

His night of deep thought was not in vain; and as soon as morning dawned he called his companions together, and begged them to listen to him, as he had found a way of saving them from slavery or death.

Then he explained to them, that, if they were only united and willing, they could form a compact body, and, under a leader of their own choosing, could beat a safe retreat toward the sea.



LXXV. THE RETREAT OF THE TEN THOUSAND.

XENOPHON'S advice pleased the Greeks. It was far better, they thought, to make the glorious attempt to return home, than basely to surrender their arms, and become the subjects of a foreign king.

They therefore said they would elect a leader, and all chose Xenophon to fill this difficult office. He, however, consented to accept it only upon condition that each soldier would pledge his word of honor to obey him; for he knew that the least disobedience would hinder success, and that in union alone lay strength. The soldiers understood this too, and not only swore to obey him, but even promised not to quarrel among themselves.

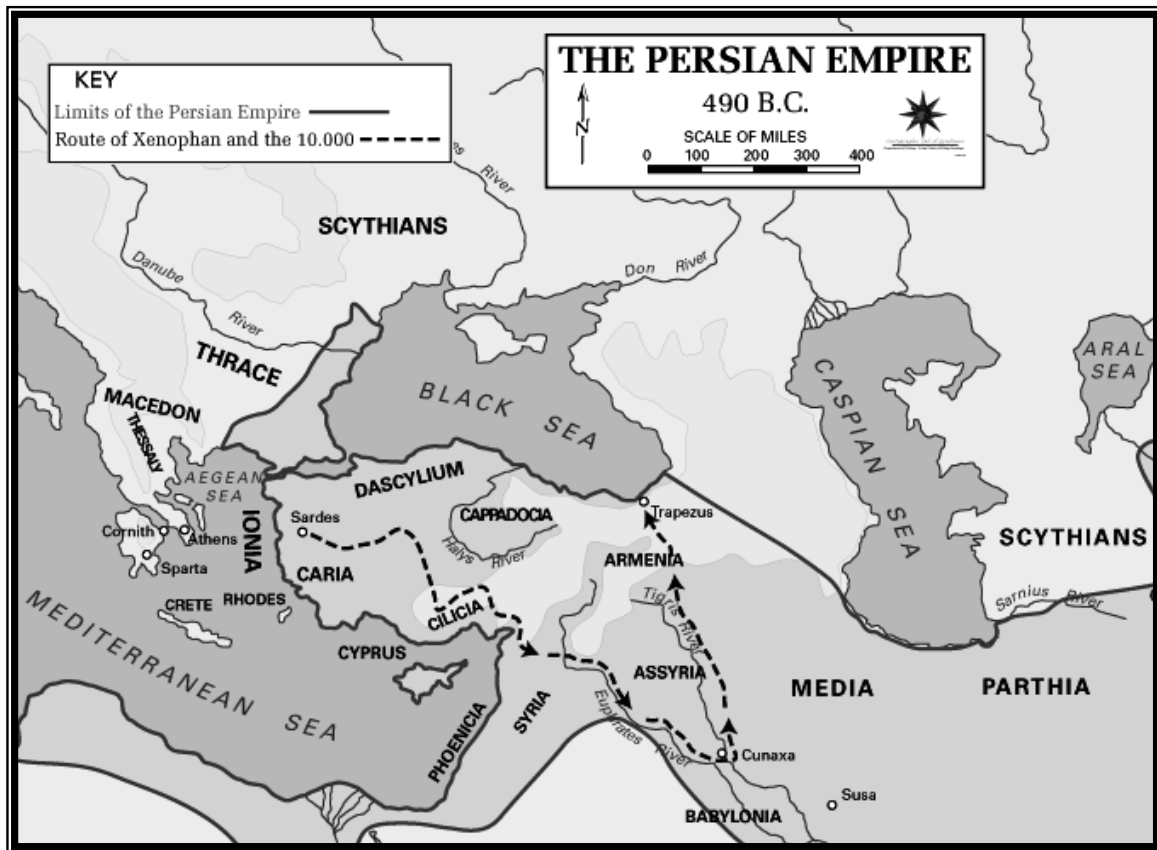
So the little army began its homeward march, tramping bravely over sandy wastes and along rocky pathways. When they came to a river too deep to be crossed by fording, they followed it up toward its source until they could find a suitable place to get over it; and, as they had neither money nor provisions, they were obliged to seize all their food on the way.

The Greeks not only had to overcome countless natural obstacles, but were also compelled to keep up a continual warfare with the Persians who pursued them. Every morning Xenophon had to draw up his little army in the form of a square, to keep the enemy at bay.

They would fight thus until nearly nightfall, when the Persians always retreated, to camp at a distance from the men they feared. Instead of allowing his weary soldiers to sit down and rest, Xenophon would then give orders to march onward. So they tramped in the twilight until it was too dark or they were too tired to proceed any farther.

After a hasty supper, the Greeks flung themselves down to rest on the hard ground, under the light of the stars; but even these slumbers were cut short by Xenophon's call at early dawn. Long before the lazy Persians were awake, these men were again marching onward; and when the mounted enemy overtook them once more, and compelled them to halt and fight, they were several miles nearer home.

As the Greeks passed through the wild mountain gorges they were further hindered by the neighboring people, who tried to stop them by rolling trunks of trees and rocks down upon them. Although some were wounded and others killed, the little army pressed forward, and, after a march of about a thousand miles, they came at last within sight of the sea. You may imagine what a joyful shout arose, and how lovingly they gazed upon the blue waters which washed the shores of their native land also.



The Route of Xenophon and the Ten Thousand.

But although Xenophon and his men had come to the sea, their troubles were not yet ended; for, as they had no money to pay their passage, none of the captains would take them on board.

Instead of embarking, therefore, and resting their weary limbs while the wind wafted them home, they were forced to tramp along the seashore. They were no longer in great danger, but were tired and discontented, and now for the first time they began to forget their promise to obey Xenophon.

To obtain money enough to pay their passage to Greece, they took several small towns along their way, and robbed them. Then, hearing that there was a new expedition to free the Ionian cities from the Persian yoke, they suddenly decided not to return home, but to go and help them.

Xenophon therefore led them to Per´ga-mus, where he gave them over to their new leader. There were still ten thousand left out of the eleven thousand men that Cyrus had hired, and Xenophon had cause to feel proud of having brought them across the enemy’s territory with so little loss.

After bidding them farewell, Xenophon returned home, and wrote down an account of this famous Retreat of the Ten Thousand in a book called the *A-nab´a-sis*. This account is so interesting that people begin to read it as soon as they know a little Greek, and thus learn all about the fighting and marching of those brave men.



LXXVI. AGESILAUS IN ASIA.

YOU may remember that the Greeks, at the end of the Peloponnesian War, had found out that Sparta was the strongest city in the whole country; for, although the Athenians managed to drive the Spartans out of their city, they were still forced to recognize them as the leaders of all Greece. The Spartans were proud of having reached such a position, and were eager to maintain it at any cost. They therefore kept all the Greek towns under their orders, and were delighted to think that their king, A-ges-i-la´us, was one of the best generals of his day.

He was not, however, tall and strong, like most of his fellow-citizens, but puny and very lame. His small size and bad health had not lessened his courage, however, and he was always ready to plan a new campaign or to lead his men off to war.

When it became known that Artaxerxes II was about to march against the Greek cities in Ionia, to punish them for upholding his brother Cyrus, and for sending him the