

gard to Pyrrhus, to whom they refused all terms of accommodation, till such time as he should leave Italy; and Dionysius Halicarnassæus (*a*) informs us, that, when Coriolanus was treating with the Romans, the senate declared they would never infringe their ancient customs; that their people could not conclude a peace so long as the enemy should continue in their territories; but that in case the Volscians would think fit to retire, they then should agree to any terms that were just and reasonable.

Rome was saved by the strength and vigour of its institution: after the battle of Cannæ, their very women were not allowed to shed tears: the senate refused to ransom the prisoners, and sent the miserable remains of the army to carry on the war in Sicily, unrecompensed, and deprived of every military honour, till such time as Hannibal was driven out of Italy.

On the other side, Terentius Varro the consul had fled ignominiously as far as Venusia: this man, whose extraction was very mean, had been raised to the consulship merely to mortify the nobles. However the senate would not enjoy the unhappy triumph: they saw how necessary it was for them to gain the confidence of the people on this occasion; they therefore went out to meet Varro, and returned him thanks for not despairing of the safety of the commonwealth.

It is commonly not the real loss sustained in a battle, (that of the slaughter of some thousand men) which proves fatal to a state, but the imaginary loss, the general damp which deprives it even of that strength and vigour which fortune had left it.

(*a*) Antiq. Rom. l. viii.