

CORRUPT GOVERNMENT

Extract from:

"The Last Days of Pompeii"



Edward George Earle Lytton Bulwer-Lytton
1st Baron Lytton
(25 May 1803 - 18 Jan 1873)

by

Lord Lytton

(1834)

CMG Archives

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The following extract describes the universal problem with a bloated government and self-seeking public service officials:

For in that unnatural and bloated civilization [Rome], all that was noble in emulation was forbidden. Ambition in the regions of a despotic and luxurious court was but the contest of flattery and craft. Avarice had become the sole ambition, - men desired praetorships [senior magistrates ranking just below the consuls] and provinces only as the license to pillage, and government was but the excuse of rapine. It is in small states that glory is most active and pure, - the more confined the limits of the circle, the more ardent the patriotism. In small states, opinion is concentrated and strong, - every eye reads your actions - your public motives are blended with your private ties, - every spot in your narrow sphere is crowded with forms familiar since your childhood, - the applause of your citizens is like the caresses of your friends. But in large states, the city is but the court: the provinces - unknown to you, unfamiliar in customs, perhaps in language, - have no claim on your patriotism, the ancestry of their

inhabitants is not yours. In the court you desire favour instead of glory; at a distance from the court, public opinion has vanished from you, and self-interest has no counterpoise.

Italy, Italy, while I write, your skies are over me - your seas flow beneath my feet, listen not to the blind policy which would unite all your crested cities, mourning for their republics, into one empire; false, pernicious delusion! Your only hope of regeneration is in division. Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa, may be free once more, if each is free. But dream not of freedom for the whole while you enslave the parts; the heart must be the centre of the system, the blood must circulate freely everywhere; and in vast communities you behold but a bloated and feeble giant, whose brain is imbecile, whose limbs are dead, and who pays in disease and weakness the penalty of transcending the natural proportions of health and vigour.

("The Last Days of Pompeii", pp. 88-89, Lord Lytton, 1834)

And today (September 2011), it's just the same!

End

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