

**Source: The Histories of Polybius V2 by Polybius □**  
**(translated by Evelyn S. Shuckburgh 1889)**

BOOK XXXIX

[Including Book XL. of Dindorf's Text.]

1. I AM fully aware that some will be found to criticise my work, on the ground that my narrative of events is incomplete and disconnected ; beginning, for instance, the story of the siege of Carthage, and then leaving it half told, and interrupting the stream of my history, I pass over to Greek affairs, and from them to Macedonian or Syrian, or some other history ; whereas students require continuity, and desire to hear the end of a subject ; for the combination of pleasure and profit is thus more completely secured. But I do not think this : I hold exactly the reverse. And as a witness to the correctness of my opinion I might appeal to nature herself, who is never satisfied with the same things continuously in any of the senses, but is ever inclined to change ; and, even if she is satisfied with the same things, wishes to have them at intervals and in diversity of circumstance. This may be illustrated first by the sense of hearing, which is never gratified either in music or recitations by a continuance of the same strains or subjects ; it is the varied style, and, in a word, whatever is broken up into intervals and has the most marked and frequent changes, that gives it pleasurable excitement. Similarly one may notice that the palate can never remain gratified by the same meats, however costly, but grows to feel a loathing for them, and delights in changes of diet, and often prefers plain to rich food merely for the sake of variety. The same may be noticed as to the sight : it is quite incapable of remaining fixed on the same object, but it is a variety and change of objects that excites it. And this is more

than all the case with the mind ; for changes in the objects of attention and study act as rests to laborious men.

2. Accordingly the most learned of the ancient historians have, as it seems to me, taken intervals of rest in this way : some by digressions on myths and tales, and others by digressions on historical facts,—not confining themselves to Greek history, but introducing disquisitions on points of foreign history as well. As, for instance, when, in the course of a history of Thessaly and the campaigns of Alexander of Pherae, they introduce an account of the attempts of the Lacedaemonians in the Peloponnese ; or those made by the Athenians ; or actions which took place in Macedonia or Illyria : and then break off into an account of the expedition of Iphicrates into Egypt, and the iniquitous deeds of Clearchus in the Pontus. This will show you that these historians all employ this method ; but, whereas they employ it without any system, I do so on a regular system. For these men, after mentioning, for instance, that Bardylis, king of the Illyrians, and Cersobleptes, king of the Thracians, established their dynasties, neither go on continuously with the stories nor return to them after an interval to take them up where they left off, but, treating them like an episode in a poem, they go back to their original subject. But I made a careful division of all the most important countries in the world and the course of their several histories ; pursued exactly the same plan in regard to the order of taking the several divisions ; and, moreover, arranged the history of each year in the respective countries, carefully keeping to the limits of the time : and the result is that I have made the transition backwards and forwards between my continuous narrative and the continually recurring interruptions easy and obvious to students, so that an attentive reader need never miss anything. . . .

*After various operations during the autumn of B.C. 147, the upshot of which was to put the whole of the open country in Roman hands, in the beginning of spring B.C. 146, Scipio delivered his final attack on Carthage, taking first the quarter of the merchants' harbour, then the war harbour, and then the market-place. There only remained the streets leading to the Byrsa and the Byrsa itself. Appian, Pun. 123-126. Livy, Ep. 51.*

3. Having got within the walls, while the Carthaginians still held out on the citadel, Scipio found that the arm of the sea which intervened was not at all deep; and upon Polybius advising him to prevent the enemy crossing it and attacking the mole,<sup>1</sup> he said that, having taken the walls and got inside the city, it would be ridiculous to take measures to avoid fighting the enemy. . . .

4. The pompous Hasdrubal threw himself on his knees before the Roman commander, quite forgetful of his proud language. . . .

When the Carthaginian commander thus threw himself as a suppliant at Scipio's knees, the proconsul with a glance at those present said: "See what Fortune is, gentlemen! What an example she makes of irrational men! This is the Hasdrubal who but the other day disdained the large favours which I offered him, and said that the most glorious funeral pyre was one's country and its burning ruins. Now he comes with suppliant wreaths, beseeching us for bare life and resting all his hopes on us. Who would not learn from such a spectacle that a mere man should never say or do anything presumptuous?" Then some of the deserters came to the edge of the roof and begged the front ranks of the assailants to hold their hands for a little; and, on Scipio ordering a halt, they began abusing Hasdrubal, some for his perjury, declaring that he had sworn again and again on the altars that he would never abandon them, and others for his cowardice and utter baseness: and they did this in the most unsparing language, and with the bitterest terms of abuse. And just at this moment Hasdrubal's wife, seeing him seated in front of the enemy with Scipio, advanced in front of the deserters, dressed in noble and dignified attire herself, but holding in her hands, on either side, her two boys dressed only in short tunics and shielded under her own robes.<sup>2</sup> First she addressed Hasdrubal by his name, and when

<sup>1</sup> τὰ χόματα, that is, apparently, the mole of huge stones constructed by the Romans to block up the mouth of the harbour.

<sup>2</sup> μετὰ τῶν ἰδίων ἐνδυμάτων. The German translator Kraz gives up these words in despair. Kampe translated them *in ihrer gewöhnlicher Tracht*. Mr. Strachan-Davidson says, "προσειληφύα, etc., 'folding them in her own robe

he said nothing but remained with his head bowed to the ground, she began by calling on the name of the gods, and next thanked Scipio warmly because, as far as he could secure it, both she and her children were saved.<sup>1</sup> And then, pausing for a short time, she asked Hasdrubal how he had had the heart to secure this favour from the Roman general for himself alone, . . . and, leaving his fellow-citizens who trusted in him in the most miserable plight, had gone over secretly to the enemy? And how he had the assurance to be sitting there holding suppliant boughs, in the face of the very men to whom he had frequently said that the day would never come in which the sun would see Hasdrubal alive and his native city in flames. . . .

*Hasdrubal's wife finally threw herself and children from the citadel into the burning streets. Livy, Ep. 51.*

After an interview with [Scipio], in which he was kindly treated, Hasdrubal desired leave to go away from the town. . . .

5. At the sight of the city utterly perishing amidst the flames Scipio burst into tears, and stood long reflecting on the inevitable change which awaits cities, nations, and dynasties, one and all, as it does every one of us men. This, he thought, had befallen Ilium, once a powerful city, and the once mighty empires of the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and that of Macedonia lately so splendid. And unintentionally or purposely he quoted,—the words perhaps escaping him unconsciously,—<sup>2</sup>

“The day shall be when holy Troy shall fall  
And Priam, lord of spears, and Priam's folk.”

And on my asking him boldly (for I had been his tutor) what he meant by these words, he did not name Rome distinctly, but was evidently fearing for her, from this sight of the mutability of human affairs. . . .

Another still more remarkable saying of his I may record. . . [When he had given the order for firing the town] he im-

with her hands," which seems straining the meaning of *προσεληφύτα*. The French translator says, *deux enfans suspendus à ses vêtements*.

<sup>1</sup> According to Livy (*Ep.* 51) she had tried to induce her husband to accept the offer described in 38, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Homer, *Il.* 6, 448.

diately turned round and grasped me by the hand and said : "O Polybius, it is a grand thing, but, I know not how, I feel a terror and dread, lest some one should one day give the same order about my own native city." . . . Any observation more practical or sensible it is not easy to make. For in the midst of supreme success for one's self and of disaster for the enemy, to take thought of one's own position and of the possible reverse which may come, and in a word to keep well in mind in the midst of prosperity the mutability of Fortune, is the characteristic of a great man, a man free from weaknesses and worthy to be remembered. . . .

*After the rejection of the orders conveyed by the legates of Metellus (38, 11), Critolaus collected the Achaean levies at Corinth, under the pretext of going to war with Sparta; but he soon induced the league to declare themselves openly at war with Rome. He was encouraged by the adhesion of the Boeotarch Pytheas, and of the Chalcidians. The Thebans were the readier to join him because they had lately been ordered by Metellus, as arbiter in the disputes, to pay fines to the Phocians, Euboeans, and Amphissians. When news of these proceedings reached Rome in the spring of B.C. 146, the consul Mummius was ordered to lead a fleet and army against Achaia. But Metellus in Macedonia wished to have the credit of settling the matter himself; he therefore sent envoys to the Achaeans ordering them to release from the league the towns already named by the Senate viz. Sparta, Corinth, Argos, Heracleia, and Orchomenus in Arcadia, and advanced with his army from Macedonia through Thessaly by the coast road, skirting the Sinus Maliacus. Critolaus was already engaged in besieging Heraclea Oetea, to compel it to return to its obedience to the league, and when his scouts informed him of the approach of Metellus, he retreated to Scarphea on the coast of Locris, some miles south of the pass of Thermopylae. But before he could get into Scarphea Metellus caught him up, killed a large number of his men, and took one thousand prisoners. Critolaus himself disappeared; Pausanias seems to imagine that he was drowned in the salt marshes of the coast, but Livy says that he poisoned himself. Pausanias, 7, 14, 15. Livy, Ep. 52. Orosius, 5, 3.*

7. Pytheas was a brother of Acatidas the runner, and son of Cleomenes. He had led an evil life, and was reported to have wasted the flower of his youth in unnatural debauchery. In political life also he was audacious and grasping, and had been supported by Eumenes and Philataerus for these very reasons. . . .

Character of the Boeotarch Pytheas.

8. Critolaus the Achaean Strategus being dead, and the law providing that, in case of such an event befalling the existing Strategus, the Strategus of the previous year should succeed to the office until the regular congress of the league should meet, it fell to Diaeus to conduct the business of the league and take the head of affairs. Accordingly, after sending forward some troops to Megara,<sup>1</sup> he went himself to Argos ; and from that place sent a circular letter to all the towns ordering them to set free their slaves who were of military age, and who had been

On the death of Critolaus (spring of B. C. 146) Diaeus succeeds as Strategus.

born and brought up in their houses, and send them furnished with arms to Corinth. He assigned the numbers to be furnished by the several towns quite at random and without any regard to equality, just as he did everything else. Those who had not the requisite number of home-bred slaves were to fill up the quota imposed on each town from other slaves. But seeing that the public poverty was very great, owing to the war with the Lacedaemonians, he compelled the richer classes, men and women alike, to make promises of money and furnish separate contributions. At the same time he ordered a levy *en masse* at Corinth of all men of military age. The result of these measures was that every city was full of confusion, commotion, and despair : they deemed those fortunate who had already perished in the war, and pitied those who were now starting to take part in it ; and everybody was in tears as though they foresaw only too well what was going to happen. They were especially annoyed at the insolent demeanour and neglect of their duties on the part of the slaves,—airs which they assumed as having been recently liberated, or, in the case of others, because they were excited

He orders the arming of 10,000 slaves,

a special contribution by the rich,

and a general levy of the free-men of military age.

<sup>1</sup> 4000 under Alcamenes, Pausan. 7, 15, 8.

by the prospect of freedom. Moreover the men were compelled to make their contribution contrary to their own views, according to the property they were reputed to possess; while the women had to do so, by taking the ornaments of their own persons or of their children, to what seemed deliberately meant for their destruction.

9. As these measures came all at once, the dismay caused by the hardship of each individually prevented people from attending to or grasping the general question; or they must have foreseen that they were all being led on to secure the certain destruction of their wives and children. But, as though caught in the rush of some winter torrent and carried on by its irresistible violence, they followed the infatuation and madness of their leader. The Eleians and Messenians do not move.

Roman fleet; for nothing could have saved them if the storm had burst when it was originally intended. The people of Patrae, and of the towns which were leagued with it, had a short time before suffered disasters in Phocis;<sup>1</sup> and their case was much the most pitiable one of all the Peloponnesian cities: for some of them sought a voluntary death; others fled from their towns through deserted parts of the country, with no definite aim in their wanderings, from the panic prevailing in the towns. Some arrested and delivered each other to the enemy, as having been hostile to Rome; others hurried to give information and bring accusations, although no one asked for any such service as yet; while others went to meet the Romans with suppliant branches, confessing their treason, and asking what penance they were to pay, although as yet no one was asking for any account of such things. The

The distracted state of Greece. whole country seemed to be under an evil spell: everywhere people were throwing themselves down wells or over precipices; and so dreadful was the state of things, that as the proverb has it "even an enemy would have pitied" the disaster of Greece. For in times past the Greeks had met with reverses or indeed complete disaster, either from internal dissensions or from treacherous attacks of despots; but in the present instance it was from

<sup>1</sup> In the battle with Metellus at Scarphea.

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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