

# **THE GREEKS AND THE PERSIANS**

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The Greeks and the Persians by G. W. Cox

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**G. W. COX**

**THE GREEKS AND  
THE PERSIANS**



# EPOCHS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

EDITED BY

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PART II.

*THE GREEKS and THE PERSIANS.*

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## PREFACE.

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IN the pages of Herodotus the history of the Persian Wars becomes the history of the world. The fortunes of the tribes and nations which were absorbed successively into the great mass of the Persian Empire, before it came into collision with the only force capable of withstanding it, are traced with a fulness of detail due probably to the fact that no written history either of the Greek tribes or of their Eastern and Western neighbors was yet in existence.

In the present volume the non-Hellenic peoples are noticed only in so far as their history bears on that of the Greek tribes, or as their characteristics illustrate the relations and even the affinity of the latter with races which they regarded as altogether alien and barbarous.

In relating the history of that great struggle between the despotism of the East and the freedom and law of the West, which came practically to an end with the discomfiture of the Persian army at Plataia and the ruin of the Persian fleet at Mykalê, I have striven to trace the lines of evidence, sometimes

faintly marked, but seldom broken, which enable us to test the traditional stories and with more or less clearness to ascertain the real course of events. In short, my effort has been to show rather how far the history may be regarded as trustworthy than how much of it must be put aside as uncertain or fictitious. That it contains some traditions which are not to be trusted and others which are actually false, is beyond question; and in such instances I have placed before the reader the evidence which will enable him to form his own judgment in the matter. But it is more satisfactory to note that with little doubt the real course of the events which preceded and followed the battle of Marathon or the march of Leonidas to Thermopylai may be determined by evidence supplied in the narrative of Herodotus himself; and that the history thus recovered throws a singularly full and clear light on the motives of all the contending parties, and on the origin and nature of the struggle which was decided chiefly by Athenian energy and heroism.

The history of this struggle forms a portion of that ground which I have had to traverse in the first volume of my "History of Greece." But although the materials have been necessarily re-arranged and much of the history is presented from a different point of view, I have given, much as I gave them in my larger volume, the descriptions of the most striking scenes or the most important actors in the great strife which carried Athens to imperial dominion. I felt that I could scarcely hope to make these descriptions

more clear or forcible by giving them in different words, and that any attempt to write down to the capacities of young readers was wholly uncalled for in a history which in its vivid pictures and stirring interest appeals with equal force to the young and to the old alike.

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#### *Note on the Spelling of Greek Names.*

No attempt has been made in this volume to alter the spelling of Greek names which have assumed genuine English forms, e. g. Athens, Thebes, Corinth, Thrace. It would be well, perhaps, if such forms had been more numerous.

The Latin form has been kept, where it has become so familiar to English ears that a change would be disagreeable, e. g. Thucydides, Cyrus. This last name is, indeed, neither Latin nor Greek; and the adoption of either the Greek or the Latin form is a matter of comparative indifference. Probably it would be to the benefit of etymological study to revert to the true Persian form, and to write *Gistasp* for *Hystaspes*.

But these exceptions do not affect the general rule of giving the Greek forms, wherever it may be practicable or advisable to do so. This rule may be followed in all instances in which either the name or the person are unknown to the mass of English readers. Thus, while we still speak of Alexander the Great, his obscure predecessor, who acts a subordinate part in the drama of the Persian wars, may appear as *Alexandros*.

The general adoption of the Greek forms is, indeed, justified, if not rendered necessary, by the practice of most of the recent writers on Greek History. It is, therefore, unnecessary perhaps to say more than that the adoption of the Greek form may help on the change in the English pronunciation of Latin, which the most eminent schoolmasters of the day have pronounced to be desirable. So long as the Phrygian town is mentioned under its Latin form, *Colossæ*, there will be a strong temptation for young readers to pronounce it as if it were the Greek name for the moon, *Selene*. It is well, therefore, that they should become familiarized with the Greek form, *Kólôssai*, and thus learn that the Greek spelling involves practically no difference of sound from that of the true Latin pronunciation, the sound of the C and K being identical, and the diphthong *ai* being pronounced as we pronounce *ai* in *fall*, while *ai* and *ei* have the sound of our *ee* in *theen*.