I. THE ROMANS IN GREECE

FROM the Roman conquest in 146 B.C. Greece lost her independence for a period of nearly two thousand years. During twenty centuries the country had no separate existence as a nation, but followed the fortunes of foreign rulers. Attached, first to Rome and then to Constantinople, it was divided among various Latin nobles after the fall of the Byzantine Empire in 1204, and succumbed to the Turks in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. From that time, with the exception of the brief Venetian occupation of the Peloponnese, and the long foreign administration of the Ionian Islands, it remained an integral part of the Turkish Empire till the erection of the modern Greek kingdom. Far too little attention has been paid to the history of Greece under foreign domination, for which large materials have been collected since Finlay wrote his great work. Yet, even in the darkest hours of bondage, the annals of Greece can scarcely fail to interest the admirers of ancient Hellas.

The victorious Romans treated the vanquished Greeks with moderation, and their victory was regarded by the masses as a relief from the state of war which was rapidly consuming the resources of the taxpayers. Satisfied to forego the galling symbols, provided that they held the substance, of power in their own hands, the conquerors contented themselves with dissolving the Achaian League, with destroying, perhaps from motives of commercial policy, the great mart of Corinth, and with subordinating the Greek communities to the governor of the Roman province of Macedonia, who exercised supreme supervision over them. But these local bodies were allowed to preserve their formal liberties; Corfù, the first of Greek cities to submit to Rome, always remained autonomous, and Athens and Sparta enjoyed special immunities as "the allies of Rome," while the sacred character of Delphi secured for it practical autonomy. A few years after the conquest the old Leagues were permitted to revive, at least in name; and the land tax, payable by most of the communities to the Roman Government, seemed to fulfil the expectation of the natives that their fiscal burdens would be diminished under foreign rule. The historian Polybios[1], who successfully pleaded the cause of his countrymen at this great crisis in their history, has contrasted the purity of Roman financial

[1] XL. 5.

administration with the corruption of Greek public men, and has cited a saying current in Greece soon after the conquest: "If we had not perished quickly, we should not have been saved." While this was the popular view, the large class of landed proprietors was also pleased by the recognition of its social position by its new masters, and the men who were entrusted with the delicate task of organising the conquered country at the outset of its new career wisely availed themselves of the disinterested services of Polybios, who enjoyed the confidence of both Greeks and Romans. Even Mummius himself, the destroyer of Corinth, if he carried off many fine statues to deck his triumph, left behind him the memory of his gentleness to the weak, as well as that of his firmness to the strong, and might have been taken as the embodiment of those qualities which Virgil, more than a century later, held up to the imitation of his countrymen.

The *pax Romana*, which the Roman conquest seemed likely to confer upon the jealous Greeks, was occasionally broken in the early decades of the new administration. The sacred isle of Delos, which was then subordinate to Athens, and which had become the greatest mart for merchandise and slaves in the Levant since the destruction of Corinth, and the silver-mines of Laurion, which had of old provided the sinews of naval warfare against the Persian host, were the scenes of servile insurrections such as that which about the same time raged in Sicily, and a democratic rising at Dyme not far from Patras called for repression. But the participation of many Greeks in the quarrel between Rome and Mithridates, King of Pontus, entailed far more serious consequences upon their country. While the warlike Cretans, who had not bowed as yet beneath the Roman yoke, sent their redoubtable archers to serve in his ranks, the Athenians were seduced from their allegiance by the rhetoric of their fellow-citizen, Athenion, or Aristion, a man of dubious origin, who had found the profession of philosopher so paying that he was now able to indulge in that of a patriot. Appointed captain of the city, he established a reign of terror, and included the Roman party and his own philosophic rivals in the same proscription. He despatched the bibliophile Apellikon, who had purchased the library of Aristotle, with an expedition against Delos, which failed; but a similar attempt by the Pontic forces was successful, and the prosperity of the island was almost ruined by their ravages. When the armies of Mithridates reached the mainland, there was a great rising against the Romans, and for the second time the plain of Chaironeia witnessed a battle, which on this occasion, however, was indecisive. A great change now took place in the fortunes of the war.

Sulla arrived in Greece, routed the Athenian philosopher and his Pontic colleague in a single battle, cowed most of the Greeks by the mere terror of his name, and laid siege to Athens and the Piræus, which offered a vigorous resistance. The groves of the Academy and the Lyceum furnished the timber for his battering rams; the treasuries of the most famous temples, those of Delphi, Olympia and Epidauros, provided pay for his soldiers; the remains of the famous "long walls," which had united Athens with her harbour, were converted into siege-works. The knoll near the street of tombs, on which a tiny church now stands, is supposed to be part of Sulla's mound, and the bones found there those of his victims. An attempt to relieve the besieged failed; and, as their provisions grew scarce, the Athenians lost heart and sought to obtain favourable terms from the enemy. In the true Athenian spirit, they prayed for consideration on the ground that their ancestors had fought at Marathon. But the practical Roman replied that he had "not come to study history, but to chastise rebels[1]," and insisted on unconditional surrender. In 86 B.C. Athens was taken by assault, and many of the inhabitants were butchered; but, in spite of his indifference to the glories of Marathon, the conqueror consented to spare the fabric of the city for the sake of its ancient renown. The Akropolis, where Aristion had taken refuge, still held out, and the Odeion of Perikles, which stood at the south-east corner of it, perished by fire in the siege. Want of water at last forced the garrison to surrender, and the evacuation of the Piræus by the Pontic commander made Sulla master of that important position also. To the Piræus he showed as little mercy as Mummius had shown to Corinth. While from Athens he carried off nothing except a few columns of the temple of Zeus Olympios, a large sum of money which he found in the treasury of the Parthenon, and a fine manuscript of Aristotle and Theophrastos, he levelled the Piræus with the ground, and inflicted upon it a punishment from which it did not recover till the time of Constantine. Then he marched to Chaironeia, where another battle ended in the rout of the Pontic army, and the Thebans atoned for their rebellion by the loss of half their territory, which the victor consecrated to the temples of Delphi and Olympia as compensation for what he had taken from them. A fresh Pontic defeat at Orchomenos in Bœotia ended the war upon Greek soil, but the struggle long left its mark upon the country. Athens still retained her privileges, and the Cappadocian King Ariobarzanes II, Philopator and his son, restored the Odeion of Perikles[2], but many

[1] Plutarch, *Sulla*, 13.
[2] Two Athenian inscriptions (Böckh, C.I.G., 1. 409) allude to this restoration.

of her citizens had died in the siege, and the rival armies had inflicted enormous injuries on Attica and Bœotia, the chief theatre of the war. Some small towns never recovered, and Thebes sank into a state of insignificance from which she did not emerge for centuries.

The pirates continued the work of destruction, which the first Mithridatic war had begun. The geographical configuration of the Ægean coasts has always been favourable to that ancient scourge of the Levant, and the conclusion of peace between Rome and the Pontic king let loose upon society a number of adventurers, whose occupation had ceased with the war. The inhabitants of Cilicia and Crete excelled above all others in the practice of this lucrative profession, and many were their depredations upon the Greek shores and islands. One pirate captain destroyed the sanctuaries of Delos and carried off the whole population into slavery; two others defeated the Roman admiral in Cretan waters. This last disgrace resulted in the conquest of that fine island by the Roman proconsul Quintus Metellus, whose difficult task fully earned him the title of "Creticus." The islanders fought with the desperate courage which they have evinced in all ages. Beaten in the open, they retired behind the walls of Kydonia and Knossos, and when those places fell, a guerilla warfare went on in the mountains, until at last Crete surrendered, and the last vestige of Greek freedom in Europe disappeared in the guise of a Roman province. Meanwhile, Pompey had swept the pirates from the seas, and established a colony of those marauders at Dyme, the scene of the previous rebellion[1]. Neither before nor since has piracy been put down with such thoroughness in the Levant, and Greece enjoyed, for a time at least, a welcome immunity from its ravages.

But the administration of the provinces in the last century of the Roman Republic often pressed very heavily upon the unfortunate provincials. Even after making due deduction for professional exaggeration from the charges brought by Cicero against extortionate governors, there remains ample evidence of their exactions. The notorious Verres, the scourge of Sicily, though he only passed through Greece, levied blackmail upon Sikyon and plundered the treasury of the Parthenon, and bad governors of Macedonia, like Caius Antonius and Piso, had greater opportunities for making money at the expense of the Greeks. As Juvenal complained at a later period, even when these scoundrels were brought to justice on their return home, their late province gained nothing by their punishment, and Caius Antonius, in exile on Cephalonia, treated that island as if it were his private property. The Roman

[1] Plutarch, *Pompey*, 28.

money-lenders had begun, too, to exploit the financial necessities of the Greeks, and even so ardent a Philhellene as Cicero's correspondent, Atticus, who owed his name to his long sojourn at Athens and to his interest in everything Attic, lent money to the people of Sikyon on such ruinous terms that they had to sell their pictures to pay off the debt. Athens, deprived of her commercial resources since the siege by Sulla, resorted to the sale of her coveted citizenship, much as some modern States sell titles, and subsisted mainly on the reputation of her schools of philosophy. It became the fashion for young Romans of promise to study there; thus Cicero spent six months there and revisited the city on his way to and from his Cilician governorship, and Horace tells us that he tried "to seek the truth among the groves of Academe[1]." Others resorted to Greece for purposes of travel or health, and the hellebore of Antikyra (now Aspra Spitia) on the Corinthian Gulf and the still popular baths of Ædepsos in Eubœa were fashionable cures in good Roman society. Moreover, a tincture of Greek letters was considered to be part of the education of a Roman gentleman. Cicero constantly uses Greek phrases in his correspondence, and Latin poets borrowed most of their plumes from Greek literature.

The two Roman civil wars which were fought on Greek soil between 49 and 31 B.C., were a great misfortune for Greece, whose inhabitants took sides as if the cause were their own. The struggle between Cæsar and Pompey was decided at Pharsalos in Thessaly, and most of the Greeks found that they had chosen the cause of the vanquished, whose exploits against the pirates and generous gift of money for the restoration of Athens were still remembered. But Cæsar showed his usual magnanimity towards the misguided Greeks, with the exception of the Megareans, whose stubborn resistance to his arms was severely punished. Most of the survivors of the siege were sold as slaves, and one of Cæsar's officials, writing to Cicero a little later, says that as he sailed up the Saronic Gulf, the once flourishing cities of Megara, the Piræus and Corinth lay in ruins before his eyes[2]. It was Cæsar, however, who in 44 B.C., raised the last of these towns from its ashes. But the new Corinth, which he founded, was a Roman colony rather than a Greek city, whose inhabitants were chiefly freedmen, and whose name was at first associated with a lucrative traffic in antiquities, derived from the plunder of the ancient tombs. Had he lived, Cæsar had intended to dig a canal through the Isthmus—a feat reserved for the reign of the late King George. On Cæsar's death, his murderer, Brutus, was enthusiastically welcomed by the Athenians, who erected

[1] *Epist.* II. 2, 45.

[2] *Epistolæ ad Diversos*, IV. 5, 4.

statues to him and Cassius besides those of the ancient tyrannicides, Harmodios and Aristogeiton. The struggle between him and the Triumvirs was decided at Philippi in Greek Macedonia, near the modern Kavalla, but had little effect upon the fortunes of Greece, though there were Greek contingents on either side. After the fall of Brutus, Antony spent a long time at Athens, where he flattered the susceptible natives by wearing their costume, amused them by his antics and orgies on the Akropolis, gratified them by the gift of Ægina and other islands, and scandalised them by the presence of Cleopatra, upon whom he expected them to bestow the highest honours. When the war broke out between him and Octavian for the mastery of the Roman world, Greece for the second time became the theatre of her masters' fratricidal strife. At no previous time since the conquest had the unhappy country suffered such oppression as then. The inhabitants were torn from their homes to serve on the ships of Antony, the Peloponnese was divided into two hostile camps according to the sympathies of the natives, and in the great naval battle of Aktion the fleeing ship of Cleopatra was pursued by a Lacedæmonian galley. The geographer Strabo, who passed through Greece two years later, has left us a grim picture of the state of the country. Bœotia was utterly ruined; Larissa was the only town in Thessaly worth mentioning; many of the most famous cities of the Peloponnese were barren wastes; Megalopolis was a wilderness, Laconia had barely thirty towns; Dyme, whose citizens had taken to piracy again, was falling into decay. The Ionian Islands and Tegea formed pleasant exceptions to the general misery, but as an instance of the wretched condition of the Ægean, the islet of Gyaros was unable to pay its annual tribute of £5. The desolation of Greece impressed Octavian so deeply that he founded two colonies for his veterans on Hellenic soil, one in 30 B.C. on the spot where his camp had been pitched at the battle of Aktion, which received the name of Nikopolis ("City of victory") in memory of that great triumph, the other at Patras, a site most convenient for the Italian trade. In both cases the numbers of the Roman colonists were augmented by the compulsory immigration of the Greeks who inhabited the neighbouring cities and villages. This measure had the bad effect of increasing the depopulation of the surrounding country, but it imparted immediate prosperity to both Patras and Nikopolis, and the factories of the former gave employment to numbers of women, while the celebration of the "Aktian games" at the latter colony attracted sight-seers from other places. Augustus, as Octavian was now called, made an important change in the administration of Greece, separating it from the Mace-

donian command, with which it had hitherto been combined, and forming it in 27 B.C. into a separate senatorial province of Achaia, which was practically identical with the boundaries of the Greek kingdom before 1912, and of which Cæsar's recently founded colony of Corinth was made the capital. But this restriction of the limits of the province did not affect the liberties of the different communities, though here and there Augustus altered their respective jurisdictions. Thus, in order to give Nikopolis a share in the Amphiktyonic Council, he modified the composition of that ancient body, and he enfranchised the Free Laconians who inhabited the central promontory of the Peloponnese, from Sparta; thus founding the autonomy which that rugged region has so often enjoyed[1]. But Athens and Sparta both continued to be "allies of Rome," Augustus made a Spartan Prince of the Lacedæmonians, and honoured them by his own presence at their public meals. If he forbade the Athenians to sell the honour of citizenship, he allowed himself to be initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, and his friend, Agrippa, presented Athens with a new theatre. As a proof of their loyalty and gratitude, the Athenians dedicated a temple on the Akropolis "to Augustus and Rome," a large fragment of which may still be seen, and erected a statue of Agrippa, the pedestal of which is still standing in a perilous position at the approach to the Propylæa. It was in further honour of the master of the Roman world, that an aqueduct was constructed from the Klepsydra fountain to the Tower of the Winds, which the Syrian Andronikos had built at a somewhat earlier period of the Roman domination. The adjoining gate of Athena Archegetis was raised out of money provided by Cæsar and Augustus, a number of friendly princes proposed to complete the temple of Olympian Zeus, while an inscription still preserves the generosity of another ruler, Herod, King of the Jews, towards the home of Greek culture.

The land now enjoyed a long period of peace, and began to recover from the effects of the civil wars. A further boon was the transference of Achaia from the jurisdiction of the Senate to that of the Emperor soon after the accession of Tiberius, who, whatever his private vices may have been, was most considerate in his treatment of the provincials. He sternly repressed attempts at extortion, kept his governors in office for long terms, and, when an earthquake injured the city of Aigion on the gulf of Corinth, excused the citizens from the payment of taxes for three years. The restriction of the much-abused right of asylum

[1] Paparregopoulos, Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους (ed. 4), II. 440, inclines however to the view that their enfranchisement was of earlier date.

in various temples, such as that of Poseidon on the island of Tenos, and the delimitation of the Messenian and Lacedæmonian boundary, showed the interest of the Roman Government in Greek affairs; and the cult of the Imperial family, which was now developed in Greece, was perhaps due to gratitude no less than to the natural obsequience of a conquered race. The visit of the Emperor's nephew, Germanicus, to Athens delighted the Athenians and scandalised Roman officialdom by the Imperial traveller's disregard of etiquette; and it was insinuated by a prejudiced Roman even at that early period that these voluble burgesses, who talked so much about their past history, were not really the descendants of the ancient Greeks, but "the offscourings of the nations." So deep was the impression made by the courtesy of Germanicus that, several years later, an impostor, who pretended to be his son Drusus, found a ready following in Greece, which he traversed from the Cyclades to Nikopolis. It became the custom, too, to banish distinguished Romans, who had incurred the Emperor's displeasure, to an Ægean island, and Amorgos, Kythnos, Seriphos, and Gyaros were the equivalent of Botany Bay. The last two islets in particular were regarded with intense horror, and Juvenal has selected them as types of the worst punishment that could befall one of his countrymen[1]. Caligula, less moderate than Tiberius in his treatment of the Greeks, carried off the famous statue of Eros from Thespiæ, for which his unaccomplished plan of cutting the Isthmus of Corinth was no compensation. Claudius restored the stolen statue, and in 44 A.D. handed over the province of Achaia to the Senate—an arrangement which, with one brief interval, continued to be the practice of the Roman Government for the future. Meanwhile, alike under Senatorial and Imperial administration, the Greeks had acquired Roman tastes and had even adopted in many cases Roman names. If old-fashioned Romans complained that Rome had become "a Greek city," where glib Hellenic freedmen had the ear of the Emperor and starving Greeklings were ready to practise any and every profession, the conservatives in Greece lamented the introduction of such peculiarly Roman sports as the gladiatorial shows, of which the remains of the Roman amphitheatre at Corinth are a memorial. The conquering and the conquered races had reacted on one another; the Romans had become more literary; the Greeks had become more material.

It was at this period, about 54 A.D., that an event occurred which profoundly modified the future of the Greek race. In, or a little before,

[1] Juvenal, I. 73, X. 170. Tacitus, *Annales*, II. 53–55, 85; III. 38, 63, 69; IV. 13, 30, 43; V. 10.

that year St Paul arrived at Athens, and, stirred by the idolatry of the city, delivered his famous speech in the midst of the Areopagos. The unvarnished narrative of the Acts of the Apostles does not disguise the failure of the great teacher's first attempt to convert the argumentative Greeks, to whom the new gospel seemed "foolishness." But "Dionysios the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them," believed, thus forming the small beginnings of the Church which grew up there in later days. From Athens the Apostle proceeded to Corinth, where he stayed "a year and six months." The capital of Achaia and mart of Greece was a fine field for his missionary labours. The Roman colony, which had now been in existence almost a century, had become the home of commerce and the luxury which usually accompanies it. The superb situation, commanding the two seas, had attracted a cosmopolitan population, including many Jews, and the vices of the East and the West seemed to meet on the Isthmus—the Port Said of the Roman Empire. We may trace in the language of the two Epistles, which the Apostle addressed to the Corinthians later on, the main characteristics of the seat of Roman rule in Greece. The allusions to the fights with wild beasts, to the Isthmian games, to the long hair of the Corinthian dandies, to the easy virtue of the Corinthian women, all show what was the daily life of the most flourishing city of Greece in the middle of the first century. Yet even at Corinth many were persuaded by the arguments of the tent-maker, and a Christian community was founded at the port of Kenchreæ on the Saronic Gulf. At the outset the converts were of humble origin, like "the house of Stephanas, the first fruits of Achaia"; but Gaius, Tertius, Quartus, and "Erastus, the chamberlain of the city," were persons of better position. That a man like Gallio, the brother of Seneca the philosopher and uncle of Lucan the poet, a man whom the other great poet of the day, Statius, has described as "sweetness" itself, was at that time governor of Achaia, shows the importance attached by the Romans to their Greek province. St Paul had not the profound classical learning of the governor's talented family, but the two Epistles to the Thessalonians, which he wrote during this first stay at Corinth, have conferred an undying literary interest on the capital of Roman Greece. Silas and Timotheus joined the Apostle at that place; and after his departure the learned Alexandrian, Apollos, carried on the work of Christianity among the Corinthians. But the germs of those theological parties, which were destined later on to divide the Greek Christians, had already been planted in the congenial soil of Achaia. The Christian community of Corinth, with the fatal tendency to faction

which has ever marked the Hellenic race, was soon split up into sections, which followed, one St Paul, another Apollos, another the supposed injunctions of St Peter, another the simple faith of Christ. Even women, and that, too, unveiled, like the Laises of Corinth, had taken upon themselves to speak at Christian gatherings, and drinking and the other sensual crimes of that luxurious city had proved temptations too strong for some of the new converts. This state of things provoked the two Epistles to the Corinthians and the second visit of the Apostle to the then Greek capital, where he remained three months, writing on this occasion also two Epistles from Greece—that to the Romans and that to the Galatians. For the sake of the greater security which the land route afforded, he returned to Asia through Northern Greece, accompanied among others by St Luke, whose traditional connection with Greece may be traced in the wax figure of the Virgin, said to be his work, in the monastery of Megaspelæon, and in the much later Roman tomb venerated as his, at Thebes. With the exception of his delay at Fair Havens on the south coast of Crete, we are not told by the writer of the Acts that St Paul ever set foot on Greek territory again; but he left Titus in that island "to ordain elders in every city," and contemplated spending a winter at Nikopolis. A tradition, unsupported, however, by good evidence, has been preserved to the effect that he was liberated from his Roman imprisonment, and it has been supposed that he employed part of the time that remained before his death in revisiting Corinth and Crete. His "kinsmen," Jason and Sosipater, bishops of Tarsus and Ikonium, preached the Word at Corfù, where one of them was martyred, and where one of the two oldest churches of the island still preserves their names[1]. The Greek journey of the pagan philosopher, Apollonios of Tyana, who tried to restore the ancient life of Hellas and to check the Romanising tendencies of the age, took place only a few years after the first appearance of the Apostle of the Gentiles in Greece.

Another visitor of a very different kind next arrived in the classic land. Nero had already displayed his taste for the fine arts by despatching an emissary to Greece with the object of collecting statues for the adornment of his palace and capital. Delphi, Olympia and Athens, where, in the phrase of a contemporary satirist, "it was easier to meet a god than a man," furnished an ample booty, and the Thespians again lost, this time for ever, the statue of Eros. But Nero was not content with the sculpture of Greece; he yearned to display his manifold talents before a Greek audience, "the only one," as he said, "worthy

[1] Mustoxidi, *Delle Cose Corciresi*, pp. 403, 404, xi.