor.

Now Hamilcar was in just such a position as this. He had saved Syracuse, but Agathocles with growing forces was still in the field. Another campaign might make his own ground untenable. The Carthaginian senate no doubt longed for some ground of charge against him, for the house of Barca, to which he, like other Hamilcars, seems to have belonged, had a lasting feud with the nobles. From such judges neither justice nor mercy could be expected, and death on the cross would be the only reward of loyalty and obedience. Thus the offer of Agathocles must have been very tempting, and a secret league was formed between the two leaders. Each undertook to lend troops to the other: and so Agathocles would become undisputed lord of Syracuse, while Hamilcar could defy his home government or overthrow it when the fair moment came. These secret dealings are known only from Justin; still there is every reason for accepting his version. Diodorus, who seems here to be following an account friendly to Agathocles, does not mention the plot at all; but merely says that Agathocles was persuaded to come home.

Hamilcar thus openly came forward as peace-maker between Agathocles and the oligarchs. The latter, finding themselves helpless without Punic aid, were obliged to lend ear to his words.

A treaty was made by which the parties were to be reconciled in Syracuse and Agathocles to come home as the leading man in the state. But he was so dreaded by the citizens that it was resolved to secure his loyalty by the most awesome of all pledges. He was taken to the temple of Demeter, the holy emblems were set out, and there he swore to do nothing to overthrow the commonwealth, and to keep the peace with Carthage. He was forthwith elected general and guardian of the peace; he was to hold office until the ill-feeling of factions was laid to rest. Hamilcar then left Agathocles 5000 of his own troops and marched out of the city. Outwardly he might claim to have furthered the Punic cause by his demonstration in Syracuse; for when had a Carthaginian leader stood with his army inside her walls? And had not Agathocles, at his bidding, sworn to stand by the terms of peace? But in truth Hamilcar had given Syracuse a master and Carthage a rival, whose hatred would not long slumber: for an oath in the mouth of Agathocles was worth no more than the broken pledge of Callippus.

7.

Agathocles becomes Ruler of Syracuse.

316 BC

Agathocles was now established in Syracuse, but he could not feel sure of his ground until the forces of opposition had been crushed. Although the nobles might no longer dare to speak against him in open assembly, their clubs and secret meetings were a standing threat to his power. Syracusan society at this time was honeycombed by these secret bodies, of which the Six Hundred was the best known, and Agathocles now resolved to sweep all such elements of disaffection from the city.

The more wary among the nobles had already fled with Sosistratus, and Herbita was for the moment their place of shelter. This town Agathocles made ready

to attack. His former friends from Morgantina and elsewhere found him 3000 men, and he held a levy among the lowest class of Syracusans. But instead of marching at once against Herbita he struck the first blow at his foes at home.

Agathocles, as general, had control of the current business of the state; and, seemingly three days after his election to office, he gave orders to his troops to muster at the Timoleonteum on the morrow. He also sent to three of the oligarchic leaders, Tisarchus, Anthropinus and Diodes, and appointed them to commands in the march against Herhita, desiring them to appear on the morrow in the same place. At the same time an assembly was called to meet in the theatre.

The fatal day dawned, and Agathocles, after sending a small body of troops to overawe the assembly, joined the main company at the Timoleonteum. The three oligarchs, fearing nothing, had also come with forty friends. Agathocles rose, and in a fiery harangue charged them with plotting against his own life. His men shouted to him to make no delay in striking down the traitors. Thereupon he bade the trumpet sound, and called on the soldiers to slay the guilty and plunder their goods. Hearing the signal the men rushed in upon the oligarchs, and slew all that were there.

From the Timoleonteum the maddened soldiery- swarmed out into the city, and fell upon all who withstood them or who were suspected of being oligarchs. In this way at least six hundred of the foremost citizens met their death. Then the confusion spread, and all Syracuse was filled with bloodshed and rapine. The soldiers and rabble no longer knew the guilty from the guiltless, no shelter was safe, neither age nor sex was respected. Escape there was none; for Agathocles had let shut the city gates, and many who tried to leap from the walls were dashed to the ground. The fall of night only made the boldness of the destroyers more fiendish. For two days the slaughter raged until four thousand men had fallen.

After these deeds Agathocles ordered into his presence such oligarchs as had been taken alive. Among these were some of his bitterest foes; these he put to death, but Deinocrates, a shifty partisan, who had once been his friend, he spared. Five or six thousand remaining enemies were driven from Syracuse and found shelter at Acragas.

Agathocles now called another assembly, and addressed a set speech to his followers. “This,” he said, “is the day for which I prayed. The city is purged of her tyrants, and the burgesses can enjoy their freedom undisturbed. My work is done: all I now desire is to rest from toil and to live among you as a private citizen.”

So saying he put off his cloak of office, laid aside his sword, and stood before the meeting in civil dress. But the mob, seeing no hope of enjoying their plunder but in the continuance of his rule, shouted in answer that he must not leave them in the lurch. At first Agathocles held his peace: the shouts grew louder, until at last he came forward, and consented to rule, if he might rule alone; he could not, he said, be answerable for the misdeeds of any colleague. The assembly asked nothing better, and at once raised Agathocles to be general with full powers.

Gela (Terranova) ; Remains of Temple.

CHAPTER II

AGATHOCLES AS A SOLDIER-PRINCE IN SICILY.

The ghastly means used by Agathocles in grasping supreme power are evident enough from the account just given. There is no need to enlarge further on such horrors, and no ingenuity has been able to palliate them. Henceforward the tyrant's sway in Syracuse was unchallenged and he found it easy to wear a look of greater mildness. Agathocles' own nature had less of the calculating cruelty of a despot than of the hasty wrath of a rough soldier. In anger he had a fiendish eagerness for the sight of death and torture; at such times a bloodthirsty fury robbed him of all foresight or care for the out-come of his own deeds. But in calmer moods Agathocles had his generous impulses and a frankness that endeared him to his followers; where nothing crossed his path, the savage nature within might long smoulder unmarked: and in Syracuse at least his worst acts were over. The few nobles still left at home were cowed into silence. The mob was glutted with plunder, and devoted to a popular ruler. Agathocles had begun his reign by promising a remission of debts and grants of land to the poor, though how far this undertaking was carried out is uncertain. For all democrats he had fair words and a courteous bearing. He did not wear the diadem, and was easy of access to all that sought him. It is even said that he went about the city without a body-guard. This may mean that he contented himself with an escort of common soldiers; he can hardly have been rash enough to walk out altogether unshielded.

How far the machinery of the republican government still ran on is again a doubtful point. It is usually taken that the assembly met as before for routine business, and that the wonted officers were elected. This view is quite unwarranted. Diodorus, speaking of later events, says that Agathocles was often escorted by a crowd to the assembly, but went in alone; and that during the meetings he could not refrain from mimicking members of the audience, his sallies of wit delighting his hearers. To say nothing of the trivial nature of the passage, it must be noted that Diodorus says nothing of the activities of the assembly itself, there or anywhere else. It is likely that Agathocles, as the Roman Emperors later did, announced important acts to the people; but all their administrative functions were probably swallowed up in his own office of general with full powers.

He strengthened the resources of Syracuse, the revenue was carefully husbanded, arms were made ready, and new ships of war set building. The new despotism was above all things military.

1.

Agathocles' War against the Greek Cities.

316—314 BC

For nearly two years after Agathocles' elevation he was busy with small wars and intrigues with the lesser towns of the Sicilian midlands—a tiresome undertaking that gave no opening for great deeds. Some of the cities had already been in league with him, and may have bowed to his rule without more ado: the others were easily crushed. No details are known. Hamilcar, who was still in Sicily, naturally let Agathocles work his will.

At this time the three cities that had set themselves most firmly against the power of the prince, were Gela, Acragas, and Messena. In these the banished nobles were sheltering, and when the smaller towns were crushed, it was their turn to feel the tyrant's hand.

Messena was the first object of his attack. He had a Messenian outpost in his power, and undertook to give it up for thirty talents of silver. The money was paid, but Agathocles, so far from handing over the stronghold, made ready a surprise-force to strike at Messena herself. Hearing that part of the city walls was in ruin, he took a squadron of ships and fell on his foes by night. But the Messenians had news of his plan and the stroke failed. He then sailed off to Mylae, where the guard, after a short siege, opened the gates; and, satisfied with this small success, Agathocles went home to Syracuse.

All this seems to have happened in the early spring; and about the time of harvest, Agathocles took fresh forces and pitched near Messena. He led his men to attack the city; but the storming parties were beaten back again and again, for the exiles from Syracuse, who helped to man the walls, fought with desperate bravery, being nerved by their fierce hatred of the tyrant. Meanwhile an embassy from Carthage landed and called upon Agathocles to give up his siege. His action was contrary to Timoleon's treaty, and he was now bidden to hand over the stronghold which he had wrongfully withheld, and to withdraw to Syracuse. Agathocles, still unready to risk going to war with Carthage, was forced to obey. He withdrew to the allied city of Abacaenum, where the hope of Punic help may have made his enemies restless. To crush any stirrings of revolt, he took the strong measure of taking forty leading citizens on a bare suspicion of treason, and putting them all to death.

In the following year the outcasts at Acragas, and other foemen of Agathocles, made a stand against his growing power. They persuaded the Agragantine assembly to declare war and to join in league with Gela and Messena. A tried leader of unswerving truth was not to be found in Sicily, so some of the exiles were sent to Sparta to find another deliverer for western Greece. At Sparta they found a young soldier who was ready enough for adventure abroad. This was Acrotatus, the son of Cleomenes. He had incurred the bitterest hatred of the Spartans by speaking against the remission of disgrace for the survivors of the Lamian war. For this bigotry he had been roughly handled by some of the runaways, and lived in fear of his life. The offer of a command abroad gave him grounds for leaving Sparta with honour, and he was so eager to sail that he started without even asking the ephors' leave.

His small squadron was driven up the Adriatic to Apollonia, which he found beleaguered by Glaucias, king of Illyria. His coming raised the siege, and Glaucias was induced to make peace.

Acrotatus then sailed to Tarentum, and urged the people to join with him in freeing Syracuse from Agathocles. The Tarentines listened readily to a prince of the royal blood of Sparta, and voted twenty ships to help in his undertaking. Acrotatus did not wait for this reinforcement, but hastened on to Acragas, where the full command was put in his hands.

Great things were hoped from his leadership, and his own boasting seemed to foretell the speedy overthrow of Agathocles. But all came to nothing. Acrotatus, as his past record might have led men to expect, was highhanded and overbearing. His success in the field was trifling, and he was more dreaded by his followers than by his foes.

Men said that his character, unused to the temptations of luxury, became corrupt; that he lived more as a Persian than a Spartan, wasting the war-funds in feasting and amusement. How far the blame should rest on Acrotatus, and how much was provoked by the disobedience or invented by the hatred of the allies, cannot be settled. The failure of Acrotatus alone is certain. At last he quarrelled with Sosistratus and had him stabbed

as he sat at meat. This was the final blow. The allies met, and deposed Acrotatus from the command; then the mob made as if they would stone him, so that he had to flee for his life. He slipped away one night and sailed home to Sparta. Tarentum recalled her ships when she heard that the Spartan leader was gone, and the Sicilians gave up the struggle as hopeless.

Hamilcar once more came forward as peacemaker, and again furthered the cause of Agathocles. He took Heracleia, Selinus, and Himera in the name of Carthage, and it was agreed that the rest of the Greek cities were to be free under the overlordship of Syracuse. This was another way of saying that the league of Gela, Messena, and Acragas was broken up, and that Agathocles could crush them in detail and at his leisure.

2.

Outbreak of the War against Carthage.

313—312 BC

For the moment the allies yielded; but they sent messages to Carthage, bitterly complaining of Hamilcar's double-dealing and of his desertion of their cause. "The tyranny of Agathocles," they said, "is less galling than the treason of Hamilcar. By his pretended mediation he has left your allies at the mercy of their deadliest foes. He began by allying himself with Syracuse, your oldest and fiercest rival, and now by this treaty of peace the cities of your allies are enslaved to the same master."

The Carthaginian government, which may have been too much hampered by party strife at home to take earlier action against its disobedient general, was fully alive to the danger involved in such growth of Agathocles' power. At such a perilous moment, hidden counsels were deemed the wisest, and a secret vote was taken on the fate of Hamilcar. The government did not even dare to publish the award until Hamilcar, son of Gisgo, another officer from Sicily, should have reached Carthage with his tidings. Whether Hamilcar himself would have gone home to stand his trial, or whether he would have dared to defy his own government and risk a civil war, can only be guessed. Death carried him off in the midst of the crisis, and saved the Carthaginian senate from the need of knowing its own mind.

Agathocles for the time being had a free hand in Sicily. But the death of Hamilcar and the attitude of the Carthaginian government warned him that fresh trouble from that quarter would soon arise. He therefore raised a body of 10,000 picked mercenaries, and 3500 horsemen, besides the regular forces of Syracuse and her allies; and made ready arms of all kinds.

The war in Sicily was carried on with great vigour: it must have consisted mainly of small sieges, of which no account has reached us. By the end of 313 nearly all the Greek states were in the prince's power.

In the next year Agathocles felt himself strong enough to strike at Messena. That city had long been a rallying-point for outcasts and malcontents of all kinds, and it was of the utmost weight for Agathocles to make short work of so dangerous an enemy, before the war with Carthage broke out again.

His plans were craftily laid. He first sent Pasiphilus with a strong force to make a sudden inroad into the land of Messena. Much booty and many prisoners were taken, and Pasiphilus then called on the besieged to give up the Syracusan oligarchs and to make peace.

The Messenians, who were now suffering in a cause not their own, lent ear to the proposals, which were enforced by the arrival of Agathocles himself with fresh troops.

The story of these dealings is enriched by a pleasing anecdote.

One Megacles had long been a bitter foe of Agathocles; he had warred against him in mid-Sicily, and even set a price on the tyrant's head. Now when Messena was besieged, Agathocles called on the citizens to hand over to him Megacles who was sheltering there; otherwise, he said, he would storm the city and enslave the burgesses. Megacles did not fear death, and said that he would go himself and treat with Agathocles. When he was brought before the prince he said: "I am come, Agathocles, as an envoy from Messena and I am ready to face death. First however call thy friends that ye may hear the charge of the Messenians." Then Agathocles called his friends, and Megacles pleaded for Messena, saying that no man did wrong to fight for his own country: "Wouldst not thou, Agathocles, fight for Syracuse if the Messenians lay under her walls? " At this the prince smiled, and some friends of Megacles persuaded him to spare the envoy and to make peace with Messena.

Peace in this case meant little less than surrender. The gates were opened, and Agathocles marched in with his troops. He used fair words to all; and the Messenians, who had already sent away the Syracusan outcasts, were now induced to take back their own. Many of these had been banished from Messena in course of law, and had since taken service under Agathocles.

The tyrant then threw off the mask; he summoned all his political enemies from Messena and Tauromenium, and slaughtered them in cold blood to the number of six hundred.

Among the Tauromenians that escaped from this butchery may have been the young Timaeus. We know that he was banished by Agathocles, and fled to Athens, where he never forgot the cruelty of his country's oppressor.

The Messenians now bitterly rued their mistake; for by trusting to the fair words of the prince, they had lost their best citizens, and recalled their worst. But it was too late for further resistance; Messena was crushed.

Agathocles then resolved to fall upon Acragas; but at that moment a fleet from Carthage came in sight, sixty ships in all. These saved the town, and Agathocles had to be content with an inroad into Punic Sicily, which land, now that Hamilcar was gone, he no longer cared to respect. He took a few strongholds and gathered much booty.

The sight of the Carthaginian fleet raised the hopes of Agathocles' enemies. They now saw that the policy of Hamilcar had been disowned, and if they could only hold out for a few months, the help of an overwhelming force might be expected. Urgent messages were sent to Carthage, begging the government to trifle with Agathocles no longer.

Meanwhile Deinocrates took the lead of the available forces, now strengthened by the outcasts from Acragas, and a desultory warfare began in midland Sicily. Centuripa was in the hands of Agathocles; but now some of the citizens sent to Deinocrates, and offered to betray the place, if the state might afterwards be allowed its freedom. Deinocrates sent Nymphodorus with a few soldiers for a surprise attack. They broke into the town by night, but the alarm was given, and the guard fell upon the party, killing Nymphodorus, and such of his party as were caught within the walls. When Agathocles heard the news, he came to Centuripa, and, accusing the citizens of treason, had all suspects put to the sword.

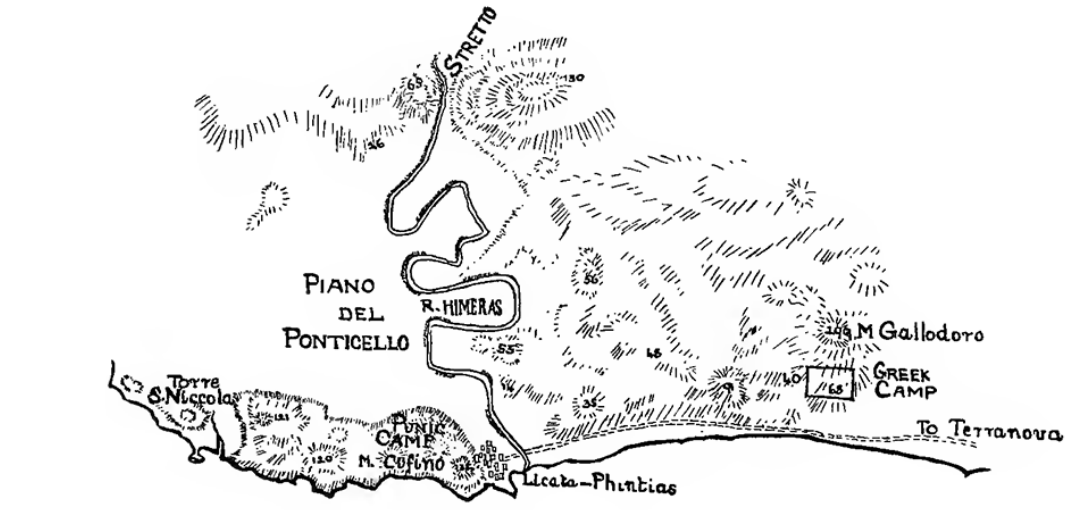
The Carthaginian fleet, finding that Acragas was no longer threatened, had sailed on to the great Harbour of Syracuse. Although they were fifty sail, they did nothing more daring than to attack two freight-ships: one of these, an Athenian, they sank, and the crews of both were taken and had their hands cut off. This cruelty did not go unpunished;

for Agathocles' captains took some of the Carthaginian ships off the Bruttian coast, and treated their sailors as they had treated the Greeks. This of course was meant as a repayment in kind, such harshness not being usual among the Greeks: but Diodorus speaks of it as a special judgment of heaven on the Carthaginians.

Deinocrates, in no way downhearted from his failure at Centuripa, now put his whole forces on the march for another enterprise. He had been called in by the enemies of Agathocles in Galaria, and with his host, given at 3000 foot and 2000 horse, he threw himself into the city, and drove out the partisans of the prince. He then pitched outside the walls and awaited the coming of Agathocles' army. The Syracusan leaders, Pasiphilus and Demophilus, forthwith marched up with 5000 men, whereupon Deinocrates and Philonides, sharing the command, hastened to give battle. Both sides fought in the old Greek way, the whole line going into action at once. The balance was even, until Pasiphilus, who seems to have been posted on the right with the pick of the Syracusan troops, routed Philonides' men and slew their leader. Deinocrates was thus threatened in the flank and had to withdraw. Many of the oligarchs were cut down in trying to flee, and Galaria was left open to the tyrant's troops. Pasiphilus marched into the city, and it is stated that he punished all who had shared in the revolt. This can hardly mean less than the slaughter or banishment of most of the nobles.

The Carthaginians had been gathering their forces in the meantime, and now took up a position on Mount Ecnomus. This point was the chief height on the southern coast of Sicily, it had a good landing-place near, it was within striking-distance of Gela, and it overlooked the road from there to Acragas. From this stronghold the Punic army secured the last refuge of the oligarchs against any Syracusan attack.

Although the summer was nearly over, Agathocles marched down southwards and offered battle to the Carthaginians. But the latter, who were awaiting fresh forces in the spring, did not choose to hurry on the encounter: and Agathocles, seeing that they would not come forth, withdrew to Syracuse, and hung up his spoils in the chief temples like a conqueror.



3.

The Campaign of the Himeras.

311 BC

Carthage had spent the winter in gathering stores and raising forces with the utmost vigour, and by the spring she had a huge army ready to take the field. A hundred and thirty warships had been fitted out, and now put to sea. The army was made up of 2000 Carthaginian citizens, many of noble birth, 10,000 Africans, 1000 hired soldiers and 200 war-chariots from Etruria, and 1000 Balearic slingers. Hamilcar, son of Gisgo, one of the leading men in Carthage at the time, was in command. The host set sail with fleet and convoy; but on the high seas a storm sprang up, in which 60 men-of-war and 200 corn-ships are said to have been sunk. Many of the leading citizens were drowned, so that Carthage hung her walls with black, and mourned for her lost sons.

Hamilcar at last landed his men, and took over the troops already in the island. The allies sent their contingents, and fresh mercenaries were hired, until the total reached 40,000 foot and 5000 horse. Hamilcar's vigour in command went far to hearten the allies, and struck terror into the minds of his foemen.

A piece of ill luck befell Agathocles at the beginning of the campaign. Twenty of his ships were sailing in the strait of Messena, when part of the Carthaginian fleet fell upon them and took them all.

The nearness of the Carthaginian host made Agathocles fearful of treason among his subjects. It was above all things needful for him to make sure of Gela, for the field of war was to be the plain of the Himeras, and Gela would have to serve him as a base.

This city had lately been at peace with Agathocles, although no guard of his was quartered there. Still no doubt the old hatred rankled in his mind. His actions are thus related: "Agathocles resolved to secure Gela by a garrison, but did not dare to lead a force into it openly, fearing to be forestalled by the Geloans, who only wanted an excuse to revolt....He therefore sent in his soldiers a few at a time, on one errand or another, until their numbers were more than a match for the burgesses. Soon after he came himself, and charged the Geloans with treason, either because they really had some idea of the kind, or because Agathocles had listened to the slander of exiles, or because he wanted to raise money. He then slew more than four thousand of them and took their goods. He ordered all the other Geloans to bring in all their money and all the uncoined gold and silver, threatening to punish the disobedient. The Geloans in terror did as he bade, and in this way Agathocles got plenty of money and overawed all the states subject to him."

In relating the punishment of Gela as a long-planned stroke carried out by a ruse, Diodorus seems to have placed the action of Agathocles in a false light. If the prince had suspected treason it would have been misguided ingenuity to send a few troops at a time into the city on various pretexts, for such an air of secrecy would have alarmed the Geloans and probably thrown them into the arms of Carthage. The fact that the Geloans, with the Carthaginian army at their doors all the winter, made no attempt to revolt, is enough to show their loyalty to Agathocles; and it is not likely that he doubted this until his own arrival in the city. He sent on his troops in detachments, as he naturally would, to the city that was to be his headquarters. The Geloans readily admitted them as friends, and not until Agathocles came did he find any signs of discontent. Perhaps the quartering of the soldiers on the Geloans, or the fear of a heavy war-tax, made the people restless, and Agathocles, as his way was, made such murmurs an excuse for a slaughter. The number of victims is perhaps overstated.

Leaving a strong guard in Gela, Agathocles marched out and pitched his camp on Mount Phalarium, where the old king Phalaris once had a fort; the Carthaginians had

their old position Ecnomus, likewise formerly a post of Phalaris, five miles away. The river Himeras, now Salso, flowed between the two camps.

The fight now to be related was one of the most memorable in Sicilian history: even the prosaic Diodorus rises to the occasion, and gives us an account not altogether unworthy to compare with the great battle-pieces of the older historians. His version therefore will be translated as it stands, and the difficulties arising therefrom can be taken later.

It had been foretold that a great number of men would fall in the coming fight, and therefore neither side dared strike the first blow, until a mere chance brought on the battle.

"The Libyans kept overrunning their enemies' land, and this emboldened Agathocles to send his own men out foraging. One day the Greeks were bringing in their plunder, and had driven off one of the baggage-beasts from the Carthaginian camp, when the Carthaginians rushed out from the stockade in pursuit.

Agathocles, foreseeing what would happen, set a picked body of his bravest men in ambush along the river. So as the Carthaginians chased the foragers and followed them across the stream, the liers-in-wait leaped up from their hiding, fell on the disordered foe, and routed them easily. While the Carthaginians were being cut down or were fleeing to their own camp, Agathocles, who now thought that the moment for decisive action had come, led out his whole force to attack the enemy's position. He fell on them unexpectedly, quickly filled in part of the trench, tore np the stockade, and threw himself forcibly into the camp.

The surprise was complete. Having no time to form in battle-line, the Carthaginians had to fight whatever foe they found in front of them. A fierce struggle raged about the trench: and soon the ground was strewn with dead bodies. For the foremost of the Carthaginian army, seeing the camp on the brink of capture, came up to the rescue: while Agathocles' men were heartened by their first success; and the hope of ending the war by one day's risk lent fury to their attack on the Carthaginians.

But when Hamilcar saw that his own men were being overpowered, as more and more Greeks kept pouring into the camp, he brought up the slingers from the Balearic isles—a force not less than a thousand men. These slingers launched a shower of heavy stones at the foe, wounding many, hitting some and slaying them outright, while most of the assailants had their defensive armour battered in. The Balearic slingers, accustomed to throw stones of a pound weight, and trained from childhood to the use of their weapon, were a most important arm in face of danger.

In this way the Greeks were worsted and driven out of the camp. Again Agathocles' men tried to storm the position from other points: and once more the camp was in the very act of capture, when an unawaited force from Libya arrived by sea to help the Carthaginians. Therefore the defenders of the camp went on with their hand-to-hand fight with fresh courage, and the new comers began to surround the Greeks. This unexpected blow quickly turned the scale. The Greeks fled, some to the river Himeras, others to the camp, forty furlongs away. The middle space was flat, and the Carthaginian horsemen, in number at least 5000, followed in hot chase. In this way the whole field was covered with dead.

The river itself helped in the destruction of the Greeks. The season was near the dog-days, and the pursuit came about noon: many of the Greeks therefore were maddened with thirst owing to the heat and the exhaustion of flight, so that they drank greedily of the water, brackish as it was; with the result that as many dead were found unwounded by the river as had been cut down in the chase. About five hundred Carthaginians were slain in the fight, but of the Greeks there fell no less than seven thousand."

The chief points needing consideration in this account are the following: (1) The forces. (2) The field of battle. (3) The plans of the two leaders. (4) The fight.

(1) The *Forces*. Hamilcar, as already said, had 40,000 foot and 5000 horse. The latter number is again mentioned by Diodorus in speaking of the flight of the Greeks. Agathocles had raised a picked body of hired soldiers, 10,000 foot and 3500 horse, besides these he had the contingents of the allies. These may have amounted to a fairly large force, for in 317 the small inland towns sent Agathocles 3000 men. It is indeed stated that his forces were fewer than those of Carthage, but in view of the equality of the struggle until the fresh troops poured into the field, we cannot place his army below 30,000 foot and 3500 horse.

(2) The *Field of Battle*. The place of encounter depends first of all on the place assigned to Gela. The common view was that it answered to the modern Terranova, but as early as 1753 Pizzolanti proposed to move the site westward to the modern Licata. This view has been adopted by Schubert. The chief grounds for holding it consist in the finding of four inscriptions at Licata which speak of the "People of the Geloans." Two of these are later than the overthrow of Gela by the Mamertines after the death of Agathocles. The Geloans had been given a new home by Phintias, and settled in the city that bore his name; but there is no reason why they may not have called themselves by their old name in official documents. The two other inscriptions, which are earlier, may have been rescued from the fall of Gela, and carried to Phintias, which the common view places at Licata.

The ancient remains found at Terranova prove that a city of some size stood there. At the eastern end of the long hill are the ruins of a massive Doric temple of the sixth or early fifth century. On the western side a large burial-ground has been found, which has yielded many hundreds of vases. Some of these are now in the Museum at Syracuse, others in a large private collection in Terranova. The vases range from the black-figured to the later red-figured styles. These finds are just what would have been expected from a city that flourished in the fifth and fourth centuries, and fell in the third. On the other hand the few remains at Licata, chiefly Hellenistic houses, and a large vaulted tank, do not point to any important settlement there in the fourth and fifth centuries. It may be added that Pizzolanti was himself a man of Licata, and his contentions ought not to be taken too seriously.

Schubert's remaining arguments rest on the events of the fight itself, and will be seen to be based on a misunderstanding of the site. The camp of Hamilcar being above Licata, on Monte Cufino and the neighbouring heights, it follows that Agathocles would have pitched on Monte Gallodoro, a long and rather gentle slope, the highest point of which is in fact about five miles from Monte Cufino. Agathocles, in other words, found the enemy encamped in the strongest position in the neighbourhood, and took the next best for himself. Pizzolanti, having made Gela equal Licata, places Mount Ecnomus on Torre S. Niccola, the next height to the west. He then puts the camp of Agathocles much further north, at a place called Racalmallina, north of the Stretto, or narrow cleft through which the Himeras (Salso) flows out into the plain. The river mentioned in the battle-piece is not, he says, the Salso proper, but a western arm of it flowing into the sea just east of Torre S. Niccola. The objections to this are: (1) A narrow gorge like the Stretto, which today does not seemingly allow more than a mule-path to thread it, would be an obstacle with which no general would hamper himself willingly. It would have made advance slow and flight disastrous. (2) This same gorge led to nowhere; while for Agathocles to pitch in that neighbourhood would have meant leaving the way to Syracuse open, save for the paltry barrier of the guard in Gela. (3) Pizzolanti in claiming that the river can be forded easily near the Stretto, overlooks the fact that in summer it is equally passable much lower down. (4) The "right arm" of the Salso does not appear in the Italian staff-map; and from the highest point above Licata, from which the whole plain can be seen, I could not descry it. It may therefore be taken that Diodorus in speaking of

the Himeras meant the principal stream of that name, and not a small brook of which no one ever heard. (5) Although, as Schubert says, there is more flat ground west of the Himeras than east of it, yet it is quite clear that the grassy slopes of Monte Gallodoro would not have checked the pursuit of the Punic horse. (6) Schubert claims that his arrangement affords a clue to the meaning of Diodorus in mentioning two different lines of flight taken by the Greeks : "They fled, some to the river Himeras, others to the camp." His explanation is; some fled along the brook (the "right arm of the river"), others across the brook to Licata-Gela. But if Diodorus really meant this, it would have been strange to express it so indirectly. Again this brook, if it existed, must have been quite dry in summer, and would not have tempted anyone to reckless drinking. (7) If Gela was so near, it is not easy to see why Agathocles did not shelter there instead of letting the Carthaginians chase him over five miles of level ground.

The following account seems more likely. Agathocles camped on Mount Gallodoro. In marching on the Carthaginians he did not take a straight line, for two reasons. (1) The mouth of the Himeras becomes choked up in summer owing to the silt; the stream forms a deep and very brackish pool near the sea, but about a mile and a half higher up it can easily be forded. (2) The natural place to attack the height of Licata was not the steep face near the mouth of the river, but the much gentler slope on the northern side.

Agathocles in attacking from this side could not of course see the Carthaginians sail up and put their men ashore. But Hamilcar, who must have had a watcher on the hill-top, cannot have been unaware of their coming. Where this surprise-force landed, is uncertain. I believe that the ships were coasting along from Punic Sicily, and that Hamilcar may have signalled to them to land between Monte Cufino and Torre S. Niccola, and so to march round and take the Greeks in the rear. The flight of the Greeks is then easily explained: those that had any presence of mind made for the ford by which they had already crossed earlier in the day, hoping thus to regain their camp. But the Punic horse gave chase, and on the grassy slopes of Gallodoro naturally wrought fearful havoc. The rest, maddened by fright and thirst, rushed to the nearest point of the river, where it was deep and heavily salt. There many died either from exhaustion, from drowning, or from the deadly draught of brackish water. A few perhaps may have swum over and reached Gela or the camp in safety.

(3) The *Plans of the Two Leaders*. That Hamilcar, who knew that fresh troops were on the way to join him, should not have wished to hurry on a battle, is natural. It remains to be seen what led Agathocles to attack when he did. He doubtless knew that more Carthaginian troops might at any moment be coming, but he probably miscalculated the time of their landing. If he did know this, he must have reckoned on taking the Carthaginian camp before the new danger threatened. But in that case he would hardly have forgotten to detach a small covering-force to check the new comers. His plan, of ambushing a Carthaginian foraging-party was not intended to "mask" his attack, which it could not possibly have done, but to draw the enemy down to the plain to help their own men. Hamilcar however followed the wiser course of letting the Greeks attack him in his stronghold, and not coining out until he was sure of winning.

(4) The *Fight*. According to Diodorus, the Carthaginians were taken by surprise. This I believe to be a mere inference, and a wrong one. The Greeks looked to their foe to form line and charge down the hill, and when instead they were allowed to reach the outworks of the camp, they naturally fancied that their onslaught was unexpected. But as a matter of fact Hamilcar's aim was to hold the Greeks in play until the fresh forces arrived: to have beaten them off too soon would have spoilt his plan. For the moment some of the Carthaginians may have been staggered by the fury of the onset, but Hamilcar was ready and brought up the arm best fitted to use the advantage of the hillside—his Balearic slingers. The Carthaginians only lost 500 men in the whole fight; and the smallness of this number proves that the defence of the camp cannot have been such a desperate matter as Diodorus believed. The Greeks seem to have thought after

their victory at the Crimisus that they were bound to surpass the Carthaginians in hand-to-hand fighting; Hamilcar respected his foes, and laid his plans accordingly. We shall not be'wrong in seeing in him one of the greatest of Carthaginian generals, by whose masterly tactics the headlong rashness of Agathocles was fatally overreached.

How the fresh troops landed and assailed the Greek rear, has already been seen. It is however uncertain why the Greek horse, which might have shielded the foot-soldiers in their flight, took little or no part in the battle. Possibly the Greek knights, who in any case can hardly have shared in the assault on the Punic camp, rode off the field without delay, when they saw that the day was lost; for it is specially recorded in another place that nearly all of them survived.

The number of fallen on the side of Agathocles is scarcely overstated, for he was quite unable to fight in the open or to control his allies after his defeat.

Licata Harbor (italy)

4

After the Fight.

311—310 BC

Agathocles had no longer any means of keeping the field, but at once set fire to his camp and threw himself into Gela. There he was cheered by a trifling success. Three hundred Carthaginian horse on a false report that Agathocles had gone to Syracuse, rode up to Gela, hoping to be welcomed as friends. There however they were all shot down.

The road to Syracuse was still open, but Agathocles waited in Gela, hoping to keep Hamilcar busy in the neighbourhood until the Syracusan harvest, already delayed by the

campaign, should be safely stored in the city. Perhaps too he feared to march out until his troops had somewhat mended after their defeat.

Hamilcar indeed could have spared enough men to harry the Syracusan harvesters and yet have been able to hold Agathocles. But he had no wish to attack Syracuse. Finding Gela too strong to take, he began to bring the other Greek states to his side, hoping no doubt that the revolt of Agathocles' subjects would soon save Carthage from the need of any more fighting. After personally visiting and bringing over some smaller places, and proclaiming freedom and good-will to the Greeks, Hamilcar was met by envoys from Camarina, Leontini, Catana, and Tauromenium with offers of alliance. Then from further-off Messena and Abacaenum the same message came. In fact "the cities vied with one another in going over to Hamilcar; such was the outburst of feeling on the part of the commons after the defeat, owing to their hatred of Agathocles."

It has hitherto been found that the party opposed to Agathocles was in every case oligarchic. Here however the explicit words of Diodorus show that even the democrats were now ready to forsake the prince. Nor is this hard to understand. As long as tyranny meant ease and plunder it was welcome, but when the loans and levies of a long war were impending, the allegiance of the people was bound to waver. It is also likely that the cruel treatment of Gela by Agathocles had opened men's eyes to the real nature of his rule. Now the call to freedom was eagerly taken up, and the mildness of Hamilcar carried on the work that his generalship had so gloriously begun.

These doings gave Agathocles a chance of drawing his forces together and slipping home to Syracuse.

Of the anxious months following his withdrawal little account has reached us, but there seems to have been fighting by land and sea. Justin speaks of a second defeat of Agathocles by Hamilcar after an engagement more serious than the first. This is certainly incorrect, but it is not impossible that some further battle took place; for Agathocles would hardly have given up his whole domain without a last struggle.

This passage has usually been overlooked. It is noted but not explained by Niese 444, and by Wiese 37. Short of accepting Justin as I have ventured to do, two courses are open, (1) To disallow the whole place as a mistake or confusion; or (2) To identify the "prima congression" with the parade before Acragas in 312, and secundum certamen with the battle of the Himeras. To this, however, there are two very strong objections, (a) The parade before Acragas was anything but a defeat for Agathocles, who, in fact, claimed the better by hanging up his spoils. That Callias and Timaeus should of the same event have made the one a success the other a defeat, is surely more than the most advanced critic would maintain; (b) During the year 312 Hamilcar was probably not in command of the Punic army in Sicily. He was sent for after the treaty of 314 to report to the Carthaginian Senate, and he sailed with the great host in 311.

The more distant allies were hopelessly lost, but Agathocles seems to have taken measures to secure or at least to make harmless those nearer home. We hear later of an outpost at Echetla, which may have been held as early as this. Against Tauromenium some action seems to have been taken, if the following confused tale of Polyaenus be worth anything: "Agathocles called upon the Syracusans for two thousand soldiers in array, as if he were about to cross over to 'Phoenice,' for, he said, some traitors there had eagerly invited him. The Syracusans believed him and granted the men. But when Agathocles got the soldiers, he paid no heed to the Phoenicians, but marched against the allies, and pulled down the strongholds round the land of Tauromenium."

It has already been seen that the order of the anecdotes in Polyaenus is the opposite of that of the events themselves. Now this story, the sixth, would come before the fifth, in which Agathocles' last acts at Syracuse and his start for Africa are related, and after the seventh, in which he first gains supreme power. Again it must belong to a time when

Agathocles feared a revolt of Tauromenium; but as the city had been reduced in 312, and before that was hardly an "ally," the present date, when the secession was in full swing, seems the most likely. That Agathocles made a sudden raid on the land of Tauromenium, and pulled down the strongholds lest Carthage should use them as bases against Syracuse, and that for this small undertaking he raised 2000 men, may fairly be believed. That he professed to be starting to invade some Phoenician land, in western Sicily or in Africa, is possible. But he can hardly have spoken of Carthage, for Diodorus says that none of his men knew that he meant to attack her, even when he actually started. On the other hand it is absurd to suppose that Agathocles, as general, could not raise 2000 men without a vote of the assembly; if Polyaenus thought of the matter at all, he must have meant that Agathocles called for the men to enrol themselves, and they came forward. Still more improbable is the view that Phoenice in Polyaenus means the Epirot town, and that Agathocles might have attacked it, while he was at Corcyra about 296. Apart from the difficulty of upsetting the order of Polyaenus, it is hard to see why Agathocles sent specially to Syracuse for so trifling a reinforcement, and still stranger that he should have used it in attacking a subject city with which he had been many years at peace.

Of the sea-fighting about this time no record has come down but a single tale in Polyaenus. Hamilcar had a Greek pilot who used to betray his master's plans to Agathocles. At last Hamilcar found this out and thereupon told the man that he would surprise the Olympieum. This was passed on to Agathocles, who set out to defend it. Hamilcar meanwhile laid an ambush, and when the Greeks came, he fell on them and slew seven thousands

This story can only belong to the time of which we are now speaking; for formerly the Punic fleet had only made surprise descents on Syracuse without Hamilcar, while the behaviour of the pilot shows that constant sea fights were now going on; and later Agathocles did not come hack to Syracuse until long after the death of Hamilcar. The number of victims is no doubt overstated, but the rest of the account can be accepted, and it proves that the Carthaginian fleet blockaded Syracuse after the battle of the Himeras, and that many small sea-fights took place, in which both generals joined. Of course we are not bound to believe all the details given by Polyaenus. Hamilcar may never have tried to deceive Agathocles. Enough that the latter, on a false report of a Carthaginian attack, set out with his forces, and was so surprised and defeated. There is also here a clue to the order of events. Hamilcar would not have taken command by sea until the land force had done all it could for the time being. The sea-fighting may therefore be placed later than the last land-battle, and after the secession of the Greek cities had taken full effect.

5.
Agathocles starts for Africa. 310 BC

Agathocles' dominion in Sicily was narrowed down to the compass of Syracuse itself. His plight was not hopeless, nor his cause lost. Dionysius had sat for months within the walls, until the gods and the fevers of the Anapus had done their work on his foemen. But Agathocles had not the dogged patience of the older prince. Either at the suggestion of the treasonable party in Carthage, or by the sheer boldness of his own genius, Agathocles formed the plan of leaving Syracuse with a strong guard, and crossing over with the pick of his troops to strike at the land of Carthage itself.

His first care was to raise men and funds. He borrowed all the money held in trust for orphans, making himself their guardian, and saying that he could manage their property far better than the legal tutors. He then raised loans from merchants, took some of the temple-treasures, and even robbed the women of their jewels.

After that he gave out in the assembly that he had found a sure means of victory; let the people only wait patiently for a while; those who could not abide the siege might take their money with them and leave the city. Sixteen hundred rich men are said to have gone out; hut Agathocles sent and murdered them all on the road, and took the money for himself. Whether Agathocles really meant to have the refugees slain—in revenge perhaps for a similar onslaught on himself or his friends—or whether the unwillingness of the rich to hand over their gold to the tyrant led him to take strong measures, is a question hardly to be settled.

In this way Agathocles raised enough money to store Syracuse with war-gear, and to spare fifty talents, in gold, which he put on board ship to pay his men.

He held a levy of troops and enrolled many freed slaves, taken perhaps from the rich men just slain. In picking the other troops, Agathocles chose them from as many households as possible, so that those who sailed might be hostages for the faith of their kinsfolk left at home. The horsemen, who, as has been said, had come out almost unscathed from the battle of the Himeras, were bidden to take saddle and bridle with them, but no mounts; for such were to be had in plenty in Africa. Two sons of Agathocles, Archagathus and Heracleides, set out with their father. His brother Antander, with Erymnon the Aetolian, was left to rule Syracuse. These two men, whose interests in the city were naturally bound up with those of Agathocles, were the most trustworthy regents that could possibly have been found.

In spite of Agathocles' public promise to make good his disasters, he had kept his real plans a dead secret. His men thought that he would sail to Italy or Sardinia, or for a raid on Punic Sicily, but their hearts were downcast, for they regarded any such venture as foolhardy, and never hoped to come back alive.

Everything was now ready, and the sixty ships of Agathocles were waiting in the harbour till a chance should offer of slipping past the Carthaginian fleet. For some days the blockade was strictly kept; but then a squadron of corn-ships drew near to the mouth of the harbour. The Carthaginians sailed out to attack them, when Agathocles, seeing the way open, rowed from the haven as fast as his men could pull. The enemy were already near the corn-ships, but when they saw the Syracusan fleet coming out of the harbour, they wheeled round and prepared to fight. Agathocles however turned out southwards and made off at full speed. The Carthaginians gave chase, and were only baulked of their prey by the fall of night. Meanwhile the freight-ships had made the haven of Syracuse, and the fresh supply of corn was a timely relief for the city, where famine was already threatening.

On the morrow the sun was darkened; day became as night and the stars were seen. This token brought dismay to the hearts of Agathocles' men, bound they knew not whither; and it took all the skill of their leader to reassure them. The portent, he said, was not given to withhold them from their venture, for if so it would have happened or ever they had set forth. The sign was for their enemies and foretold the downfall of Carthage.

TABLE OF DATES.

361 Birth of Agathocles.

343 Removal of Agathocles to Syracuse.

339 War against the Aetnaeans.

After 330 Bruttian War.

c. 326 Agathocles' Attempt on Croton.

e. 322 Agathocles' Homecoming.

c. 320 Agathocles' Attack on Gela.

319 (?) Acestorides chosen General. Flight of Agathocles.

317 Agathocles makes terms with Hamilcar.

316 (early Spring) Agathocles becomes Tyrant. Minor Operations in Sicily.

315 Attack on Messena. Acrotatus lands.

314 Failure and Flight of Acrotatus.

313 Minor Operations (D. six. 72).

312 Messena yields. Outbreak of the War with Carthage.

311 Battle of the Himeras.

310 Agathocles sets sail for Africa.

CHAPTER III.
AGATHOCLES' WARFARE IN AFRICA

1.
The Landing and First Operations, 310 BC

There can be no doubt that Agathocles, in the dangerous state of his fortunes, had chosen the only possible means of dealing a blow at the Carthaginians. Nothing could have been done in Sicily, and no help was forthcoming from outside. The Greeks of Italy had no wish to uphold a tyrant's cause, and the Greeks of the Near. East were too intent on their own wars to find another deliverer for their western brethren. On the other hand the outroad to Africa had a good prospect of success, if enough forces could be landed in the country. The land was open, the natives chafed under Punic rule, and the fealty of the Numidian vassals was wavering. The untoward sight of an army in the home-country would frighten the Carthaginians, and the wasting of their fields might drive them to buy off the invaders with an offer of peace. Lastly the Senate of Carthage was hampered by a strong opposition party, which was suspected of being in league with Agathocles. The least that could be expected to follow from a brilliant campaign in Africa would be the relief of Syracuse by the recall of Hamilcar's forces: a lasting conquest on African soil was no part of the invader's plan.

The Syracusan fleet after baffling the first pursuit of the Carthaginians had sailed some way to the west along the coast of Sicily. The ships then steered southwards and after a six days' sail the rocky Hermaean headland, now Cape Bon, was sighted at daybreak. The Carthaginians had guessed in the meantime the line taken by the Greeks and had been following in their wake, but now they once more caught sight of the enemy, and gave chase with all speed. It was a desperate race, but the Greeks had some start at the outset, and most of their ships got to land before the Carthaginians came near. The rear-guard however came within shooting range and some artillery practice ensued, until at last the Carthaginian van came to close quarters with a few of the Greek ships. But then the Greeks had the better, for their decks were crowded with soldiers, and the enemy were forced to sheer off to escape being boarded and taken: thus Agathocles landed his men undisturbed.

The place where he put in was called The Quarries, and there are still to be seen on the spot some huge underground caverns from which Carthage drew her building-stone. The anchorage was no better than a rocky creek, only practicable in calm weather.

There Agathocles beached his ships and threw up an earth-wall to guard them.

How long the Greeks lay in their camp is not known, but it seems likely that Agathocles only waited to make sure that no land force was ready to meet him, and then resolved to push forward with all speed. The first difficulty was the disposal of his ships, for he could ill spare men to guard them, and he would not brook their falling into the enemy's hands. He therefore made up his mind to burn the whole fleet, and to lessen the fear which such a deed was bound to cause in his army, he treated the destruction as an offering to the gods.

The scene is thus described by Diodorus.

"Agathocles called a meeting of his soldiers, and came forward to address them clad in a white robe with a wreath on his head. 'When the Carthaginians were pursuing

us,' he said, 'I made a vow to Demeter and the Maid, the goddesses of Sicily, to burn all the ships in their honour. Now that we are come out unscathed it is time for ns to pay our vow. Only fight well, and I will repay you many times what you have lost. For the goddesses have told me in the sacrifice that the victory in the whole war will be ours.' So saying, he took a lighted torch from the hand of a servant, and bade all the captains to do the same. Then he called upon the goddesses and ran to the flagship. There he stood on the prow and told the others to do as he did. So the captains fired all the ships, and the flames quickly leaped up, while the buglers blew a blast, and the host shouted, and all prayed for a safe homecoming at the last."

The pomp and solemnity of this rite led the men to forget for a while the plight in which they were now landed. But even before the flames died down, the exaltation passed, and they began to reflect how many miles of sea cut them off from Sicily, and how recklessly they had trusted themselves to unfriendly ground. Agathocles however was ready to march forward, and resolved to cheer his men by the taste of conquest and plunder.

He led his men by a quick march to attack a Carthaginian town called Megalopolis, or the Great City. The way led through a wonderfully rich country, thickly grown with vines, olives, and all kinds of fruit, and dotted with homesteads and country-houses. The gardens were carefully watered by cuts leading from large store-tanks; the houses were well built and hand somely plastered, and everything showed the taste that the wealthy Carthaginians had applied to the beautifying of their homes. The pastures were grazed by large numbers of sheep and oxen, and the low ground was full of horses. Long years of peace had brought this land to such a pitch of well-being, as the Greeks in their own troubled island had never dreamed of; now they felt that a rich reward awaited their valour.

The Great City was quite unready to withstand attack, and was quickly stormed. The men were let loose to plunder, and then Agathocles, who was for pressing on towards Carthage, had the walls dismantled and camped in the open.

The next city taken was White Tunis, which was treated in the same way.

Our understanding of the course of this campaign would be much clearer if it could be settled where the first of the two places taken by Agathocles really lay. The Great City must have been some way off the landing place, for otherwise the alarm would have been given and the cattle and horses, which the Greeks found peacefully grazing, would have been brought into a place of safety. The suggestion of Barth to place the Great City at Missua, about six miles from Aquilaria, must therefore be given up. But there is little or no evidence to help the geographer to find a more likely site. At the present day the most important track from El-Haouria leads south-east to Kelibia, and it is not impossible that Megalopolis may have been in that region, as Wesseling suggested. This was a short day's march from Aquilaria. Agathocles himself founded Aspis in that neighbourhood, perhaps near the site of his earlier capture. The present state of the land through which Agathocles marched does not help to fix his road; for the dreary stretches of sand and scrub between El-Haouria and Kelibia may once have been blooming gardens, such as are now seen a few miles further south. The whole headland is dotted with small ruins, none of which afford means of identification. On the other hand there are easy tracks from Cape Bon nearer the western coast, leading to Soliman, and affording a shorter road to Tunis. The site of Megalopolis must therefore remain uncertain.

White Tunis is said by Diodorus to have been 250 miles from Carthage, but as this is nearly twice as far as the distance from Carthage to Cape Bon by the present roads, the number is almost certainly corrupt. The only known city of Tunis held the site of the modern town. Agathocles later on had his headquarters there, but it is nowhere related that he took a second Tunis. The most likely view therefore is that White Tunis is the well

known city, and that it got its name from its white cliffs. This was the natural base for any force acting against Carthage, and it afforded almost the only passable haven on that coast. Regulus used Tunis in this way, and the leaders in the Mercenary war also held it.

The Carthaginian fleet had been hovering round Cape Bon and the seamen saw with astonishment and delight that Agathocles had burned all his ships. But when the prince was seen dashing boldly inland, the admiral felt that it was time to warn the government of what had happened. He had the prows of his own ships hung with skins as a sign of disaster, and after picking up the brazen beaks of Agathocles' boats, which the fire had spared, he sailed to Carthage with all speed.

The alarm however had already been raised; and the city was crowded with fugitives from the land, while the utmost terror prevailed. Everyone thought that the host in Sicily had been crushed, and the fleet driven off the seas, so that the victorious enemy had come to invade their country. There was no army ready to guard Carthage, and Agathocles was hourly expected to show himself under the walls. The Senate met in a panic. Some counsellors were for sending envoys to treat with the foe or at least to spy out his strength, others held that it was better to wait for fuller news. In the midst of this wild uproar the admiral's messengers landed and told what had really happened. The people took heart, and the Senate assembled to form a plan of defence. A vote of censure was first passed on the sea-commanders, for allowing Agathocles to land in spite of their own greater numbers. Then it was resolved to send an army to fight the Greeks, and two leaders of opposite parties, Hanno and Bomilcar, were chosen to command it. Bomilcar was a kinsman of Hamilcar the friend of Agathocles, and his election now must have been meant to satisfy the popular party: while good citizens tried to console themselves with the thought, that the jealousy of the generals would make each strive to outdo the other in valour. This course, however, was unlucky for Carthage, for Bomilcar was already hoping to rise above the laws, and high command gave him an opening for treason.

The Carthaginian generals were anxious to meet Agathocles at once, and decided to raise such forces as the city could muster, without waiting for the levies elsewhere. The foot soldiers amounted, it is said, to 40,000 men, the horse to 1000 and the chariots of war to 2000. Of the population of Carthage at this time nothing is known; but it would seem that a great effort must have been made to arm so many men, and numbers of these would have been poorly trained and only fit to take the field near home; otherwise Agathocles would never have faced them with an army of half the size.

The camp was pitched by Hanno on a hill near the Greek position, and the host was set out in array. Hanno himself, as senior commander, took the right wing, where the Sacred Band, about a thousand strong, was posted. Bomilcar stood on the left, where lack of room obliged him to make a narrow front. The chariots and horsemen were posted in the van to make the first onset.

Agathocles meanwhile had been setting his own men in array. Instead of taking the post of honour on the right wing, he gave this to his son Archagathus, and kept for himself the more dangerous task of facing the best troops of the enemy. Archagathus had 2500 foot under his own command; then came 3500 Syracusans, 3000 Greek hirelings, and 3000 foreigners (Celts, Samnites and Etruscans); on the left wing stood Agathocles himself with a thousand picked men. The 500 bowmen and slingers were placed on the wings: no horse is mentioned.

Owing to the small number of his forces—which, if rightly given, were only 13,500 strong against 40,000— Agathocles resorted to a curious plan to add to his apparent strength. He had some of his ships' crews in camp besides his regular troops, but there were not enough arms for them all. He therefore took the cases of the shields and stretched them on wicker frames, says Diodorus. These make-shifts were quite useless in action, but from a distance the men equipped with them might deceive the enemy into

believing that Agathocles had reserve 'troops in waiting. In spite of this contrivance the Greeks, our account goes on, were still downhearted in face of such overwhelming odds, and the ready wits of Agathocles found yet more remarkable means to cheer them. In several points of the camp he let fly some owls, that he had long had in readiness for such an hour. The birds flew along the battle line and settled on the men's shields and helmets; and the soldiers, who thought this a fair token from Athena, at once regained their courage. Thus, says Diodorus, what seems a trifling device may often lead to great results.

Neither of these ruses can be fully believed. In the first place they break into the account of the battle, without having very much to do with it. The supposed reserves play no part in the action, and in the roll of the army they have no place. It is also unlikely that any large number of men lacked arms; Agathocles must have known that every oarsman would have to be a land-fighter later on, and therefore he would certainly have put on board enough shields for all. Again if any of these had been dropped in the fighting that had already taken place, the capture of two cities must have afforded means of making good the loss. The utmost that can be believed is that a few shields were missing, and that Agathocles had substitutes patched up of such stuff as was to hand.

The truth underlying the second story may be that a few of Agathocles' men happened to start some owls not long before a battle. The birds, being half blinded by the daylight, flew about aimlessly in the camp. This was taken as a token from heaven, and the victory was afterwards ascribed to Athena. The thought of Agathocles' carrying about an owl-cote on the march against such an occasion, is obviously ridiculous; and even the Greeks, when they saw the owls being let loose, would hardly have fancied that a goddess was giving them a sign. It has already been seen that in many of these ruses of Agathocles accidents are made the outcome of set purpose, and small details are overstated for dramatic effect. This has happened in the case in hand: neither story is altogether false, but neither can be believed in its present shape.

The fight began with a charge of the Carthaginian war-chariots. The Greeks stood their ground; some of the drivers were shot, some were let pass right through the ranks, but the more part were forced to wheel round and take shelter among the foot-soldiers. Then the horsemen charged; but the Greeks never wavered, so that these too had to flee with heavy loss. The onset of the infantry proved more dangerous, and a fierce fight began along the whole line. Hanno and the Sacred Band wrought a great slaughter among the Greeks, until the light troops came up to the rescue. The Carthaginians fought on under a rain of arrows till at last Hanno fell with many wounds. The Greeks now felt that the victory was theirs, and began to press hard on the enemy. Bomilcar meanwhile saw the discomfiture of the right wing, and withdrew his own troops, sending word to the rest to retire to the camp in good order.

Such a command naturally meant the ruin of the army, and Bomilcar was strongly suspected of treasonable designs in wishing to bring about the overthrow of the Sacred Band; for not only would the weakening of Carthage make it easier to upset the government, but with the Sacred Band many of the staunchest oligarchs would perish.

The right wing, thinking from the withdrawal of Bomilcar that the battle was already lost, was swept away in headlong rout, in which the Sacred Band, from fear of being cut off, was forced to share, and nearly the whole army fled like a disordered rabble to the gates of Carthage.

The Greeks did not pursue far, but turned back to plunder the camp. There they were astonished to find, besides other booty, several waggon-loads of handcuffs, twenty-thousand pair, it was said. So sure had the Carthaginians been of the victory, that they meant to make a great number of captives, and to set them to work on their lands.

The numbers of the fallen were variously reported. Diodorus says that 200 Greeks were slain, and either 1000, or according to another account, 6000 Carthaginians. Justin speaks of 2000 Greeks and 3000 Carthaginians as slain. The smallest numbers, that is

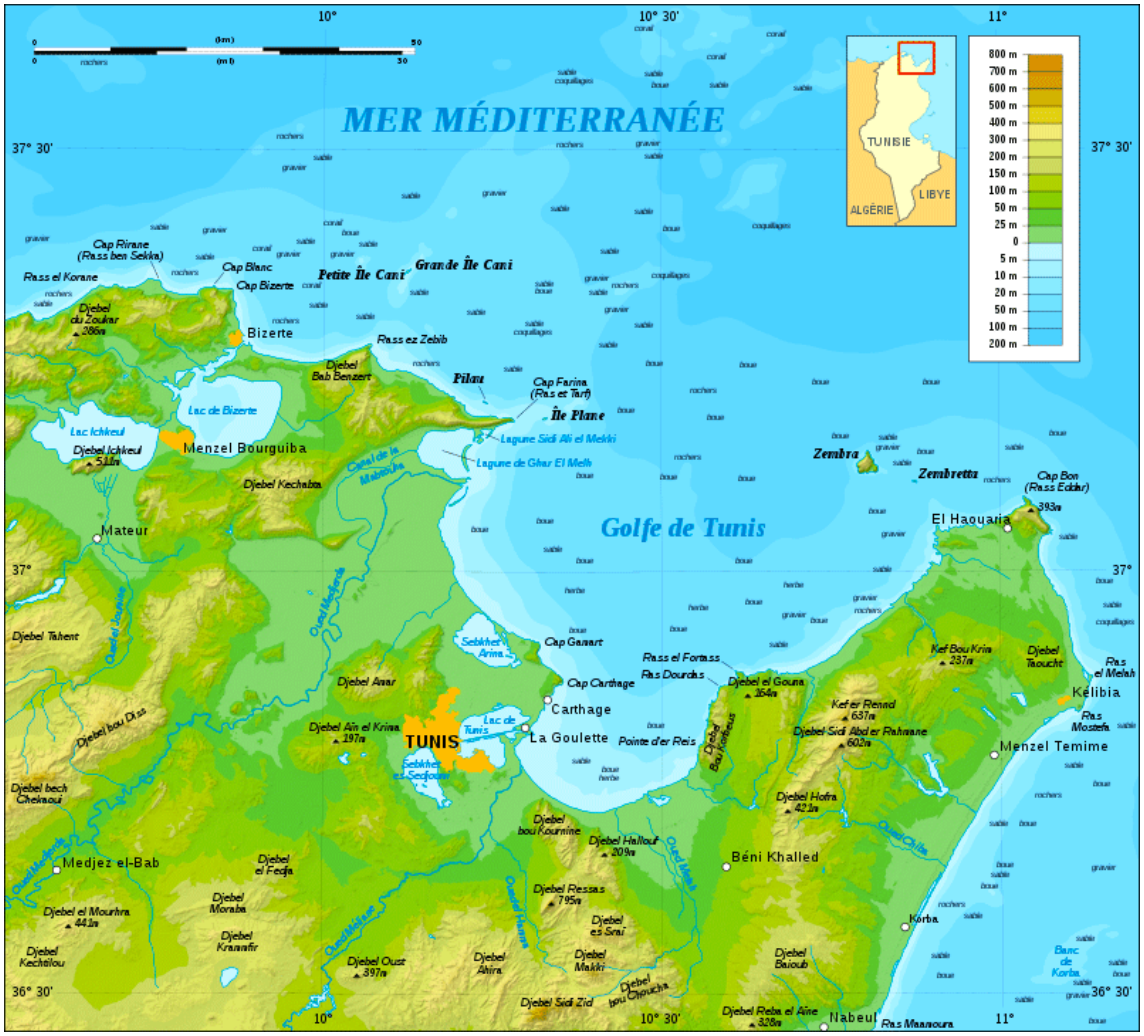
200 Greeks and 1000 Carthaginians, seem the most likely. This heavy defeat within sight of Carthage spread the utmost fright and dismay among her citizens. They believed that the wrath of heaven was smiting them, since the gods seemed no more to go forth with their hosts. The Carthaginians remembered with shame how grudging their own gifts to the gods had been, and turned with fearful haste to make good this shortcoming. From of old the wont had been to send to Melkart at Tyre a tithe of every year's income; but when the wealth of Carthage grew, the greed of men would allow but a trifling share to their fathers' god. Now the anger of Melkart seemed to be upon them, and it was resolved to send a rich offering to appease him. Many costly gifts were brought together, and among them golden models of shrines, which were kept in the Punic temples. These offerings were taken to Tyre and there dedicated to the god.

Still more dreaded was the wrath of Moloch, whom the Greeks called Cronos. To his ruthless godhead the Semites used to make their own children pass through the fire. But ease and culture made the Carthaginians feel the horror of such rites, and the nobles used to buy slave-children and offer them to the god instead of their own. Perhaps too the sacrifice itself had been in abeyance. Now in the agony of remorse it was resolved to take two hundred children of the highest rank and offer them; while other three hundred, who were suspected of having escaped unduly, came forward, by their own will or their fathers, and gave themselves up to death.

The image of Moloch was brazen, and the hands stretched out and sloped downwards towards the earth. The children were laid one by one on the god's hands and so rolled off into a deep pit filled with fire.

Having taken these means of appeasing the wrath of heaven, the Carthaginian government sent orders to Hamilcar to ship the best of his forces for Africa, to help in the war against Agathocles.

CAPE BON TUNISIA



2.

Hamilcar's Attempt on Syracuse.

Hamilcar meanwhile had been besieging Syracuse, and a complicated series of events now followed which must first be given in the words of Diodorus. The Carthaginians in sending their call for help to Hamilcar, had despatched at the same time the brazen rams of Agathocles' ships. "Hamilcar bade the messengers hold their peace about the late defeat, but told them to spread abroad the tidings that Agathocles had lost his ships and his whole force. He sent some of the messengers as envoys to the Syracusans, and with them the brazen rams; they were to demand the surrender of the city. The power of Syracuse, they were to say, had been overthrown by the Carthaginians: and her ships were burned. Those who doubted must be convinced by the sight of the rams. When the news came to Syracuse, most of the citizens believed it, while the rulers, who were at a loss what to do, kept watch to check any turmoil. Hamilcar's envoys were at once sent back, and an order was issued to drive out of the city all kinsfolk of the exiles, and any others who seemed to chafe at the government of the regents. No fewer than eight thousand were cast out; and this sudden flight filled Syracuse with bustle and din and the wailing of women. No house but mourned in that hour. The rulers wept for the

fate of Agathocles and of his sons: some of the citizens bewailed their friends, whom they believed to have fallen in Libya, others sorrowed for those who were driven from hearth and home, who might not stay and who dared not go forth with the foe under the walls, and in whose flight so many helpless children and women were forced to share. But when the outcasts fled to the Carthaginian camp, Hamilcar gave them shelter. At the same time he marshalled his army and marched on Syracuse, hoping that the emptiness of the city, and the fright caused by the ill tidings, would make it easy to surprise the besieged, Hamilcar sent on an embassy and undertook to spare Antander and his fellow-rulers, if they handed over the city. A council met, and Antander, who was a coward and very unlike his brother, declared for yielding, but Erymnon the Aetolian, who had been chosen to aid Antander, took the other side, and persuaded the council to hold out until the truth was known. When this resolve was told to Hamilcar, he began to build all kinds of siege-engines, meaning to storm the city. Agathocles had built two thirty-oared boats after his victory. He sent one to Syracuse with his strongest rowers on board, and Nearchus, one of his trustiest friends, to carry the good tidings. The weather was fair, and after five days' sail the boat drew near to Syracuse at night; and then, after crowning themselves, and singing songs of triumph on the way, made a dash for the harbour at daybreak."

Diodorus then states that the Carthaginians on the blockade espied the boat and gave chase. A desperate race followed, which was eagerly watched by Greeks and Carthaginians, who had gathered on the shore near the harbour. In the end, the despatch-boat escaped by a hair's-breadth, and came safely to land.

The account goes on "When Hamilcar saw that the stir and expectation of news had drawn most of the Syracusans to the harbour, he guessed that some part of the wall would be unguarded, and sent the strongest of his men with ladders. The party found a place undefended, and climbed up unseen; they had already taken the space between two towers, when the usual patrol came up and caught sight of them. A fight ensued; the citizens rushed to the rescue, and their quickness hindered the army outside from helping the storming-party. Some of the assailants were cut down, and the rest were hurled from the walls. This failure disappointed Hamilcar, who drew off his forces from the city, and sent 5000 of his men to the help of the Carthaginians."

Although Diodorus seems to speak of two embassies from Hamilcar to Syracuse, there can be little doubt that he is really describing the same event in different words. To prove this it need only be said that the council of the Syracusan rulers (placed by Diodorus after the second embassy) must have been held as soon as the news from Hamilcar came in; for the sending his envoys back with a refusal, and the banishment of the suspected partisans, are both the outcome of the resolve to wait for further tidings. In fact Diodorus says as much, in stating that the regents did not know what to do, but resolved to crush sedition at all costs, and not to treat with Hamilcar.

The order of events therefore needs setting right, and it seems to have been as follows.—Hamilcar probably heard of the burning of Agathocles' fleet long before any news of the land fight came to Sicily: and very likely both he and the Syracusans knew of the fate of the ships before the rams could have been carried across to Hamilcar's camp. It is not easy to believe that the whole tale of sixty ships' beaks was ever brought to Sicily. The weight of the rams would have made their conveyance very costly, and the chance of deceiving the Syracusans was remote. One beak may perhaps have been sent, not to confirm the burning of the fleet, which the Greeks ex hypothesis believed already, but merely as a kind of symbol such as the Semites love.

Cheered by this news, Hamilcar called on Syracuse to treat: he offered fair terms; the exiles of course must have been taken back, and peace made with Carthage: the cause of Agathocles must have been given up, but the whole of the tyrant's party was promised safety. Whether Hamilcar really knew the issue of the land fight when he sent his

proposals may well be doubted; for he must have seen that there could be little chance of a peaceful settlement with Agathocles victorious in Africa.

The council of war followed the coming of the envoys: and after Erymnon had carried his motion to await news from Agathocles, the Carthaginians were sent back, and it was resolved to purge Syracuse of all oligarchic elements. Perhaps the tale of Agathocles' destruction had caused restlessness among that party, which now found itself ruthlessly forestalled. The heart-breaking scenes of parting are drawn rhetorically, but must indeed have been painful, especially as the mildness of Hamilcar, politic as it was, seems to have been quite unhoped for.

Hamilcar of course had his siege-engines ready beforehand, and the return of his envoys, as well as the flight of the banished nobles with their wives and children, informed him of the stubborn mood of the Syracusans. There was nothing left but to storm the city, and Hamilcar chose the moment when the friends of Agathocles were making merry after the good news had come. The despatch-boat had met with fair weather, and crossed in five days where Agathocles' fleet had needed six. The account of the run into the harbour, though highly coloured for the sake of dramatic effect, is not altogether false. The race must have lain between the extreme end of the entrance to the Great Harbour and the point of Ortygia. The garrison there posted and the Carthaginians stationed on the shore could easily have followed the course of the pursuit. But as the distance is under a mile and the time can have been little over five minutes, it was therefore impossible for a large crowd to have gathered in time to see the finish of the race. The coming of the news is quite enough to account for the disorder of which Hamilcar tried to take advantage.

The strength of the walls was such as almost to defy storming, so that Hamilcar's failure cannot have surprised even himself. By that time he must have had the news of the Carthaginian defeat in Africa and wished to make a last try before sending home his best troops.

By the withdrawal of so large a part of Hamilcar's army Carthage virtually gave up hope of striking a telling blow at the power of Syracuse. But her act must not be judged hastily. Doubtless the crowded state of Carthage made food very scarce, and it was needful at all costs to keep the road open to the midland of Africa; for a city which drew all its food-supplies from its own fields would not have been able at such a crisis to feed its swollen population by means of its ships. Therefore until the crowd of runaways could be drilled and sent out to fight (as they were later on), the help of fresh troops could not be foregone.

Kelibia Fortress

3.
The War in Africa.
310—309 BC

By his late victory over the Carthaginians Agathocles found himself master of the open country. He now built a strong camp near Tunis, which, as we have seen, he had probably already taken; there he left a detachment of troops to watch Carthage, and to shut her off from the land to the south. The threatening nearness of this camp and the sight of burning crops and farms weighed heavily on the hearts of the Carthaginians in the city, but until the troops of Hamilcar came, there were no means of checking Agathocles.

The latter marched to the eastern coast and fell upon the city of Neapolis. This place, which has left its name in the modern Nabel, stood on an open sandy beach in a rich neighbourhood. No doubt the pottery, now made there in large quantities, was a source of wealth to the ancient town. Agathocles took Neapolis by storm, but spared the indwellers, for like Hamilcar in Sicily, he wished to play the deliverer to subject cities.

Hadrumetum was next attacked, and, while Agathocles lay before it, he was greeted with an offer of alliance from Elymas king of the Libyans. The action of this powerful chief shows that the valour of Agathocles was becoming widely known, and that the allies of Carthage were ready to join him.

The Carthaginians seem to have taken heart when Agathocles' back was turned, and marched out in great force to surprise his camp. The stroke succeeded, and the Greek troops had to throw themselves into Tunis itself, which was at once besieged by the enemy with the aid of their engines. Many assaults were beaten off, and a call for help was sent to Agathocles outside Hadrumetum. He is said to have saved Tunis by a strange trick.

"He left most of his men to carry on the siege, and took his camp-followers and a few troops to a hill-top in sight of Tunis and also of Hadrumetum. There he made his men light fires over a wide stretch of ground, and thus led the Carthaginians to believe that he was coming to attack them with a large army. At the same time the Hadrumetans thought that a fresh Greek force was on its way to press the siege. Thus both were outwitted by the ruse, and unexpectedly worsted. The besiegers of Tunis left all their engines and fled to Carthage, while the Hadrumetans yielded to the Greeks."

This story seems out of place at the present juncture. Firstly, the distance between Hadrumetum and Tunis was too great for the fires to have been seen from both places at once. Hadrumetum, which seems to have held the site of the modern Susa, was at least seventy miles from Tunis; and even if with some travellers we place it at Hammamet, the distance would still be too great. At all events there would have been nothing more than a faint glow in the sky, which could hardly have frightened, the Carthaginians into such headlong flight, that they forgot to move or even to burn their siege-engines. Still less would it have alarmed the Hadrumetans, who might just as well have thought that a Punic and not a Greek army was coming.

All that can be believed is that Agathocles in marching to the relief of Tunis surprised the Carthaginian camp: the men fled in a panic, and left all their artillery behind. Then Agathocles came back to Hadrumetum, which at once made terms.

The prince then marched southwards to Thapsus, which stood in a weak position on a flat headland; this he stormed. After the taking of the three chief cities in the coast-land the smaller towns could not withstand the Greek forces; most of them yielded, and

the rest were carried by assault. At the end of the campaign Agathocles had two hundred places in his hands.

Although there is no break in the account of Diodorus, it can hardly be believed that Agathocles undertook in the first year of his inroad the operations now to be described. It will be seen that Diodorus only relates one trifling event for the year 309 in Africa, and there is good ground for thinking that the undertakings before us really belong to that year and not, as Diodorus implies, to 310.

Agathocles had now subdued all the civilized part of the eastern coast. He strengthened his hold by founding a dockyard and haven at Aspis. The new harbour took its name from the neighbouring shield shaped hill which is a far-seen height along the flat strand. This rising made a safe stronghold and a good watch-tower, for it overlooked the whole coast from the eastern shoulder of the Cape Bon cliffs almost to Neapolis itself. The Romans called the place Glupea, and the modern Kelibia carries on the name.

The prince then undertook a long march up country, but we are not told how he fared. His absence emboldened the Carthaginians, now strengthened by Hamilcar's troops as well as by the long awaited levies from the interior, to make another attempt on Tunis. They laid siege to this and won back some smaller posts from the Greeks. The garrison of Tunis sent a hasty message to Agathocles, who at once turned back to relieve the place.

He crept up within a few miles of the Carthaginian camp and there halted, forbidding his men to light fires. Then he made a night march and fell on the enemy at daybreak. Many of the Carthaginians were caught outside the camp and cut down; a pitched battle followed, in which Agathocles won the day. Over two thousand of the Punic soldiers were killed, and many were taken alive. This defeat was a great blow to Carthage; for it now seemed that her best troops were no .match for the invaders.

Elymas, the Libyan prince who had joined Agathocles some months before, proved faithless when the new muster raised for a time the hopes of the Carthaginians; and Agathocles, after his victory and the relief of Tunis, set out to chastise this fickle ally. A fight was fought, and again the Greeks had the better. Elymas fell, and many of his subjects died with him.

Diodorus himself has only assigned two events of the African war to the year 309, although it has already been seen that others may properly belong to it. It is first stated that after the sending of Hamilcar's head to Agathocles (of which matter we shall speak below), the Carthaginians were much cast down in heart, while the Greeks were overjoyed, as they felt that Syracuse was safe. This must have happened fairly late in the campaign.

For the moment the fighting was at a standstill, but the ill-feeling among the followers of Agathocles brought on an outbreak of mutiny on the part of the troops.

It is said that Agathocles and his son Archagathus sat at wine with one of the generals, named Lyciscus. This man forgot in his cups the respect owing to his leader, and reviled Agathocles recklessly.

Agathocles bore it patiently, but his son was wroth and chid Lyciscus with threats. When the party broke up, Lyciscus taunted Archagathus with being the lover of his stepmother Alcia. Enraged at this charge Archagathus snatched a spear from one of the guardsmen, and ran Lyciscus through the chest. Lyciscus fell dead, and was borne to his tent. On the morrow the friends of the murdered man roused the whole army to wrath. It happened that many officers feared punishment on one charge or another, and the men's pay was owing: so that the ill-feeling against Agathocles led to an uproar in the camp. The mutineers called on the prince to give up his son to justice, and when he would not, they chose leaders of their own, set guards on the walls of Tunis, and kept Agathocles and his sons closely watched.

These doings came to the knowledge of the Carthaginians, and they sent word to the mutinous troops offering them gifts and high pay if they would forsake the Greek side. This proposal found most favour among the officers, who undertook to bring over the whole host to the Carthaginians. Agathocles, knowing well that no mercy awaited him if he were carried over to the foe, resolved to throw himself on the loyalty of the common soldiers.

He came forward in a mean garb without his cloak of office, and made a moving harangue to the crowd. He professed his readiness to die if his men so wished it, and ended by drawing his sword, as if to do the deed then and there. The soldiers shouted to him to stay his hand, declaring that he had done no wrong, and bidding him put on his robe once more. He obeyed with tears of joy, and the cheers of his troops assured him of their renewed faithfulness.

The Carthaginians had no notion of the turn of affairs, and are said to have been waiting outside the camp to welcome all who would join them. Soon a large force was seen marching from the Greek position: Agathocles in fact had thought the moment favourable for another attack. The army drew near to the Carthaginians, who feared nothing. All at once the bugles rang out, and the Greeks fell upon the enemy in a furious onset. The Carthaginians were routed with heavy loss and fled to their camp. Thus Agathocles once more saved himself and worsted the foe by his own bravery and cleverness. Only two hundred of the mutineers went over to Carthage.

Such is the substance of Diodorus' account, but there is reason for believing that he greatly overrates the importance of the mutiny. Only the army actually in Tunis was concerned; the other bodies holding Hadrumetum, Aspis, and the rest of the posts, were guiltless. The cause of the upheaval seems to have been the jealousy of the officers against the sons of Agathocles: for, firstly, the charge of adultery against Archagathus would not have been so galling unless there was already great bitterness of feeling; and again, the officers appear throughout as the chief agents. They stir up the men to rise, and they welcome the offers from the Punic side. The men on the other hand only think about their arrears of pay when the officers put them in mind of it: and when Agathocles appeals to them, they quickly forget their discontent. Doubtless the army of Tunis was the same body that had fought against Hamilcar's reinforcements; Agathocles very likely left them to rest after the fight, and took fresh troops from Hadrumetum to march against Elymas: for Hadrumetum seems to have been near that king's lands. Thus the men left behind had only weary and bootless garrison duty, while the other army had the easy task of chastising and plundering an untrained desert-tribe.

In this way some discontent may have arisen. The fact of the Carthaginians' trying to buy over the Greeks with promises of high pay shows how much they felt their own weakness. Agathocles' harangue to his troops, and his play-acting, may be overdrawn, but need not be disbelieved altogether. It is also hardly likely that the Carthaginians would have let themselves be surprised quite so easily as Diodorus relates. No doubt the news of the mutiny made them careless, and Agathocles in some way found means of taking them unawares and of slaying many. The two hundred traitors, who were very likely the ringleaders in the mutiny, must have gone over by Agathocles' leave. He did not wish to spoil the general rejoicing by harsh measures, and such an accession could not have been worth much to the Carthaginians. But there is reason to believe that these deserters one day felt the vengeance of Agathocles after all.

4.
The Death of Hamilcar. 309 BC

Hamilcar seems to have left the neighbourhood of Syracuse after his failure in the year 310. He spent the winter in raising fresh troops to fill the place of the six thousand that he had sent home; and by the next spring it is said that the whole force amounted to 120,000 foot, and 5000 horse; among these no doubt the Greeks were reckoned. With this great host he won over the remaining towns or strongholds in the island, and then resolved to make an assault on Syracuse.

The city was now in sore straits, for the Punic fleet was closely blockading the harbour, and Hamilcar's army wasted the fields utterly. But a bold plan favoured by-good luck brought a quick deliverance.

Hamilcar had set his army in march, and meant to pitch his camp on the hill of the Olympieum, the natural base for attacking Syracuse. To reach this point he had to march right past the walls of the stronghold on Euryelus. For some reason he chose the late evening to make the passage. Perhaps he hoped to slip by unseen, and thus to save his column from a tiresome flank-attack. Diodorus says that he meant to surprise Syracuse on his march, and that he had high hopes, because his seer had foretold that he should sup the next evening in the city.

The Syracusans had wind of Hamilcar's plans, and posted a picked body of 3000 foot and 400 horse in the fort of Euryelus. Presently the Carthaginian army drew near in the darkness. First came Hamilcar with his own guards, then Deinocrates at the head of the knights. These were followed by two huge columns of foot, one Greek, one foreign. The regular troops were accompanied by a crowd of camp-followers, who hoped to share in the plunder of Syracuse. This rabble was a hindrance on the inarch, and when the road became narrow and rocky, serious disorder with shouting and quarrelling set in.

The Syracusans in Euryelus heard the noise and chose that moment to dash out and fall upon the foe. This sudden onslaught threw the Carthaginian host into confusion. The Greeks blocked up the road, and the enemy, who had no notion of the small numbers of their opponents, were seized with panic and tried to flee. But in the darkness there was little hope of safety; some fell down steep places, others were trampled by the frightened horses, while many struck out wildly at friend or foe and perished in the fray. Hamilcar bade his followers stand firm, and fought manfully himself, but when the alarm spread he was forsaken by his men, and the Syracusans took him alive.

Thus had three thousand Greeks routed an army of twelve myriads, and Syracuse was saved.

The march of Hamilcar past the walls of Syracuse is usually taken as a night-attack on a large scale, with the same object as that of Demosthenes the Athenian. But in this case the acts of Hamilcar, whose generalship has hitherto been of the highest order, would bear the stamp of incredible folly. In the first place the works on Euryelus and Epipolae were so strong that even a surprise could not promise more than a momentary gain. Next it would have been stark madness to take 5000 horse and a large baggage-train on a night-attack; nor would any treasures or costly objects, such as the Syracusans are said to have picked up after the rout, have been much use in such an undertaking.

The main body of Hamilcar's army, as Diodorus' description quite clearly shows, was in marching order, and there was no question whatever of its attacking Syracuse. The comparison with the attempt of Demosthenes therefore falls to the ground.

As the main Carthaginian army cannot thus have been trying to surprise Syracuse, some have thought that Hamilcar detached a small body of troops for that purpose, and that their repulse led to the rout of the whole force. But so experienced a general as Hamilcar would never have endangered his army so recklessly, especially as the noise made by the main body would have warned the Syracusans and thus foredoomed any attempt at surprise. If he had meant to take the besieged unawares, he would have needed above all things to keep the troops not required for the attack as far away as possible; the surprise-force must have gone forward by itself swiftly and silently. The fact that Hamilcar on the night of the encounter made no such dispositions is enough to prove that he had no notion of surprising the city.

Diodorus says that Hamilcar had meant to attack the walls on his march; but does not state that the attack was ever tried. In other words he was fully aware that the action of the Syracusans was directed solely against the marching column, and that the supposed plan of surprise attributed to Hamilcar had no effect on the course of events.

Why then was this unfulfilled design of the Punic leader ever mentioned? The answer seems to be that Diodorus found the story of the seer in one of his authorities, and that in trying to work in this detail, he has half implied that some kind of attack on the city was intended—otherwise the prophecy would be pointless. It is very likely in the nature of things that the whole account of the soothsayer and his quibble is pure fiction. The Syracusans were undoubtedly astonished at the sudden downfall of their dreaded foe, and tried to explain it by making Hamilcar a victim misled by the gods to his own ruin. With the seer-story the night-attack will also be struck out; and Hamilcar's mistake becomes a much more intelligible one. He did not dream that the Syracusans would show such desperate boldness as to attack his huge column on the march; and probably they would never have dared to do it but for the disorder in the Carthaginian train. The camp-followers, who must have been mostly Greeks, may have insisted on sharing in the march without yielding obedience to Hamilcar, so that Diodorus is right in the main in making them the cause of the ruin of the whole host.

The victors gathered rich spoils from the baggage left by the routed foemen, and made their way back to the city with Hamilcar in bonds. There no mercy awaited him. The rulers are said to have handed him over to any that had lost kinsfolk in the war, and these heaped every kind of insult and cruelty upon him as he was led in chains through Syracuse. In this hideous manner Hamilcar met his end. The rulers, it is said, then cut off his head, and sent it to Agathocles in Africa. The Greeks, as has already been stated, were overjoyed at this token of their countrymen's deliverance, and Agathocles is said to have ridden with this trophy almost to the Carthaginian camp, and with a loud voice to have told the enemy of their disaster. Diodorus adds that when the Carthaginians saw their general's head they were filled with dismay, but mindful of the rank of the dead man, they did obeisance in their barbaric fashion.

This story does not sound like sober history. It is not likely that Hamilcar, an unusually generous foe, would have been made away with in so outrageous a way.

Probably he was simply beheaded. It would have been a tiresome business to send the head to Africa, and such a savage act does not suit what is known of the Greek character. The head would have needed embalming, and it is hard to believe that so much trouble would have been taken to effect so little. It is possible that Agathocles was at some pains to let the Carthaginians hear of their misfortune in Sicily; but that he trusted himself within earshot of their camp is certainly false.

The shattered wreck of Hamilcar's host rallied on the morning after the disaster, but there was no longer a guiding spirit to restore order or make good defeat. Mistrustful

of each other, the Greeks and Carthaginians parted their forces; the next in command to Hamilcar were raised by choice of the men to be leaders of the Carthaginians, while the Greeks elected Deinocrates for their general.

The siege of Syracuse was not altogether raised but merely lingered on.

5.
The Acragantine League.
309—308 BC

The two leading powers in Sicily, Syracuse and the Carthaginians, were so stunned by the shock of this last encounter, that for the moment there was no likelihood of serious undertakings on the part of either. Now the lesser states in the island could once more raise their heads and carry out unchecked whatever plans the hour suggested. Of the old rivals of Syracuse only one had not tasted the vengeance of Agathocles. This was Acragas. She had survived the fall of Messena and the punishment of Gela. She owed her safety to Hamilcar and the Punic host; but now that neither help nor hindrance could come from that quarter, it was time for her to stand alone. It is good to read that the democratic spirit was still alive and that Acragas at such a time could rise to the understanding of her call. The citizens resolved to shake off the control of Syracuse, to drive out all Punic garrisons from Greek Sicily, and to bind the cities together in a free and equal alliance.

The hour was fair: the Punic army was helpless and no fresh troops were likely to land from Africa; Deinocrates and his party would be neutral, and the half-starved guard of Syracuse had no taste for fighting in the open field. Above all the Greeks hated the Carthaginian supremacy and longed for independence.

The new movement was democratic, and Xenodicus of Acragas, who was elected general by the Acragantine assembly, became its chief promoter. A strong force was put under his orders and he was soon invited by partisans to free Gela, which seems to have had a Punic garrison. The gates were opened by night and Xenodicus became master of the place. The citizens welcomed him with great enthusiasm and put the whole forces and treasure of the state at his disposal. Of the garrison we hear no more, perhaps they withdrew under a truce. The call to freedom was now raised throughout the island and taken up eagerly on all sides. The Sicel towns joined in the new movement and Henna at once offered her alliance. Herbessus was guarded by the Carthaginians, but after a struggle in which the citizens joined, the garrison, having met with heavy loss, surrendered to the number of five hundred.

The next call came from the south-east. Camarina and Netum had been harassed for some time by a Syracusan outpost at Echetla. The friends of Agathocles had kept a force there which wasted the lands of the two cities. Xenodicus now brought up his forces and stormed Echetla. The popular government was set up, and the Syracusans driven out. Thus Netum and Camarina were saved.

Xenodicus went to many other places in the island, and freed them from the Carthaginians. Among these seems to have been Heraclea; but the old Phoenician posts were not touched.

One more event is given by Diodorus for this year. The Syracusans were in sore straits through lack of food, and when they heard that some corn-ships were coming, they manned twenty ships and slipped past the blockading fleet into the open sea. They

coasted along as far as Megara Hyblaea, then a Syracusan post, where they waited to convoy the corn-fleet. But the Carthaginians had already found out what had happened, and sailed out thirty strong to cut off the Greeks. The Greeks at first thought of fighting, but soon lost heart, and beached their ships, the crews swimming ashore to a shrine of Hera that stood near. The enemy pressed on and dragged off ten of the vessels with grappling irons. But a rescue party from Megara saved the rest.

This small incident may be taken as a type of many skirmishes that must have gone on between the Carthaginians and the defenders of Syracuse. It shows that the Greeks had a certain number of warships at sea, and that the blockade of the harbour was kept up, though less closely than before. It is not stated that the cornfleet ever reached Syracuse, but this perhaps is implied, for otherwise there is not much point in the story.

6.
Agathocles' Third Campaign.
308 (?).

The Carthaginians had now grown more used to the sight of the Greeks, and by this time many of the runaways sheltering in Carthage must have been trained into useful soldiers. The Senate therefore resolved on a more active conduct of the war. A strong force took the field and its first goal was to bring back the revolted Numidians to the side of Carthage. The army came among the Zuphonians, a tribe otherwise unknown, and most of these declared for Carthage, while some who had joined Agathocles returned to their allegiance.

The prince could not be blind to such doings; and he set out with a picked body to meet the foe, leaving Archagathus to hold Tunis, with the main army. Agathocles. had 8000 foot, 800 horse, and 50 African chariots. With these he hastened after the Carthaginians.

The latter had pitched on a high hill, at the foot of which several deep streams flowed: of its position nothing further is known. Agathocles came boldly up to the attack, but he was sorely harassed by the light-armed Numidians, and at last brought to a halt. Luckily there was a detachment of slingers and bowmen in the Greek army, and with these Agathocles cleared the way for the advance of the foot. The Punic host was already in battleline in front of its camp, and chose the moment when Agathocles was fording the stream to rush down upon him in full charge.

A fierce struggle followed; the Carthaginians had the better ground and outnumbered the Greeks, but the latter were doughty fighters, and for a long time the balance was even. The Numidian allies of both sides took no more part in the fray, but waited to plunder the camp of whichever army should be put to flight. At length Agathocles. worsted the enemy in front of him, and forced the whole Carthaginian infantry to draw back. A band of Greek horse in Punic service under the leadership of Cleinon, proved more stubborn, and would not give ground until almost every man was cut down, a few only escaping. Agathocles pressed forward and with a great effort drove the Carthaginians back to their camp. Meanwhile the Numidians, seeing both armies hotly engaged on the hilltop, swooped down on the Greek quarters. The camp guard was cut to pieces, and nearly all the captives and booty carried off. Agathocles must have stormed the Carthaginian camp and driven the foe from the field, before he had time to march back to the rescue of his own baggage. He came too late to save more than a small part: the Numidians had made away with the rest, and the fall of night made it hopeless to pursue them. Agathocles however had taken much booty in the Punic camp,

and this was given bodily to the troops, so that they did not feel the loss of their own belongings.

A trophy was set up in honour of the victory.

Among the captives were more than a thousand Greeks, including five hundred Syracusans, from the Carthaginian service. They were put under a guard, but in the night they broke away from their keepers and made off, fearing the anger of Agathocles. They were defeated by the guard, but at length withdrew in safety to a steep hill. Agathocles marched up with his army when he heard what had happened, and persuaded the men to come down from the hill under a truce. He then had them all slain. It has been suggested as a ground for this harshness that among the runaways were the two hundred Greeks that had forsaken Agathocles after the mutiny of the year before. These perhaps, having no hope of mercy for themselves, may have urged the rest to join them in trying to escape, and so have involved them in their own doom.

7.
The March of Ophellas.
308 BC (?).

In spite of his victories in the field, Agathocles had begun to feel that his own forces were unequal to the hugeness of his undertaking. The news from Sicily was no longer good, and the party of Bomilcar gave no signs of overthrowing the government of Carthage and thus making peace easy. An ally was therefore needed by Agathocles, and he called in Ophellas of Cyrene.

Ophellas had been an officer in the army of Alexander on his eastward march, and afterwards took service under Ptolemy. When Thimbron was beleaguering Cyrene, Ophelilas was sent by his chief to relieve the city, and quickly raised the siege. The whole land of the Five Cities became part of Ptolemy's kingdom, and Ophellas was left to rule it in his stead. This had happened in 322, and since then, save for a rising in 312, which was quickly crushed, the sway of Ophellas had been unquestioned, and so fully was he trusted by Ptolemy, that he seemed almost a prince in his own right; indeed Justin inexactly calls him the King of Cyrene.

Ophellas was a man of some ability and boundless ambition. He took every means of gaining influence in Greece, and he must long have thirsted for conquest in the West, where alone the barbarian seemed still to hold sway.

It was probably in the latter half of the year 309 that Agathocles' envoy, one Orthon of Syracuse, reached Cyrene with his master's proposals. The offer was fair and tempting. In return for help in the overthrow of Carthage, Ophelias was promised the whole kingdom of Libya. Agathocles, said Orthon, wished for nothing but a stable rule over Sicily; if a wider field were needed, then Italy would be open to his valour. Africa was parted from Sicily by miles of stormy sea, and it was not lust of conquest, but necessity that had brought him to attack it. To these words, which fell in with the dearest wishes of Ophellas, a favourable answer was forthwith given; the two princes joined in league, and Ophellas resolved to hasten at once to the help of his friend.

The winter and early spring were spent by Ophellas in making ready for the march. He sent his recruiting agents to Greece, and men flocked to his standard. Long wars had wasted the land and drained her resources, while the iron rule of Macedonia left no opening for fame or adventure. Now a new field of glory and riches seemed to be opening up, and thousands came forward to share in the overthrow and plunder of Carthage.

At Athens Ophellas sought a formal alliance. He was in high favour there as the husband of the noble and lovely Eurydice, the daughter of Miltiades. This man claimed to be of the race of Marathon's hero, and was probably the leader of the Athenian settlement sent to Hadria in 325-4.

Many Athenians joined the army of Ophellas, but no alliance seems to have been made. There is some reason for thinking that Carthage sent envoys to Athens to counteract the movements of Ophellas' party and by their means such a course may have been hindered.

Late in the spring of 308 the outroad began. Ophellas had no warships, and Carthage was still strong at sea, so that the whole distance had to be crossed on foot. But no comrade of Alexander was afraid of a long march. The tale of the force was as follows: 10,000 foot, 600horse, 100 chariots, with more than 300 drivers and champions. Besides these there was a crowd of 10,000 unarmed followers, many of whom brought their wives and children and all their belongings, so that it seemed as if a whole people were wandering out in search of a new home.

Eighteen days' march brought them to Automala, the westernmost station of the Five Cities, and 325 miles from Cyrene. Thence they threaded a cleft between steep sheer rocks, at the foot of which was a huge cave thickly grown with ivy and bindweed. Here the wondering soldiers believed that they had found the home of the Lamia, once a fair queen, as the tale ran, but long since turned for her cruelty into a fearful she-dragon, the bugbear of Greek children.

The hardest part of the march was now to come. The land round the Syrtes was bare and waterless, and the men were like to die of hunger and thirst. The waste teemed with deadly snakes, and some of these were of the same hue as the sand, so that many trod on them unawares and were bitten: and the poison was so strong that the help of the leech could not save them.

The host passed near the land of the Lotus-Eaters, and for one or two days they ate the jujube fruit that grew there, for they had no other food.

At the end of two months the hardships of the way were over, and Ophellas pitched his camp near the position of Agathocles. Diodorus does not say where this was; but most likely the prince had marched down at least as far as Hadrumetum to meet his ally. The Carthaginians were much alarmed when they heard that this new force was marching against them.

What followed is thus told by Diodorus: "Agathocles met the staff of Ophellas and kindly furnished them with all that they needed, advising them to rest their men after all their sufferings. He then waited a few days and watched everything that went on in the camp. Finally, when most of the army had gone out foraging, and Ophellas, as he saw, had no suspicion of the plan that had been formed, Agathocles called a meeting of his own troops, and charged Ophellas, who had come to be his ally, with plotting against his own life. In this way he roused his men, and at once bade them stand to arms, and led them to attack the Cyreneans. Ophellas was taken utterly by surprise; he tried to shield himself, but he had not enough troops left in his camp, and so died fighting."

Justin's account is as follows: "When Ophellas came with a huge force to join Agathocles in the war, Agathocles met him with a winning address and flattering respect. The two princes dined together more than once; and Ophelias adopted the son of Agathocles. Thus Agathocles lulled all suspicion to rest, and so killed Ophelias."

Polyaenus' version is to the effect that Agathocles sent his son Heracleides to Ophellas as a hostage: and it seems to imply that Agathocles stirred up the wrath of his troops by pretending that Ophellas was ill-treating his son.

From these three accounts certain facts are plain. Agathocles welcomed Ophellas very friendly, dined with him and very likely gave him his son to adopt. The adoption is probable for two reasons. It gave Ophellas a hostage without implying that there was any need of such precaution, and also, in case Ophellas should become prince of Carthage, the adopted son would have kept the succession for the house of Agathocles. That Agathocles sent his son merely to disarm suspicion is of course the meaning of Justin; but this is no more than an inference and very likely a wrong one.

Thus far the course of events is clear; but there remains the question: why did Agathocles suddenly turn from friendship to enmity? Three answers are possible: Agathocles may from the first have meant to murder Ophellas: Ophellas may have meant to murder Agathocles but have been forestalled: or both may have acted in good faith, until some quarrel arose which led Agathocles to get rid of his ally.

The first view seems to be that of Diodorus and Justin, and has been followed by some modern writers. Against this it must be said that such a fiendish design was too bad even for Agathocles, and that the adoption of his son must have been meant to pave the way for a lasting friendship. The second view has found more favour and its supporters argue thus: Ophellas had everything to gain by the murder of Agathocles, whose troops must have come over: Ophellas as one of Alexander's captains had no mind to follow the lead of Agathocles and preferred to plot his death: Agathocles' attack on the camp of Ophellas was a desperate stroke with the Carthaginians so near, and he would never have made it without the utmost need. These pleas seem rather inconclusive. What Ophellas would have gained by the murder of Agathocles is by no means clear. The Sicilian troops were not like the fickle Macedonians, to whom one Successor was as good as another, but they were personally attached to Agathocles, and would undoubtedly have followed his warlike , sons to avenge his death. Against their trained valour the exhausted soldiers of Ophellas could have done nothing. The third plea, that the nearness of the Carthaginians made Agathocles' attempt desperate, is surely absurd. We have no evidence where any of these events happened; but it is clearly stated that the Carthaginians were hindered by ignorance of what went on from taking any advantage of the strife between the two princes. Above all the fact that Ophellas' men were able to roam in great numbers in search of fodder is proof positive that the Carthaginians were nowhere near. The remaining plea that Ophellas gave offence to Agathocles, and that they quarrelled, is likely enough, but this obviously does not prove that Ophellas was plotting murder.

Again, if we turn to the account friendly to Agathocles, namely Polyaenus', we find no hint that Ophellas was plotting against Agathocles. No reason indeed is given for his death; for the offence there mentioned was trifling to the Greek mind, and Ophellas had not even tried to commit it. Thus although the silence of Polyaenus naturally proves little, at any rate it does not acquit Agathocles. Furthermore, if Ophellas meant to murder Agathocles, he would certainly have done this when Agathocles was dining in his camp, and on no account would he have let his men stray far away; for a demonstration in force would have been needed to follow up the murder.

We are thus brought to take the third view, that both princes made their plans in good faith but fell out after their meeting. Agathocles perhaps was shocked when he saw the motley rabble of his ally. He had hoped for an active army, doubtless for a fleet also; he saw a whole townful of settlers, a mere hindrance in the field. Ophellas himself, as a comrade of Alexander, may have been overbearing; no doubt he had taken Agathocles at his word, and meant to be king of Libya, and no humble sheriff for the prince of Syracuse. This temper may have led Agathocles to put his rival out of the way without more ado.

After this hapless end to all Ophellas' hopes and plans, Agathocles called on the Cyrenean troops to pile their arms in token of yielding. The men bereft of their leader dared not do otherwise. Agathocles then sent a friendly message to them, and in the end the whole force entered his service. The unwarlike fared worse. Agathocles put them on

board some freight-ships that were carrying his plunder, and despatched them for Syracuse. But a storm sprang up and wrecked most of the boats off the Pithecusae islands near the Italian coast, and few of the prisoners ever reached their haven.

Thus ended this melancholy episode, in which a splendid and hopeful enterprise was brought by rashness and crime to a miserable and disgraceful close.

8.

Bomilcar's Rising.

308 BC

Agathocles' forces were nearly doubled by the enrolling of Ophellas' men; and thus strengthened he attacked a large Carthaginian army, that had marched up, and routed it utterly. Unluckily a fresh mutiny arose in his camp, and he was unable to follow up the blow at a moment when a descent upon Carthage would have brought the whole war to a triumphant end.

These events are given only by Justin, and most historians have not recorded them. But the truth of the account cannot reasonably be doubted, especially as it gives the only credible explanation of what next befell.

Bomilcar's long-planned revolt was at last to be tried. He had returned to office early in 308, but in spite of the chance afforded by the absence of many leading citizens on the Nubian campaign, he had not had the courage to make the bold stroke. Now he was still general at the head of the home forces, but he could not get news of the movements of Agathocles nor send word of his own. The departure of the Carthaginian army, which was indeed too late to help Ophellas' men against Agathocles, and the tidings of its defeat at last roused Bomilcar to action. He must have expected that the victorious Sicilians would soon appear under the walls of Carthage, and then he would openly join his country's foes. But the mutiny in the Greek camp, of which no news reached him, foredoomed his plans to failure.

Bomilcar held a review of the troops under his leadership in the suburb of Carthage called Neapolis. He then sent away all but his own followers, who amounted to 500 citizens, and perhaps 4000 hirelings. To this force he declared himself tyrant, and was doubtless hailed with the name of king.

The army was divided into five companies, and ordered to force a way into the market-place, each company by a different road, killing any citizens that came in the way. Thus Carthage was filled with fear and uproar, for everyone thought that the enemy had been let in. But soon the truth was found out, and all those who could fight came together to withstand Bomilcar. The latter, after slaying many unarmed wretches, massed his forces in the market-place. Meanwhile the loyal army had taken up position in the surrounding houses, and climbing upon the high roofs, began to shower darts upon the traitors. The place thus became untenable, and Bomilcar was driven to withdraw under a heavy fire to Neapolis, where he entrenched himself. By this time almost every burgess of Carthage was up in arms, and an overwhelming force encamped hard by the rebels. Then milder counsels won the day; the elders of Carthage promised forgiveness to all who would lay down arms, and the men of Bomilcar gave up their hopeless undertaking. The promise of mercy was faithfully kept: only Bomilcar himself, who had perhaps been handed over by his followers as the price of peace, was put to death. Diodorus says that he was cruelly tortured, and Justin adds that he was crucified in the market-place. This

latter is no doubt true, but the polished speech which the traitor is supposed to have made as he hung on the cross, is certainly an embellishment.

9.
Conquest to the West of Carthage.
307 BC

The fate of Agathocles' undertaking was really settled by the utter failure of Bomilcar's rising. The disloyal party in Carthage would not dare to raise its head for many years after such a blow, and the hands of the Senate were strengthened for a more resolute conduct of the war.

But for the moment the tide of the prince's success flowed as strongly as ever, and he began an important conquest on the western side of the land of Carthage.

His first object of attack was the coast town of Utica, which according to Diodorus had formerly been on his side. So sudden was the onset that three hundred citizens were made prisoners outside the walls. Agathocles hoped that to ransom these men the government of Utica would make peace, and he promised to overlook the offence of revolt if the city would yield. But this the men of Utica had no mind to do. Agathocles therefore bethought him of a gruesome plan to make resistance impossible. He built a large engine, and on this he hung his captives. He also made his slingers, bowmen, and darters mount on it, and so wheeled it up to the walls. At first the Uticans shrank from answering the enemy's fire, but as the attack grew fiercer they could withhold their hand no longer, and so the luckless captives were pierced by the arrows and shafts of their own friends. This shocking scene did not tame the spirits of the besieged, and Agathocles had to bring up his whole force to storm the town. At last he found a weak spot in the walls; this was battered down, and the Greeks poured into the breach. The Uticans rushed to their homes or to the shrines for shelter, but in vain: the men of Agathocles were enraged at the stubborn defence, and a fearful slaughter was wrought. Some of the Uticans were cut down in the fray, others taken prisoners and afterwards hanged, and others were even torn from the altars of the gods. The booty was doled out to the troops, and a guard left in the city.

The next point at which Agathocles aimed was the city of Hippuacra or Mare's Hill, which held the site where now is Bizerta. The town stood very strongly, protected by the sea and a wide deep mere. The citizens had a fleet, and Agathocles, who had by this time built warships, perhaps in the dockyard of Aspis or at Tunis, met and overcame them in a sea-fight. But whether they fought in the open or on the mere is uncertain. The town then yielded.

Agathocles, who saw its strong position and natural harbour, almost the only one on the whole coast, resolved to make of Hippo a fleet-station. He improved the anchorage, built docks and strengthened the walls and the keep. The time had come when sea-power was all-important, and this new arsenal on the western shore would be a valuable base for the final attack on the harbour of Carthage.

To guard the land-road from Hippo to Tunis, Agathocles built a tower near the point from which the Utica road branched off. There is still a small ruin near the coast road from Tunis to Bizerta, and in this the remains of Agathocles' tower are sought. The tower was about, thirty furlongs from Utica.

The prince was now at the height of his power. All the chief coast towns were his and a large number of places inland had joined him, the open country was in his hands, but the Numidians still awaited the issue of the whole war. If only Carthage could be

attacked from the sea, she would hardly defy Agathocles any longer, and in any case she might have been glad to make peace. But in Sicily the cause of Agathocles had for some time been in a perilous state, and he resolved to sail back to reassert his sway. Gathering a fleet of open boats and fifty-oared craft, which had been building at his orders, he shipped 2000 of his men for Sicily, and thus started from Africa, leaving Archagathus in command.

10.

The Overthrow of the Acragantine League.

308—7 BC

Since the relief of Netum and Camarina in 308 nothing has been heard of the Acragantine movement; but there can be little doubt that it had been making great headway, for it is now stated that the Sicilians hoped that the whole island would soon be free.

About this time Xenodicus seems to have made up his mind to march on Syracuse, and advanced with more than 10,000 foot and about 1000 horse. To meet him, Leptines and Demophilus raised such troop and marshalled 8200 foot and 1200 horse. The allies had thus far more men, but their citizen levies seem to have been poorly trained and ill led. Xenodicus himself (like Aratus who inherited some of his ideals) had made his way by political means, or at most by small sieges and surprises: now he had to meet in fair fight a seasoned army under professional leaders. Still the blow at Syracuse had to be struck before freedom was assured, and perhaps the news of Agathocles' coming had reached Xenodicus and spurred him to make trial of battle.

At some nameless spot the armies met. The struggle was long and stubborn, but at length the allies were worsted. Xenodicus himself fled straightway to Acragas, leaving fifteen hundred slain upon the field.

This untoward blow quite broke the spirit of the allies. The Acragantines gave up the active conduct of the war, and the smaller cities were left unsheltered to become the prey of the strongest party. In this way the whole movement fell to the ground; the historian may regret its fate, but ha cannot wonder at it. In an age of military powers and trained soldiers a league of free cities could not hope for a lasting success unless it had leaders of the highest valour and ability. Acragas had preached freedom without counting the cost; and one defeat was the deathblow of all her aspirations.

A short time after this fight Agathocles landed at Selinus. He matched to Heraclea, which had been free as a member of the Acragantine league. The city yielded. Segesta may have been won about the same time. Agathocles then marched over to Thermae, his own birthplace. There he found a Punic guard, which seems to have agreed to leave the city to be an ally of Agathocles.

Soon after this Agathocles must have been joined by Leptines, no doubt with a large part of the Syracusan army. An attack on the strong town of Cephaloedium was next undertaken: and this was carried by storm. Leaving Leptines to hold the place, Agathocles marched inland to Centuripa, where some partisans were ready to open the gates. A surprise by night was tried, but the alarm was given and the guard came up in time to save the city. Agathocles was driven out with a loss of 500 men.

At Apollonia there were also traitors at work, but when the prince reached the gates these men had already been found out and punished, perhaps with death, for their evil designs. There was nothing for it but to storm Apollonia. The first day's assault was beaten back, but on the morrow, after a sore and bloody fray, the men of Agathocles burst into the town. Most of the citizens were slaughtered and their goods plundered. This no doubt was a measure of vengeance for the punishment of the prince's friends.

The headway made by the arms of Agathocles and the ruthless manner in which his success had been used, now thoroughly roused his enemies of all parties. Deinocrates, who had stood aloof from the Acragantine league, came forward once more as the champion of freedom. His tried ability seemed to promise better things than the feeble efforts of Xenodicus. Men flocked to Deinocrates' standard, and soon 20,000 foot and 1500 horse were in the field: though they can hardly have been all old soldiers, as Diodorus says. Justin adds that a fresh army from Carthage landed about this time: and although the war in Africa must have swallowed up most of the Punic forces, it is quite possible that a small detachment may have been sent. The fleet of Carthage was still master at sea, and the wisdom of helping such a movement as that headed by Deinocrates was undoubted. Deinocrates camped in the open and offered battle to Agathocles. But the tyrant felt himself too weak to fight, and withdrew step by step towards Syracuse. Deinocrates followed at his heels, and seemed to be winning a bloodless victory.

11.

Archagathus' Warfare in Africa.

306 BC

Archagathus had been left by his father as leader of the army in Africa. His wisest course would probably have been to stand his ground until his chief's return. But he seems to have longed to do some great deed on his own account, and thus engaged hotly in several rather useless undertakings.

His first act was to send Eumachus up land with a large part of the forces, in all about 8000 foot and 800 horse. This outroad was aimed at the Numidians and other allies of Carthage; but chiefly perhaps it served to keep the men busy, and to win treasure and booty.

Eumachus was a good soldier, and his march proved an almost unbroken success. But from our lack of knowledge we can scarcely trace his path through the dim wonderland of the southern waste.

He first took the large town of Tocae, which was perhaps the same as the modern Dougga, and thus no doubt was the key to the midlands. The town may have been Phoenician, but the neighbouring country-folk, many of whom came over, were Numidians. Eumachusis next supposed to have stormed Phelline, a place now sought on the sea-coast opposite the island of Djerba. If this is rightly placed, his march may have led him to the oasis of Capsa and thence along the line of road from Capsa to where Gabes now stands. This long march through partly hostile country was a great feat of generalship. The capture of Phelline was followed by the submission of the neighbouring tribe of the Asphodelians. These folk, who had a swarthy skin like the Aethiopians, may have lived in the basin of Nefzaoua, where a black race is still found.

The city of Meschela, said to have been founded by Greeks after the fall of Troy, was next taken. Diodorus does not seem to mean that this large town had any Greek elements left when Eumachus came up. Another city called Hippuacra and a free town named Acris were also stormed. The latter was sacked and all the indwellers enslaved. Then Eumachus marched back to Archagathus, laden with plunder after a well-fought campaign.

The success of this venture led Archagathus to send Eumachus on another raid to the south. Retracing his steps in the last march, Eumachus fell upon the town of Miltiane, the site of which is unknown. The citizens were taken by surprise, but after a fierce street fight Eumachus was driven out with heavy loss. After this unexpected failure the army marched through twenty miles of uplands which swarmed with wild cats, so that no bird could nest there. Then they reached a country full of apes, where there were three cities named after these brutes. The customs of the people astonished the Greeks not a little; for the apes were worshipped and lived in the houses, where they were allowed to steal whatever food they liked from the stores. The children too were named after apes, and to kill an ape was deemed something deathworthy. Eumachus took one of these cities, and the other two gave in. Then he heard that a Punic army was mustering to attack him, and thought it high time to withdraw to the coast.

So far Archagathus had had no trouble from the Carthaginians, but now the Senate resolved to carry on the war on a greater scale. The crowds of runaways sheltering in the city had been trained to arms, and their absence would relieve the pressure and dearth at home; for by this time all the reserve supplies had run out. An attack on Carthage by Archagathus was not to be feared; the city was quite safe as long as the harbour was open, while the sight of a large army would strengthen the loyalty of the allies besides diverting the Greeks from Carthage.

The Punic forces were formed into three columns, one was sent down to the coast, another inland, and the third to the further south. In all thirty thousand men took the field, and thus those left behind in Carthage had ample supplies for their needs.

The threefold division of the Carthaginian troops made Archagathus' part a very hard one. His own fewer men could ill be separated, but if he kept them in one place he was bound to lose the open country with most of his allies. He therefore made bold to split up his own army, and to send divisions in pursuit of the enemy, leaving only the guard of Tunis behind. Eumachus had not yet returned with his column, and of the remaining troops Archagathus took half himself, and gave the rest to another officer, named Aeschrion. These huge undertakings were naturally watched with much eagerness and dread by both sides.

Archagathus himself seems to have stayed near Tunis, where he was confronted by Adherbal with one of the Carthaginian divisions. No battle however seems to have been fought.

Hanno, who was in charge of the army in the midlands, laid an ambush for Aeschrion, and took him unawares. In this way 4000 foot, 200 horse, with Aeschrion himself, were cut down. The survivors—and probably there were very few—fled straight back to Archagathus, who was sixty miles away, no doubt near the coast.

Meanwhile the Carthaginian force under the orders of Himilco had marched southwards to meet Eumachus, who must have been returning from his second inroad, of which the history has already been given. The Greeks were heavy-laden with the booty from the fallen cities, and most likely had not heard of the new Carthaginian plan of warfare.

Himilco quartered his army in a city on Eumachus' line of march. He then sallied forth with a small detachment, leaving word to the rest to come into action when they

saw the enemy in disorder. The Greeks were ready to fight, and seeing Himilco's advance party in front of their camp, they gave battle without further delay.

The Carthaginians drew back in face of the Greek onset, and the men of Eumachus followed them in headlong chase. All at once the city gate was thrown open, and the strong Punic reserve dashed out with a mighty cheer and fell upon the Greeks. The latter were in disorder, and this sudden attack utterly discomfited them. The Carthaginians had cut off their foe from their camp, and Eumachus was driven at last to take shelter on a waterless hill. But even there he was not safe: the enemy camped round about, and harassed him with ceaseless onslaughts, until at last, what with thirst and the unequal struggle, almost the whole Greek host was cut to pieces. Eumachus fell, and of 8000 foot and 800 horse only 30 footmen and 40 knights are said to have escaped: it is clear that the Carthaginians gave no quarter.

When the sad tidings reached Archagathus, he withdrew at once to Tunis, and gave up all hope of holding the open country. Most of the outlying guards were called in, and an urgent message was sent to Agathocles to come back and save his friends. Nearly all the Numidian and other African allies forsook the losing side; and the Carthaginian armies closed around Tunis. Himilco camped twelve miles away on the south side, and Adherbal only five miles off to the east. Thus Tunis was hemmed in on the land side, and the Punic fleet held the sea. Famine stared the Greeks in the face, and they waited in dismay for the coming of Agathocles, now their only hope.

12.

The End of the War in Africa.

307 BC

Agathocles himself had been sitting helpless in Syracuse since his withdrawal before Deinocrates, and the Carthaginian fleet was still blockading the harbour. But, luckily for the prince, he had one ally remaining faithful, the Etruscans. When or how the league had been formed is unknown: but no doubt the fear of Rome drove her neighbours to make friends wherever they could, and the good understanding between Rome and Carthage naturally threw them into the arms of Agathocles. Such a bond could be worth little to Etruria, for the war against Rome had to be fought out on land, and an inroad on Central Italy was hardly to be expected from their new ally. Beyond help in money, which Agathocles may have given or promised, the most that he was likely to do against Rome would have been a raid in Lucania. On the other hand the Etruscan sea power was useless at home, but some advantage might be gained by helping Agathocles against the fleet of a Roman ally.

For some such reason the Etruscans now sent eighteen warships to Syracuse; this squadron may have been found by Tarquinii, the chief harbour of free Etruria now that Caere and Antium had fallen.

The Etruscan squadron slipped into the haven of Syracuse by night unseen of the Carthaginians. Agathocles himself could muster seventeen sail, so that the allied fleet now outnumbered the thirty ships of their foe. The plan of battle was carefully laid, for great things hung on the issue.

Agathocles rowed out of the harbour with his own ships, leaving the Etruscans in hiding. The Carthaginians, catching sight of him, began to chase him towards the open sea, when the Etruscans in their turn sailed out after the Carthaginians. No sooner did

the Greeks see their allies coming near, than they wheeled round and faced the enemy in battle array. The latter were thus caught between two hostile squadrons, and took to flight in alarm. The Greeks and Etruscans followed, and captured five ships with all hands. So fierce was the struggle that the Carthaginian sea-lord had slain himself for fear of falling into the enemy's hands, although a gust of wind afterwards carried the flagship beyond reach of pursuit.

This great success, far greater than anything that Agathocles had hoped to achieve, broke up the blockade of Syracuse, and threw open the way to Africa. The Syracusans, who had long been suffering from dearth of food, now took in all kinds of stores, and again enjoyed great cheapness and plenty.

The great victory at sea was followed very soon by a smaller win on land. Shortly before the Etruscan ships sailed up, Agathocles sent Leptines for an inroad into the land of Acragas. Very likely Deinocrates' army was busy elsewhere, and Acragas, still too proud to take help from the oligarchs, lay open to the vengeance of Agathocles. Another reason for the attack lay in the political state of Acragas, where Xenodicus, though still general, was losing most of his following, and might be driven to risk a fight to retrieve his credit.

Leptines began by wasting the Acragantine fields, and at first Xenodicus watched him from the walls, knowing that the home forces were too weak to give battle. But soon his enemies taunted him with cowardice, and their challenge outweighed his better judgment. Xenodicus took the field with an army little less than that of Leptines, but made up of poorly trained men; for the burgesses of Acragas had always lived in the shady courts and alleys of the city, and were no match for his seasoned hirelings inured to every hardship.

The armies met, and after a short struggle the Acragantines were routed, and fled into the town, leaving about 500 foot and 50 horse dead on the field. Leptines did not press forward to attack the city; perhaps the news of the sea-fight had brought with it an order to send home his men to be shipped for Africa: or it may be that Deino- crates was hastening up with his overwhelming forces to save Acragas in spite of herself. Anyhow the campaign came to an end.

The Acragantines were very wroth with Xenodicus, to whose bad generalship they assigned both their defeats: and he was threatened with impeachment at the end of his year of office. Not daring to stand his trial, Xenodicus fled before his term of command was out, and took shelter at Gela.

Xenodicus' history in Acragas is like the history of Acragas in Sicily. Both had high aims, and both could win success when no great barrier stood in the way. But neither counted the cost of their undertaking, and defeat was fatal to both alike. Xenodicus, who was nothing more than a statesman, aspired to do a work that only the soldier's arm could have carried through: eager and energetic in prosperity, under ill luck he could as little repair his country's lot as his own. Pathetic in his weakness, he must none the less be honoured for his single-hearted and honest aims: the movement for federal freedom was not less noble because it was doomed from the outset, and with the fall of Xenodicus his cause perished.

It is uncertain whether Agathocles himself undertook any more land-fighting about this time; for the only hint of such action is given by a trivial tale in Diodorus a chapter or two after the record of the foregoing events. The story reappears twice in Plutarch without any clue, to time or place. "Once when Agathocles was attacking a not unimportant city, men shouted at him from the walls, 'Man of the pot and chimney, when wilt thou pay thy soldiers?' and he answered, 'When I take this city.' Afterwards he stormed the town and sold all the indwellers into slavery, remarking, 'If ye mock me again, I shall have a word to say to your masters'. "

Diodorus, whose version of the story stops short of the end, gives this incident rather as an example of Agathocles' wit than as a fact of regular history. The whole account sounds untrustworthy, and all that can be said is that the event is as likely to have happened at this time as at any other.

Agathocles was now victorious on both elements, and he made ready to start for Africa. But before setting sail, he once more took upon himself to cleanse the city of all taint of disloyalty,—though after two massacres and two sweeping decrees of banishment there can have been left but the smallest remnant of the oligarchic party, enough however, he thought, to open the gates to Deinocrates.

As to the manner in which Agathocles found out and punished these suspected foes, only untrustworthy accounts have come down. Diodorus tells the following story: "Agathocles, who had thus in a few days overcome his foes by sea and land, sacrificed to the gods and raised high the hopes of his friends. He laid aside in his cups all princely dignity, and mixed on a footing of greater equality with private persons whom he met. By this policy he not only hunted for popularity with the many, but by letting everyone speak boldly against him at their wine, he found out how each was minded, for the drink made the men speak the truth unguardedly."

Then follow some remarks as to the bearing of Agathocles: how he used to mimic his opponents in open assembly, thus setting the house laughing loudly, how he had no bodyguard, and so far from being ashamed of his earlier calling of potter, lost no chance of reminding his friends of his 'mean beginnings,—and so forth, until at last the main thread is taken up again. "Not but what, having found out which of his drunken boon-companions were opposed to his government, he invited them with other suspected Syracusans, in all about five hundred, to another banquet. Then he put the most active of his hired soldiers round them, and had them all slain."

Polyaenus' version is even sillier: "Agathocles heard that the leading Syracusans were plotting revolt, after his victory over the Carthaginians: and on the occasion of his public thanksgiving he invited the suspects, to the number of five hundred, to the banquet. The feast was lordly, and when the guests were mellow, Agathocles came forward in a saffron robe draped with a Tarentine shawl; he piped, harped and danced until the delight of the onlookers voiced itself in general applause. In the moment of merriment, feigning weariness he slipped out of the banquet to change his dress. Then a strong body of soldiers beset the hall; and a thousand drew sword, two standing behind each guest, and so slew the whole party."

In all this mass of detail there is little real history. Agathocles no doubt suspected certain men, and followed the not uncommon plan of slaying them at a banquet. The number of five hundred victims may also be right. It is also possible that the rejoicing and revelry after the two victories may have given Agathocles, or rather his spies, the means of overhearing unwary remarks against the tyranny.

But the remaining statements are nonsensical. That Agathocles by a modest bearing could have evoked in a few days a number of treasonable sayings, or that he played the harlequin before the assembly, or that he boasted of a trade which he never plied, or that he danced and sang like a stage-player before his guests, is not for an instant to be believed.

Having thus freed Syracuse from foes without and traitors within, Agathocles put his men on board ship and sailed straight over to join his main body in their quarters at Tunis. The number of his new troops is not stated, but the total army now reached 8000 Greek foot, and 8000, partly Celts, partly Etruscans, partly Samnites; besides these there were 10,000 Libyans, an untrustworthy arm likely to forsake the losing side; 1500 horse and some chariots. Now it has been mentioned that Eumachus" army of 8000, which was cut to pieces, had been about a third of the forces of Archagathus; nearly another third fell under Aeschrion; thus Archagathus would have saved rather more than 8000

foot, besides the garrisons left in Tunis; so that Agathocles' new troops were probably less than 6000.

The prince found his men mutinous and down-hearted, for Archagathus had been unable to pay them, and had put, them off with promises until his father's coming.

Agathocles called an assembly, and told the soldiers frankly that their only hope of pay lay in another victory over the Carthaginians. He led out his troops and set them in array for battle, but the Carthaginians sat in their fenced camps and would not come forth, fearing to fight with such a handful of desperate men. They knew too that supplies, so plentiful in their own quarters, were running low behind the walls of Tunis, and hunger would bring the Greeks down more easily than the sword.

At length Agathocles could wait no longer, but was forced as a last hope to try to storm the Carthaginian entrenchments. It appears from Diodorus' account that the two camps, one five and the other twenty miles away from Tunis, had been given up, and the whole Punic army was massed together on a rising ground, in close and threatening nearness to the Greek lines.

When the Carthaginians saw the Greeks coming on to attack them they formed their array on the slope just below their camp, and there awaited the shock. The ground and superiority of numbers were in their favour, and though the Greeks fought stoutly for some time, the discomfiture of the hired troops soon compelled the whole army to retire. The enemy chased them hotly down the slope, and sparing the Libyans, who were likely to come over in any case, they fell furiously upon the Greeks and Italians, slaying 3000 (it is said) before Agathocles could shelter inside Tunis.

That night the Carthaginians made a great thank offering to their gods, bringing them the fairest of the prisoners to be burned in the sacred fire; and a mighty blaze was kindled to consume the sacrifice. Then all at once a breeze sprang up and wafted the flames over the tabernacle of the god which was near the altar. This caught fire in an instant, and the general's tent which was next to it; and then all the officers' quarters were seized by the flames. Thus the whole camp was filled with uproar and tumult. Some tried to quench the fire, and others in striving to save their arms and belongings were caught by the flames and perished. The tents were all built of wattled reeds and grass, and the wind fanned the fire so that the help of man could no longer cope with it. Soon every part of the camp was alight, and many who tried to escape through its narrow lanes were burned alive, and so tasted the cruel doom which they had devised for their captives.

Such as made their way out of the camp were met by a new terror; for they saw by the flaring light a large body of soldiers drawing near. It was a party of Agathocles' Libyans, 5000 strong, who had forsaken the losing side, and were come to join the Carthaginians. But .the affrighted soldiers thought that the Greeks were about to fall upon them; and in this new alarm all discipline and reason were forgotten. Even the officers did not try to restore order, and the whole army fled in a maddened rout towards Carthage, the men striking or trampling down any that stood in their way. Five thousand met their death by fire or in the panic-stricken race. The shameful remnant threw themselves into Carthage, where the citizens naturally believed that the Greeks had won, and bade the runaways hasten through the gates, lest Agathocles' van should burst into the city in pursuit of them. Not till the morning was the truth made known.

The Greek army had not fared much better; for when the Libyans had seen the fire and heard the din, they dared not go forward, but shrank back towards the Greek lines. Agathocles' men saw them coming and thought that an attack by the Carthaginians was threatening. The tyrant bade stand to arms, and the host dashed out of the camp to meet the fancied enemy. Then they too caught sight of the flames and heard the shouting, and believed that the whole Carthaginian army was coming out against them. Terror set in and the Greeks made for their camp in headlong flight. Entangled with the Libyan detachment, the frightened soldiers struck out wildly at random, and a furious scuffle

ensued. For hours the fighting raged, until four thousand of the Greeks had fallen on that awful night.

We have followed Diodorus in our account, and although his version is highly rhetorical, there is not much ground for doubting its truth. The numbers however must be overstated. Perhaps the total losses on each side, in the fight and afterwards, amounted to 4000 for the Greeks and 5000 for the Carthaginians. A fire in an African camp was always a disaster, as the plan of Scipio Africanus proved later on, when he destroyed almost a whole army by setting light to their tents.

Agathocles' position in Africa was now quite hopeless. The defeat was followed by the loss of his last African allies, and the temper of his own troops was threatening. They bitterly chid Agathocles for leading them to waste their strength against overwhelming odds, and clamoured once more for their arrears of pay. There was no means of making peace with the Carthaginians, for they were so elated with their victory, that they had resolved to punish the daring invaders in such a way as to deter for ever the boldest foe from doing as Agathocles had done. Thus the prince not unnaturally feared that his own surrender would be called for as an earnest of truce: and he knew that his discontented men would not shrink from paying such a price. There was nothing left but to give up the foothold on the African shore and to sail home to Sicily. Agathocles might perhaps have taken most of his men with him. For the fleet of Carthage had been unable to hinder his last landing with five or six thousand men, and in the weeks or days since the sea-fight little repair to the ships can have been done. Still it would have been hard to take some of his soldiers home and to leave others behind, and perhaps the men were too downhearted to be trusted in another sea-fight. But most likely Agathocles had no time for these calculations: the soldiers were ready to hand him over to the foe at any moment, and instant flight afforded the only chance of safety.

Of the details of Agathocles' escape two versions have come down. Justin's is as follows: " When Agathocles saw that the men were angry with him for his rash attack, and fearing too that the old trouble about arrears of pay would arise, he slipped away at dead of night with no one but Archagathus, his son....The soldiers tried to run after him, but they were met by the Numidians and driven back into the camp; they did however seize Archagathus, who had missed his way and lost his father in the darkness. Agathocles sailed back to Syracuse with the same fleet that had brought him from Sicily, the guards on board going with him....Meanwhile in Africa the soldiers made a truce with Carthage after Agathocles' flight, and after slaying his sons, surrendered themselves."

Diodorus thus: "Agathocles resolved to slip away with a few followers, and was for taking his younger son Heracleides with him. Archagathus however he wished to leave, fearing that he might intrigue with his stepmother, and with his reckless temper plot against his father. But Archagathus suspected the plan and was prepared to reveal it to the troops... Therefore when Agathocles and his followers were ready to set out, he betrayed them to some of the officers. The latter assembled, and not only hindered their general's design, but informed the soldiers of his treachery. Enraged at this, the men took Agathocles and threw him into chains. Then there was uproar and din and tumult in the camp, and when night fell the alarm of a Carthaginian attack was given. A panic ensued, and each man armed and rushed out without waiting for orders. Meanwhile the keepers of Agathocles, who were as alarmed as the rest, and thought that someone had called them, led the prince forward loaded with chains: and when the crowd saw the sight they were moved to pity, and shouted for him to be set free. As soon as Agathocles was released, he ran to the landing-place with a few followers, and sailed away unseen in the stormy weather, about the setting of the Pleiads."

It does not seem at all likely that Agathocles really meant to leave his eldest son behind. So far the best understanding had ruled between them, and it is hard to believe that the troops would have slain Archagathus if he had served their cause by the betrayal of his father; thirdly Agathocles was at great pains later on to avenge the death of both

his sons on the kinsfolk of the African army; and lastly the gossip about Alcia and her stepson Archagathus is worth little in any case, and is much too far-fetched here to be taken seriously.

From these two accounts it may be gathered that Agathocles really meant to take both his sons with him. Before he could start, his plan was betrayed, perhaps by one of the officers. The men heard of this and put Agathocles under a guard; but when the alarm of a Carthaginian attack was given, Agathocles either managed to slip away, or else was set free by his men, who wanted their leader in the hour of need. Then Agathocles fled, but his sons both missed their way or came too late, and so fell into the hands of the soldiers.

The army was enraged at the news of Agathocles' flight, and at once had his sons put to death. Archagathus was slain by one Arcesilaus, who had formerly been a friend of the prince, and when Archagathus asked him, "What thinkest thou that Agathocles will do to thy children, who now slayest his son?" he answered, "It is enough if my children outlive the children of Agathocles"

The troops then chose leaders of their own, who at once began to treat with Carthage. The terms were thus fixed: the Greeks were to give up all Carthaginian towns still in their hands; and for these they were to be paid three hundred talents; as many as wished could enlist on the Carthaginian side at their old scale of pay, and the rest were to be settled at Solus in Punic Sicily, where the arm of Agathocles could never reach them.

Nearly all the Greeks came over on these terms; but a few of the outlying garrisons still hoped that Agathocles was coming to relieve them, and held out. These places however were soon stormed by the Carthaginians: the leaders were crucified, and the men were put in fetters, and forced to till again the lands that they had wasted in the war.

Thus Carthage, after four years' fighting at her own doors, was at last freed from the fear of Agathocles.

The African War as a Whole.

The end of the struggle was failure for Agathocles: the whole fruits of the war seemed to have been lost by the last disasters, and his position in Sicily had to be won back at the point of the sword. Carthage had come out uppermost in the fray; but of her spent state and sufferings during the slow years of recovery nothing is told us. It was unlucky for Agathocles, who had staked everything on the chance, that the moment for making an easy peace seemed always at hand, but never came. The effect of his first victory over the Carthaginians was nullified by the burning of his fleet. The death of Hamilcar was outweighed by the mutiny in the prince's camp. The fall of Ophellas did him less good than the harm caused by the failure of Bomilcar. At the height of his good fortune, after the taking of Utica and Hippo, Agathocles was recalled to help his friends at home; and the sea victory over the Carthaginians was more than counterbalanced by the ruin of his African army. Thus in a sense Agathocles was unlucky, but it may be that a greater man would have triumphed in spite of all. It will be clear to all readers of his story that Agathocles was dauntless as an adventurer, and heroic in face of the enemy; with other gifts of a true leader he was less highly-endowed. We hear several times of mutinies in his camp, and one ground of discontent seems to have been that he favoured his own sons to the slighting of other, perhaps abler, officers. Agathocles in fact suffered constantly in Africa from the lack of a good second in command;— whenever his back was turned, something went wrong.

Even Eumachus, the best of the officers, wasted his strength on useless raids into unknown lands, and gained nothing better than plunder. Such good leaders as Aga-

thocles had he seems to have been unwilling to trust. He quarrelled, as we shall see, with Pasiphilus; and Leptines and Demophilus were not allowed to carry on their wise defensive policy against the Acragantine league. In such an act as Agathocles' hurried crossing to Sicily, when of all times he was most needed in Africa, there are signs of a fickle and hasty temper naturally fatal to a great undertaking. Archagathus, as far as can be seen, was an ineffective commander, who had not the sense to stand his ground until his father returned; by his rash ambition the Sicilian cause was ruined.

Another trouble of Agathocles lay in the temper of his men. Of their mutinous spirit we have already spoken; it was needful at all times to keep them busy, but never to strain their endurance too far, and to satisfy them with plunder without allowing ease to spoil them for the field. An army of this kind might be disorganised by a single reverse.

The Carthaginians also made mistakes, but they seem to have grown wiser by trial. The hasty levy and offer of battle in face of the invaders is naturally comparable to the earliest acts of the Romans in withstanding Hannibal in Italy. It needed two or three defeats to teach the home power that patience alone could mend the shattered fortunes of the state. Then the policy of inaction came in, and the army of Agathocles was allowed to waste its strength until the time arrived for striking back. The recall of Hamilcar's men from Sicily was strategically wrong, though it is excused if the Carthaginians were in danger of starving unless their roads were kept open. But later we hear that the Punic government, for all the stress in Africa, still spared a force to keep the oligarchic cause alive in Sicily. A more serious mistake of the Carthaginians seems to have been their failure to garrison the chief towns outside the capital: for proper guards in Hippo, Utica, Neapolis and Hadrumetum would have helped greatly to bar the progress of Agathocles. But we know so little of the government of these places at the time, that there may have been some hindrance to the acceptance of Carthaginian help of which we are unaware.

But all these matters are of little weight beside the main and obvious cause of Agathocles' failure,—his lack of a strong fleet. It was the fate of almost all Syracusan rulers to discover too late that sea-power was essential to their greatness. The reason seems to have been that Syracuse was bound to become a Sicilian power first and a world power afterwards. Now in Sicily her empire was on the land, so that all her energies had to be centred in her army, and the fleet inevitably took second place. This can easily be seen in the history of Agathocles. On land he has an almost unbroken run of victories up to the defeat of the Himeras (itself due to his over-confidence in his own land-forces). On the water his ships are surprised by the Carthaginians, or at best keep out of their way; he raises just enough ships to carry his men over to the firm land of Africa, and then sets his fleet on fire as an encumbrance. His one victory at sea was gained by the help of the Etruscans.

There is no point in the war at which Agathocles' having a strong fleet would not have changed the whole face of affairs. The Carthaginian invasion of Sicily might have been stopped, or if the fleet were too late for this, at least the harbour of Syracuse might have been kept open. The attack on the Punic dominion, instead of being a series of inroads and small sieges, could have been driven home by a descent on the haven of Carthage itself; and such an attack would have been irresistible. Later too when Africa was lost, an unconquered Syracusan fleet might have carried the army safely home to Sicily.

Agathocles himself became aware of his need. He founded dockyards at Aspis and Hippo, and he allied himself with the Etruscan coast-towns. It is not unlikely that he hoped for a fleet with Ophellas. At the end of his life, when Agathocles planned another Punic war, his first act was to set building a fleet of two hundred ships. But again he had learnt his lesson too late.

Although the inroad of Agathocles was a failure in itself, it was a great event in the history of Europe. It showed men the possibility of attacking Carthage at her own doors,

and there were not wanting bold spirits to try the same venture. To Pyrrhus an invasion of Africa was a dream: its fulfilment was fatal to Regulus: but it was in store for the Scipios to march to victory in the footsteps of Agathocles.

CHAPTER IV.
AGATHOCLES' LAST WAR AGAINST THE SICILIANS.
307—305 BC

1.
Acts at Segesta and Syracuse.

AGATHOCLES reached Sicily with a small band of followers, and found Deinocrates at the height of his power. The prince resolved to show men that, though he had left Africa like a runaway, he had come back to Sicily as her master.

Where Agathocles landed is uncertain; perhaps he put ashore at Selinus, and waited there for his ships to bring him troops from Syracuse; at any rate his small forces could never have marched overland with the oligarchs in the field, and no more is heard of the fleet of Carthage. When part of his army had come, he marched to Segesta, a city of his own alliance. There he lacked for funds, and prepared to wring money out of the Segestans to fill his war-chest. The citizens numbered ten thousand men, and when Agathocles called on the rich to pay over a large share of their belongings, the public discontent voiced itself in an indignant assembly. The prince could not brook such a slight on his will; fear and disaster had made him ruthless, and anger drove him to the most gruesome deed that ever Greek wrought on the heads of his countrymen.

On a trumped up charge of treason Agathocles had the poorer citizens driven out of the city and slaughtered in cold blood on the banks of the Scamander. The wealthy were sent to the rack, that they might be forced to tell how much they owned. Some were broken on the wheel, some shot from spring-guns, others beaten with loaded whips until they died in shocking torment. Agathocles. even improved on the bull of Phalaris; he made a brazen bed to fit the shape of the body, and on this the victims, were clamped down, and a slow fire lighted beneath. Thus while Phalaris could only hear the shrieks of the sufferers, Agathocles glutted his cruel eyes with their tortured looks. Even the women were not spared if their wealth was coveted; but the historian shrinks from the hideous tale of their agonies. So great was the fear of Agathocles that some men hung themselves to forestall his harshness, and others fired their houses over their own heads, and perished with all their home-folk in the blaze. It was as if the whole people of Segesta had been cut off in one day. The boys and maidens were shipped over to Italy, and there sold to the Bruttians. Even the name of Segesta was changed in mockery to Dicaeopolis—Justitia, and the city was given to be the home of runaways. But the newcomers soon forgot that Agathocles had been their founder, and deemed themselves heirs of old Segesta and her nobler past.

After Agathocles had worked his will at Segesta the tidings reached him of his two sons' death at the hands of the African army. This so enraged him that he sent a few of his friends to Antander at Syracuse, bidding him slay all kinsfolk of the guilty soldiers. Antander carried out this fell command forthwith, and the city was once more filled with fear and bloodshed. Hitherto the victims had at least been grown men with some means of defending themselves, but now old men, women and babes were dragged down to the shore for wholesale destruction. The uncertainty of the doomed wretches as to their own fate made greater the misery of the hour; and to the Greek mind, the worst horror was the lack of proper burial: for the dead bodies were thrown out on the beach,

and none of their kinsfolk dared do the last rites, lest their act should bring suspicion on themselves. Thus the sea swallowed up the victims, and its waves were dyed red with Syracusan blood.

2.
Agathocles' Treaty with Carthage.
306 BC

Agathocles had not furthered his own prospects of victory by these ruthless deeds[2]; he lived in fear of losing such hold on Sicily as he still kept, but he could do nothing in the field against Deinocrates. Indeed after he had strengthened the guards in his few cities in western and northern Sicily, and raised what funds he could, there was nothing left but to stand his ground and to wait for a turn of the tide. Meanwhile Agathocles' oldest general, Pasiphilus, hearing the news of the disaster in Africa and the death of the prince's sons, made up his mind to forsake a lost cause, and to join Deinocrates before it was too late. He induced his men to go over with him, and so betrayed a few posts that he held for Agathocles. In this way he earned a welcome to the oligarchic side.

This loss drove Agathocles to despair, and he sent envoys to Deinocrates to make peace. He offered to give up Syracuse to the oligarchs and to lay down his own power, if only the two towns of Thermae and Cephaloedium might be left in his hands. Deinocrates would not hear of such a thing, but called on Agathocles to withdraw from Sicily altogether. The prince repeated his prayer, but Deinocrates was unyielding, and insisted at least that the children of Agathocles should be handed over as pledges of his good faith. No agreement therefore was reached.

Diodorus beholds with some astonishment the proud and ready-witted Agathocles driven at last to seek for safety on hard terms, and contrasts his poor spirit with the greater courage of the elder Dionysius. On the other hand Diodorus has no doubt as to the motives of Deinocrates in rejecting the prince's offer. "Deinocrates coveted supreme power for himself and was no friend of the popular cause at Syracuse: he was on the contrary very well pleased with his post of general at the moment. At the head of more than 20,000 foot and 3000 horse, with many great cities in his hands, he was called indeed the leader of the exiles, but in reality his power was kingly and his sway despotic. If however he went home to Syracuse, he must have become once more a private man, and one of the many—for freedom means equality—and he might have been overborne by the mob-orator of the hour; since the commons always oppose the boldness of anyone that speaks his mind plainly. Thus it would not be too much to say, that Agathocles had given up his power, but that Deinocrates was the cause of his regaining it."

Although some modern admirers of Agathocles have done their best to find noble and unselfish motives for his acts in the present case, it seems most likely that the crafty prince, finding himself outnumbered, wished to buy peace with a great show of concession, while keeping a foothold in Sicily, from which he could soon renew his intrigues and plans. That Agathocles meant to throw an apple of discord between Deinocrates and the oligarchs is also quite possible, but it is not at all likely that he succeeded. Diodorus at any rate is quite wrong in blaming Deinocrates for not taking Agathocles' proffered terms. It would have been utter folly after so long a war to have left the work half done by failing to drive Agathocles out of Sicily: and Deinocrates must have believed that a little firmness in treating would soon bring the prince to see reason.

In so doing Deinocrates made two mistakes: firstly he acted in a way displeasing to his own followers; and also he gave Agathocles a breathing-space of which he made very good use. Firstly, then, it is quite clear that the so-called exiles in Deinocrates' army were

no longer in reality outcasts from their homes. All the chief cities of the island, as Diodorus implies, were in the hands of Deinocrates, and this is another way of saying that the oligarchs had come into their own again, and only kept the field from hatred of Agathocles. They cannot in any case have loathed him as bitterly as did the Syracusan exiles, to whom their city was still closed. To the more part of Deinocrates' followers the hope of a speedy end of the war was very dear, and when the proposals came to nothing, men began to read double-dealing into his acts.

That Deinocrates, as Diodorus says, really dreaded going home to Syracuse as a private man, cannot easily be believed; for after all the exiles were oligarchs, and if they won the upper hand, the likelihood of Deinocrates' being out-faced in the assembly by a mob-leader was not very great. Moreover if Deinocrates wished to set up as a prince on his own account, it would have been foolish to intrigue with Agathocles, who could never have granted him more than a second place. Further the idea that Deinocrates simply wished the war to drag on so as to lengthen his own spell of leadership, is not sound; for Agathocles would have been ruined by delay as surely as by action, while, if he retrieved his fortunes, Deinocrates would once more have defeated his own ends. At this stage, therefore, it is found that Deinocrates acted with perfect good faith.

Thus the first mistake of Deinocrates was diplomatic; the other was an error in generalship: with his overwhelming forces he ought to have fallen upon Agathocles and driven him out of Sicily. The prince could not have withstood such an attack, especially as the loyalty of his allies was wavering: and the war might soon have been ended. But Deinocrates hoped to win full submission by patience, and, in so doing, he really gave Agathocles the means of regaining his power. For the latter, when he found that Deinocrates was firm, bethought him of a forlorn hope in seeking to patch up an agreement with Carthage. Diodorus gives the following account: "Agathocles, on learning the temper of Deinocrates, sent to the exiles and charged him with standing in the way of their freedom. He also sent envoys to the Carthaginians, and made peace on condition of giving back all the cities in Sicily that they had formerly held. For this he got a sum of money in gold worth 300 talents of silver, or, as Timaeus says, 150 talents, and 200,000 bushels of wheat."

It was quite natural that Agathocles should try to stir up ill-feeling against Deinocrates among the oligarchs; hut this was a trifling matter beside the remarkable success of his reconciliation with Carthage. Some strong motive must have driven the Punic government to this sudden change of front, but there is some uncertainty as to the real reason. Many have said that Carthage now began to fear Deinocrates more than Agathocles : but this view after all is unlikely. For Carthage had trusted and befriended the oligarchs for many years and can scarcely have forgotten that her worst enemies had always been tyrants. She must also have known that the success of the oligarchs rested chiefly on her own alliance and that her change of side would mean the return of Agathocles to power. It would thus be a mistake to say that Carthage meant to wear out both sides by helping the weaker. Another theory is that a change of party had taken place in the Carthaginian government, and that the side to which Hamilcar and Bomilcar had belonged, having regained the upper hand, was returning to its old policy of friendship with Agathocles. This is quite possible, but rests on no evidence whatever. On the whole it seems best to believe that Carthage snatched at the chance of pushing forward her bounds in Sicily at small cost, and trusted to the weariness following a long war to keep Agathocles from reconquering what he was then giving up. The sum of money was a trifle, and the corn, now peace reigned in Africa, was easily raised, and for this Carthage won back the old march of the Halycus, as we must believe; and Selinus, Segesta, Heraclea, and Thermae were all to pass into her hands. This was far more than the oligarchs would have granted, for Heraclea, at any rate, was actually theirs. On these terms peace was made; and the outcome proved that Carthage was not altogether wrong. Agathocles stood by the terms, and not till the very end of his life did he think of wresting from his new allies the cities that he now gave up to them.

The withdrawal of Carthaginian help was ruinous to the hopes of the oligarchs. It is uncertain, indeed, whether any land army had been fighting on their side up to that time; but the new conditions meant that no more such add would be forthcoming, and that the fleet of Carthage would not blockade the Syracusan harbour again. In other words Deinocrates had no longer the means of dealing a telling blow at Agathocles. The spirits of his army sank, and many men began to fall away or to buy their safety by secret promises to the enemy.

3.
The Campaign of Gorgium.
305 BC

The winter seems to have passed in these negotiations, and in the next year Agathocles took the field. He is said to have had no more than 5000 foot and 800 horse, while Deinocrates had 25,000 foot and 3000 horse. But many of the oligarchs were waverers, and not a few had already pledged themselves to come over to Agathocles.

The armies camped at a place called Gorgium; the site is unknown. Soon the fight began, for which the more vigorous oligarchs were naturally eager. For a long time the struggle went on without advantage to either side. Then more than 2000 of Deinocrates' men passed over to Agathocles. This act turned the scale. The oligarchs, fancying that the desertion was more widespread than it had really been, were seized with fright, and soon gave way before the fierce onset of the Agathocleans. Then a headlong flight set in. But the prince soon stayed the chase, and sent to offer fair terms to the worsted side. They must see, he said, that after such a defeat by his own smaller army it was vain to go on fighting. Let them lay down arms and return freely to their own homes.

The horsemen, who had fled in safety to a hill called Ambices, and such of the foot as had got clean away, lent no ear to these fair words. But the more part of the infantry, who had sheltered on a hill near the battlefield, were ready enough to listen. They now despaired of victory, and longed to see their homes and kinsfolk once more. A truce was made, and the men came down from the hill. Agathocles hade them pile arms, and then had the whole body surrounded and shot down. In this way 4000, or, as Timaeus said, 7000, victims met their death. The smaller number is doubtless nearer the' truth; but what led Agathocles to break faith with his prisoners is uncertain. Diodorus speaks of his act as one more example of that faithless cruelty, which ever preyed upon the defenceless. But this explains nothing. Agathocles was bringing the war to an end, and it would have been impolitic to have broken faith with any Greeks that were ready for peace. It has been suggested that the prisoners had themselves been the first to break the truce, and so brought down the vengeance of Agathocles. But to have taken such revenge for what can only have been a technical breach of the terms of surrender would have been just as impolitic as a slaughter for its own sake: and Agathocles would have had too much sense to embitter the Sicilians at the very moment when he was trying to win them over by his declaration of forgiveness. The truth must be that the victims belonged to a different class of men from the rest of the army. We know that the latter were not really exiles, since Agathocles could bid them return to their own cities. On the other hand it is said that the surrendered Greeks had yielded chiefly because they longed for their homecoming. Now the real outcasts were the Syracusan nobles, and it is likely that the vengeance of Agathocles fell designedly upon them, his oldest and bitterest foes.

Perhaps Deinocrates led his followers to trust the promises of Agathocles, knowing himself what lay beneath them, and thus bought back the favour of the prince.

This view explains the act of Agathocles, and also accounts for his treatment of Deinocrates. So far from punishing his rival, the tyrant at once forgave him and set him over part of his army: and it was noted that Agathocles, so faithless towards most men, ever treated Deinocrates with unswerving truth and goodwill. No doubt the prince could respect and value as a helper the man whose gifts of leadership and shifty dealing were so little inferior to his own.

Deinocrates and Agathocles then set themselves to the final reduction of Sicily. Pasiphilus who was holding Gela for the oligarchs was seized and slain. But whether he was betrayed by Deinocrates, of whose change of side, he may have been uninformed, or merely surprised in a sudden attack, is uncertain. From the smaller towns no further resistance was met; their surrender seems to have been quick and abject. How far Agathocles fulfilled the hopes raised by his promise of forgiveness, and how far his old harshness still made itself felt is another doubtful point. At Leontini, indeed, stern measures seem to have been taken; although the tale of Polyaenus is rather fanciful.

"When Agathocles had conquered the Leontines, he sent his general Deinocrates to the city, to say that Agathocles was trying to rival the fame of Dionysius, and wished to spare them, as Dionysius had spared the Italian Greeks who were defeated at the Helleporus. The Leontines believed this and gave their oaths. Then Agathocles came into the city, and bade them come to the assembly unarmed. The general put the question, 'Those who agree with the proposal of Agathocles hold up their hands.' Agathocles said: 'My proposal is: to slay everyone here.' There were ten thousand sitting; and forthwith the soldiers surrounded and slew all that were in the assembly."

From this story it may be gathered that Leontini yielded at discretion, and that Agathocles punished a great number of the citizens. The rest of the tale is hardly historical.

The subjection of Sicily was accomplished in two years' time. Nothing is said of the fate of Acragas, the one still powerful enemy of Agathocles. But it is most likely that Agathocles left her in peace. Her power was narrowed down to her own lands, and she could not hope to vie with Syracuse again, while with his own wearied troops a long siege would have been an unwise undertaking. No treaty is recorded, but one may well have been made; or perhaps the freedom of Acragas was in the terms of Agathocles' agreement with Carthage. For, although nothing of the kind is mentioned, it is quite possible that the Punic government may have done this last service to a former ally. Outside Acragas the sway of Agathocles reached to the marches of the Punic dominions.

CHAPTER V.

AGATHOCLES AS KING,

1.

HIS Government.

The true kingly power of Agathocles dates from the pacification of Sicily after the campaign of Gorgium; but it is uncertain when he took the name of king. Diodorus dates this after the fall of Ophelias in 307 Antigonus certainly took the title in that year after his victory over Ptolemy. But when Diodorus implies that the other Successors followed his lead forthwith, he is undoubtedly mistaken. Ptolemy reckoned his years of kingly rule from November 305. Ptolemy's example was followed by Seleucus and Lysimachus and Cassander. Last of all Agathocles, who felt himself in no way inferior to these rulers, added the royal title to his own name. It is therefore not likely that he called himself king before 304, when the Sicilian war was over; but it is even possible that his assumption of the name falls still later.

In Syracuse Agathocles seems to have ruled and behaved very much as he had done since the beginning of his tyranny. His bearing was still genial and popular. He wore no diadem, but often put on a myrtle wreath, to which a priesthood entitled him, but which, as his enemies were unkind enough to say, was meant to hide his unsightly baldness. He put his name on the coins of Syracuse, but not, as far as is known, his head. Thus it happens that no true likeness of Agathocles has reached modern students.

Of the nature of his rule outside Syracuse very little is known. There seems to have been an end of slaughter and plunder, and so far the new order must have furthered the welfare of the island. To these later years of Agathocles the oft-quoted words of Polybius would best apply. "What writer has failed to record that Agathocles, the tyrant of Sicily, who in his first undertakings and in the establishment of his power seemed to be the harshest of men, afterwards, when his sway was firmly grounded, is thought to have become of all men the gentlest and mildest?" Before the battle of Gorgium it would have been a mockery to use such words of Agathocles, but to the years of his unchallenged rule they may not be ill fitted. This period was the most glorious and noteworthy of his life; but as the history of Diodorus is here known to us only from fragments, we are very ill-informed on the course of events.

2.

Agathocles' Acts on the Liparean Islands.

304 BC

In the year 304 Agathocles seems to have wished to assert his sway over the Lipari islands. He sailed down upon them in peace time, and called for the payment of fifty talents of silver. The islanders had no means of withstanding the tyrant, and at once placed in his hands such sums as could be raised. They asked Agathocles to wait for the payment of the balance that they might not be forced to draw upon temple hoards. To this plea Agathocles refused to listen; and obliged the Lipareans to give up some costly objects which stood in their townhall; for all that some of these treasures were labelled as offered to Hephaestus and others to Aeolus. With this plunder Agathocles' set sail. But heaven wreaked this godless act on the tyrant's head. For Aeolus the god of the winds,

raised a mighty storm on the open sea, and the treasure-laden ships, eleven all told, were sent to the bottom. The god of fire nursed his wrath for long years; but his vengeance overtook Agathocles in the end: for when the king lay speechless in his last illness, he was placed still living on a burning pyre, and thus fearfully paid his debt to Hephaestus.

In this account of Diodorus the moral of the tale rather overshadows the facts. It was of course a common belief in old times that heaven took upon itself to punish impiety, and often chose to suit the vengeance to the crime, so that all men could see for themselves that the wicked man had incurred a merited fate. Examples of such ways of the gods have already been remarked in Agathoclean history, and whether or not these pious fancies were always the work of Timaeus, it is at least possible that the story may have been a little embellished to point the moral. That Agathocles wrung a sum of money out of the islanders is clearly historical. But the other details are far from certain. The sacred treasures are not taken from a shrine as would have been natural, but merely from the town-hall; and this suggests that the plea of sparing votive offerings may have been nothing but the Lipareans' excuse for their short payment. At the same time Agathocles was not the man to shrink from sacrilege if he wanted money; in this he was only following Dionysius. It is also possible that the shipwreck was a fable and that the king came safely home with his. spoils.

3.
The Adventures of Cleonymus.
304—303 BC

After his sorry exploit in the Liparean islands, Agathocles lived for some time in peace. As far as Sicily is. concerned, the next few years are a blank, but it will be worth while to look further abroad and to trace the causes. that led Agathocles to step out from his island-realm into, the wider field of Hellenistic politics.

In 305 the Samnites had made peace with the Romans; but the Lucanians, Rome's allies, whose freedom the new treaty safeguarded, went on with their war against Tarentum. The Greek republic, unwilling as usual to sacrifice comfort to the demands of a great undertaking, bethought, herself once more of seeking a champion from Sparta. An opening for western adventure was still alluring to needy princes, and the call of Tarentum was at once taken up by Cleonymus, the son of Cleomenes. Cleonymus was the brother of Acrotatus, who had failed to save Sicily from Agathocles, and when Acrotatus died before his father. Areus his son was chosen to be king instead of Cleonymus. Thus Cleonymus, having lost his hope of kingship at Sparta, was glad to seek his fortune elsewhere.

The Tarentines sent a fleet to fetch Cleonymus, and handed him a sum of money, with which he hired 5000 troops on the recruiting-ground of Taenarum. Then he sailed to Tarentum and hired other 5000. He also enrolled the home force to the number of 20,000 foot and 5000 horse. The Messapians and most of the Italian Greeks threw in their lot with the new deliverer. Cleonymus survived an attempt on his life made by two Peucetians; and boldly took the field. His mighty array so frightened the Lucanians, that before a blow had been struck, they made peace with Tarentum. This peace led to a treaty with Rome : for when once the Samnites were quiet, Rome cared little what went on in the south of Italy, and she had no wish to fight with Cleonymus unless he became troublesome. At this time must probably be placed the famous agreement that forbade the Romans to send warships round the Lacinian headland.

Cleonymus was now at the height of his power, and the object of his coming being thus easily attained, he found himself out of employment. He was unjust enough to use his position to the ruin of a Greek city. Metapontum had been almost alone among the Italiot states in standing aloof from Cleonymus' undertaking, and he now persuaded the Lucanians to march into the Metapontine lands. Soon afterwards he drew near himself, and the city yielded at discretion. Cleonymus entered Metapontum, "as a friend," and wrung from the citizens no less than six hundred talents. He also carried off two hundred of the fairest and noblest maidens as hostages. This wanton and outrageous act showed how far Cleonymus had sunk from the Spartan ideal. He had left off his Spartan dress, and lived in luxury, tyrannising over his friends and letting his forces lie idle. At last ambition roused him from his stupor, and he formed the bold plan of crossing to Sicily, and freeing the country from Agathocles. But for some reason the carrying out of this design was put off.

Cleonymus seems instead to have gone on a plundering raid in Italy; of his adventure a much confused account is given by Livy. Cleonymus first took an unknown town called Thuriae in the land of the Sallentini; this was perhaps the place called Thyraeum by the Greeks, which lay between Tarentum and Brundisium. From this point he was apparently driven out by the Romans, although the reports varied. One story was that the consul Aemilius met and routed Cleonymus, and left Thuriae in freedom. Another related that the dictator Junius Bubulcus marched into the Sallentine land, and that Cleonymus fled to his ships without even facing the enemy. All this sounds suspicious.

It was perhaps after this failure that Cleonymus planned a greater undertaking. He sailed to Corcyra, which had been free since 312, took the city and wrung a sum of money from the citizens. He then guarded the place strongly, and resolved to use it as a base from which he could watch the course of Greek politics. So formidable did he seem on this point of vantage that Cassander and Demetrius the Besieger (then installed as the deliverer of Greece) both sought his alliance. But Cleonymus listened to neither.

Soon he heard that his Italian and Tarentine allies were wavering, and hastened back to punish them. It is uncertain to what this defection really amounted; some have thought that the treaty between Rome and Tarentum had only just been made, and that Cleonymus felt this to be against his own interests. Anyhow Cleonymus left a guard in Corcyra, and sailed back to Italy. He took a nameless place which the "barbarians," as Diodorus says, were guarding, enslaved the indwellers and harried the land.

Then Cleonymus, finding perhaps that the loyalty of Tarentum had been unduly suspected, sailed for a roving cruise up the Adriatic. The western shore was almost harbourless, and the Dalmatian creeks swarmed with pirates, so that Cleonymus found an easier prey in the land of the Veneti. He sailed into the river Meduacus, and leaving at last his bigger boats as the water grew shallow, he took his men up stream in skiffs. Soon they came to three hamlets of the Patavians that stood on the river's bank about forty miles from its mouth. These were taken, sacked and burned. When the news reached Patavium itself, the men, whom the nearness of the Gauls obliged to be ever active in arms, at once made ready to withstand the raiders. Half marched down stream to attack the boats in the naval camp fourteen miles from the town, and the rest fell upon the plunderers. Both strokes succeeded. The land army of Cleonymus was routed and the boats were driven to shelter on the further bank of the river. Thus the flight of the Greeks was cut off, and an onset of the Veneti from the east barred the way to the main fleet. A great number of captives were taken, and from these it was found out that Cleonymus and the fleet were only three miles downstream. Thereupon the Patavians manned flat-bottomed boats and gave chase. Many of the Greek ships ran aground in the shoals and were set on fire; others were surrounded and taken, and not more than a fifth of the fleet escaped with Cleonymus after a desperate pursuit right down to the river's mouth.

The ships' beaks were taken to Patavium and set up in the temple of Juno, where they had been seen by many in Livy's own day; and a solemn feast with a boat race or sham fight on the river kept up the memory of the city's deliverance.

This reasonable account of Livy is undoubtedly sound; but it is uncertain whether Diodorus' narrative relates to the same or to another mishap of Cleonymus. It is said that he took a place called Triopium (of which nothing is known elsewhere) and a thousand captives. He was then set upon at night by the barbarians, and lost 4000 killed and 1000 taken. At the same time his fleet, moored near the camp, suffered from a storm and lost 20 ships. It is certainly tempting to believe that Triopium might have been the general name for the three hamlets on the Meduacus, and that Diodorus, who used a Greek source friendly to Cleonymus, understated the number of casualties. But the whole matter is very uncertain.

Whatever the exact nature of Cleonymus' disasters had been, he had no longer any foothold in Italy, and hastened back to Corcyra.

4.
Agathocles' Wars in Corcyra and Italy.
c. 300 BC

The next events are wrapped in mystery. No more is heard of Cleonymus in the west; but it is said that Demetrius had been in Corcyra before his return to Athens in 303—2. Whether Demetrius had seized the island while Cleonymus was up the Adriatic, and so obliged Cleonymus to sail home to Sparta without landing, or the Corcyreans had themselves driven him out and welcomed Demetrius as a friend, without his interfering in the government, is uncertain. For the moment at any rate Corcyra was a free state.

But before long new troubles arose. When Demetrius was busy on the campaign of Ipsus, or perhaps soon after his defeat, Cassander saw his chance of bringing the island once more under the Macedonian sway. He swooped down upon Corcyra with his fleet; his troops landed and beleaguered the city. The place was on the brink of capture, when Agathocles came to save it. Perhaps the Corcyreans had themselves called him in, fearing a Sicilian lord less than the hated Macedonian. At any rate Agathocles and his ships brought a quick deliverance. He fell upon Cassander's fleet and a furious struggle set in. The Sicilians thirsted to show that their valour, already dreaded by Phoenician and Italian, was more than a match for the prowess of the Macedonians, the conquerors of Asia. And so the outcome proved, for the fleet of Cassander was thoroughly worsted, and every ship set on fire. This blow brought on such a panic among the land troops on Corcyra that Agathocles might, it is said, have landed his army and cut the whole force to pieces, but, not knowing his own chance, he did no more than set up a trophy on the shore. But it would probably be nearer the truth that Agathocles, seeing Corcyra and its besiegers in his power, refrained from useless bloodshed, and rightly claimed a complete victory. Cassander must have been allowed to withdraw under terms, and the island was left in the power of Agathocles.

How far the Corcyreans were content with him as a master is uncertain, the only information on the matter being a tale in Plutarch. It is said that the Corcyreans asked Agathocles why he wasted their land. "Why," said Agathocles, "because your fathers gave shelter to Odysseus." And further when the men of Ithaca complained that the Sicilian soldiers had been stealing their sheep, he answered, "Well, when your king came to Sicily, he did worse than that; he blinded the shepherd." If Agathocles thus jestingly posed as the avenger of Polyphemus, it is not to be believed that he really behaved as an enemy to

Corcyra. His sallies were only meant to excuse the unbridled greed of his hired soldiers, and his own inability to check it. Corcyra was far too valuable an outpost for Agathocles to trifle wantonly with the feelings of the indwellers.

It may have been about this time that Ptolemy sought the friendship of Agathocles by offering him the hand of his step-daughter Theoxena, who seems to have been the daughter of Berenice by her first husband. Agathocles accepted the offer, and he may have wedded the princess, his third wife, a year or two later. This step of Ptolemy is a sign of his crafty policy: Cassander was his friend, but Cassander's power seemed to be growing too great: therefore Ptolemy joined hands with Cassander's foeman.

Agathocles was soon recalled from Corcyra by news of a rising among his Ligurian and Etruscan troops in Sicily. The men had been left under the command of Agathocles' grandson Archagathus, or perhaps of his son Agathocles', and were clamouring for their pay. The king himself set upon the mutineers with his other soldiers, and slew them to the number of 2000. This act, according to Diodorus, angered the Bruttians; and the reason may have been that the discontented Italian troops had made common cause with the enemies of Agathocles beyond the strait. There is no ground for believing that Agathocles had been in league with the Bruttians against the Greek cities. He now declared war on the Bruttians, and laid siege to a town called Ethae. But while he lay before it, the barbarians raised a strong force, and fell upon him by night, so that Agathocles lost 4000 men and had to withdraw to Syracuse.

After this rebuff Agathocles seems to have sat peaceably in Syracuse for some time; but his diplomacy was busily at work, and presently he gained another powerful ally. About 297 Pyrrhus was sent home from Egypt by Ptolemy with men and money to claim the throne of Epirus. There he set himself up as joint ruler with Neoptolemus. At the same time mention is made of the betrothal of Agathocles' daughter, Lanassa, to Pyrrhus. It is therefore quite likely that Ptolemy brought about this union, hoping at once to have a trustworthy agent in Epirus, and to draw closer the bonds of his friendship with Agathocles.

Before the wedding was held, Agathocles made a surprise attack on Croton. The event is thus narrated. Agathocles got together his naval forces and crossed to Italy, meaning to descend upon Croton. He sent a messenger to Menedemus, the prince of that place, who was his friend, telling him that the Crotoniates need not fear. In reality Agathocles meant to besiege Croton, but he pretended that he was sending his daughter, Lanassa, in royal array to her wedding. In this way he took Croton quite unprepared. Then he laid siege to the place, building lines round it from sea to sea; and with artillery and mines he overthrew the strongest of the defence works. The Crotoniates were so alarmed at the sight that they opened the gates and let in Agathocles with his army. The town was given up to plunder and slaughter.

If Menedemus, as has been thought, was the same as the Crotonian democrat who may have been acting with Agathocles in his Italian campaign, and who helped to defeat the Crotonian oligarchs about 317 B.C., then his friendship with Agathocles would have been of very long standing, and some strong reason must have led Agathocles to turn against so useful an ally. What plans were brewing in the tyrant's mind can only be guessed. It may be that he began to feel that Corcyra was too far off to be a useful outpost for Syracuse, and this may have led him to undertake the foundation of a south-Italian empire, of which Greek and Italian were alike to be subject.

It has been objected that the means taken by Agathocles to cajole Menedemus were childish and that Diodorus' statement of the unpreparedness of the town is disproved by the stubborn resistance that was offered. But it seems most likely that Agathocles really tried to lull the suspicion of the Crotoniates to rest, but only succeeded so far that his onset was unexpected: it had to be followed up by a regular siege. A town so open to

attack as Croton can never have been in a state of utter unreadiness; and without treason within the walls a complete surprise would have been hopeless.

After the fall of Croton Agathocles widened his influence in Italy by a league with the lapygians and Peucetians. These people had an ill name for roving, and Diodorus says that the prince lent them ships for their evil trade, and took himself a share of the booty. From this statement there is every reason to believe that a regular alliance was formed, and that a desultory war of plunder and raids was carried out by the joint forces on the Italian coast. Agathocles must have aimed at something more vigorous than robbery on the high seas. Indeed he seems to have visited the Peucetians' land himself, which proves that their friendship was a matter of some weight to him. It is possible that these Apulian tribes were really calling in the help of Agathocles against the Romans, who for the moment were too busy with the Etruscans and Samnites to take any action in southern Italy. The settling of Venusia a few years later with a strong body of Latin colonists shows that the Romans were anxious to strengthen their hold on these lands.

Soon after these events the wedding of Pyrrhus and Lanassa was actually held; and Corcyra was handed over as Lanassa's dowry. Thus Agathocles hoped to have placed his dependency in safe keeping.

But the union was brief and unhappy. Lanassa indeed bore Pyrrhus a son named Alexander, but presently she grew sick of her husband, who, like other Hellenistic princes, was ready to marry any number of wives, Greek or foreign, for political reasons. The princess withdrew to Corcyra, and sent a message to Demetrius with flattering proposals, knowing, as Plutarch says, that of all rulers he had most taste for such adventures. Demetrius at that time was fairly set upon the throne of Macedonia, and the chance of winning a bride and the precious island at the same time was most alluring. It will be seen that Pyrrhus in allowing Lanassa to retire to her own dower land virtually accepted the severance of their wedlock, for in Greek law a man could be rid of his wife if he repaid her marriage-portion. Demetrius sailed to Corcyra with an army, wedded Lanassa, and after leaving a guard in the chief city once more departed.

5.
Agathocles' last Italian War.

After his success at Croton Agathocles may have spent some time in raising forces to carry out an undertaking on a greater scale. He seems to have planned nothing less than the conquest of Bruttium. This is proved firstly by the large muster of troops, and again by the long digression of Trogus on the nature and ways of the Bruttians, of which a bald summary has come down in Justin. Such an account must have been meant to lead up to the story of a great campaign, and no mere plundering inroad. The occasion of the outbreak was an appeal from Tarentum to Agathocles. It was to no unselfish mission that he was called; so valuable a base as Tarentum would be a great help in the war; and if the Tarentines had little ground for trusting Agathocles, the prospect of his treason or harshness was less dreadful than the fear of utter destruction at the hands of the Bruttians.

Agathocles raised 30,000 foot, 3000 horse, and a strong fleet. This ready-making frightened the Bruttians, who sent envoys to him with an offer of friendship. The king dined the envoys, at Messena apparently, and promised to give them his answer on the morrow. But while the banquet went on, the army was quickly ferried over the strait, and before the next day dawned, Agathocles himself had slipped away on shipboard.

The Syracusan fleet was put under Stilpo, and perhaps with the help of the Apulian allies, began to raid the Bruttian shore. But before much had been done, a storm sprang up in which Stilpo lost most of his ships.

Agathocles himself marched against Hipponium, from which movement it seems likely that he was using Tarentum as his base. The walls were breached by his siege engines, resistless as usual, and the city fell. The Bruttians were alarmed at this loss, and sent to Agathocles begging for peace. The king might not have been willing to grant their prayer, had he not been already sickening for his last illness. As it was Agathocles took 600 hostages and left them with a guard in Hipponium. Then he sailed home to Syracuse. But soon the Bruttians forgot their fright, and mustering in full force, fell upon the Sicilian army, which was cut to pieces. The hostages were set free, and Bruttium shook off the yoke of Agathocles. It is likely, however, that Hipponium itself was not lost to his sway; for Strabo speaks of a dockyard there, built by order of Agathocles, and this work must have needed some months to carry out. Clearly the king dreaded the fickleness of his Tarentine friends and wished to have a harbour of his own on the Italian coast. Another reason was that Bruttium, the land of forests, was the best possible place for ship-building. Croton no doubt also remained in his hands, so that the toil of the war had not been thrown away.

6.

Agathocles' last Acts and his Death.

290—289 BC

The union of Lanassa and Demetrius, whatever Agathocles may have thought of it, was a deed done, about which it was useless to grumble. Agathocles therefore resolved to seek the friendship of Demetrius. He sent his son, who bore his own name, to the Macedonian court with offers of a regular alliance. The days were passed when Demetrius, or his flatterers, had mocked Agathocles as the lord of one poor island. He caught eagerly at the Syracusan king's offer, which seemed to open a grand prospect of western extension. He welcomed the young Agathocles with every mark of honour, put a kingly robe on him, and loaded him with gifts. When it was time for Agathocles to fare homewards, Demetrius sent his own adviser and friend Oxythemis with him, to take from king Agathocles his formal consent to the league, although, says Diodorus, what Demetrius really wished was to spy out the state of Sicily. Agathocles had a further end in view, when he sent his son to Demetrius. He wished to mark out Agathocles as his heir, and in this solemn recognition and investiture by Demetrius the rights of the younger Agathocles were clearly established. It has even been thought that the old king appealed to Demetrius to make safe the succession for his son, and that Oxythemis came for this very purpose. But the avowed motive of Demetrius in sending Oxythemis to secure confirmation of the alliance was probably his real or at least his chief reason.

It has already been said that Agathocles had two young children by his Egyptian wife, of whom one at least must have been a son. He now sent both Theoxena and her children home to Ptolemy. The reason for this course is thus explained by Justin. Agathocles' grandson Archagathus was a man of violent temper; and the old king feared that he would slay Theoxena and her children to win the kingdom for himself. Others have thought that Agathocles, wishing his own son of that name to be the next ruler, got rid of the young children to clear the way for the succession; or else that in befriending Demetrius Agathocles was defying Ptolemy, and followed this up by sending away his Egyptian wife so as to leave Ptolemy no opening for interference in Sicily. But, as Justin notes that Theoxena was sent away with her royal array, retinue, and treasure—or in

other words, with every mark of honour—the last view is not very likely. So remote a power as Sicily might have kept on good terms both with Demetrius and with Ptolemy.

The parting scene was mournful; for Theoxena was losing her queenly state, and seemed to be leaving Agathocles at the mercy of his quarrelsome heirs. But the account in Justin of Theoxena's tears and protestations is such a mixture of false sentiment and tasteless rhetoric, as must surely have been made up by one of the Roman historians.

About this time Agathocles planned a fresh war against Carthage, and as his weakness in his earlier years, had been lack of a proper fleet, he now resolved to make a bid for sea-power, to sweep the Punic corn-ships off the water, and to land another army in Africa. It is also possible that Carthage too was making ready for another war, and that the armament which invaded Sicily not. long after Agathocles' death, was already mustering.. Agathocles had a fleet of two hundred ships nearly equipped, some triremes, some even of huger build. But. when the forces were ready, a fresh attack of sickness put. a stop to the king's undertaking.

The last days of Agathocles' life were embittered by a feud between his son Agathocles and his grandson Archagathus. The father of the younger man was that. Archagathus who fell in Africa, and the son though still very young was remarkable for bravery and fierceness. Most of the military command seems to have been in his hands, and he was at that time in charge of an army at Aetna, which had perhaps been raised for the African war.

The king sent for his own son, and proclaimed him at Syracuse as his heir. Then he sent him with a letter to Archagathus, who was to hand over the command of the army to his uncle. Seeing himself thus slighted Archagathus was driven into a murderous plot. He happened to be going to offer a sacrifice on an island off the coast near Aetna; before starting, he sent a ship with an invitation to his uncle to come to the sacred feast with him. Agathocles came, and they sat down to the banquet together. Late in the evening, when Agathocles was drunk, Archagathus rose up and slew him. His body was cast into the sea; but those that found it knew it again, and sent it to Syracuse.

At the same time it is said that Archagathus plotted the death of his own grandfather. Diodorus relates that the king had a courtier, one Meno, who had survived the fall of his home, Segesta, and for his good looks had been taken into the king's service as a page. But the wrongs of Segesta rankled in his heart, and he awaited the day for wreaking them on his master. To him Archagathus now sent word to carry off Agathocles by poison. It is said that the king used to clean his teeth after supper with a feather, and Meno dipped this in a biting poison, so that when Agathocles put the feather into his mouth it smarted; but instead of getting rid of the venom, he plied the feather all the more vigorously. From this his gums broke out into abscesses, and he suffered horribly with over-growing pain.

This story is for two reasons improbable: it is evident from Justin that Agathocles was seriously ill when he came home from Bruttium, and the symptoms mentioned suggest a case of cancer. There was thus little to be gained by hurrying on a death which could not have been delayed more than a few weeks. It seems most likely that, as the illness was somewhat rare, Meno was popularly accused of murder, and his later crime in killing Archagathus lent colour to the charge.

When Agathocles saw his dead son and heard how his end had been brought about, he called a last assembly of the people. There he denounced the outrageous deed of Archagathus, calling upon the people to punish the murderer. With his last public utterance Agathocles named no heir to his power, but proclaimed the renewal of the democracy.

After this the old king sank fast, and soon lay speechless and unable to move. At the last Oxythemis had his body laid on a pyre, and some said that Agathocles still

breathed when the fire consumed him. This was believed to be the judgment of Hephaestus for the godless act of Agathocles on the Lipari Islands.

Agathocles died seventy-two years old. Soon after his death the Syracusan people escheated his property and tore down all his statues. Meno, the reputed murderer, fled from Syracuse and took shelter in the camp with Archagathus. But the presence of his fellow-plotter made Meno feel unsafe, and in no long time he murdered the young prince and took command of the army himself.

Thus the whole house of Agathocles was involved in ruin.

7.
Agathocles' Character and Monuments.

Agathocles was above everything else a man of action and a soldier. Through all his restless life he was never at peace for more than a few years together. Yet none of his wars can be called purposeless or merely adventurous; there was a well-laid plan underlying his wildest undertakings, and through all his acts his ambition centred in himself. There is something splendid in Agathocles' resolute advance to the highest place, his dauntless valour, his championship of a discredited party, his stern destruction of all that stood in his way. But whether for this shocking record of bloodshed he had the supreme excuse of having ruled Sicily for her own good, is unhappily a matter on which there is little evidence. Polybius' testimony that Agathocles, when his rule was safe, became the mildest of all tyrants, will not help us here. For any monster might become humane when there were no enemies left to punish. Not that Agathocles ever forgave the Syracusan nobles; for it needed another Carthaginian invasion to secure their homecoming after his death. Even his good treatment of Deinocrates was noticed as something unwonted; and there, as has been seen, the tyrant's motives were by no means disinterested.

That Sicily fell into confusion when Agathocles was no more, is a proof that no one else was strong enough to keep order. But it is also a sign that his rule, resting purely on force, or at most on the unnatural alliance between tyranny and democracy, had no sure foundations. It is also clear that the treacherous grandson who upset all the king's plans, had copied too well the nature of Agathocles himself. There have been few men as great as Agathocles whose work has fallen so utterly to the ground in so short a time. Gelo and Dionysius not only founded but handed on their power. Agathocles declared that his kingship must die with him; and the first act of the new republic was to throw down all memorials of their popular tyrant. It may be true that in such hard times no fixed government could maintain itself in Sicily: but it is also true that such a course of slaughter and injustice as Agathocles had, could never secure a stable throne nor endear the ruling house to the hearts of the subjects. It was the tragedy of Agathocles' life that he saw on his death-bed the downfall of his own work, and that the recipients of his highest favours had become his worst enemies. There was an element of divine justice in such a fate.

As a general Agathocles was at his greatest. In battle by land or sea he was skilful in his dispositions, quick in action, and dauntless in bravery. It has been seen that in the fight on the Himeras he was misled by overconfidence. In his later engagements, as far as can be judged from scanty accounts, he seems to have adopted the most scientific tactics of his age. In the rout of Bomilcar and Hanno Agathocles clearly followed the Macedonian plan by falling upon the Sacred Band with his own division, and letting the weaker parts of the line stay out of action. Only the cavalry charges of Alexander are wanting in this case. In sieges Agathocles seems to have been almost irresistible: a very great number of strong places such as Utica, Croton and Hipponium were breached by his artillery. Here again we see the work of a worthy contemporary of Alexander the

overthrower of Tyre, and Demetrius the besieger. When Agathocles met Cassander in battle, his signal victory proved that he was indeed a match for the best tacticians of the Greek east. His success was all the more praiseworthy for being won with unruly hired troops and unwilling levies of Syracusans.

In public life Agathocles was a vigorous speaker, quick to rouse the feelings of the army or assembly. His manner seems to have been direct and fiery, sometimes theatrical. As ruler of Syracuse his bearing was jovial and popular; as has already been seen he put on no kingly airs, was easy of access, and did not scorn to amuse the mob by a jest.

Apart from his great stroke of diplomacy, the peace with Carthage in 306, Agathocles gave little sign of any high order of statesmanship. He failed to manage Ophelias, and had to kill him instead; his defiance of Rome led to nothing; and in his eastern relations he seems to have been ready to join hands with any prince who would treat him regally. The sending away of Theoxena and her children amounted to a confession of failure to regulate matters in Sicily; and the embroilment of Agathocles' heirs makes the same thing only too clear. In short Agathocles was a great general, but as a king he was only moderately successful: with far greater military gifts than Dionysius he effected very much less.

Of Agathocles' private life little is known. Neither the slander of Timaeus recorded in Suidas and Justin, nor yet such a sentimental affair as the farewell of Theoxena can be taken at all seriously. It can only be said that we often hear of Agathocles at his wine, and he seems to have been a merry boon-companion. If any truth underlies the stories of his early trade as a potter, it may be this, that he scorned all show of luxury and refinement, and, as Plutarch suggests, liked best to drink from earthenware.

For art and letters Agathocles seems to have cared nothing. The greatest Sicilian writers of the age, such as Timaeus, Dicaearchus, and Euhemerus, lived and thought away from their troubled home in the milder air of Greece itself'. Callias alone and Antander worked under the eye of Agathocles, that men might know of his deeds in after years. In this neglect of men of letters Agathocles made a break in the tradition of Sicilian princes, which had been so splendidly established by Hiero, carried on by Dionysius, the Elder and the Younger, and which was afterwards revived by Hiero II. One comic poet, called Hermippus or Boeotus, was allowed to write his poor verses to amuse the Syracusans; until he too was banished by Agathocles.

As a builder Agathocles was more noteworthy. Besides restoring the walls and outworks of Syracuse, where this was needed, he set up a huge building on Ortygia, which is thus described: "There was in Syracuse the so-called House of the Hundred Beds on the Island: this surpassed in size and workmanship all other buildings in Sicily. Agathocles the tyrant set it up. Owing to the size of the erection, it overtopped the temples of the gods, and received a mark of the divine displeasure in being struck by lightning. There were also the towers by the Little Harbour with inscriptions in mosaic, giving the name of the builder who was Agathocles."

The towers were naturally meant for the defence of the harbour, and the other building must have been Agathocles' own dwelling. Of these works nothing now remains, for the ruin called the House of Agathocles has not the slightest claim to the title. It is also possible that Dionysius' castle at the entrance to Ortygia was rebuilt by Agathocles.

But the king was a destroyer as well as a builder. It is said that he wrecked the monument of Gelo. This stood without the city, and was girt with nine towers.

The grave itself had been overthrown by the Carthaginians; and Diodorus states that Agathocles through envy of Gelo had all the towers pulled down.

One other monument of Agathocles is mentioned. This was a picture set up in the temple of Athena in Ortygia, where it stayed until the time of Verres. Cicero speaks of it thus: "There was a cavalry fight of king Agathocles painted on panels; with these panels

the walls of the temple were covered. There was nothing more famous than this picture, and no sight at Syracuse reckoned worthier to be viewed?' This painting had survived the sack of Syracuse under Marcellus, but it was carried off by the godless greed of Verres. This picture must have been painted on wooden panels, and most likely it was done in the lifetime of Agathocles and spared by his enemies as a work of art.

Conclusion.

In spite of the outward splendour and military glory of Agathocles' reign, the whole period was really a time of decadence for Greek Sicily. The prince ruled by the help of his hired soldiers and by pandering to the tastes of the mob. He was ready to fight on any side, for his countrymen or against them, as his own interests demanded. Thus his success brought temporary peace and wealth to the island, but for this the Greeks paid dearly with the decline of their national spirit. How low they had sunk is shown by their utter confusion and helplessness after Agathocles' death. Evidently they had lost all power of acting together or even of thinking for themselves. Agathocles' Italian troops, that only his strong hand could keep in order, soon became the scourge and terror of the Greek cities; and brought Sicily to a pitiable state of unlaw. The prey of petty tyrants, the Greeks next called in Pyrrhus, but were too weak to help or hinder him. Henceforward they became a prize to be fought for, and suffered terribly at the hands of Rome for the equally hated cause of Carthage. The ruin of Gela and Messena wrought by the Italian soldiers of Agathocles, and thus the direct outcome of his policy, led on to the more awful fate of Acragas, the most hapless sufferer in the first Punic war. Syracuse herself was saved for a while by the cautions policy of Hiero, the last ruler of free Sicilians. But her fate was not long delayed, and with her fall, the Greece of the west was finally lost in the Roman empire.