

of the commonwealth supplied. As for the great body of the people, they would probably be gainers by the distribution.

The more effectually to annihilate the distinction of wealth, the Spartan legislator, instead of gold and silver, substituted *iron money*; the small value of which rendered the current specie of such unwieldy bulk, that no individual could easily accumulate a large quantity without the discovery of his avarice. The sum of ten *minæ*, equal to about thirty pounds sterling, would, in the Spartan money, as Plutarch tells us, fill a large apartment, and could not be transported without a yoke of oxen. This iron money, moreover, being probably estimated at a higher value than its intrinsic worth, prevented its currency beyond the Lacedæmonian territory; and thus contributed to another view of the legislator, in checking all commercial intercourse with foreign states.

In a government formed upon the principle of exterminating luxury, and abolishing all inequality of property, the exercise of no arts could be tolerated unless such as were merely necessary. The practice even of these, which might have occasioned some inequality of wealth, was forbidden to all the free subjects of the state, and permitted only to the slaves. Commerce was strictly prohibited; and although the territory of Lacedæmon contained a considerable extent of sea-coast, and afforded many excellent harbors, the Spartans allowed no foreigners to approach their shores, and had not a single trading vessel of their own.

Amidst these regulations repressive of every species of luxury, one of the most remarkable was the institution of the *Public Tables*. The whole citizens of the republic were divided into vicinages of fifteen families, and each vicinage had a common table, where all were obliged to dine or make their principal repast, each taking his place in the public hall without distinction of ranks; the kings, senators, and magistrates, indiscriminately with the people. Here all partook of the same homely fare dressed in the simplest and most frugal manner. At those public tables the youth not only learned moderation and temperance, but wisdom and good morals. The conversation was regulated and prescribed. It turned solely on such subjects as tended to instil into the minds of the rising generation the principles of virtue, and that affection for their country which characterizes the worthy citizens of every government, but was peculiarly eminent under the Spartan constitution.

Among the principal objects of the institutions of Lycurgus, the education of the youth of the republic was that on which the legislator had bestowed the most particular attention. Children, after they had attained the age of seven, were no longer the charge of their parents, but of the state. Before that period, they were taught at home the great lessons of obedience and frugality. Afterwards, under public masters, their education was such as to

train them up to that species of heroism, and the practice of the severer virtues, which so strongly marked the Spartan character. They were taught to despise equally danger and pain. To shrink under the stroke of punishment was a sufficient reason for having that punishment redoubled. Their very sports and amusements were such as are fitted to promote a strength of constitution, and vigor and agility of body. The athletic exercises were prescribed alike for both sexes; as the bodily vigor of the mother is essential to that of her offspring. To run, to swim, to wrestle, to hunt, were the constant exercise of the youth. With regard to the culture of the mind, the Spartan discipline admitted none of those studies which tend to refine or embellish the understanding. But the duties of religion, the inviolable bond of a promise, the sacred obligation of an oath, the respect due to parents, the reverence for old age, the strictest obedience to the laws; and above all, the love of their country, the noble flame of patriotism, were early and assiduously inculcated. In impressing on the mind these most important lessons, the great duties of morality, and instructing the youth in the knowledge of the laws of their country, the utmost attention was deservedly bestowed.

An acquaintance with the laws was a most material object in the education of all the citizens. Lycurgus did not permit his laws to be written. They were few and simple; and were impressed on the memory of the youth by their parents and masters, continually renewed in their minds by the conversation of their elders, and most effectually enforced by the daily practice of their lives.

Thus the reproach which some authors have thrown on the Spartan education, that it was fitted only to make a nation of soldiers—and that the mind as to every useful science, was left in absolute ignorance—is a rash and ill-founded accusation. The utmost attention was, on the contrary, bestowed on those which are the most important of all mental occupations, the duties of morality, and that true philosophy which teaches both the practice of the domestic virtues, and the great and important obligations of a citizen. The youth of Sparta, from their attendance at the public tables, were from their infancy familiarly acquainted with all the important business of the commonwealth. They knew thoroughly its constitution, the powers of the several functionaries of the state, and the defined duties and rights which belonged to the kings, the magistrates, and the citizens. Hence arose (more than perhaps from any other cause) that permanence of constitution which has been so justly the admiration both of ancient and of modern politicians: for where all orders of men know their precise rights and duties, and there are laws sufficient to secure to them the one, and protect them in the exercise of the other, there will rarely be a factious struggle for power or preeminence; as all inordinate ambition will be most effectually repressed by a general

spirit of vigilance and caution, as well as the difficulty and danger attendant on innovations.

But while we thus give to the general outlines of the plan of Lycurgus that encomium which it justly merits, let us not become the blind panegyrist of a system which, in many particulars, considered in detail, was much more deserving of blame than of admiration.

The Lacedæmonian manners, to the regulation of which so much attention was paid by the laws of Lycurgus, have afforded very ample matter of censure. The regulations especially regarding women have drawn on the Spartan legislator much deserved condemnation, both from moralists and politicians. Amidst all that rigid austerity of manners which the laws of Lycurgus seem calculated to enforce, how astonishing is it that public decency and decorum should have been totally overlooked! The Spartan women were the reproach of all Greece for their immodesty; and Aristotle imputes chiefly to their licentiousness and intemperance those disorders which were ultimately the ruin of the state. The men and women frequented promiscuously the public baths: the youth of both sexes ran, wrestled, and fought naked in the palæstra. Plutarch tells us, in one passage of the Life of Lycurgus, that there was no such thing as adultery known in Sparta in ancient times. But it is difficult to reconcile this assertion of Plutarch with what he himself records of that extraordinary peculiarity of the laws of Lycurgus which permitted one citizen to borrow another's wife, for the purpose of a good breed; and held it no dishonor for an aged man who had a handsome wife, to offer her to a young man, and to educate as his own the issue of that connection. The chief end of marriage, according to the lawgiver's notions, was to furnish the state with a vigorous and healthy race of citizens. It were therefore more just to have said, not that *adultery* was unknown at Sparta, but that there was no such *crime* recognised by its laws.

Yet Lycurgus, with an apparent inconsistency, which it is not easy to reconcile, had laid down the strictest regulations regarding the commerce between the sexes after marriage. The Spartan marriages were performed in secret: the husband stole away, or forcibly carried away, his wife: she was dressed for some time in man's apparel, to conceal her; while the husband continued to sleep as usual in the public dormitories with his companions, and to see his wife only by stealth, till the birth of a child made him known at once as a husband and a father.\*

\* The laws of Lycurgus discouraged celibacy by some very extraordinary regulations respecting old bachelors. They were forbidden to dance with women; and were compelled to walk naked through the streets in the winter singing a ludicrous song which confessed the justice of their punishment. *Gillie's History of Greece*, c. iii.

It is not only in the article of chastity that the Spartan laws have been justly blamed. Theft was a part of the system of education at Lacedæmon. Children were sent out to steal from the public markets and gardens, from the butchers' stalls, and even from private houses. If unsuccessful, they were punished with the loss of a meal; if detected in the theft, they were scourged with severity. It is a lame apology for an institution of this kind to say that it habituated them early to stratagems of war, to danger, and to vigilance. The talents of a thief are very different from the virtues of a warrior.

Cruelty, too, a quality extremely opposite to heroic virtue, was a strong ingredient in the Spartan system of manners. Paternal or maternal tenderness seemed perfectly unknown among this ferocious people. New-born children were publicly inspected by the elders of each tribe; and such as promised to be of a weak and delicate constitution were immediately put to death by drowning. At the festival of Diana, children were scourged, sometimes even to death, in the presence of their mothers, who exhorted them, meantime, to suffer every extremity of pain without complaint or murmur. It is no wonder that such mothers should receive, without emotion, the intelligence of the death of a son in the field of battle; but is it possible to believe that on such occasions they should so far conquer nature as to express a transport of joy? What judgment must we form of the Spartan notions of patriotic virtue, when, to love their country, it was thought necessary to subdue and extinguish the strongest feelings of humanity, the first instinct of nature.

The barbarous treatment which the Lacedæmonians bestowed on their slaves, or Helots, is mentioned by all ancient writers with extreme censure and just indignation. The Helots were a neighboring people of Peloponnesus, whom they had subdued in war, and reduced to servitude. They were numerous, and had at times attempted to shake off their yoke; whence it was judged a necessary policy to curb, to intimidate, and to weaken them by the most shocking inhumanity. It was not allowable to sell or to export them; but the youth were encouraged to put them to death for pastime. They went forth to the field to hunt them like wild beasts; and when at any time it was apprehended that those unhappy wretches had become so numerous as to endanger the state, the *cryptia*, or *secret act*, viz: a general massacre in the night, was ordained by law. The apologists of the Spartan legislator tell us, that these enormities cannot be imputed to Lycurgus; that they sprang from the perversion of his institutions, and were unknown in the early and more virtuous periods of the Lacedæmonian state; but a very little reflection must convince us, that they arose necessarily from that system of manners which his institutions were calculated to form.

It were easy to show that the Spartan institutions, however ex-

cellent in many respects, carried in themselves the seeds of much disorder.

To virtue there is no such enemy as idleness; but the Lacedæmonians, unless when engaged in war, were totally unoccupied. Lycurgus, it is said, wanted to make a nation of soldiers.\* So his apologists conclude, because they find that his constitution was more proper for producing that effect than any other. But the ultimate object of all legislation is not to give a people any particular character, but to furnish them with such laws as are suited to produce, in their situation, the greatest political happiness. Lycurgus may have judged that the military character was most proper for producing that effect. In a small territory like that of Lacedæmon, security was evidently the first and principal object; and therefore to cherish the military spirit as essential to that end was deservedly a primary view of the legislator; but it ought not to have been his only view. It is in peace that a nation enjoys its truest happiness; and to qualify the citizens of every government for that which is their natural state, the sound health of the body politic, is certainly the chief end of legislation. Much therefore as we may admire the genius and talents of Lycurgus, we cannot say that he had extensive or even just views as a politician, since he seems to have concluded that while his laws cherished the military spirit, every other virtue or quality of a citizen would follow of course. The Lacedæmonians therefore exhibited in their general character exactly what might have been expected from the discipline that trained them. Unless when engaged in war, they were absolutely idle and listless. They had no occupations for a season of peace. The distinction of professions, which in other states gives rise to that separation of interests which, animating each individual, inspires life and vigor into the whole community, was there totally unknown. The common good, or rather the glory, of the state, came in place of every private inter-

\* Xenophon, who had fought for and against the Lacedæmonians, remarks, that in the knowledge and practice of war, they far excelled all other nations, both Greeks and barbarians. Their troops were divided into regiments consisting of 512 men, subdivided into four companies, and each of these into smaller divisions, commanded by their respective officers. The soldiers were attended by a multitude of artisans and slaves, who furnished them with all necessary supplies, and accompanied by a long train of priests and poets, who flattered their hopes and animated their valor. A body of cavalry always preceded their march. They encamped in a circular form; they employed for their security out-sentries and videttes; and regularly every morning and evening performed their customary exercises. In the day of battle, the Spartans assumed an unusual gaiety of aspect; and displayed in their dress and ornaments more than their wonted splendor. Their long hair was arranged with simple elegance; their scarlet uniforms and brazen armor diffused a lustre around them. As they approached the enemy, the king performed sacrifice, the music struck up, and they advanced with firmness and alacrity to the charge. Xenophon has declared, that when he considered the discipline of the Spartans, all other nations appeared but children in the art of war.—*Xenoph. de Rep. Lac.*; *Gillies's Hist. of Greece*, c. 3.

est—a noble object! but, unhappily, from the weakness of our nature, utterly inadequate to the desires and passions of the great mass of a people. The insipid and inactive life of the Spartans was accordingly a perpetual subject of raillery to the rest of the Greeks, and to none more than to the busy, restless, and volatile Athenians. To this purpose Ælian mentions a witticism of Alcibiades, when some one was vaunting to him the contempt which the Lacedæmonians had for death: “It is no wonder,” said he, “since it relieves them from the heavy burden of an idle and stupid life.”

From the military character, however, of this people, the small extent of their territory, and the wise precautions of their lawgiver for preventing all extension of its limits, the constitution of this republic possessed a very strong principle of duration. We shall see that in reality it subsisted much longer without any important revolution than any other of the states of Greece.

The first material change, however, upon the system of Lycurgus was made within 130 years of his own time, by the introduction of a new magistracy, under the name of the *Ephori*. Theopompus, one of the kings, jealous of the power of the senate, which was generally supported by the concurring judgment of the people, devised a plan for influencing their resolutions, by giving them a set of officers of their own body. These officers, termed *Ephori*, were five in number; they were elected by the people, and enjoyed a similar but a higher power than that of the tribunes of the people at Rome. Instituted at first to form an equipoise between the senate and people, they gradually usurped a paramount power in the state. They could, by their own authority, expel or degrade the senators, and even punish them capitally for any offence which they might interpret into a state crime. The kings themselves were under their control, and the *Ephori* had a right to fine them and put them in arrest; a dangerous prerogative, which it was easy to see would never stop short of absolute power; and accordingly they assumed at length the function of deposing and putting the kings to death. These, on the other hand, still nominally the chief magistrates, plotted against the power and persons of the *Ephori*; they bribed, deposed, and murdered them. Thus in the latter periods of the Spartan commonwealth, instead of that equal balance established by the original plan of Lycurgus, there was between the different branches of this constitution a perpetual contention for superiority, the continual source of faction and disorder. Most of the internal causes which in time operated to the decline and fall of the Spartan government, particularly to be found in those institutions which led to the corruption of manners, have been already noticed. These silently undermined this political fabric; while other causes external of its constitution were the more direct and immediate causes of its destruction. These shall

be opened in their order, while we pursue the general outlines of the national history; after a brief delineation of the rival republic of Athens, to which we proceed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

THE REPUBLIC OF ATHENS—Revolution in the States of Attica—Regal Government abolished—perpetual Archons—Draco—Solon—His Institutions—Senate—Areopagus re-established—Power of the Popular Assemblies—Laws—Ostracism—Appeal from all Courts to the People—Manners—Revenue—Grecian History continued, Pisistratus, Hippias, and Hipparchus—Alcmæonidæ.

I HAVE, in a former chapter, observed that Greece, in the early part of her history, probably owed some of her greatest political revolutions to her first colonies. The prosperity which the mother country saw her children enjoy in their new settlements, while she herself was yet groaning under the worst of all servitude, that of a bad government, naturally inspired an eager wish to attain if possible a similar freedom of constitution. The domestic disorders of Attica, in particular, had grown to a great height. The union of its states by Theseus was but a forced league of association: it was the consequence of the subordinate cities being involved in frequent quarrels, and hence courting the aid of the principal, that the latter thus acquired a sort of dominion over the whole of them. To bind these firmly together it was necessary to annihilate in the smaller states this sense of dependence on the principal; to make them all parts of the same body, by abolishing their particular magistracies, bringing about a submission to the same general magistrates, and giving them a common system of laws. Theseus, and his immediate successor, had attempted this, but were unequal to the task. The disorders which arose from the tyranny of some of those princes effected an union which their slender political talents had labored in vain to accomplish; but an union hostile to their powers, which had for its end the abolition of the regal office. Codrus, the last of the kings, was, as we have seen, a true patriot, and worthy to reign; but he having sacrificed his own life to save his country, the Athenians, dreading a renewal of their former oppression, determined to make the trial of a new constitution. They were ignorant, however, of the best means of obtaining what they desired. They abolished the title

of king, while the magistrates whom they put in his place enjoyed almost the same authority. From respect to the memory of Codrus, they appointed his son Medon chief magistrate, with the title of *archon* or commander. They conferred on him the office for life, and even continued it hereditary in his family; so that the Athenian republic was governed for 331 years by a succession of perpetual archons of the family of Codrus. Of the difference between their authority and that of the former kings, historians have given us no distinct idea. Some writers, indeed, tell us, in general terms, that the perpetual archons were accountable to the people for their conduct,—a control which the kings did not acknowledge;—but as to the precise nature of the Athenian government at this time, we are, on the whole, extremely ignorant.

This form, however, of a monarchy in all its essentials, though without the name, became in the end equally grievous as that which had preceded it. The perpetual archonship was abolished, and the office was now conferred for ten years. Even this duration was found repugnant to the prevailing spirit of democracy; and after submitting for a few years to the decennial archonship, they reduced the term to a single year, and appointed nine magistrates with equal authority. Of these the chief was called by pre-eminence *the archon*, and, like the Roman consuls, gave his name to the current year in the state annals. The second archon had the title of *king*, (*Basilus*), and was the head of the religion of the state; the third was termed the *polemarch*, from his function of regulating all military affairs. The remaining six archons were called *thesmothetæ*, and held the office of judges in the civil courts of the republic. The whole body of nine formed the supreme council of the state.

Meantime the constitution was by no means strictly defined. The laws framed during the regal government, and accommodated to that despotic authority, were quite unsuitable to the democratic spirit now become predominant; and no attempts had yet been made for their alteration or improvement. The limited power of the annual magistrates was insufficient to check those factions and disorders which a yearly returning election kept constantly alive in the mass of the people.

A virtuous citizen of the name of *Draco*, whose eminent qualities had raised him to the dignity of chief archon, was prompted to attempt a reform, by introducing a code of laws\* which might operate as a restraint on all orders of the state. Presuming that a desperate disease requires a violent remedy, and probably influenced by the austerity of his own temper, the penal laws which he framed made no distinction of offences, but punished all equally

\* There were probably no written laws at Athens before those of Draco.—*Aul. Gell. i. 1., c. 18.*