

Maximus, after enumerating the instances of similar ingratitude to Miltiades, to Cimon, to Themistocles, to Phocion, and particularly to Aristides, exclaim with bitter irony: — “Felices Athenas, quæ post illius exilium invenire aliquem aut virum bonum, aut amantem sui civem potuerunt.” *

The laws of Solon, unlike those of Lycurgus, were all committed to writing: but one fault, common to all the laws of the Athenian legislator, was the obscurity with which they were expressed: a capital defect indeed of laws, when, instead of a clear warning voice, which, teaching every man his duty, represses litigation, they mislead by their obscurity, and are thus the perpetual source of contest and chicane.

It was a singular peculiarity of the constitution of Athens, and, as Plutarch informs us, likewise of Thebes, that after a law was voted and passed in the assembly of the people, the proposer of the law might have been cited in the ordinary civil courts, tried, and brought to punishment, if the court was of opinion that the law was prejudicial to the public. This peculiarity is noticed in one of Mr. Hume’s political essays, (*Of some remarkable Customs*;) and that author mentions several examples in the Grecian history; among the rest, the trial of Ctesiphon, for that law which he had proposed and carried, for rewarding the services of Demosthenes with a crown of gold; a trial which gave occasion to two of the most splendid and animated orations that remain to us of the composition of the ancients; the orations of Æschines and Demosthenes *Περί σερφάρου*. This species of trial was entitled the *Γραφή παρανομῶν*, or the indictment of illegality; and was intended as a check upon the popular leaders, who, by their influence in the public assemblies, were able frequently to procure the enactment of most pernicious laws. This was indeed a violent remedy, and apparently very contrary to republican freedom; but it was esteemed so beneficial a provision, that Æschines, in his oration against Ctesiphon, maintains that the democracy could not subsist without it.

An appeal lay from all the Athenian tribunals, except the Areopagus, to the *ecclesia*, or assembly of the people. The interpretation of the laws may thus be said to have depended ultimately on the judgment of a populace swayed by prejudices, divided by faction, or the dupes of a worthless orator or demagogue. The Athenian jurisprudence, therefore, rested on no fixed principles, or solid basis. It is almost equivalent to a total want of laws, to have such only as the passions and caprices of a people can mould or distort, or at pleasure so interpret, as to accommodate to the most opposite purposes.

* “Happy Athens! that, after driving such a man from her bosom, could yet find one virtuous or devoted citizen remaining.”

I have thus endeavored very briefly to trace the outlines of the Athenian Constitution. The distinct powers of every branch of that constitution, and the precise extent of jurisdiction, the rights and privileges of the several courts, have occupied many volumes, and supplied an immense field of learned but unimportant controversy, which furnishes at least a proof of the difficulty of obtaining distinct notions of the particular features of this constitution, though its general nature appears sufficiently intelligible. Those who wish to go more into detail ought to peruse with attention the fragment of Aristotle concerning the Athenian Constitution, the 2d, 4th, and 6th books of his *Politics*, the tract of Xenophon on the Athenian Republic, the *Life of Solon* by Plutarch, the *Archæologia* of Archbishop Potter, and, to sum up all, the various information concerning the Athenian state, contained in the *Thesaurus Græcarum Antiquitatum* of Gronovius.

The manners of the Athenians formed a most striking contrast to those of the Lacedæmonians. It is, in fact, hardly possible to find a greater dissimilarity even in nations inhabiting the most opposite extremes of the earth. The Athenian found, either in his relish for serious business, or in his taste for pleasure, a constant occupation.* The arts at Athens met with the highest encouragement. The luxury of the rich perpetually employed the industry of the poor; and the sciences were cultivated with the same ardor as the arts; for the connection of mental enjoyments with moderate gratification of sense is the refinement of luxury. But in the pleasures of the Athenians, unless, indeed, in the most corrupted times of the commonwealth, decency was most scrupulously observed. We have seen those rigid restraints on the conduct of magistrates. An archon convicted of drunkenness was, for the first offence, condemned to pay a heavy fine, and for a second was punished with death. This general decency of character was much heightened by a certain urbanity of manners, which eminently distinguished the Athenians above all the other states of Greece. There are some singular proofs of this character recorded, even of their public measures. Plutarch, in the life of Demosthenes, has mentioned two remarkable examples. In the war against Philip of Macedon, one of the couriers of that prince was intercepted, and his despatches seized; they opened all the letters which he carried, except those written by Philip’s queen, Olympia, to her husband. These the Athenians transmitted immediately to Philip, with the seals unbroken. In the same war, Philip was suspected of having distributed bribes among the Athenian orators. Their houses were ordered to be searched; but with singular regard to decorum, they forbade to break into

* The best sources of information with regard to the general manners of the Athenians, are the *Comedies of Aristophanes*, the *Characters of Theophrastus* the *Lives of Plutarch*, and the *Orations of Demosthenes*.

the house of Callicles, because he was then newly married. Such was certainly the natural character of the Athenians,—generous, decent, humane, and polished; but the turbulence and inconstancy inseparable from a democratic constitution, often stained their public measures with a character very opposite to the natural disposition of the people. We have more flagrant instances of public ingratitude in the single state of Athens, than are to be found perhaps in all the other states and kingdoms of antiquity.*

The capital features of the two great republics of Greece, Sparta and Athens, may be thus briefly delineated. Sparta was altogether a military establishment; every other art was prohibited—industry among individuals was unknown, and domestic economy unnecessary, for all was in common. The Lacedæmonians were active only when at war. In peace, their manner of life was languid, uniform, indolent, and insipid. Taught to consider war as the sole honorable or manly occupation, they contracted a rigid and ferocious turn of mind, which distinguished them from all the other states of Greece. Despising the arts themselves, they despised all who cultivated them. Their constitution was fitted to form and to maintain a small, a brave, and an independent state; but had no tendency to produce a great, a polished, or a conquering people.

At Athens, peace was the natural state of the republic; and the institutions of Solon tended to form his fellow citizens for the enjoyment of civil happiness. It was a punishable crime at Athens to be idle, and every citizen was compelled to industry, and to the utmost exertion of his talents. It was not enough that each should choose himself a particular profession. The court of Areopagus inquired into and ascertained the extent of his funds, the amount of his expenditure, and consequently the measure of his industry and economy. The sciences were in contempt at Sparta; but dependent on the arts, and essential to the highest and most

*Plutarch records many anecdotes, which strongly mark the fickleness of the character of the Athenians. The following may serve as an example:—Themistocles intimated in public that he had formed a most important project, but that the strictest secrecy was necessary to insure its success. The people answered, "Let it be told to Aristides alone, and we shall be regulated by his advice." Themistocles acquainted Aristides that the project was to burn the fleet of the combined states, then at anchor in perfect security in the harbor of Pegasus; a scheme which would give Athens the absolute command of Greece. Aristides told the people that nothing could be more advantageous than the project of Themistocles; but nothing at the same time more unjust. The whole assembly with one voice cried out, "Let us have nothing to do with it." This was to feel and to decide with rectitude and propriety. But mark a striking contrast to this honorable decision. A few years afterwards, it was proposed to the Athenians, to violate an article of a treaty formed with the allies of the republic. The people asked the advice of Aristides, who, in the same spirit as before, told them, that the counsel was advantageous, but unjust. The upright statesman had no longer the same influence; the perfidious suggestion was now unanimously approved of.

rational enjoyment of life, they were held at Athens in the greatest honor and esteem. Luxury was the characteristic of the Athenian, as frugality of the Spartan. They were equally jealous of their liberty; because liberty was equally necessary to each, for the enjoyment of his favorite scheme of life. In the best times of both republics, their military character was nearly equal. The bravery of the Spartan sprang from a fostered hardihood, and constitutional ferocity; the courage of the Athenian was derived from the principle of honor. The character of the individual at Athens was humane, polite, equitable, and social; but from a faulty constitution, the character of the public was fickle, inconstant, frivolous, cruel, and ungrateful.

The revenue of the territory of Attica has admitted of various estimations by different authors. The Athenians, at the commencement of their first war with Lacedæmon, before proceeding to vote the necessary supplies for the armament, made a general estimate, as Polybius informs us, of their lands, their houses, and their whole property, which did not quite amount to 6000 talents; a sum equivalent to 1,162,500*l.* sterling. Demosthenes, in one of his orations touching on this subject, makes the value of the land of Attica amount nearly to that sum, exclusive of houses and effects. Meursius extravagantly supposes this to mean the annual value of the lands; a computation which would make the revenue of Attica, a small territory of sixty miles in length, and thirty broad, exceed the annual census of several of the European kingdoms. In ancient Greece, gold and silver bore a much higher proportion to other commodities than they do at present. The same quantity of these metals would, in those times, have purchased in Greece nearly ten times as much of the necessaries of life, or commanded ten times as much labor, as at present in most of the countries of Europe. A strong presumption, therefore, arises, that even the most moderate of those accounts of the census of Attica are much exaggerated.

The Spartan government had acquired solidity, while all the rest of Greece was yet unsettled, and torn by domestic dissensions. Had the Spartans then aspired at extending their dominion, they might with great facility have subdued all Greece. But the ambition of extensive conquest was not agreeable to the spirit of their constitution. Their passion for liberty prompted them rather to assist others in maintaining or asserting their independence; and this generous conduct inspired so high a respect for their equity and moderation, that contending states not unfrequently chose them the umpires of their differences. Yet though this was their general character, there are some instances of their departure, even in those early times, from this generosity of conduct. Their behavior to the Messenians, a neighboring people who solicited their aid in war, was extremely dishonorable. They took advantage of their weakness, to reduce this unfortunate people to

the condition of slaves, as they had before done by the Helots. It was contrary to their laws to communicate to strangers the rights of citizenship; and we have before remarked, that when the number of their slaves increasing gave room to apprehend danger to the state, it was customary to reduce them by a general massacre.

While the power of Sparta was thus high among the states of Peloponnesus, Athens, a prey to faction and civil discord, was for a while threatened with the entire loss of that liberty which she had scarcely begun to enjoy. Pisistratus, a relation of Solon, a man of splendid talents, highly popular from his wealth and liberality, began secretly to aspire at the sovereign power. He propagated a report, that his enemies, jealous of his asserting the rights of the people, had endeavored to assassinate him; and on that pretence demanded a guard for the protection of his person, which he employed in seizing the citadel. The Athenians submitted without much opposition. Solon, indignant at the unworthy conduct of his kinsman, attempted to revive the patriotic spirit of his countrymen, and urge the recovery of their freedom; but he met with no support; and the aged lawgiver, unable to brook the degradation of his country, bade adieu to Athens, and died in voluntary exile.

A considerable party of the citizens, however, were secretly hostile to the usurpation of Pisistratus. The faction of the Alcæonidæ, of whom the chiefs were Megacles and Lycurgus, gained at length so much strength as to attack and expel the usurper from the city. The stratagem by which he regained his power is a singular instance of the force of superstition. He procured a beautiful female to personate the goddess Minerva. Seated on a lofty chariot, she drove into the city, while her attendants proclaimed aloud that their tutelary deity had deigned in person to visit them, and to demand the restoration of her favorite Pisistratus. A general acclamation hailed the auspicious presence, and all paid obedience to the heavenly summons. Pisistratus thus restored was a second time expelled by the faction of the Alcæonidæ, and remained for eleven years in exile. But the talents and the virtues of this extraordinary man, for such he really possessed; had gained him many friends; and with their aid he finally triumphed over all his enemies. His return to Athens was marked by a proclamation of general pardon to all who had opposed him, and chose quietly to return to their allegiance; and he regained at once, and continued during the remainder of his life to possess, the favor and affection of the people; leaving at his death a peaceable crown to his sons Hippias and Hipparchus.

Pisistratus was a man of elegant talents, and a zealous encourager of literature. He patronized Simonides and other contemporary poets; and he conferred a memorable service on his country and on the world, by collecting and publishing the hitherto scattered fragments of the poems of Homer.

Pisistratus, much to his honor, had made no alteration on the forms of the republic as established by Solon; and his sons, who inherited their father's spirit and dispositions, trod in his footsteps. Thucydides informs us, that the only mark of their ascendancy in the state was the appointment of their friends and partisans to the chief offices of the republic. Plato has celebrated the character of Hipparchus as one of the most perfect to be found in history. His principal aim seems to have been to polish and improve his countrymen, by encouraging and cultivating the liberal arts and fostering the literary spirit; while his brother Hippias bent his attention to the finances of the republic, the enlargement and embellishment of the city, and the regulation of its military strength. The circumstances which put an end to their government are variously related by historians; but they agree in this fact, that it was private revenge, and no motive of state policy or patriotism, that incited Harmodius and Aristogiton to conspire their death. The common story is, that Hipparchus having debauched the sister of Harmodius, and afterwards affronted her while she walked in a public procession, her brother, in revenge for this atrocious injury, with the aid of his friend Aristogiton, conspired and effected the death of the aggressor. At the celebration of the feast of Minerva, Harmodius attacked and killed Hipparchus, but was himself massacred in the attempt. The character and temper of Hippias, hitherto mild and amiable, underwent a change from the period of his brother's fate. Fear and suspicion made him assume a severity of conduct contrary to his nature; and an extreme rigor in the punishment of all whom he dreaded or suspected, soon rendered his government as odious as it had once been popular.

The faction of the Alcæonidæ, who had once succeeded in dethroning Pisistratus, had, upon his restoration, been expelled and banished Attica. They now plotted the dethronement of Hippias, and found the temper of the Athenians favorable to their wishes. The oracle of Delphos was bribed, in order to procure them the aid of the Lacedæmonians. The Pythia continually prophesied, that Sparta would fail in all her enterprises, till she merited the favor of the gods, by delivering Athens from the tyranny of the Pisistratidæ. The Lacedæmonians accordingly declared war, and invaded Attica, headed by their king Cleomenes. Athens surrendered to a superior force, and Hippias, driven into banishment, retired to Sigeum, on the Hellespont. The freedom of the city, thus ingloriously restored, was celebrated with high festivity, and statues were erected to the honor of Harmodius and Aristogiton, as the authors of their country's deliverance from tyranny.

But the popular government was scarcely thus re-established, when it sustained a new assault from Cleisthenes, one of the Alcæonidæ, who, on the ascendancy of the prevailing faction,

had sought to act a similar part with Pisistratus and his sons. He found, however, a powerful rival in Isagoras, who cherished the same ambitious views; and who, with the aid of Cleomenes and the Spartans, expelled Clisthenes and drove with him into banishment no less than seven hundred of the principal Athenian families. The selfish schemes of Isagoras were first manifested in an attempt to abolish the senate, or to change all its members and abridge their number. A proceeding thus violent and impolitic roused the people at once. They drove Cleomenes and his Spartans, together with Isagoras, out of Athens, and recalled Clisthenes with the whole of the exiled families.

The Lacedæmonians, indignant at this disgrace of their king and countrymen, were now wholly bent on revenge. A principal means appeared to be the re-establishment of Hippias, and for that purpose, the other states of Greece, and particularly Corinth, were urged to join in the enterprise. But Corinth loved her own liberty, and respected that of others. She refused to accede to the alliance; and the rest of the states followed her example.

Hippias, disappointed of that aid he expected from the jealousy entertained by the petty states of the predominance of Athens, now looked towards a foreign alliance. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, under whom the Persian empire was splendid and flourishing, meditated, at this juncture, the conquest of Greece. Hippias disgracefully availed himself of the views of an enemy against the general liberty of his country, and courted the assistance of Artaphernes, the Persian governor of Sardes, to re-establish him on the throne of Athens. Artaphernes eagerly embraced a proposal, which promised effectually to second the views of his sovereign; and Greece now saw herself inevitably involved in a war with Persia.

The subject of the war with Persia naturally induces a retrospective view of the origin of this monarchy; its ancient history and the government, policy, and manners of this great empire; field of inquiry on which we shall enter in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

ORIGIN OF THE PERSIAN MONARCHY—End of the first Assyrian Empire—Era of Nabonassar—Monarchy of the Medes; Dejoces, Phraortes, Cyaxares, Nabopolassar—Nabuchodonozor II.—Captivity of the Jews—Cyrus the elder—Cambyses—Darius, son of Hystaspes—Conquest of Babylon—His War against the Scythians—His conquest of India—Government, Customs, and Manners of the Persians—Education of their Princes—General Education of the Persian Youth—National Character of the Persians—Military Character—Government—Administration of Justice—Religion of the Ancient Persians—Zoroaster; Uncertainty of his History—The Second Zoroaster—Translation of the Zendavesta by Anquetil—Cosmogony of the Zendavesta—Manicheism—Practical and Moral parts of the Persian Religion—The Sadder—Change in the Manners of the Persians—State of Greece at the time of the Persian War.

HAVING pursued, in some of the preceding chapters, the general outlines of the history of Greece, from the time when the leading republics of Sparta and Athens had assumed a fixed and regular constitution, to the commencement of the Persian war, I now propose, in conformity with the plan laid down in the beginning of this work, to look back to the origin of the Persian monarchy, to delineate very briefly the early periods of its history, and to exhibit a general view of the government, genius, policy, and manners of this ancient people. Such a retrospect will serve to throw light upon their subsequent history, and familiarize us to their acquaintance when, under Darius, the son of Hystaspes, Xerxes, Artaxerxes, Darius Ochus, and Codomanus, we see the force of that splendid empire opposed to the valor and intrepidity of Greece.

It will be recollected that the first empire of the Assyrians ended under Sardanapalus, when Arbaces, governor of the Medes, and Belesis, governor of Babylon, shook off the yoke of that effeminate prince. Three monarchies arose from the ruins of that empire—that of Nineveh, or the second Assyrian empire, that of Babylon, and that of the Medes.

To Belesis succeeded Nabonassar, whose accession to the throne is the beginning of an astronomical era, called the Era of Nabonassar. It is fixed 747 years before Jesus Christ, at which time the Chaldæan astronomical observations began, which have been handed down to us by Ptolemy the geographer. The history of the kings of Babylon succeeding Nabonassar is entirely unknown. That of the monarchs of Nineveh is very little better known, unless by the ravages they committed in Palestine. We read in