

THE
 HISTORY
 OF
 GREECE.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Affairs of the GRECIAN Settlements in SICILY and ITALY; from the ATHENIAN Invasion, to the Settlement of the SYRACUSAN Government under DIONYSIUS and HIPPARINUS.

SECTION I.

Authorities for the Sequel of Grecian History. Sicilian Affairs following the Athenian Invasion. Administration and Legislation of Diocles at Syracuse.

WHOEVER may engage in the investigation of Grecian history among the original authors, whether writing for others, or only reading for himself, cannot but feel, at the period where we are now arrived, the loss of regular guidance from those cotemporary with the events, citizens of the republics they describe, conversant with the politics and warfare of the time, eyewitnesses, or generally acquainted with eyewitnesses of the facts they relate. After the death of Epameinondas, with which Xenophon's narrative ends, the only account of Grecian affairs, aiming at connection, is that of the Sicilian Diodorus, who lived above three hundred years after, in the time of Augustus

Vol. IV. + B Cæsar.

HISTORY OF GREECE. CHAP. XXIX.

Cæsar. In this long interval, the establishment, first of the Macedonian, and afterward of the Roman empire, had so altered and overwhelmed the former politics of the civilized world, that they were no more to be gathered but from books, in the age of Diodorus, than at this day.

Many valuable works of elder writers were indeed extant, of which a few sentences only, preserved in quotations, are now known to exist. Very interesting portions of Sicilian history were published by men of eminent abilities, whose means of information were not inferior to those of Xenophon and Thucydides, but whose interests and passions, according to remaining report, more tinged their narratives. Diodorus, who had these materials before him, was a scholar of some eloquence, and apparently a well-meaning man; but very ill qualified, either by experience in politics and war, or by communication among statesmen and military men, or by natural acuteness of judgment, to sift the truth from the various falsehood and sophistication in which party-writers would studiously inwrap it. The circumstances of his age also led Diodorus to prejudices. Roman liberty, never assured by a good constitution, was, after many bloody struggles, then just finally crushed by a military despotism, pervading the civilized world. Men of letters, indignant at the event, were compelled to silence about it; yet when none could any longer oppose openly the gigantic tyranny, a kind of masked war was waged against it, in treating sometimes of early Roman, but oftener of Grecian history. This purpose, which may be observed extensive among the writers of both nations, in the first ages of the Roman empire, is conspicuous in Diodorus. Warm in the cause of civil liberty, he has adopted, without discrimination, the party prejudices of those whom he supposed animated in the same way; tho their principal object has too often been only to promote the interest, or veil the crimes, of a faction. In abridging then, as his extensive plan of universal history required, often he has evidently missed the meaning of political and military writers whom he proposed to follow: but, far worse than this, he has often omitted leading and connecting facts, the most necessary toward a right understanding of following matter. In remark, rarely deserving attention, he is sometimes even puerile. His honesty nevertheless gives him value; and even the contradictions,

SECT. I. A U T H O R I T I E S.

3

traditions, into which, in collecting materials from different authors, he has fallen, tho vexatious and disgusting to a hasty reader, yet while, to a careful observer, they often evince his honesty, they sometimes also show those truths which a more ingenious writer, with the same prejudices, would not have afforded opportunity to discover.

For the deficiencies of Diodorus's generally concise, and frequently broken narrative, Plutarch offers, for detached portions of history, the most copious supply remaining. Plutarch, living about a century and half later than Diodorus, possessed yet probably all the stores of former knowlege undiminished. But while, in Sicily, men versed in civil and military business were induced, by the interest they felt in the wars and revolutions in which they bore a share, to transmit accounts of them to posterity, another description of writers arose and flourished in various parts of Greece. The numerous schools of philosophy had long been the seminaries to prepare youth for high fortune through political or military eminence. They had lately opened means for the acquisition of great wealth, by meerly teaching eloquence and politics. Ingenuity, incited by the desire of gain, proceeded then to find new channels, and litterature itself was made a trade; a branch of which, perhaps the most profitable, was something very analogous to modern news-writing. The principal difference was that, as the news of the day could not be circulated by writing as by the press, the writer was obliged to take a more extended period; and like our monthly and annual publishers of news, to digest his matter with more care, whence his work became dignified with the title of history. But nothing more invites the curiosity of the many than the private history of eminent persons. Panegyric will have charms for some: but satire of eminent living characters, managed with any dexterity, is always highly alluring to the multitude, and forces the attention even of the calumniated and their friends. Greece then, divided into so many states, jealous each of its separate jurisdiction and peculiar jurisprudence, afforded extraordinary opportunity for safety to libellers; and safety not only against penalties of law, but also against that conviction of falsehood which, by overthrowing reputation, might ruin the author's trade; because, while, in every republic, curiosity was alive to

B 2

accounts

HISTORY OF GREECE. CHAP. XXIX.

accounts of persons eminent in any other, means to sift the truth of any account were generally wanting. Writers of what was called the history of the times, thus became very numerous, and men of great talents and acquirements were induced to engage in the business. As then the general licentiousness was excessive, the falsehood, most invidiously and wrongfully attributed by some Roman authors to Grecian history without reserve, has been fairly enough charged against those of the ages after Xenophon, who might perhaps be more fitly called news-writers and anecdote-writers than historians.

With such materials abounding before him, Plutarch, in the leisure of the Roman empire, under the benignant government of Trajan, conceived the design of showing the principal characters of Grecian history in advantageous comparison with the most eminent of the Roman. Viewing then with just regret the degraded state of mankind under the existing despotism, and from horrors recently past, notwithstanding the advantageous character and conduct of the reigning prince, foreboding the probability of a renewal of them, his purpose appears to have been to spread, with the fame of his own nation, a spirit of revolution and democracy. It has been, injuriously for him, too extensively held, among modern writers, that he was to be considered as an historian, whose authority might be quoted for matters of fact, with the same confidence as that of Thucydides or Xenophon, or Cæsar or Tacitus. Sometimes indeed he undertakes historical discussion, or relating different reports, leaves judgement on them to his reader. When truth thus appears his object, his matter is valuable for the historian. But generally to do justice to his great work, his Lives, it should apparently be considered that, next at least to panegyric of his nation, example, political and moral, was his purpose, and not historical information. Indeed he has in plain terms disavowed the office of historian: he writes lives, he says, and not histories¹. But to produce striking characters, his constant aim, he appears much to have sought private history. Authorities however for this are rarely to be found of any certainty; and little scrupulous as he has shown himself about transactions the most public, concerning which he often contradicts,

¹ "Ουτε γὰρ ἱστορίας γράφομεν, ἀλλὰ βίους. V. Alex. init.

without

SECT. I. A U T H O R I T I E S.

5

without reserve or apology, not only the highest authorities, but even himself, it can hardly be supposed that he would scrutinize, with great solicitude, the testimonies to private anecdotes, if even sometimes he did not indulge his invention². With the same political principles, and prejudices and purposes as Diodorus, far more ingenious, he has been however, in political and military knowlege, equally deficient. Diodorus, tho a zealot for democracy, or what, having never seen it, he supposed democracy to be, has sometimes described its evils in just and strong colors. Plutarch is still more unequal and uncertain. When led by his subject to exercise his judgement, he could see that civil freedom can be no way secure but through a balance of powers in a state; or possibly he may have followed Cicero's authority in asserting that a combination of democracy, aristocracy and monarchy, would make the best government; for at other times we find him an inconsiderate and even furious advocate of the pure democratical cause. Plut. v. Dion.
v. Themist.
& Timol.

The partialities then of these two writers being considered, together with the indifference of one of them to historical truth, when illustration or panegyric was his object, we may generally gather where to trust, and where to doubt them. When they report facts adverse to their known partialities, which happens often from the honesty of Diodorus, and sometimes from the carelessness of Plutarch, credit will of course be given them. But when the tale, conformed to their prejudices, bears appearance of exaggeration, distortion, or invention, whether their own or of others from whom they have gleaned, we must inquire if it accords with the course of history, with well-attested events and well-attested characters; if it is consistent with all that the author himself has related; and more especially if it is in any degree either supported or contradicted by those earlier extant writers, some

² Plutarch's deficiencies, as an historian, can escape none who may have occasion to examine him critically. The notice taken of them by some writers has been mentioned on former occasions. I will add here that of a learned and acute critic, the baron de Sainte Croix. 'Personne n'ignore que les vies des hommes illustres sont des tableaux peu corrects; ou l'expression est superieure a l'ordonnance. Cet historien (Plutarch) ne rassemble des faits que pour donner des leçons, & ne raconte que pour avoir l'occasion et le droit de réfléchir. Un pareil plan ne peut être que fort nuisible a l'exactitude. Quelle confusion aussi ne trouve-t-on pas dans les différens recits de cet historien!' Examen critique des historiens d'Alexandre, prem. sect.

of

of them cotemporary with the transactions, from whom we gain occasional and sometimes large assistance: such assistance must always be of high value.

One more writer, Justin, may require notice here, only because he is commonly quoted with the others. His general abridgement is too scanty and imperfect to be of much use to the historian, and his selection of more detailed matter, to inviven it, is too commonly of extravagant tales, unknown or uncredited by other authors.

Among the deficiencies of historical materials, not least to be regretted, is the failure of means for tracing the causes of the wonderful prosperity of some of the SICILIAN cities; a prosperity so extraordinary, that we might perhaps reasonably deny belief to report of it, the best attested, if monuments yet existing, which have survived, some of them two thousand years, the ruin of those cities, did not afford proof incontestable. And here strikingly appears, what before we have had occasion to observe, how much misfortunes, and crimes, and miseries engage and force the notice of the cotemporary recorder of events, more than blessings and virtues, and the happiness of nations. The sources of the calamities, for which the Sicilian, even more than most of the other Grecian settlements, were remarkable, are in large proportion opened to us; but to account for their prosperity, more wonderful from the frequency and magnitude of interfering troubles, we are left to conjecture, and even for conjecture sometimes hardly find probable ground.

We have formerly observed the Grecian settlements in Sicily divided into many small republics, and the same consequence resulting as in Greece itself, the inability of each to maintain the independency which was the favorite object of all. Syracuse was generally the leading state of Sicily, as Lacedæmon of Greece. When all the Grecian interest in the island was threatened with subjugation by the imperial democracy of Athens, the government of Syracuse was democratical, and, perhaps as nearly as any ever was, a pure democracy. The necessity for new subordination, arising from the pressure of the Athenian arms, produced some improvement of so licentious a constitution, and placed

SECT. I. SICILIAN AFFAIRS.

7

placed Hermocrates son of Hermon, at the head of affairs. But as a keen feeling of great evil, and anxious fear of greater impending, alone brought the sovereign many to that temper which inabled so excellent a man to take the lead, so, immediately as calamity and alarm subsided, others prevailed against him. In vain he opposed the nefarious decree for the death of the Athenian generals, and for the atrocious cruelty which followed to the captive army. The author of that decree was Diocles, already eminent for his favor with the multitude, acquired by turbulent forwardness in asserting their absolute sovereignty, and violent invective against all in power. Success led to farther success, and Diocles quickly overthrew the government established by Hermocrates, which Aristotle has described by the respectable title of polity, and restored that tumultuary government, by which the Syracusan affairs had been administered before the Athenian invasion. Under such circumstances a foreign command would be for Hermocrates a refuge. Accordingly he promoted a decree for the Syracusan state to pay its debt of gratitude to Lacedæmon, by joining in offensive war against Athens; and the armament was in consequence equipped, which we have formerly seen earning honor for its country under his orders in Asia.

Diod. 1. 13.
c. 19.

Aristot. Polit. 1. 5. c. 4.

Before Christ
412.
Olympiad
92. 1.

The result however, as we have also formerly seen, was unfortunate for himself. In his absence his adversaries so prevailed in Syracuse, that, within the twelvemonth, he was superseded in his foreign command. Still parties were so balanced that his friends presently procured his restoration. But soon after a more violent effort of party not only deprived him again of his command, but condemned him, and those most attached to him, to banishment. The principal officers of his army were included in the sentence, and numbers of the citizens at home, whether by a positive decree, or by fear of consequences, were also driven from their country.

Ch. 19. s. 3.
of this Hist.

B. C. 411.
Ol. 92. 2.

The power of the party adverse to Hermocrates being thus established, and the deficiencies of the new or restored government being abundantly obvious, Diocles took upon himself the office of legislator. The democratical form was retained as the basis of his constitution. Of his laws one only remains reported, denouncing

Diod. 1. 13.
c. 53.

VOL. IV.

+

B 4

death

Aristot. Polit. 1. 5. c. 4.

death against any who should enter the place of civil assembly in arms. This law exhibits a striking feature of democracy, and it appears to mark in the legislator a zeal for that form of government, accompanied with a conviction of difficulty and almost impossibility to carry it through in practice. Aristotle evidently considered the change from the constitution of Hermocrates to that of Diocles as a change greatly for the worse; and Diodorus, not a panegyrist of Diocles himself, tho a friend to his party, speaks of the new code as remarkable for nothing so much as the severity with which it was executed. To keep order in a democracy may require more severity than in other forms of government; and there seems ground for believing that the constitution of Diocles was not without ability adapted to the purpose. It is evident that he established some constitutional restraint upon popular extravagance: it appears even that he raised a kind of aristocratical body to great weight in the government; and, how far it was provided for by law, we know not, but he so managed that, in fact, one chief held the supreme executive authority, civil and military, and he was himself that chief.

SECTION II.

Divisions among the Sicilians. Carthaginian Invasion under Hannibal. Sieges of Selinus and Himera. Return of Hermocrates to Sicily.

BUT whatever may have been the merits of the legislation of Diocles, the revolution, which gave occasion for it, produced very unfortunate consequences for the whole Grecian interest in Sicily. Under Hermocrates that interest had been united. When the democratical party prevailed against him in Syracuse, tho the aristocratical would in other cities be shaken, yet it did not equally fall; Syracusan influence could no longer hold all united, and the Grecian cause was broken.

Ch. 18. of this Hist.

A war, it will be remembered, between two little republics at the farther end of the island, led to that scourge of Syracuse and of Sicily the Athenian invasion. The people of Eggesta, overborne by the people of Selinus, who obtained assistance from Syracuse, were without resource but in external aid, which was sought and received from Athens. While then the Athenian arms pressed upon the Syracusans and

SECT. II. CARTHAGINIAN INVASION.

9

and their allies, the Egestans were relieved; but, with the catastrophe of the Athenian forces, followed by the downfall of the influence of Hermocrates, their situation became even more perilous than before; inasmuch as the exasperation of their enemies was increased, the hope of liberality from Syracuse was lessened, and all prospect of a protecting power anywhere among the Grecian states was done away. One glimpse of safety only remained: tho all chance of Grecian protection failed, yet it might be possible to obtain the patronage of a barbarian power; and this was a resource which had not been scrupled sometimes by people of purer Grecian blood than the Egestans, who were a mixed race. The rival city itself, Selinus, tho boasting a population completely Grecian, had been, as we have formerly seen, the ally of Carthage against Syracuse; and it was the resort of an expelled party from Himera, also a Grecian city, to the same barbarian power, that produced the formidable invasion which was repressed by the memorable victory, obtained under the conduct of the illustrious Gelon.

Ch. 5. s. 2.
 & Ch. 10.
 s. 1. of this
 Hist.

Ch. 10. s. 1.
 of this Hist.

Since that victory, now above seventy years, the Carthaginian government had made no considerable exertion for the recovery of its dominion in Sicily. The protection of its suffering allies of Egesta seems to have afforded now no unreasonable pretext for interfering again in arms. In the third summer after the conclusion of the fatal expedition of the Athenians against Syracuse, a Carthaginian army arrived, not less powerful, perhaps, than that whose defeat raised Gelon's military fame. The historian Ephorus, following apparently the more extravagant of the accounts which passed into Greece, ventured to state the infantry alone at two hundred thousand; the horse he called four thousand. But Timæus, a Sicilian, likely to have had means of information, without partialities of a kind to induce him to underrate the Carthaginian number, reckoned the whole force little more than one hundred thousand. With this account Xenophon's judgement led him to concur, so far that, in cursory mention of the expedition, he calls the Carthaginian army a hundred thousand men. The commander-in-chief was Hannibal, grandson, according to Diodorus, of Hamilcar, who fell in the battle of Himera. The force brought from Africa was landed at the western extremity of the island, near Lilybæum. Han-

B. C. 410.
 Ol. 92. $\frac{2}{3}$.
 Dodwell,
 chron. Xen.

Diod. 1. 13.
 c. 54—58.

Xen. Hel.
 l. 1. c. 1.
 s. 27.

Diod. 1. 13.
 c. 59.

VOL. IV.

C

Hannibal

nibal was presently joined by the Egestans, together with the Sicilian subjects of Carthage, and he proceeded to revenge its allies by marching against Selinus. The port, situated at the mouth of the little river Mazara, yielded to his first assault, and siege was laid to the city.

What Selinus was remains to this day testified by ruins, among the most magnificent of human works existing, tho, two thousand years ago, Strabo described it as a town destroyed, and the place almost a desert. How a people commanding so narrow a territory, without fame for commerce, any more than for politics or war, acquired means to raise such works, we find no information. But we learn that the public wealth, which, to a large amount, whencesoever arising, they certainly possessed, was employed more in public ornament and popular luxury, than in what should have given strength to the state. Temples, baths, processions, and festivals, consumed what should have raised fortifications and maintained military discipline, which might have given security in more moderate enjoynments. Aware of the insufficiency of their own means to resist the might of Carthage, the Selinuntines had implored help from all the Grecian cities of their island; urging, with evident reason, the interest of all to save them from the threatened ruin. But tho their solicitations were kindly received, and the justness of their representations acknowledged, yet the many independent republics feared each to give its single assistance, and to bring them to coöperation was a complex business and slow. Agrigentum and Gela, tho marked by situation for the next attack, waited for Syracuse; and Syracuse waited to collect the force of all the towns in which it had command or influence, as likely all to be little enough for the occasion.

While succour was thus delayed, after a siege of only nine days, the walls of Selinus were forced. The greater part of the men in arms, assembling in the agora, were overpowered, and put to the sword. Amid rapine and every sort of violence, an indiscriminate massacre followed, of both sexes and all ages. On such an occasion, an army composed, after the common method of Carthage, of troops ingaged by hire from various barbarous nations, was not to be readily restrained. The humanity of the general however was neither slowly nor ineffectually exerted,