

Such was the fate of the successors of Alexander, and such the catastrophe of his family; and thus feeble and fluctuating were most of those monarchies which were raised from the ruins of his empire. Great in extent of territory, they had no internal strength, nor any principle of union or durability. It was their lot to be governed by restless, jealous, and ambitious men; the perpetual jarring of whose interests gave them no intervals of tranquillity, nor allowed any attention to the settlement of their kingdoms, or the regulation of their domestic policy. These monarchies were, therefore, subject to perpetual revolutions; but all being alike deficient in that native strength which arises from a long-established government, there was not in any individual power a sufficiency of vigor to overwhelm or subjugate the rest. The general weakness of those kingdoms thus secured them against their incorporation and subjection to the government of any one of those ambitious rulers; while it paved the way for an easy conquest, and successive reduction of the whole under the yoke of a foreign power.

In that period from the death of Alexander the Great, which we have thus hastily run over, the proper history of the states of Greece presents only a series of unimportant revolutions; frequent and violent transitions from one form of government to another; political changes, not produced as formerly by the internal spirit or genius of the different commonwealths—or by those animated contentions which gave room for the display of the noble and manly passions—but effected at once by the will of a despot on a submissive, spiritless, and corrupted people. Yet, amidst this general weakness and degeneracy, there existed in a corner of this country a small people till now scarcely known, who still retained their ancient manners, and who preserved in a considerable degree the ardor of true patriotism and the love of their ancient liberty. These were the states of Achaia.

In those early times when all the cities of Greece, as if by general consent, shook off the yoke of their domestic tyrants, the cities of Achaia, Patræ, Dymæ, Tritæa, Pharæ, Ægium, and some others, had armed for their common liberty, and having deposed or expelled their governors, formed a league of association on a basis of perfect equality. It was agreed that each of the cities should be ruled by its own laws and magistrates; and that all affairs regarding their common interests should be treated in a senate, which should assemble twice in the year at Ægium, to which convention each of the associated states should send their deputies. No treaty could be formed, no alliance made, no war undertaken, or peace concluded, without the consent of the whole body. Two presidents of the assembly were yearly elected, called *Στρατηγοί*, or prætors. It was their duty to summon the states, and in them the authority of the body was vested during the intervals when it was not assembled. Such was the small but respectable republic of Achaia.

Till the era of the division of Alexander's empire, the Achaians had taken no share in the revolutions of Greece, having no ambition of extending their own territory or power, and no wealth to tempt the ambition of other states. They were enslaved, however, after that era by some of those turbulent governors, and several of their cities were garrisoned by Polysperchon, Demetrius Poliorcetes, Cassander, and Antigonus Gonatas. Others suffered from the usurpation of domestic tyrants, and the ancient association seemed entirely at an end. The following circumstance, however, incited the states to a renewal of their league. The people of Ætolia, a set of lawless freebooters, emboldened by the disorders of Greece, began to make incursions on Peloponnesus. The territories of the Achaian states, lying immediately opposite to them, were most exposed to their ravages. On this occasion Dymæ, Patræ, Pharæ, and Tritæa, renewed their league of association on its ancient principles, and they were joined soon after by the Tegæans, and some of the other states of Peloponnesus. In one respect they improved on their former constitution, by electing only one president, or prætor, instead of two, and they were fortunate in choosing for that office a man truly deserving of it.

Aratus of Sicyon, when a youth of twenty years of age, had acquired a high reputation by delivering his native state from a domestic *tyranny*, and joining it to the associated republics. This young man was a singular phenomenon in those days of degeneracy. He possessed uncommon endowments of mind, and a heart which glowed with the love of honor and of his country. He was vigilant, enterprising, and prompt in decision; and he possessed that ready and forcible eloquence which is of the greatest importance to the magistrate of a democracy. Aratus was in the twenty-eighth year of his age when he was elected prætor of Achaia; and, invested with that honorable office, he formed the patriotic design of delivering Peloponnesus from the yoke of Macedonia. In the first year of his magistracy, he expelled the Macedonian garrison from Corinth; a most important measure, which gave the united states the command of the isthmus and entry to Peloponnesus. The consequence of this success was that the states of Megara, Trœzene, and Epidaurus joined the Achaian confederacy.

The republic of Achaia was not fitted to support an offensive war, for two strong reasons. A number of separate, independent republics, however connected by a common interest, cannot always act with a perfect unanimity, and their measures are consequently seldom attended with that celerity of execution on which success so much depends. Moreover, the confederate states were neither populous nor wealthy, and, of course, they could not muster a strong force in the field. Aratus was quite sensible of these defects, and therefore bent his chief attention to the securing his country from attack, and from the necessity of going to war; and this he wisely judged would be best effected by strengthening

the league with the accession of some of the more powerful states of Greece.

In that view he made his proposals both to Athens and Lacedæmon; but these commonwealths, though still affecting a passion for liberty, could not, from a despicable pride, brook the thought of owing their freedom to the petty states of Achaia. The situation of the Lacedæmonians at this time was indeed such as to engross all attention to their domestic concerns, as that republic was actually in the very crisis of a revolution.

Agis IV. had succeeded to one branch of the throne of Sparta a short time before Aratus was chosen prætor of the Achaian states. This prince, a better man than a wise politician, had cherished the chimerical project of restoring the ancient laws of Lycurgus, as conceiving this the only means of rescuing his country from the disorders induced by the universal corruption of its manners. But there is a period when political infirmity has attained such a pitch that recovery is impossible; and Sparta had arrived at that period. The design of Agis, of course, embraced the radical reform of a new division of all the land of the republic—a project sufficient to rouse the indignation and secure the mortal enmity of the whole of the higher class of citizens, and of almost every man of weight and consideration in his country. The plan was therefore to be conducted with the greatest caution and secrecy till sufficiently ripened for execution; but Agis was betrayed by his own confidants. Leonidas, his colleague in the sovereignty, had imbibed a relish for luxury from his Asiatic education at the court of Seleucus, and was thus easily persuaded to take the part of the richest citizens in opposing this violent revolution, which threatened to reduce all ranks of men to a level of equality. The premature discovery of his scheme was fatal to its virtuous author; for the party of his opponents was so formidable, that after compelling Agis to take shelter in the Temple of Minerva, they seized the opportunity of his going to the bath, and dragged him to the common prison, where a tribunal of the Ephori, summoned by his colleague Leonidas, sat ready to judge him as a state criminal. He was asked, by whose evil counsel he had been prompted to disturb the laws and government of his country? “I needed none to prompt me,” said the king, “to act as I thought right. My design was to restore your ancient laws, and to govern according to the plan of the excellent Lycurgus; and though I see my death is inevitable, I do not repent of my design.” The judges hereupon pronounced sentence of death, and the virtuous Agis was carried forth from their presence and immediately strangled.

This example did not deter Cleomenes, the son of Leonidas, and his successor in one branch of the sovereignty, from cherishing the same patriotic design which had proved fatal to Agis, and which his own father had so keenly opposed. Cleomenes proposed the twofold object of delivering Sparta from the Macedonian

yoke and of restoring the ancient system of Lycurgus. He began by the judicious measure of attaching the army to his interest, securing the confidence and allegiance of all the principal officers, and dexterously removing from command such as he judged to be unfriendly to the revolutionary design. Several of the richer citizens, and even some of the Ephori, from whom he expected opposition, were on various pretences banished or put to death. Trusting to the ready coöperation of the lower orders, he then assembled the people, and detailing the great benefits to be expected from a complete change of system, proclaimed the abolition of all the debts, and beginning by divesting himself of the whole of his property, made a new partition of the lands of the republic, and restored the ancient plan of education, the institution of the public tables, and, in a word, as nearly as possible, the long-forgotten regimen of Lycurgus. Cleomenes was hailed the second founder and father of his country, and Greece resounded with his praise, and boundless applause and admiration of the regenerated acedæmonians.

This revolution, which in reality was favorable to the great object of the Achaian league, the subversion of the Macedonian influence in Greece, did not, however, meet with that cordial approbation which it ought to have found from the states of Achaia. Instead of being the leaders in the great and patriotic design of vindicating the national liberty, they now feared that Sparta was destined to eclipse their glory by assuming that honorable pre-eminence. Such was the influence of pride and jealousy, that even the virtuous Aratus now affected to consider Cleomenes and the Spartans as cherishing views more hostile to the liberty and independence of the Grecian republics, by elevating the hated power of Lacedæmon, than even the control of the Macedonians. The consequence was that, with a policy which it is not easy to justify upon any principle of disinterested patriotism, Aratus and the Achæians now formed a strict alliance with Macedon to oppose, as they pretended, the ambitious design of the Spartans to be the rulers of Greece.

Antigonus Doseon at this time governed Macedonia, in the minority of his nephew Philip, the son of Demetrius. He gladly entered into the designs of Aratus, which he naturally thought were most effectually subservient to the Macedonian interests; and entering Peloponnesus with a large army, attacked the Spartans under Cleomenes, and in one sanguinary battle left above 5000 dead on the field. Cleomenes, seeing all was lost, fled for shelter to Egypt. Sparta fell into the hands of the conqueror, and its newly regenerated constitution, with its short-lived freedom, were now annihilated for ever. Antigonus imposed upon the Lacedæmonians an easy yoke. Satisfied with an acknowledgment of their submission to the control of Macedon, he allowed them to model their laws and constitution as they should judge

best, and to elect their own magistrates. It may be believed they made no further attempt to revive the system of Lycurgus.

Antigonus died soon after, and was succeeded in the kingdom of Macedon by his nephew Philip, then a youth of seventeen years of age, endowed by nature with excellent talents and many valuable qualities of a sovereign. He was brave, eloquent, and of great address in moulding men to his purposes, which were not always the designs of a man of virtue and probity. Philip owed much to his uncle's care of his education and the early instruction he received in the science of government: he possessed great ambition, and was not scrupulous in the means of indulging it. His object very early appeared to be the dominion of all Greece; and the want of a bond of union among its states, and their eternal jealousies and quarrels, gave him every advantage. His ambition, however, and a train of success in the beginning of his career, inspired him with a confidence in his own plans, which in the end proved his destruction and the ruin of his own kingdom. After some considerable successes against the *Ætolians*, which gave him a high character as a general, the important contest at that time carrying on between the Romans and the Carthaginians appeared to offer to Philip, by the medium of a junction with Hannibal, the means not only of subjugating Greece, but of sharing in the spoils of Italy. Seduced by these flattering prospects, Philip concluded a treaty with Hannibal, by which he agreed to furnish a large fleet and army for the conquest of Italy; in return for which service, Hannibal agreed, after subduing the Romans, to invade Epirus and reduce it under the dominion of Macedon. This treaty was carried so far into effect by a large fleet under Philip, which entered the Ionian Gulf and seized the seaport of Oricum; but a fatal defeat ensued, and the armament of Philip returned with dishonor and mortification to his own ports.

The period was now come when the Romans first obtained a footing in Greece. This devoted nation was now prepared for slavery, and its destiny could not be averted. Philip, mortified by his late disaster, now bent his whole thoughts on the sovereignty of Greece. He was in league with the Achaian states; but the virtues of Aratus were an insurmountable bar to his ambition; it was therefore necessary that this obstacle should be removed, and the Macedonian was not scrupulous in his choice of means. He procured the death both of Aratus and of his son by poison, and in their extinction the last feeble prop of the Grecian liberty was cut away. Philip had now the command of the Achaian league, and seemed fast advancing to the attainment of his great object; but in provoking the enmity of the Romans, he had imprudently paved the way for his own destruction. Having renewed his attacks upon the *Ætolians*, this people, with a very natural but most imprudent policy, courted aid from the Romans, who cheerfully complied with a request which was to avenge their

own quarrel and gratify their passion of conquest. They declared themselves protectors of the liberties of Greece, which they were determined to defend against invasion from any other quarter than their own. Flaminius being sent with a large army into that country, defeated Philip in a decisive engagement at Cynoscephalæ, and speedily compelled him to sue for peace upon these humiliating terms, that all the Greek cities, both in Europe and Asia, should be declared free and independent of Macedonia; that every Greek or Roman captive should be set at liberty; that he should surrender to the Romans the whole of his armed ships of war, with the exception of five small vessels, and pay the sum of 1000 talents; and, finally, that his son Demetrius should be given up to the Romans as a hostage for security of the performance of these conditions. Such was the infatuation of the degenerate Greeks, that this treaty, which distinctly proclaimed their subjection to a foreign power much more formidable than Macedonia, and now rapidly advancing to universal dominion, was hailed by them as a new epoch of liberty.

The treaty of Cynoscephalæ in reality put a period to the kingdom of Macedon. Philip sunk into absolute insignificance. Seduced by false information from his youngest son Perseus, he caused Demetrius, his elder son, to be put to death. He died himself soon after; and Perseus, defeated in the battle of Pydna by the consul *Æmilius*, was compelled to surrender himself with all his family into the hands of the victor. Precipitated from the throne, this unhappy prince attended in chains the triumphal chariot of *Æmilius*, and died a prisoner in Italy. Thus ended the kingdom of Macedonia, which now became a Roman province, under the government of a proconsul.

The Romans, from the period of the conquest of the Macedonian kingdom, made rapid advances to the dominion of all Greece. In this progress their art was more conspicuous than their virtue. They gained their end by fostering dissensions between the republics; offering themselves as arbiters of differences, which they contrived should always terminate in their own favor, and bringing over by corruption the principal men of the different states to their interest. While they were confessedly the most powerful nation on earth, they employed that species of policy which is excusable only in the weak. A procedure of this kind is not fitted to command the reverence of a generous enemy. The Achaian states held that policy in contempt, and they did not scruple to insult the deputies of imperial Rome. This drew upon them the thunder of the Roman arms. Metellus marched into Greece with his legions, gave them battle, and entirely defeated them. Mummius, the consul, terminated the work, and made an easy conquest of the whole of Greece, which from that time became a Roman province, under the name of Achaia.

Athens alone had offered no resistance, and therefore could not

be said to be as yet subdued. This versatile republic had always flattered the predominant power, and thence had preserved a bastard species of liberty much akin to servitude. The Romans assisted the Athenians in a war against the Acarnanians, but Athens unwisely deprived herself of this alliance by concluding a treaty with an enemy of the Romans, Mithridates, king of Pontus. Aristion was the adviser of this imprudent measure, and Mithridates rewarded his services by raising him to the tyranny of Athens; an elevation which was dearly purchased, for Sylla besieged and took the city of Athens, delivered it for a day to the fury and plunder of his troops, and put Aristion to death. From that period, the Athenians quietly submitted to the dominion of Rome. They were allowed to retain their form of a democracy, which was now more quietly administered than their liberty was extinct, and there was no object to rouse the passions or inflame the turbulent spirit of the populace.

The Romans treated Greece with more peculiar favor and distinction than any other of the conquered provinces of the empire. The ancient habit of associating with that people the idea of all that in past ages was respectable in virtue or in valor, and more recently the idea of a singular eminence in philosophy, and the culture of the fine arts, had assuredly great weight in maintaining this favorable opinion of a degenerate and fallen people. Low as they had sunk in the scale of true greatness, the Greeks were yet in some respects superior to their conquerors. Rome was arrived at that period when the severer virtues which distinguished the first ages of the commonwealth had yielded to that refinement which arises from, and in its turn cherishes, the cultivation of letters and the taste for the fine arts. In these respects, Greece was to Rome an instructor and a model.

*Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agresti Latio.—Hor. Ep. ad Aug.*

Hence she was still regarded in an honorable point of view by her conquerors,—a consideration which leads us, at this period of the termination of the history of Greece, to take a short view of the national character and attainments in those departments of art and science in which the Greeks still continued to make a distinguished figure among the contemporary nations. Previously, however, to these considerations, the preceding sketch of the history of Greece furnishes naturally some political reflections which shall be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Political reflections arising from the history of Greece—Retrospective view—Constitutional defects in the leading republics—A pure democracy is a chimaera—All government essentially of the nature of a monarchy—Error of Montesquieu's theory—Ferguson's idea of a perfect republic—Democracy unfavorable to patriotism—Danger of generalizing in politics—A rude state of society favorable to patriotism—Greece a strong instance of this—Character of Greece after the Roman conquest.

WE have now traced Greece from her origin; from the rude and barbarous periods when she owed even the most necessary arts of life to foreign instructors, through every stage of her progress to the highest rank among the civilized nations of the earth. We have seen the foundation and rise of her independent states; the vigorous perseverance by which they succeeded in shaking off the yoke of intolerable tyranny, and establishing a popular system of government; the alternate differences of these states from petty quarrels, the fruit of ambition and the love of power; while, at the same time they cordially united their strength and resources to oppose foreign hostilities, when such were formidable enough to threaten their liberties as a nation. We have remarked the domestic disorders which sprang from the abuse of that freedom which these republics enjoyed; and, finally, that general corruption of manners which, tainting all the springs of public virtue, and annihilating patriotism, at length brought this illustrious nation entirely under subjection to a foreign yoke. The revolutions which in this progress the states of Greece underwent, and the situations into which they were thrown by their alternate connection and differences, as well as by their wars with foreign powers, were so various, that their history is a school of instruction in politics, as there is scarce a doctrine in that important science which may not find an example or an illustration from their history.

The science of politics, like every other subject of philosophical speculation, admits of a variety of opposite and contradictory opinions—a truth the more to be lamented that of all sciences it is that, where for the interest of mankind it were most to be wished that our reasonings should rest upon solid and fixed principles. If, however, there is in reality any criterion of the solidity of abstract principles in political reasoning, it must be when we ascertain their coincidence or disagreement with actual experience in the history of nations. I shall adopt this criterion in laying before my readers a few reflections which naturally arise from the foregoing short delineation of the Grecian history.