

and it is said, with a very moderate regard to probability, that, in the space of two months, this resolute and active people equipped a fleet of one hundred galleys of five banks of oars, and twenty of three banks. The construction of these vessels, and particularly the disposition of the different ranges, or banks of oars, has given occasion to much speculation among the moderns. The difficulty of supposing five different lines or orders of rowers disposed one above another, has occasioned the conjectures of some authors, that the expression of *triremes* and *quinqueremes* meant no more than that there were in some galleys three men to an oar, and in others five. But the expressions of the ancient writers clearly show that there were different ranks which sat above each other. Nothing can be more ridiculous than the importance which men of learning assume to themselves from that parade of erudition, which they sometimes choose to display on the most insignificant topics. Meibomius has written a treatise upon the structure of the ancient *triremis*, in which, from a variety of quotations from ancient authors, and critical disquisitions upon the meaning of some of their technical phrases, he shows that Scaliger, Salmasius, and the ablest of the modern critics, were totally in the dark as to the true sense of those authors; and so highly does he value himself upon his discoveries, that he dedicates his book, *Regibus, Principibus, Rebus-publicisque Maris Interni accolis*; "To all the kings, princes, and states, whose territories lie upon the Mediterranean." His treatise again has been answered by Opelius, and thus the dispute goes on to the length of folio volumes to settle this important point, whether the *thranites*, one order of rowers, sat uppermost, and the *thalamites* undermost, or whether these last were above, and the former below.\*

\* The late Lieutenant-General Melville, who united a taste for antiquities to great professional knowledge, has some curious ideas upon this subject of the structure of the ancient galleys. He conjectures that the waist part of the vessels rose obliquely above the water's edge, with an angle of forty-five degrees or near it; that upon the inner sides of this waist part, the seats of the rowers, each about two feet in length, were fixed horizontally in rows, with no more space between each seat and those on all sides of it, than should be found necessary for the free movements of men when rowing together. The *quincunx*, or chequer order, would afford this advantage in the highest degree possible; and in consequence of the combination of two obliquities, those inconveniences, which, according to the common idea of the regulation of such galleys, must have attended the disposition of so great a number of rowers, are entirely removed. In 1773, the General caused the fifth part of the waist of a *quinqueremis* to be erected in the back yard of his house, in Great Pulteney Street. This model contained with sufficient ease, in a very small place, thirty rowers in five tiers of six men in each lengthways, making one-fifth part of the rowers on each side of a *quinqueremis*, according to Polybius, who assigns three hundred for the whole complement, besides one hundred and twenty fighting men. This construction, the advantages of which appeared evident to those who examined it, serves to explain many difficult passages of the Greek and Roman writers concerning naval matters. The General's discovery is confirmed by ancient monuments. The collection at Portici contains ancient paintings of several galleys, one or two of which, by representing the stern

Besides the *longæ naves*, or ships of war, such as those we have mentioned, the Romans made use of small vessels called *liburnica*, which were serviceable during a naval engagement in carrying the general's or admiral's orders from one part of the squadron to the other. They were so called from the Liburni, a people of Illyria, who followed a piratical way of life, and used small, quick-sailing vessels. In a naval engagement the general himself, in one of these *liburnica*, was wont to sail through the fleet, and give his orders for the dispositions and motions of the squadron.

In their naval engagements the ancients had no means of assailing each other at a distance but with the javelin; nor had they any contrivance for disabling the vessels of the enemy, unless in some of their largest ships, which were constructed with towers on their stern, from which they could use the balista or catapulta. The *corvus*, or grappling machine, used by the Romans, served to fasten the ships to each other during action, while the men were engaged with the sword and buckler or with spears. Under the emperors the Romans maintained their distant conquests not only by their arms but by their fleets, which were disposed in all the quarters of the empire, and preserved a fixed station, as did the legions.\*

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## CHAPTER VI.

Reflections arising from a view of the Roman History during the Commonwealth.

IN the view which I have endeavored to give of the rise and the progress of the Roman republic, and of the states of Greece previously, I have been less attentive through the whole to a minute and scrupulous detail of events, than studious to mark

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part, show both the obliquity of the sides, and the rows of oars reaching to the water; and many ancient basso relievos show the oars issuing chequer-wise from the sides. See Gillies' History of Greece, cap. 5.

\* Augustus stationed two permanent fleets at Ravenna, on the Adriatic, and at Misenum, in the Bay of Naples, to command the two seas, each squadron containing several thousand marines. They consisted chiefly of the lighter vessels called *Liburnica*. A very considerable armament was likewise stationed at Frejus, on the coast of Provence, and another was appointed to guard the Euxine. To these may be added the fleet which preserved the communication between Gaul and Britain, and a number of vessels constantly maintained on the Rhine and Danube.

those circumstances which show the spirit and genius of those remarkable nations, and illustrate those great moral and political truths which it is the most valuable province of history to point out and inculcate.

To consider history only as a magazine of facts, arranged in the order of their dates, is nothing more than the indulgence of a vain and childish curiosity; a study which tends to no valuable or useful purpose. The object of the study of history is one of the noblest of the pursuits of man. It is to furnish the mind with the knowledge of that great art on which depends the existence, the preservation, the happiness and prosperity of states and empires.

That the connection of politics with morality is inseparable, the smallest acquaintance with history is sufficient to show.

No nation has afforded a more striking example, than the Romans have done, of the necessity of *good morals to the preservation of political liberty and the happiness of the people*. This is a doctrine of so much importance, that it cannot be too seriously considered nor attended to. Unlike, in this respect, to many other political truths which are interesting only to statesmen, and those who conduct the machine of government, this truth is of importance to be known and considered by every single individual of the community; because the error or fault is in the *conduct of individuals*, and can only be amended by a conviction brought home to the mind of every private man, that the reformation must be begun by his own virtuous and patriotic endeavors.

It will, therefore, be no unprofitable task if I shall endeavor, from the history of the Roman republic, and likewise from that of the states of Greece, which were before under our consideration, to throw together in one view such striking facts as tend to exemplify and illustrate this great and useful lesson, of which the application is not confined to any age or country, but is equally suited to the subject of a *monarchy*, and of a *republic*; equally important to the modern Briton, as it was to the ancient Greek or Roman. For in truth, no principle is more false or more pernicious than that assumed by some political writers, that virtue is *essentially necessary to republics alone*. Virtue is necessary, and indispensably necessary, to the existence of every government, whatever be its form; and no human institution where men are assembled together to act in concert, however limited be their numbers, or however extensive, however wise may be their governors, however excellent their laws, can possess any measure of duration without that powerful cement, virtue in the principles and morals of the people. *Quid leges sine moribus vane proficiunt*, is a sentiment equally applicable to all governments whatever.

The love of liberty, or the passion for national freedom, is a noble, a disinterested, and a virtuous feeling. Where this feeling is found to prevail in any great degree, it is a proof that the manners of that community are yet pure and unadulterated; for cor-

ruption of manners infallibly extinguishes the patriotic spirit. In a nation confessedly corrupted, there is often found a prevailing cry for liberty, which is heard the loudest among the most profligate of the community; but let us carefully distinguish *that* spirit from *virtuous patriotism*. Let us examine the morals, the private manners of the demagogue who preaches forth the love of liberty; remark the character and examine the lives of those who listen with the greatest avidity to his harangues, and re-echo his vociferations—and let this be our criterion to judge of the principle which actuates them.\* The aversion to restraint assumes the same external appearance with the love of liberty; but this criterion will enable us to distinguish the reality from the counterfeit. In fact the spirit of liberty and a general corruption of manners are so totally adverse and repugnant to each other, that it is utterly impossible they should have even the most transitory existence in the same age and nation. When Thrasybulus delivered Athens from the thirty tyrants, liberty came too late; the manners of the Athenians were irretrievably corrupted; licentiousness, avarice, and debauchery had induced a mortal disease. When Antigonus and the Achæan states restored liberty to the Spartans, they could not enjoy or preserve it; the spirit of liberty was utterly extinct, for they were a corrupted people. The liberty of Rome could not be recovered by the death of Cæsar; it had gone for ever with her virtuous manners.

On the other hand, while virtue remains in the manners of the people, no national misfortune is irretrievable, nor any political situation so desperate, that hope may not remain for a favorable change. If the morals of the people be entire, the spirit of patriotism pervading the ranks of the state will excite to such exertions as may soon recover the national honor. Of this truth the Roman state afforded at one time a most striking example. When Hannibal was carrying every thing before him in Italy, when the Roman name was sunk so low that the allies of the republic were daily dropping off, and the Italian states seemed to stand aloof, and leave her to her fate, there was in the manners of the people, and in that patriotic ardor which can only exist in an uncorrupted age, a spirit of reconvalence which speedily operated a most wonderful change of fortune. Of all the allied states, Hiero, king of Syracuse, manifested the greatest political foresight. When solicited to forsake the Romans in this hour of their adversity, he stood firm to the alliance. He saw, that, although sunk under the pressure of temporary misfortune, patriotism was still alive and

\*“That man,” says Æschines, “who is an unnatural father, and a hater of his own blood, can never be a worthy leader of the people; the soul that is insensible to the tenderest domestic relations, can never feel the more general bond of patriotic affection: he who in private life is vicious, can never be virtuous in the concerns of the public.”

the constitution of the republic was still sound; and he rightly concluded that she would recover her strength and splendor. So likewise at Carthage, when the intelligence arrived of the great victory gained over the Romans at Cannæ;—the most sanguine and shortsighted manifested the highest exultation, and concluded that Rome for certain was in the possession of Hannibal, *et quod actum erat de republicâ Romanâ*: but the wiser sort judged far otherwise; and, hearing of those intrepid resolutions of the senate upon that great calamity, sagaciously foresaw that this misfortune would but rouse to a more desperate resistance, and accumulate the whole strength of the Romans, of which hitherto there had been only partial exertions. The lapse of a hundred and forty years, however, made a prodigious change in the Roman character. In the time of Marius and Sylla, a defeat like Cannæ would have been decisive of the fate of Rome. Had Hiero lived in the time of the Second Triumvirate, he would have abandoned the republic to her fate, which he must have seen to be inevitable.

The force of the torrent of corruption in the degeneracy of a nation is never so sensibly perceived, so strongly felt, as when one man of uncommon virtue makes a signal endeavor to oppose it. If his example, though ineffectual to excite a general imitation, is yet strong enough to attract applause, there is still some faint hope that *that* nation or people is not beyond the possibility of recovery. Thus, when, after the defeat of Antiochus, and the plunder of his kingdom, the virtuous Scipio withstood every temptation to accumulate wealth,—temptations judged so powerful, that it was thought impossible he should have resisted them, and he underwent on that ground a calumnious prosecution,—the conduct of that great man on this occasion excited universal admiration; a proof that, amidst great corruption, public virtue was not yet *extinct*. In that age, a few such men as Scipio might have postponed the approaching ruin of their country. But when things have once proceeded to that depth of degeneracy, that the example of one virtuous man strenuously resisting the torrent cannot command even a sterile applause, but is received with scorn and contempt, then is that nation gone beyond all hopes, and no human power can prevent its hastening to ruin. A very few years from the time of the last mentioned example had produced this fatal difference in the manners of the Romans. When the first triumvirate, Pompey, Cæsar, and Crassus, had gone such lengths towards the destruction of the Roman liberty, and had so debauched the manners of the people, that candidates for offices, instead of depending on their merits or services, openly bought the suffrages of the people, and, improving in corruption, instead of purchasing single votes, went directly to the triumviri and paid down the ready money; when all was going headlong to perdition, the younger Cato attempted to impose some check upon this torrent of wickedness. What was the consequence?—He only procured to

himself the contempt and hatred of both rich and poor, the former detesting the man who forbade them to buy the liberty of their country, and the latter execrating him who would have prevented them from making money by the sale of it.

Whether it was the intercourse with the Carthaginians, whose want of probity and of national faith had passed into a proverb; or whether it was the internal corruption of the manners of the Romans themselves, a people now flushed with the arrogance that attends repeated conquests—it is not easy to determine; but it is certain that the national character of the Romans seems to have undergone its most remarkable change for the worse, from the time of the destruction of their rival, Carthage. The last Punic war itself was prompted, as we have seen, by a most mean, ungenerous, and dastardly spirit in the Romans. But after the fall of Carthage, some of the public measures became stained with the most horrible perfidy. Their conduct to Viriathus, a Spanish chief, of whom they first purchased an ignominious peace, and afterwards broke it by hiring assassins to murder him; and their shameful treachery and cruelty to the people of Numantia, whom they basely attacked, murdered, and exterminated, while they thought themselves safe under the sanction of a most solemn treaty,—these are instances marking so total a depravation of national character, as could be followed by nothing else but the ruin of the state that could furnish them. Accordingly, we find similar instances following each other in the quickest succession, from this time down to the entire subversion of the commonwealth.

When the passion of avarice had, as at this time, pervaded all the ranks of the state, it is not wonderful that the public measures should be in the greatest degree mean and disgraceful. The ambition of conquest was now little else than the desire of rapine and plunder. If the allies of the state were opulent, the Romans considered their wealth as a sufficient reason for dissolving all treaties between them, and holding them as a lawful object of conquest. Thus the kingdoms of Numidia, of Pergamus, of Cappadocia, of Bithynia, separate sovereignties bound to the allegiance of the Romans by the most solemn treaties, were invaded as if they had been ancient and natural enemies, and reduced to the condition of conquered provinces. The senate made a kind of traffic of thrones and governments, selling them openly to the highest bidder.

It is curious, in this state of the Roman manners, to observe the pretences sometimes alleged for going to war, when any country offered a tempting object to their avidity and rapaciousness.

Manlius, the consul, undertook an expedition against the Gallogrecians or Gallatians, a people of Asia Minor. It was alleged that the war was unjust, for they had given the Romans no sort of provocation. But the general urged in excuse, that they were a wicked and profligate people, and that some of their ancestors,