"Ariſtocracy prevailed at firſt in the Greek ſettlements, but ſoon made way for tyranny ; which in its turn was expelled by democracy. One of the earlieſt deſtroyers of common liberty was Phalaris of Agrigen­tum, who reigned 600 years before Chriſt : his example was contagious ; a legion of tyrants ſprang up, and not a commonwealth in the iſland eſcaped the laſh of an uſurper. Syracuſe was moſt oppreſſed and torn to pieces by diſſenſion ; as its wealth and preponderance in the general ſcale held out a greater temptation than other cities to the ambition of wicked men. It requires the combined teſtimony of hiſtorians to enforce our be­lief of its wonderful proſperity, and the no leſs extraor­dinary tyranny of ſome of its ſovereigns. Theſe Gre­cian colonies attained to ſuch excellence in arts and ſciences as emboldened them frequently to vie with the learned and ingenious in the mother country ; nay, often enabled them to bear away the palm of victory : there needs no ſtronger proof of their literary merits than a bare recital of the names of Archimedes, Theocritus, Gorgias, and Charondas.

“ But the Sicilian Greeks were not deſtined to en­joy the ſweets of their ſituation without moleſtation. Very ſoon after their arrival, the inhabitants of the neighbouring coaſt of Africa began to aſpire to a ſhare of Sicily. Carthage ſent large bodies of forces at dif­ferent times to eſtabliſh their power in the iſland, and about 500 years before the Chriſtan era had made themselves masters of all the weſtern parts of it. The Siculi retained poſſeſſion of the midland country, and the ſouthern and eaſtern coaſts were inhabited by the Greeks.

“ About that time Gelo was choſen prince of Syractuse on account of his virtues, which grew ſtill more conſpicuous after his exaltation : had the example he ſet been followed by his ſucceſſors, the advantages of freedom would never have been known or wished for by the Syracuſans. The Carthaginians found in him a vi­gorous opponent to their project of enſlaving Sicily, a project invariably purſued but never accompliſhed.

“ Hiero ſucceeded his brother Gelo, and, contrary to the uſual progreſſion, began his reign by a diſplay of bad qualities. Senſible of his error, and improved by experience, he afterwards adopted more equitable meaſures. At his death the Syracuſans threw off the yoke, and for ſixty years revelled in all the joys of freedom. Their peace was, however, diſturbed by the Athenians and the Carthaginians. The latter plunder­ed Agrigentum, and threatened ruin to the rest of the Grecian ſtates ; but a treaty of peace averted that ſtorm.

The Athenians, under pretence of ſupporting their al­lies the people of Segeſta, but in reality from a thirſt of dominion, inverted Syracuſe with a formidable land and naval armament under the command of Nicias ; in conſequence of a raſh indigeſted plan, ill conducted at­tacks, and inadequate ſupplies, their whole hoſt was cut to pieces or led away into captivity.

“ Syracuſe had ſcarce time to breathe after her vic­tory ere inteſtine wars broke out, and raiſed Dionyſius to ſupreme command. Avarice, deſpotism, and cruel­ty, marked every day of his reign ; but his military enterpriſes were crowned with conſtant ſucceſs. He died in peace, and bequeathed a powerful ſovereignty to a ſon of his name tainted with the ſame and worſe vices, but not endowed with equal capacity and martial abili­

ty ; in ſuch hands the rod of tyranny ceaſed to be for­midable, and the tyrant was driven out of Sicily by the patriotic party ; but matters were not ſufficiently set­tled for popular government, and Dionysius reſumed the ſceptre for a while, till Timoleon forced him into perpetual exile.”

Liberty ſeemed now to be eſtabliſhed on a permanent baſis ; but in Syracuſe ſuch proſpects always proved illuſory. Agathocles, a tyrant more inhuman than any preceding uſurper, ſeized the throne, and deluged the country with blood. He was involved in a perilous conteſt with the Carthaginians, who obtained many ad­vantages over him, drove his troops from port to port, and at laſt blocked up his capital. In this deſperate ſituation, wſhen all foreign helps were precluded, and hardly a reſource remained at home, the genius of Agathocles compaſſed his deliverance by a plan that was imitated among the ancients by Hannibal, and among the moderns by the famous Cortes. He embarked with the flower of his army ; forced his way through innu­merable obſtacles ; landed in Africa ; and, having burnt his fleet, routed the Carthaginians in a pitched battle, and laid their territory waſte. Carthage ſeemed to be on the brink of ruin, and that hour might have mark­ed her downfal had the Sicilian hoſt been compoſed of patriotic ſoldiers, and not of ungovernable aſſaſſins ; diſcord pervaded the victorious camp, murder and riot enſued ; and the tyrant, after beholding his children and friends butchered before his face, eſcaped to Sicily, to meet a death as tragical as his crimes deſerved.

Anarchy now raged throughout the iſland, and eve­ry faction was reduced to the neceſſity of calling in the aſſiſtance of foreign powers; among whom Pyrrhus king of Epirus took the lead, and reduced all parties to ſome degree of order and obedience. But ambition ſoon prompted him to invade thoſe rights which he came to defend ; he caſt off the maſk, and made Sicily feel un­der his ſway as heavy a hand as that of its former oppreſſors ; but the Sicilians ſoon aſſumed courage and strength enough to drive him out of the iſland.

About this period the Mamertini, whom Mr Swin­burne indignantly ſtyles a crew of miſcreants, ſurpriſed Meſſina, and, after a general maſſacre of the citizens, eſtabliſhed a republican form of government. Their commonwealth became ſo troubleſome a neighbour to the Greeks, that Hiero II. who had been raiſed to the chief command at Syracuſe in conſideration of his ſuperior wiſdom and warlike talents, found himſelf neceſſitated to form a league with Carthage, in order to deſtroy this neſt of villains. In their diſtreſs the Mamertini implored the aſſiſtance of Rome, though the ſenate had recently puniſhed with exemplary ſeverity one of their own legions for a ſimilar outrage committed at Rhegium. The virtue of the Romans gave way to the temptation, and the define of extending their empire be­yond the limits of Italy, caſt a veil over every odious circumſtance attending this alliance. A Roman army croſſed the Faro, relieved Meſſina, defeated the Car­thaginians, and humbled Hiero into an ally of the re­public.

Thus began the firſt Punic war, which was carried on for many years in Sicily with various ſucceſs. The genius of Hamilcar Barcas ſupported the African cauſe under numberleſs diſappointments, and the repeated overthrows of his colleagues ; at laſt, finding his exer-