

48 *The Rise and Fall of the*

and dissoluteness, the people would themselves transact all things.

Carthage, in warring with all its riches against the poverty of Rome, had a disadvantage in this very circumstance; for gold and silver may be exhausted, but virtue, perseverance, strength and poverty are inexhaustible.

The Romans were ambitious through pride, and the Carthaginians through avarice; the former would command, the latter amass; and these whose minds were wholly turned to traffic, perpetually casting up their income and expences, never engaged in any war from inclination.

The loss of battles, the decrease of a people, the decay of trade, the consumption of the public treasure, the insurrection of neighbouring nations, might force the Carthaginians to submit to the severest terms of peace: but Rome was not swayed by the consideration of blessings or calamities, being determined by no other motive but its glory; and as the Romans were persuaded they could not exist without commanding over others, neither hopes, nor fears of any kind, could prevail with them to conclude a peace, the conditions of which were not prescribed by themselves.

Nothing is so powerful as a commonwealth in which the laws are exactly observed, and this not from fear nor from reason, but from a passionate impulse, as in Rome and Lacedaemon; for then the wisdom of a good legislature is united to all the strength a faction could possibly boast.

The Carthaginians made use of foreign forces, and the Romans employed none but their own. As the latter had never considered the vanquished but