Athenians from alliance with a naval state occupying an im- portant situation “ with respect to the western regions towards which the views of the Athenians had for some time been directed” (Thirlwall, *Hist. Greece,* iii. 96). It was the “weapon of her sea-power,” to adopt Mahan’s phrase, that enabled Athens to maintain the great conflict in which she was engaged. Repeated invasions of her territory, the ravages of disease among her people and the rising disaffection of her allies had been more than made up for by her predominance on the water. The scale of the subsequent Syracusan expedition showed how vigorous Athens still was down to the interruption of the war by the peace of Nicias. The great expedition just mentioned overtaxed her strength. Its failure brought about the ruin of the state. It was held by contemporaries, and bas been held in our own day, that the Athenian defeat at Syracuse was due to the omission of the government at home to keep the force in Sicily properly supplied and reinforced. This explanation of failure is given in all ages, and should always be suspected. The friends of unsuccessful generals and admirals always offer it, being sure of the support of the political opponents of the administration. After the despatch of the supporting expedition under Demosthenes and Eurymedon no further great reinforcement, as Nicias admitted, was possible. The weakness of Athens was in the character of the men who swayed the popular assem­blies and held high commands. A people which remembered the administration of a Pericles, and yet allowed a Cleon or an Alcibiades to direct its naval and military policy, courted defeat. Nicias, notwithstanding the possession of high qualities, lacked the supreme virtue of a commander—firm resolution. He dared not face the obloquy consequent on withdrawal from an enterprise on which the popular hopes had been fixed; and therefore he allowed a reverse to be converted into an overwhelming disaster. “ The complete ruin of Athens had appeared, both to her enemies and to herself, impending and irreparable. But so astonishing, so rapid and so energetic had been her rally, that (a year after Syracuse) she was found again carrying on a terrible struggle ” (Grote, *Hist. Greece,* v. p. 354). Nevertheless her sea-power had indeed been ruined at Syracuse. Now she could wage war only “ with impaired resources and on a purely defensive system.” Even before Arginusae, it was seen that “superiority of nautical skill had passed to the Peloponnesians and their allies ” (*ibid.* p. 503).

The great, occasionally interrupted, and prolonged contest between Rome and Carthage was a sustained effort on the part of one to gain and of the other to keep the control of the western Mediterranean. So completely had that control been exercised by Carthage, that she had anticipated the Spanish commercial policy in America.

The Romans were precluded by treaties from trading with the Carthaginian territories in Hispania, Africa and Sardinia. Rome, as Mommsen tells us, “was from the first a maritime city and, in the period of its vigour, never was so foolish or so untrue to its ancient traditions as wholly to neglect its war marine and to desire to be a mere continental power.” It may be that it was lust of wealth rather than lust of dominion that first promoted a trial of strength with Carthage. The vision of universal empire could hardly as yet have formed itself in the imagination of a single Roman. The area of Phoenician maritime commerce was vast enough both to excite jealousy and to offer vulnerable points to the cupidity of rivals. It is probable that the modern estimate of the sea-power of Carthage is much exaggerated. It was great by comparison, and of course overwhelmingly great when there were none but insignificant competitors to challenge it. Mommsen holds that, in the 4th and 5th centuries after the foundation of Rome, “ the two main competitors for the dominion of the Western waters” were Carthage and Syracuse. “ Car- thage,” he says, “had the preponderance, and Syracuse sank more and more into a second-rate naval power. The maritime importance of the Etruscans was wholly gone. . . . Rome itself was not exempt from the same fate; its own waters were likewise commanded by foreign fleets.” The Romans were for a long time too much occupied at home to take much interest in Medi-

terranean matters. The position of the Carthaginians in the western basin of the Mediterranean was very like that of the Portuguese long afterwards in India. The latter kept within reach of the sea; “ nor did their rule ever extend a day’s march from their ships ” (R. S. Whiteway, *Rise of the Portuguese Power in India.* Westminster, 1889, p. 12). “ The Carthaginians in

Spain,” says Mommsen, “ made no effort to acquire the interior from the warlike native nations; they were content with the possession of the mines and of stations for traffic and for shell and other fisheries.” Allowance being made for the numbers of the classes engaged in administration, commerce and supervision, it is nearly certain that Carthage could not furnish the crews required by both a great war-navy and a great mercantile marine. No one is surprised on finding that the land-forces of Carthage were composed largely of alien mercenaries. We have several examples from which we can infer a parallel, if not an identical, condition of her maritime resources. How, then, was the great Carthaginian carrying-trade provided for? The experience of more than one country will enable us to answer this question. The ocean trade of those off-shoots or dependencies of the United Kingdom, viz. the United States, Australasia and India, is largely or chiefly conducted by shipping of the “old country.’’ So that of Carthage was largely conducted by old Phoenicians. These may have obtained a “ Carthaginian Register,” or the contemporary equivalent; but they could not all have been purely Carthaginian or Liby-Phoenician. This must have been the case even more with the war-navy. British India for a considerable time possessed a real, and indeed highly efficient navy; but it was officered entirely and manned almost entirely by men from the old country. Moreover, it was small. The wealth of India would have sufficed to furnish a larger material element; but, as the country could not supply the *personnel,* it would have been absurd to speak of the sea-power of India apart from that of England. As soon as the Romans chose to make the most of their natural resources the maritime predominance of Carthage was doomed. The artificial basis of the latter’s sea-power would not enable it to hold out against serious and persistent assaults. Unless this is perceived, it is impossible to understand the story of the Punic Wars. Judged by every visible sign of strength, Carthage, the richer, the more enterprising, ethnically the more predominant among her neighbours, and apparently the more nautical, seemed sure to win in the great struggle with Rome which, by the conditions of the case, was to be waged largely on the water. Yet those who had watched the struggles of the Punic city with the Sicilian Greeks, and especially that with Agathocles, must have seen reason to cherish doubts concerning her naval strength. It was an anticipation of the case of Spain in the age of Philip II. As the great Elizabethan seamen discerned the defects of the Spanish naval establishment, so men at Rome discerned those of the Carthaginian. Dates in connexion with this are of great signifi­cance. A comprehensive measure, with the object of “ rescuing their marine from its condition of impotence ” was taken by the Romans in the year 267 B.c. Four *quaestores classici*—in modern naval English we may perhaps call them port-admirals—were nominated, and one was stationed at each of four ports. The objects of the Roman Senate, so Mommsen tells us, were very obvious. They were “ to recover their independence by sea, to cut off the maritime communications of Tarentum, to close the Adriatic against fleets coming from Epirus, and to emancipate themselves from Carthaginian supremacy.’’ Four years afterwards the first Punic War began. It was, and had to be, largely a naval contest. The Romans waged it with varying fortune, but in the end triumphed by means of their sea-power. The victory of Catulus over the Carthaginian fleet off the Aegadian Islands decided the war and left to the Romans the possession of Sicily and the power of possessing themselves of Sardinia and Corsica. It would be an interesting and perhaps not barren investigation to inquire to what extent the decline of the mother states of Phoenicia, consequent on the campaigns of Alexander the Great, had helped to enfeeble the naval efficiency of the Carthaginian defences. One thing was certain. Carthage had