

**Polybius (c.200-after 118
BCE):**

**Rome at the End of the
Punic Wars**

[*History*, Book 6]

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[Thatcher Introduction]: ROME, with the end of the third Punic war, 146 B. C., had completely conquered the last of the civilized world. The best authority for this period of her history is Polybius. He was born in Arcadia, in 204 B. C., and died in 122 B. C.

Polybius was an officer of the Achaean League, which sought by federating the Peloponnesus to make it strong enough to keep its independence against the Romans, but Rome was already too strong to be resisted, and arresting a thousand of the most influential members, sent them to Italy to await trial for conspiracy. Polybius had the

good fortune, during seventeen years exile, to be allowed to live with the Scipios. He was present at the destructions of Carthage and Corinth, in 146 B. C., and did more than anyone else to get the Greeks to accept the inevitable Roman rule. Polybius is the most reliable, but not the most brilliant, of ancient historians.

An Analysis of the Roman Government:

THE THREE kinds of government, monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, were all found united in the commonwealth of Rome. And so even

was the balance between them all, and so regular the administration that resulted from their union, that it was no easy thing to determine with assurance, whether the entire state was to be estimated an aristocracy, a democracy, or a monarchy. For if they turned their view upon the power of the consuls, the government appeared to be purely monarchical and regal. If, again, the authority of the senate was considered, it then seemed to wear the form of aristocracy. And, lastly, if regard was to be had to the share which the people possessed in the administration of affairs, it could then scarcely fail to be denominated a popular state. The several powers that were appropriated

to each of these distinct branches of the constitution at the time of which we are speaking, and which, with very little variation, are even still preserved, are these which follow.

The consuls, when they remain in Rome, before they lead out the armies into the field, are the masters of all public affairs. For all other magistrates, the tribunes alone excepted, are subject to them, and bound to obey their commands. They introduce ambassadors into the senate. They propose also to the senate the subjects of debates; and direct all forms that are observed in making the decrees. Nor is it less a part of their office likewise, to attend to those affairs

that are transacted by the people; to call together general assemblies; to report to them the resolutions of the senate; and to ratify whatever is determined by the greater number. In all the preparations that are made for war, as well as in the whole administration in the field, they possess an almost absolute authority. For to them it belongs to impose upon the allies whatever services they judge expedient; to appoint the military tribunes; to enroll the legions, and make the necessary levies, and to inflict punishments in the field, upon all that are subject to their command. Add to this, that they have the power likewise to expend whatever sums of money they may think convenient from the public

treasury; being attended for that purpose by a quaestor; who is always ready to receive and execute their orders. When any one therefore, directs his view to this part of the constitution, it is very reasonable for him to conclude that this government is no other than a simple royalty. Let me only observe, that if in some of these particular points, or in those that will hereafter be mentioned, any change should be either now remarked, or should happen at some future time, such an alteration will not destroy the general principles of this discourse.

To the senate belongs, in the first place, the sole care and management of the

public money. For all returns that are brought into the treasury, as well as all the payments that are issued from it, are directed by their orders. Nor is it allowed to the quaestors to apply any part of the revenue to particular occasions as they arise, without a decree of the senate; those sums alone excepted. which are expended in the service of the consuls. And even those more general, as well as greatest disbursements, which are employed at the return every five years, in building and repairing the public edifices, are assigned to the censors for that purpose, by the express permission of the senate. To the senate also is referred the cognizance of all the crimes, committed in any part of Italy,

that demand a public examination and inquiry: such as treasons, conspiracies, poisonings, and assassinations. Add to this, that when any controversies arise, either between private men, or any of the cities of Italy, it is the part of the senate to adjust all disputes; to censure those that are deserving of blame: and to yield assistance to those who stand in need of protection and defense. When any embassies are sent out of Italy; either to reconcile contending states; to offer exhortations and advice; or even, as it sometimes happens, to impose commands; to propose conditions of a treaty; or to make a denunciation of war; the care and conduct of all these transactions is entrusted wholly to the

senate. When any ambassadors also arrive in Rome, it is the senate likewise that determines how they shall be received and treated, and what answer shall be given to their demands.

In all these things that have now been mentioned, the people has no share. To those, therefore, who come to reside in Rome during the absence of the consuls, the government appears to be purely aristocratic. Many of the Greeks, especially, and of the foreign princes, are easily led into this persuasion: when they perceive that almost all the affairs, which they are forced to negotiate with the Romans, are determined by the senate.

And now it may well be asked, what part is left to the people in this government: since the senate, on the one hand, is vested with the sovereign power, in the several instances that have been enumerated, and more especially in all things that concern the management and disposal of the public treasure; and since the consuls, on the other hand, are entrusted with the absolute direction of the preparations that are made for war, and exercise an uncontrolled authority on the field. There is, however, a part still allotted to the people; and, indeed, the most important part. For, first, the people are the sole dispensers of rewards and punishments; which are the only bands by which states and

kingdoms, and, in a word, all human societies, are held together. For when the difference between these is overlooked, or when they are distributed without due distinction, nothing but disorder can ensue. Nor is it possible, indeed, that the government should be maintained if the wicked stand in equal estimation with the good. The people, then, when any such offences demand such punishment, frequently condemn citizens to the payment of a fine: those especially who have been invested with the dignities of the state. To the people alone belongs the right to sentence any one to die. Upon this occasion they have a custom which deserves to be mentioned with applause. The person

accused is allowed to withdraw himself in open view, and embrace a voluntary banishment, if only a single tribe remains that has not yet given judgment; and is suffered to retire in safety to Praeneste, Tibur, Naples, or any other of the confederate cities. The public magistrates are allotted also by the people to those who are esteemed worthy of them: and these are the noblest rewards that any government can bestow on virtue. To the people belongs the power of approving or rejecting laws and, which is still of greater importance, peace and war are likewise fixed by their deliberations. When any alliance is concluded, any war ended, or treaty made; to them the conditions are

referred, and by them either annulled or ratified. And thus again, from a view of all these circumstances, it might with reason be imagined, that the people had engrossed the largest portion of the government, and that the state was plainly a democracy.

Such are the parts of the administration, which are distinctly assigned to each of the three forms of government, that are united in the commonwealth of Rome. It now remains to be considered, in what manner each several form is enabled to counteract the others, or to cooperate with them.

When the consuls, invested with the power that has been mentioned, lead the

armies into the field, though they seem, indeed, to hold such absolute authority as is sufficient for all purposes, yet are they in truth so dependent both on the senate and the people, that without their assistance they are by no means able to accomplish any design. It is well known that armies demand a continual supply of necessities. But neither corn, nor habits, nor even the military stipends, can at any time be transmitted to the legions unless by an express order of the senate. Any opposition, therefore, or delay, on the part of this assembly, is sufficient always to defeat the enterprises of the generals. It is the senate, likewise, that either compels the consuls to leave their designs imperfect, or enables them to

complete the projects which they have formed, by sending a successor into each of their several provinces, upon the expiration of the annual term, or by continuing them in the same command. The senate also has the power to aggrandize and amplify the victories that are gained, or, on the contrary, to depreciate and debase them. For that which is called among the Romans a triumph, in which a sensible representation of the actions of the generals is exposed in solemn procession to the view of all the citizens, can neither be exhibited with due pomp and splendor, nor, indeed, be in any other manner celebrated, unless the consent of the senate be first

obtained, together with the sums that are requisite for the expense. Nor is it less necessary, on the other hand, that the consuls, how soever far they may happen to be removed from Rome, should be careful to preserve the good affections of the people. For the people, as we have already mentioned, annuls or ratifies all treaties. But that which is of greatest moment is that the consuls, at the time of laying down their office are bound to submit their past administration to the judgment of the people. And thus these magistrates can at no time think themselves secure, if they neglect to gain the approbation both of the senate and the people.

In the same manner the senate also, though invested with so great authority, is bound to yield a certain attention to the people, and to act in concert with them in all affairs that are of great importance. With regard especially to those offences that are committed against the state, and which demand a capital punishment, no inquiry can be perfected, nor any judgment carried into execution, unless the people confirm what the senate has before decreed. Nor are the things which more immediately regard the senate itself less subject than the same control. For if a law should at any time be proposed to lessen the received authority of the senators, to detract from their honors and pre-eminence, or even

deprive them of a part of their possessions, it belongs wholly to the people to establish or reject it. And even still more, the interposition of a single tribune is sufficient, not only to suspend the deliberations of the senate, but to prevent them also from holding any meeting or assembly. Now the peculiar office of the tribunes is to declare those sentiments that are most pleasing to the people: and principally to promote their interests and designs. And thus the senate, on account of all these reasons, is forced to cultivate the favor and gratify the inclinations of the people.

The people again, on their part, are held in dependence on the senate, both to the

particular members, and to the general body. In every part of Italy there are works of various kinds, which are let to farm by the censors, such are the building or repairing of the public edifices, which are almost innumerable; the care of rivers, harbors, mines and lands; every thing, in a word, that falls beneath the dominion of the Romans. In all these things the people are the undertakers: inasmuch as there are scarcely any to be found that are not in some way involved, either in the contracts, or in the management of the works. For some take the farms of the censors at a certain price; others become partners with the first. Some, again, engage themselves as sureties for the

farmers; and others, in support also of these sureties, pledge their own fortunes to the state. Now, the supreme direction of all these affairs is placed wholly in the senate. The senate has the power to allot a longer time, to lighten the conditions of the agreement, in case that any accident has intervened, or even to release the contractors from their bargain, if the terms should be found impracticable. There are also many other circumstances in which those that are engaged in any of the public works may be either greatly injured or greatly benefited by the senate; since to this body, as we have already observed, all things that belong to these transactions are constantly referred. But there is still

another advantage of much greater moment. For from this order, likewise, judges are selected, in almost every accusation of considerable weight, whether it be of a public or private nature. The people, therefore, being by these means held under due subjection and restraint, and doubtful of obtaining that protection, which they foresee that they may at some time want, are always cautious of exciting any opposition to the measures of the senate. Nor are they, on the other hand, less ready to pay obedience to the orders of the consuls; through the dread of that supreme authority, to which the citizens in general, as well as each particular man, are obnoxious in the field.

Thus, while each of these separate parts is enabled either to assist or obstruct the rest, the government, by the apt contexture of them all in the general frame, is so well secured against every accident, that it seems scarcely possible to invent a more perfect system. For when the dread of any common danger, that threatens from abroad, constrains all the orders of the state to unite together, and co-operate with joint assistance; such is the strength of the republic that as, on the one hand, no measures that are necessary are neglected, while all men fix their thoughts upon the present exigency; so neither is it possible, on the other hand, that their designs should at any time be frustrated through the want

of due celerity, because all in general, as well as every citizen in particular, employ their utmost efforts to carry what has been determined into execution.

Thus the government, by the very form and peculiar nature of its constitution, is equally enabled to resist all attacks, and to accomplish every purpose. And when again all apprehensions of foreign enemies are past, and the Romans being now settled in tranquility, and enjoying at their leisure all the fruits of victory, begin to yield to the seduction of ease and plenty, and, as it happens usually in such conjunctures, become haughty and ungovernable; then chiefly may we observe in what manner the same constitution likewise finds in itself a

remedy against the impending danger. For whenever either of the separate parts of the republic attempts to exceed its proper limits, excites contention and dispute, and struggles to obtain a greater share of power, than that which is assigned to it by the laws, it is manifest, that since no one single part, as we have shown in this discourse, is in itself supreme or absolute, but that on the contrary, the powers which are assigned to each are still subject to reciprocal control, the part, which thus aspires, must soon be reduced again within its own just bounds, and not be suffered to insult or depress the rest. And thus the several orders, of which the state is framed, are forced always to maintain

their due position: being partly counter-worked in their designs; and partly also restrained from making any attempt, by the dread of falling under that authority to which they are exposed.

The Military Institutions of the Romans: As soon as the consuls are declared, the military tribunes are next appointed. Of these, fourteen are taken from the citizens who have carried arms in five campaigns; and ten more from those who completed ten. For every citizen, before he arrives at the age of forty-six, is obliged to serve either ten years in the cavalry, or sixteen in the infantry: those

alone excepted who are placed by the censors below the rate of four hundred *drachmae*; and who are all reserved for the service of the sea. In the case of any pressing danger the time of continuing in the infantry is extended to twenty years. No citizen is permitted by the laws to sue for any magistracy before he has completed the serving of ten campaigns.

When the enrollments are to be made the consuls give notice before to the people of a certain day, upon which all the Romans that are of sufficient age are required to attend. This is done every year. And when the day arrives, and the men all appear at Rome, and are assembled afterwards in the Capitol, the

tribunes of the youngest order divide themselves, as they are appointed either by the consuls or the people, into four separate bodies. For this division corresponds with the first and general distribution of all the forces into four separate legions. Of these tribunes, therefore, the four first named are assigned to the first legion; the three next to the second; the following four to the third; and the last three appointed to the fourth. Of the tribunes of the oldest order the two that are first named are placed in the first legion; the three second in the second; the two that follow in the third; and the remaining three in the fourth. By this distribution and division an equal number of commanders is allotted to

each legion.

When this is done, the tribunes of each legion, having taken their seats apart, draw out the tribes one by one by lot; and calling to them that upon which the lot first falls, they select from it four young men, as nearly equal as is possible in age and stature. And when these are brought forward from the rest, the tribunes of the first legion first choose one; then those of the second a second; those of the third take the third; and those of the fourth the last. After these four more are made to approach. And now the tribunes of the second legion first make their choice; then those of the rest in order; and last of all the

tribunes of the first. In the same manner again, from the next four that follow, the tribunes of the third legion choose the first; and those of the second the last. And thus, by observing the same method of rotation to the end, it happens that the legions, with respect to the men of which they are composed are all alike and equal. The number allotted to each legion is four thousand and two hundred; and sometimes five thousand, when any great and unusual danger is foreseen. After these had been thus selected it was anciently the custom to choose the cavalry; and to add two hundred horsemen to each four thousand of the infantry. But in the present times, the citizens, of whom the cavalry is

composed, are first enrolled; having been before appointed by the censors, according to the rate of their revenue; and three hundred are assigned to every legion.

When the enrollments are in this manner finished, the tribunes having assembled together in separate bodies the soldiers of their respective legions, choose out a man that seems most proper for the purpose, and make him swear in the following words: "that he will be obedient to his commanders, and execute all the orders that he shall receive from them to the utmost of his power." The rest of the soldiers of the legion, advancing one by one, swear also that

they will perform what the first has sworn. About the same time, likewise, the consuls send notice to the magistrates of the allied cities of Italy, from which they design to draw any forces, what number of troops are wanted, and at what time and place they are required to join the Roman army. The cities, having raised their levies in the same manner that has now been mentioned, and administered to them the same oath, send them away attended by a paymaster and a general.

At Rome the tribunes, after the ceremony of the oath is finished, command all the legions to return without arms upon a certain day, and then dismiss them. And

when they are met together again at the appointed time, those that are youngest, and of the lowest condition, are set apart for the light-armed troops. From the next above these in age are selected the *hastati*; from those that are in full strength and vigor, the *principes*; and the oldest of all that are enrolled are the *triarii*. For every legion is composed of all these different bodies; different in name, in age, and in the manner in which they are armed. This division is so adjusted that the *triarii* amount to six hundred men; the *principes* are twelve hundred; the *hastati* an equal number; and all the rest light-armed. If a legion consist of more than four thousand men, the several bodies are increased in due

proportion; except only that the number of the triarii always remains the same.

The youngest of these troops are armed with a sword, light javelins, and a buckler. The buckler is both strongly made, and of a size sufficient for security. For it is of a circular form, and has three feet in the diameter. They wear likewise upon their heads some simple sort of covering; such as the skin of a wolf, or something of a similar kind; which serves both for their defense, and to point out also to the commanders those particular soldiers that are distinguished either by their bravery or want of courage in the time of action. The wood of the javelins is of the length

of two cubits, and of the thickness of a finger. The iron part is a span in length, and is drawn out to such a slender fineness towards the point, that it never fails to be bent in the very first discharge, so that the enemy cannot throw it back again. Otherwise it would be a common javelin.

The next in age, who are called the hastati, are ordered to furnish themselves with a complete suit of armor. This among the Romans consists in the first place of a shield of a convex surface; the breadth of which is two feet and a half; and the length four feet, or four feet and a palm of those of the largest size. It is composed of two

planks, glued together, and covered first with linen, and afterwards with calves' skin. The extreme edges of it, both above and below, are guarded with plates of iron; as well to secure it against the strokes of swords, as that it may be rested also upon the ground without receiving any injury. To the surface is fitted likewise a shell of iron; which serves to turn aside the more violent strokes of stones, or spears, or any other ponderous weapon. After the shield comes the sword, which is carried upon the right thigh, and is called the Spanish sword. It is formed not only to push with at the point; but to make a falling stroke with either edge, and with singular effect; for the blade is remarkably strong

and firm. To these arms are added two piles or javelins; a helmet made of brass; and boots for the legs. The piles are of two sorts; the one large, the other slender.

Of the former those that are round have the breadth of a palm in their diameter; and those that are square the breadth of a palm likewise is a side. The more slender, which are carried with the other, resemble a common javelin of a moderate size. In both sorts, the wooden part is of the same length likewise, and turned outwards at the point, in the form of a double hook, is fastened to the wood with so great care and foresight, being carried upwards to the very

middle of it, and transfixed with many close-set rivets, that it is sooner broken in use than loosened; though in the part in which it is joined to the wood, it is not less than a finger and a half in thickness. Upon the helmet is worn an ornament of three upright feathers, either red or black, of about a cubit in height; which being fixed upon the very top of the head, and added to their other arms, make the troops seem to be of double size, and gives them an appearance which is both beautiful and terrible. Beside these arms, the soldiers in general place also upon their breasts a square plate of brass, of the measure of a span on either side, which is called the guard of the heart. But all those who are

rated at more than ten thousand drachmae cover their breasts with a coat of mail. The principes and the triarii are armed in the same manner likewise as the hastati; except only that the triarii carry pikes instead of javelins.

From each of these several sorts of soldiers, the youngest alone excepted, ten men of distinguished merit are first selected; and after these, ten more. These are all called commanders of companies; and he that is first chosen has a seat in the military council. After these, twenty more are appointed to conduct the rear; and are chosen by the former twenty. The soldiers of each different order, the light troops excepted,

are then divided into ten separate parts; to each of which are assigned four officers, of those who have been thus selected: two to lead the van, and two to take the care of the rear. The light-armed troops are distributed in just proportion among them all. Each separate part is called a company, a band, or an ensign; and the leaders, captains of companies or *centurions*. Last of all, two of the bravest and most vigorous among the soldiers are appointed by the captains to carry the standards of the company.

It is not without good reason that two captains are assigned to every company. For as it always is uncertain, what will be the conduct of an officer, or to what

accidents he may be exposed; and, as in the affairs of war, there is no room for pretext or excuse; this method is contrived, that the company may not upon any occasion be destitute of a leader. When the captains therefore both are present, he that was first chosen leads the right, and the other the left of the company. And when either of them is absent, he that remains takes the conduct of the whole. In the choice of these captains not those that are the boldest and most enterprising are esteemed the best; but those rather, who are steady and sedate; prudent in conduct, and skillful in command. Nor is it so much required, that they should be at all times eager to begin the combat, and throw

themselves precipitately into action; as that, when they are pressed, or even conquered by a superior force, they should still maintain their ground, and rather die than desert their station.

The cavalry is divided also into ten parts or troops. In each of these, three captains first are chosen; who afterwards appoint three other officers to conduct the rear. The first of the captains commands the whole troop. The other two hold the rank and office of decurions; and all of them are called by that name. In the absence of the first captain, the next in order takes the entire command. The manner in which these troops are armed is at this time the same

as that of the Greeks. But anciently it was very different. For, first, they wore no armor upon their bodies; but were covered, in the time of action, with only an undergarment. In this method, they were able indeed to descend from their horses, or leap up again upon them, with greater quickness and facility; but, as they were almost naked, they were too much exposed to danger in all those engagements. The spears also that were in use among them in former times were, in a double respect, very unfit for service. First, as they were of a slender make, and always trembled in the hand, it not only was extremely difficult to direct them with exactness towards the destined mark; but very frequently, even

before their points had reached the enemy, the greatest part of them were shaken into pieces by the bare motion of the horses. Add to this, that these spears, not being armed with iron at the lowest end, were formed to strike only with the point, and, when they were broken by this stroke, were afterwards incapable of any farther use.

Their buckler was made of the hide of an ox, and in form was not unlike to those globular dishes which are used in sacrifices. But this was also of too infirm a texture for defense; and, as it was at first not very capable of service, it afterwards became wholly useless, when the substance of it had been

softened and relaxed by rain. The Romans, therefore, having observed these defects, soon changed their weapons for the armor of the Greeks. For the Grecian spear, which is firm and stable, not only serves to make the first stroke with the point in just direction and with sure effect; but, with the help of the iron at the opposite end, may, when turned, be employed against the enemy with equal steadiness and force. In the same manner also the Grecian shields, being strong in texture, and capable of being held in a fixed position, are alike serviceable both for attack and for defense. These advantages were soon perceived, and the arms adopted by the cavalry. For the Romans, above all other

people, are excellent in admitting foreign customs that are preferable to their own.

As soon as this partition of the troops is finished, and the necessary orders given by the tribunes concerning their arms, they are then commanded to return to their respective habitations, till the day arrives, upon which they are bound by oath to assemble together in a certain place appointed by the consuls. Each of the consuls usually appoints a different place for the assembling of his whole army: for to each of them are allotted separately two Roman legions, together with an equal part of the allies. No pretense of accident is at any time

allowed to those that are enrolled; nor any excuse admitted, in opposition to their oath, to discharge them from appearing on the day prescribed; unless some auspices should intervene, or some disaster happen, which renders their attendance absolutely impracticable. When they are all met together, the distribution of the allies, who are assembled also with the Romans, is regulated by twelve officers, called prefects, and appointed by the consuls, in the following manner. They first choose out from all the allies a body of the bravest and most skillful soldiers, both cavalry and infantry, to serve near the person, and under the immediate orders, of the consuls. These are called

the extraordinary, or selected troops. The whole infantry of the allies is usually the same in number with that of the Romans; but the cavalry three times as many. Among these, about a third part of the cavalry, and a fifth part of the infantry, are set apart as extraordinary. The rest are then divided by the prefects into two equal bodies; one of which is called the right, and the other the left wing. When all things are thus prepared, the tribunes direct both the Romans and the allies to encamp.

As soon as the encampment is completed, the tribunes, having assembled together all the persons, both free men and slaves, that are in the army,

administer to every one of them apart the following oath: "That they will not steal any thing from the camp; and even if they find any thing that they will bring it to the tribunes." Two companies are then selected from the principes and the hastati of each legion; to whose care is assigned the ground that lies before the tents of the tribunes. For as the Romans usually pass the whole time of day in this open space, they employ great care to keep it continually cleansed and sprinkled. Of the remaining eighteen companies three are allotted to every tribune. For in every legion there are twenty companies of principes and hastati, as we have already mentioned, and six tribunes. The service which

these three companies are obliged to perform in turn for the tribune to whom they are respectively assigned is to fix his tent, to make the ground around it plain and level, and to cover his baggage, if it be necessary, with a fence. It is their duty likewise to place a double guard near him for his security. This guard consists of four soldiers, two of whom are stationed before the tent, and two behind it, near to the horses. As three companies are thus allotted to every tribune, and as each company, without including the triarii and the light-armed troops, who are both exempted from this duty, contains more than a hundred men, this service falling to each company in turn upon every

fourth day only, becomes very light and easy; and, while it ministers in all things that are necessary to the convenience of the tribunes, renders their office likewise more illustrious, and brings respect to their authority.

The triarii are discharged from bearing any part in this attendance. But each of their companies is obliged to furnish every day a guard to the troop of cavalry that lies close behind it. The duty of this guard, among other functions, is principally to observe the horses; that they may not at any time be rendered unfit for service by being entangled in the bands that hold them; or by breaking away, and falling in among other horses,

create tumult and disorder in the camp. One company alone, which is selected in turn from the whole body of these troops, is stationed round the tent of the consul; as well to secure his person against all surprise, as for the sake of adding splendor also to his dignity.

The entrenchment is made by the allies, on those two sides, near to which their wings are encamped. The two other sides are left to the Romans; to each legion, one. Each side is divided into certain portions, according to the number of the companies: and a centurion assigned, to overlook the work in every portion. The whole side is afterwards examined and approved by two of the

tribunes; whose office it is to attend to every thing that is done in the camp. For the tribunes, dividing among themselves the time of their campaign, and presiding, two in turn, during two months of the six, have the supreme direction of every kind of necessary work and service, that falls within the time of their command. The same duty is performed, in the same manner likewise, among the allies, by the officers who are called prefects. As soon as daylight appears, the leaders of the cavalry, and the centurions, attend all together at the tents of the tribunes; and the tribunes at that of the consul. The necessary orders are then delivered by the consul to the tribunes; by the tribunes to the centurions

and the leaders of the cavalry; and by these, as the proper time for each arrives, to the rest of the army.

The delivery of the signal for the night is secured in the following manner. Every tenth cohort, both of infantry and cavalry, is lodged at the extreme end of those lines which form the separate streets. From each of these a soldier is selected, who is discharged from all the duties of the guard. This soldier, every day about the time of the setting of the sun, goes to the tent of the tribune, and receives from him the signal; which is a flat tablet of wood, with some word inscribed upon it; and having returned back again to his own company, he then

delivers the tablet with the signal, in the presence of some witnesses, to the leader of the cohort that is lodged next to his own. From him again, it passes to the following cohort; and, in the same manner, through all the rest in order, till it arrives at the first cohorts, which lie nearest to the tents of the tribunes; and from thence it is carried back again to the tribunes, while it is yet day. If all the tablets that were delivered are brought back, the tribune then perceives that the signal has passed through all the camp. But if any one be wanting, he immediately examines into the fact; and, having discerned by the inscriptions in what quarter the tablet has been stopped, inflicts a suitable punishment upon those

that have been the cause of that neglect.

The guards for the night are thus disposed. One entire company is always stationed around the consular tent. The tents of the tribunes, and the cavalry, are guarded by soldiers taken from each company, in the manner that has before been mentioned. Each separate company appoints a guard likewise for itself from its own body. The other guards are disposed as the consul directs. But the usual custom is, to allot three soldiers to the quaestor; and two to each of the members of the council. The external sides of the camp are guarded by the light-armed forces; who are distributed every day along the whole entrenchment.

From the same body, ten men are also stationed before every gate that leads into the camp.

Among those that are appointed for the watch, one soldier from each guard, the same whose duty it is to take the first watch, is carried in the evening to the tribune, by one of the conductors of the rear of every company. The tribune, having given to all of them some small tablets of wood, inscribed with a certain character, and appropriated to each particular guard, dismisses them to their respective stations.

The care of making the rounds is entrusted to the cavalry. The captain of the first troop in each of the legions is

bound to send his orders in the morning to one of the conductors of the rear; commanding him to appoint, before the time of dinner, four soldiers of the troop to go the rounds; and to send notice also afterwards, in the evening, to the leader of the second troop, that it is his turn to inspect the watch on the following day. The leader of the second troop gives notice, in like manner, for the third day; and the same method is observed through all the rest. The four soldiers, who are thus selected from the first troop by the conductor of the rear, having determined among themselves each particular watch by lot, go afterwards to the tent of the tribune, and receive from thence in writing an account of the several posts,

and of the number of guards, which they are required to visit. They then take their station near to the first company of the triarii. For the leader of this company has the care of marking the time of every watch by the sound of a trumpet. And when the signal is made, he, to whose inspection the first watch was allotted, taking with him some of his friends as witnesses, goes round to all the posts that are recited in his orders, and visits all the guards: not those alone that are stationed round the entrenchment, and before the gates, but those also that are placed in every single company and in every troop. If he finds the sentinels awake and fixed in their several stations, he receives from them the wooden

tablets. But if he discovers that any one is sleeping, or has left his post, he desires those that are present to bear testimony to the fact, and then retires.

The same method is observed in all the following watches. The care of sounding the trumpet, by which notice is given in the same moment both to the sentinels and the inspectors of the watch, is left, as we have said, to the captains of the first company of the triarii, who perform this duty alternately, day by day.

As soon as the morning appears, those who have made the rounds carry the tablets to the tribune. If they bring the full number back they are suffered to depart without any question. But if the

number be less than that of the guards, the inscriptions are immediately examined, in order to discover from what particular guard the tablet has not been returned. When this is known, the centurion is ordered to attend and to bring with him the soldiers that were appointed for that guard; that they may be questioned face to face with him who made the rounds. If the fault be in the guard, he that made the rounds appeals at once to the testimony of his friends who were present. Such evidence always is demanded from him; and in case that he is not able to bring this proof, the whole blame rests upon himself. The council is then assembled; the cause is judged by the tribune, and the guilty person

sentenced to be bastinadoed. This punishment is inflicted in the following manner.

The tribune, taking a stick into his hand, gently touches the criminal; and immediately afterwards all the soldiers of the legion attack him with sticks and stones; so that the greatest part of those that are thus condemned are destroyed immediately in the camp. If any one escapes, yet he is not saved. For all return into his country is shut against him: nor would any of his friends or kindred ever dare to receive him into their houses. Those, therefore, who have once fallen into this misfortune are lost without resource. The conductor of the

rear, and the leader of the troops, if ever they neglect to give the necessary notice in due time, the first to the inspectors of the watch, and the second to the leader of the succeeding troop, are subject also to this punishment. From the dread of a discipline so severe, and which leaves no place for mercy, every thing that belongs to the guards of the night is performed with the most exact diligence and care.

The soldiers are subject to the control of the tribunes, as these are to that of the consuls. The tribunes have the power of imposing fines, and demanding sureties, and of punishing with stripes. The same authority is exercised by the prefects

among the allies. The punishment of the bastinadoe is inflicted also upon those who steal any thing in the camp; those who bear false testimony; who, in their youth, abuse their bodies; and who have been three times convicted of one fault. These offenses are punished as crimes. There are others that are regarded as the effects of cowardice, and disgraceful to the military character. When a soldier, for example, with a view of obtaining a reward, makes a report to the tribunes of some brave action which he has not performed. When any one, through fear, deserts his station, or throws away his arms in the time of engagement. For hence it happens that many, through the dread of the allotted punishment, when

they are attacked by much greater numbers, will even encounter manifest destruction, rather than desert that post which they had been ordered to maintain. Others again, when they have lost their shield, or sword, or any other part of their arms in the time of action, throw themselves precipitately into the very midst of the enemy; hoping either to recover what they have lost, or to avoid by death the reproaches of their fellow-soldiers, and the disgrace that is ready to receive them.

If it happens that many are at one time guilty of the same fault, and that whole companies retire before the enemy, and desert their station; instead of punishing

all of them by death, an expedient is employed which is both useful and full of terror. The tribune, assembling together all the soldiers of the legion, commands the criminals to be brought forward: and, having sharply reproached them with their cowardice, he then draws out by lot either five, or eight, or twenty men, according to the number of those that have offended. For the proportion is usually so adjusted, that every tenth man is reserved for punishment. Those, who are thus separated from the rest by lot, are bastinadoed without remission in the manner before described. The others are sentenced to be fed with barley instead of wheat; and are lodged without the

entrenchment, exposed to insults from the enemy. As the danger, therefore, and the dread of death, hangs equally over all the guilty, because no one can foresee upon whom the lot will fall; and as the shame and infamy of receiving barley only for their support is extended also alike to all; this institution is perfectly well contrived, both for impressing present terror, and for the prevention of future faults.

The method by which the young men are animated to brave all danger is also admirable. When an action has passed in which any of the soldiers have shown signal proofs of courage, the consul, assembling the troops together,

commands those to approach who have distinguished themselves by any eminent exploit. And having first bestowed on every one of them apart the commendation that is due to this particular instance of their valor, and recounted likewise all their former actions that have ever merited applause, he then distributes among them the following rewards. To him who has wounded an enemy, a javelin. To him who has killed an enemy, and stripped him of his armor, if he be a soldier in the infantry, a goblet; if in the cavalry, furniture for his horse; though, in former times, this last was presented only with a javelin. These rewards, however, are not bestowed upon the soldiers who, in a

general battle, or in the attack of a city, wound or spoil an enemy; but upon those alone who, in separate skirmishes, and when any occasion offers, in which no necessity requires them to engage in single contest, throw themselves voluntarily into danger, and with design provoke the combat. When a city is taken by storm, those who mount first upon the walls are honored with a golden crown. Those also who have saved the lives of any of the citizens, or the allies, by covering them from the enemy in the time of battle, receive presents from the consul, and are crowned likewise by the persons themselves who have thus been preserved, and who, if they refuse this office, are compelled by the judgment of

the tribunes to perform it.

Add to this, that those who are thus saved are bound, during the remainder of their lives, to reverence their preserver as a father, and to render to him all the duties which they would pay to him who gave them birth. Nor are the effects of these rewards, in raising a spirit of emulation and of courage, confined to those alone who are present in the army, but extended likewise to all the citizens at home. For those who have obtained those presents, beside the honor which they acquire among their fellow soldiers, and the reputation which immediately attends them in their country, are distinguished after their

return, by wearing in all solemn processions such ornaments as are permitted only to be worn by those who have received them from the consuls as the rewards of their valor. They hang up likewise in the most conspicuous parts of their houses the spoils which they have taken, as a monument and evidence of their exploits. Since such, therefore, is the attention and the care with which the Romans distribute rewards and punishments in their armies, it is not to be thought strange that the wars in which they engage are always ended with glory and success.

The military stipends are thus regulated. The pay of a soldier in the infantry is

two *obols* by the day; and double to the centurions. The pay of the cavalry is a drachma. The allowance of corn to each man in the infantry consists of about two-third parts of an Attic bushel of wheat by the month. In the cavalry, it is seven bushels of barley, and two of wheat. To the infantry of the allies the same quantity is distributed as to that of the Romans: but their cavalry receives only one bushel and a third of wheat, and five of barley. The whole of this allowance is given without reserve to the allies. But the Roman soldiers are obliged to purchase their corn and clothes, together with the arms which they occasionally want, at a certain stated price, which is deducted by the

quaestor from their pay.

In breaking up the camp the following order is observed. When the first signal is made, the soldiers all take down the tents, and collect the baggage. No tent, however, is at any time either set up or taken down until those of the consul and the tribunes are first set up, or first removed. Upon the second signal the baggage is placed upon the beasts of burden; and at the third, the foremost of the troops begin their march, and the whole camp is put in motion. In the van are usually placed the extra-ordinaries; and after these the right wing of the allies, which is followed by the baggage of both these bodies. Next to these

marches the first of the Roman legions, with its baggage also behind it. The second legion follows; having behind it likewise both its own baggage, and the baggage of the allies, who are in the rear; for the rear of all the march is closed with the left wing of the allies. The cavalry marches sometimes in the rear of the respective bodies to which it belongs; and sometimes on the flanks of the beasts that are loaded with the baggage; keeping them together in due order, and covering them from insult. When an attack is expected to be made upon the rear, the extra-ordinaries of the allies, instead of leading the van, are posted in the rear. In all the other parts the disposition remains the same.

Of the two legions, and the two wings of the allies, those that are on one day foremost in the march, on the following day are placed behind; that, by thus changing their rank alternately all the troops may obtain the same advantage in their turn, of arriving first at water and at forage. There is also another disposition which is used when any immediate danger threatens, and the march is made through an open country. At such times, the hastati, the principes, and the triarii, are ranged in three parallel lines, each behind the other, with the baggage of the hastati in the front. Behind the hastati is placed the baggage of the principes, who are followed likewise by that of the triarii; so that the baggage and the

several bodies are mingled in alternate order. The march being thus disposed, the troops, as soon as an attack is made, turning either to the left or to the right, advance forwards from the baggage towards that side upon which the enemy appears. And thus, in a moment of time, and by one single movement, the whole army is formed at once in order of battle; except only that the hastati are perhaps obliged to make an evolution; and the beasts of burden also, with all those that attend upon the baggage, being now thrown into the rear of all the troops, are covered by them from all danger.

At the end of a march, when the army arrives near the place of their

encampment, a tribune and some centurions, who are appointed always for this purpose, advance before the rest. And having surveyed the whole ground upon which the encampment is to be made, they first determine the place of the consular tent, and on which side of it the legions may most commodiously be lodged. When this is done, they measure out the space that is allotted for the consul; and then draw a line for the place of the tents of the tribunes; and parallel to it another line, below which the legions are to be encamped. In the same manner also the several portions of the ground, which lies on the other side of the consular tent, and which we have already particularly described, are

ascertained by lines. And as the distances are fixed, and well known by use, the admeasurement of the whole is easy, and soon completed. Four ensigns are then planted in the ground, the first in the place in which the tent of the consul is to be set up; the second, on that side of the consular ground which has been chosen for the front of the camp; the third in the middle of the line that is designed for the tents of the tribunes; and the last upon the other parallel line below which the legions are to be encamped. These ensigns are all of a purple color; that of the consul excepted, which is white. The portions on the other side of the consular ground are sometimes marked by simple pikes fixed in the ground, and sometimes

by ensigns of some different color. Last of all, the several streets are drawn out by measure, and pikes also planted to denote the limits of each particular street.

The necessary effect of this method is, that when the troops upon their march approach so near as to discover the place of their encampments, they are able to discern at once all the different parts of the camp; being taught by the ensign of the consul to point out and distinguish all the rest. And as they all occupy the same place always in the camp, so that each man knows in what particular street, and in what part also of the street, he is going to be lodged, their

entrance very much resembles that of a body of soldiers into their own native city. For as these, already knowing, both in general and in particular, the quarters of the city in which their habitations stand, turn aside immediately from the gates, and arrive at their several houses without mistake; just so it happens in the Roman camp. It is to this facility indeed that the Romans chiefly attend upon such occasions; and, for the sake of obtaining it, pursues contrary a method to that of the Greeks. For the Greeks, when they encamp, consider principally the natural strength of the place that is chosen, and accommodate their disposition to it; being partly studious to avoid the labor of throwing up an entrenchment; and

partly persuaded also, that fortifications raised by art are always less secure than those that are made by nature. In compliance, therefore, with what the nature of the ground demands, they not only are obliged to give every kind of figure to their camp, but to vary also the position of the several parts, as the place for each is favorable or improper. And from hence it happens that the soldier never knows with certainty either his own place in the camp, or that of the body to which he belongs. But the Romans willingly submit to the task of making an entrenchment, and to other painful works, for the sake of the advantage that is found, in employing a method which is never changed, and

which renders all the parts of the camp familiar to the army.

Such then in general are the institutions of the Romans, which belong to the establishment of their armies, and more especially to the manner of their encampment.

Rome and Carthage Compared:

The government of Carthage seems also to have been originally well contrived with regard to those general forms that have been mentioned. For there were

kings in this government, together with a senate, which was vested with aristocratic authority. The people likewise enjoy the exercise of certain powers that were appropriated to them. In a word, the entire frame of the republic very much resembled those of Rome and Sparta. But at the time of the war of Hannibal the Carthaginian constitution was worse in its condition than the Roman. For as nature has assigned to every body, every government, and every action, three successive periods; the first, of growth; the second, of perfection; and that which follows, of decay; and as the period of perfection is the time in which they severally display their greatest strength;

from hence arose the difference that was then found between the two republics. For the government of Carthage, having reached the highest point of vigor and perfection much sooner than that of Rome, had now declined from it in the same proportion: whereas the Romans, at this very time, had just raised their constitution to the most flourishing and perfect state. The effect of this difference was, that among the Carthaginians the people possessed the greatest sway in all deliberations, but the senate among the Romans. And as, in the one republic, all measures were determined by the multitude; and, in the other, by the most eminent citizens; of so great force was this advantage in the

conduct of affairs, that the Romans, though brought by repeated losses into the greatest danger, became, through the wisdom of their counsels, superior to the Carthaginians in the war.

If we descend to a more particular comparison, we shall find, that with respect to military science, for example, the Carthaginians, in the management and conduct of a naval war, are more skillful than the Romans. For the Carthaginians have derived this knowledge from their ancestors through a long course of ages; and are more exercised in maritime affairs than any other people. But the Romans, on the other hand, are far superior in all things that belong to the

establishment and discipline of armies. For this discipline, which is regarded by them as the chief and constant object of their care, is utterly neglected by the Carthaginians; except only that they bestow some little attention upon their cavalry. The reason of this difference is, that the Carthaginians employ foreign mercenaries; and that on the contrary the Roman armies are composed of citizens, and of the people of the country. Now in this respect the government of Rome is greatly preferable to that of Carthage. For while the Carthaginians entrust the preservation of their liberty to the care of venal troops; the Romans place all their confidence in their own bravery, and in the assistance of their allies.

From hence it happens, that the Romans, though at first defeated, are always able to renew the war; and that the Carthaginian armies never are repaired without great difficulty. Add to this, that the Romans, fighting for their country and their children, never suffer their ardor to be slackened; but persist with the same steady spirit till they become superior to their enemies. From hence it happens, likewise, that even in actions upon the sea, the Romans, though inferior to the Carthaginians, as we have already observed, in naval knowledge and experience, very frequently obtain success through the mere bravery of their forces. For though in all such contests a skill in maritime affairs must be allowed

to be of the greatest use; yet, on the other hand, the valor of the troops that are engaged is no less effectual to draw the victory to their side.

Now the people of Italy are by nature superior to the Carthaginians and the Africans, both in bodily strength, and in courage. Add to this, that they have among them certain institutions by which the young men are greatly animated to perform acts of bravery. It will be sufficient to mention one of these, as a proof of the attention that is shown by the Roman government, to infuse such a spirit into the citizens as shall lead them to encounter every kind of danger for the sake of obtaining reputation in their

country. When any illustrious person dies, he is carried in procession with the rest of the funeral pomp, to the *rostra* in the forum; sometimes placed conspicuous in an upright posture; and sometimes, though less frequently, reclined. And while the people are all standing round, his son, if he has left one of sufficient age, and who is then at Rome, or, if otherwise, some person of his kindred, ascends the rostra, and extols the virtues of the deceased, and the great deeds that were performed by him in his life. By this discourse, which recalls his past actions to remembrance, and places them in open view before all the multitude, not those alone who were sharers in his victories, but even the rest

who bore no part in his exploits, are moved to such sympathy of sorrow, that the accident seems rather to be a public misfortune, than a private loss. He is then buried with the usual rites; and afterwards an image, which both in features and complexion expresses an exact resemblance of his face, is set up in the most conspicuous part of the house, inclosed in a shrine of wood. Upon solemn festivals, these images are uncovered, and adorned with the greatest care.

And when any other person of the same family dies, they are carried also in the funeral procession, with a body added to the bust, that the representation may be

just, even with regard to size. They are dressed likewise in the habits that belong to the ranks which they severally filled when they were alive. If they were consuls or praetors, in a gown bordered with purple: if censors, in a purple robe: and if they triumphed, or obtained any similar honor, in a vest embroidered with gold. Thus appeared, they are drawn along in chariots preceded by the rods and axes, and other ensigns of their former dignity. And when they arrive at the forum, they are all seated upon chairs of ivory; and there exhibit the noblest objects that can be offered to youthful mind, warmed with the love of virtue and of glory. For who can behold without emotion the forms of so many

illustrious men, thus living, as it were, and breathing together in his presence? Or what spectacle can be conceived more great and striking? The person also that is appointed to harangue, when he has exhausted all the praises of the deceased, turns his discourse to the rest, whose images are before him; and, beginning with the most ancient of them, recounts the fortunes and the exploits of every one in turn. By this method, which renews continually the remembrance of men celebrated for their virtue, the fame of every great and noble action become immortal. And the glory of those, by whose services their country has been benefited, is rendered familiar to the people, and delivered down to future

times. But the chief advantage is, that by the hope of obtaining this honorable fame, which is reserved for virtue, the young men are animated to sustain all danger, in the cause of the common safety. For from hence it has happened, that many among the Romans have voluntarily engaged in single combat, in order to decide the fortune of an entire war. Many also have devoted themselves to inevitable death; some of them in battle, to save the lives of other citizens; and some in time of peace to rescue the whole state from destruction. Others again, who have been invested with the highest dignities have, in defiance of all law and customs, condemned their own sons to die;

showing greater regard to the advantage of their country, than to the bonds of nature, and the closest ties of kindred.

Very frequent are the examples of this kind, that are recorded in the Roman story. I shall here mention one, as a signal instance, and proof of the truth of all that I have affirmed. Horatius, surnamed Cocles, being engaged in combat with two enemies, at the farthest extremity of the bridge that led into Rome across the Tiber, and perceiving that many others were advancing fast to their assistance, was apprehensive that they would force their way together into the city. turning himself, therefore, to his companions that were behind him, he

called to them aloud, that should immediately retire and break the bridge. While they were employed in this work, Horatius, covered over with wounds, still maintained the post, and stopped the progress of the enemy; who were struck with his firmness and intrepid courage, even more than with the strength of his resistance. And when the bridge was broken, and the city secured from insult, he threw himself into the river with his armor, and there lost his life as he had designed: having preferred the safety of his country, and the future fame that was sure to follow such an action, to his own present existence, and to the time that remained for him to live. Such is the spirit, and such the emulation of

achieving glorious action, which the Roman institutions are fitted to infuse into the minds of youth.

In things that regard the acquisition of wealth, the manners also, and the customs of the Romans, are greatly preferable to those of the Carthaginians. Among the latter, nothing is reputed infamous, that is joined with gain. But among the former, nothing is held more base than to be corrupted by gifts, or to covet an increase of wealth by means that are unjust. For as much as they esteem the possession of honest riches to be fair and honorable, so much, on the other hand, all those that are amassed by unlawful arts, are viewed by them with

horror and reproach. The truth of this fact is clearly seen in the following instance. Among the Carthaginians, money is openly employed to obtain the dignities of the state: but all such proceeding is a capital crime in Rome. As the rewards, therefore, that are proposed to virtue in the two republics are so different, it cannot but happen, that the attention of the citizens to form their minds to virtuous actions must be also different.

But among all the useful institutions, that demonstrate the superior excellence of the Roman government, the most considerable perhaps is the opinion which the people are taught to hold

concerning the gods: and that, which other men regard as an object of disgrace, appears in my judgment to be the very thing by which this republic chiefly is sustained. I mean, superstition: which is impressed with all its terrors; and influences both the private actions of the citizens, and the public administration also of the state, in a degree that can scarcely be exceeded. This may appear astonishing to many. To me it is evident, that this contrivance was at first adopted for the sake of the multitude. For if it were possible that a state could be composed of wise men only, there would be no need, perhaps, of any such invention. But as the people universally are fickle and inconstant,

filled with irregular desires, too precipitate in their passions, and prone to violence; there is no way left to restrain them, but by the dread of things unseen, and by the pageantry of terrifying fiction. The ancients, therefore, acted not absurdly, nor without good reason, when they inculcated the notions concerning the gods, and the belief of infernal punishments; but much more those of the present age are to be charged with rashness and absurdity, in endeavoring to extirpate these opinions. For, not to mention effects that flow from such an institution, if, among the Greeks, for example, a single talent only be entrusted to those who have the management of any of the public money;

though they give ten written sureties, with as many seals and twice as many witnesses, they are unable to discharge the trusts reposed in them with integrity. But the Romans, on the other hand, who in the course of their magistracies, and in embassies, disperse the greatest sums, are prevailed on by the single obligation of an oath to perform their duties with inviolable honesty. And as, in other states, a man is rarely found whose hands are pure from public robbery; so, among the Romans, it is no less rare to discover one that is tainted with this crime. But all things are subject to decay and change. This is a truth so evident, and so demonstrated by the perpetual and the necessary force of nature, that it

needs no other proof.

Now there are two ways by which every kind of government is destroyed; either by some accident that happens from without, or some evil that arises within itself. What the first will be is not always easy to foresee: but the latter is certain and determinate. We have already shown what are the original and what: the secondary forms of government; and in what manner also they are reciprocally converted each into the other. Whoever, therefore, is able to connect the beginning with the end in this enquiry, will be able also to declare with some assurance what will be the future fortune of the Roman government.

At least in my judgment nothing is more easy. For when a state, after having passed with safety through many and great dangers, arrives at the highest degree of power, and possesses an entire and undisputed sovereignty; it is manifest that the long continuance of prosperity must give birth to costly and luxurious manners, and that the minds of men will be heated with ambitious contest, and become too eager and aspiring in the pursuit of dignities. And as these evils are continually increased, the desire of power and rule, and the imagined ignominy of remaining in a subject state, will first begin to work the ruin of the republic; arrogance and luxury will afterwards advance it: and in

the end the change will be completed by the people; as the avarice of some is found to injure and oppress them, and the ambition of others swells their vanity and poisons them with flattering hopes. For then, being with rage, and following only the dictates of their passions, they no longer will submit to any control, or be contented with an equal share of the administration, in conjunction with their rulers; but will draw to themselves the entire sovereignty and supreme direction of all affairs. When this is done, the government will assume indeed the fairest of all names, that of a free and popular state; but will, in truth, be the greatest of all evils, the government of the multitude.

As we have thus sufficiently explained the constitution and the growth of the Roman government; have marked the causes of that greatness in which it now subsists; and shown by comparison, in what view it may be judged inferior, and in what superior, to other states; we shall here close this discourse. But as every skillful artist offers some piece of work to public view, as a proof of his abilities: in the same manner we also, taking some part of history that is connected with the times from which we were led into this digression and making a short recital of one single action, shall endeavor to demonstrate by fact as well as words what was the strength, and how great the vigor, which at that time were

displayed by this republic.

When Hannibal, after the battle of Cannae, had taken prisoners eight thousand of the Romans, who were left to guard the camp; he permitted them to send a deputation to Rome, to treat of their ransom and redemption. Ten persons, the most illustrious that were among them, were appointed for this purpose: and the general, having first commanded them to swear that they would return to him again, suffered them to depart. But one of the number, as soon as they had passed the entrenchment, having said that he had forgotten something, went back into camp, took what he had left, and then continued his

journey with the rest; persuading himself that by his return he had discharged his promise, and satisfied the obligation of the oath. When they arrived at Rome, they earnestly entreated the senate not to envy them the safety that was offered, but to suffer them to be restored to their families, at the price of three *minae* for each prisoner, which was the sum that Hannibal demanded; that they were not unworthy of this favor; that they neither had through cowardice deserted their post in battle, nor done anything that had brought dishonor upon the Roman name; but that having been left to guard the camp, they had been thrown by unavoidable necessity, after the destruction of the rest of the army, into

the power of the enemy.

The Romans were at this time weakened by repeated losses; were deserted by almost every one of their allies; and seemed even to expect that Rome itself would instantly be attacked; yet when they had heard the deputies, they neither were deterred by adverse fortune from attending to what was fit and right, nor neglected any of those measures that were necessary to the public safety. But perceiving that the design of Hannibal in this proceeding was both to acquire a large supply of money and at the same time to check the ardor of his enemies in battle, by opening to their view the means of safety, even though they should

be conquered, they were so far from yielding to this request, that they showed no regard either to the distressed condition of their fellow citizens, or to the services that might be expected from the prisoners: but resolved to disappoint the hopes and frustrate the intentions of this general, by rejecting all terms of ransom. They made a law also, by which it was declared that the soldiers that were left must either conquer or must die; and that no other hope of safety was reserved for them, in case that they were conquered. After this determination they dismissed the nine deputies, who, on account of their oath were, willing to return, and taking the other, who had endeavored to elude by sophistry what

he had sworn, they sent him bound back to the enemy; so that Hannibal was much less filled with joy from having vanquished the Romans in the field, than he was struck with terror and astonishment at the firmness and magnanimity what appeared in their deliberations.

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halsall@murray.fordham.edu

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