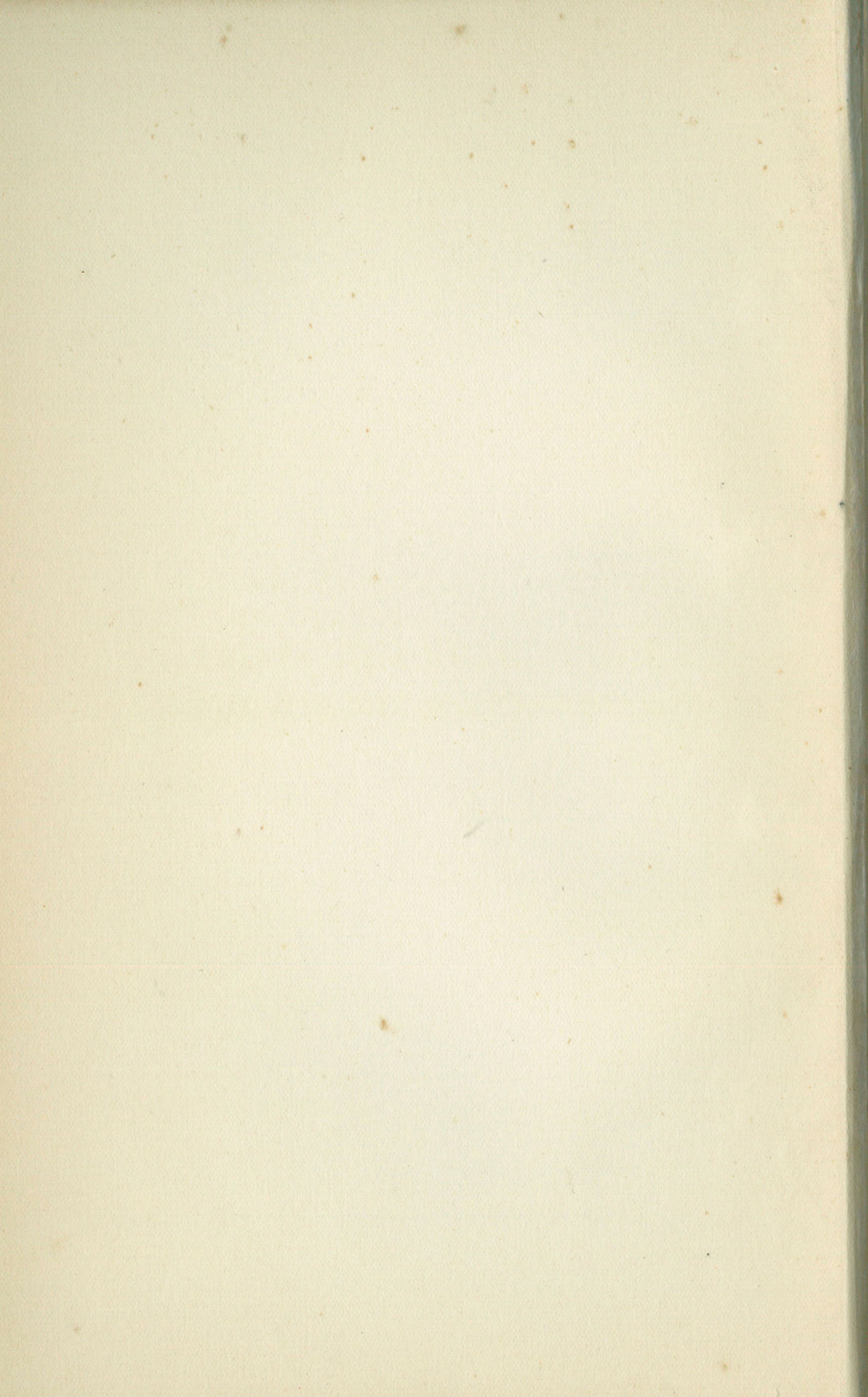


Fernando Ferrer







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AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH POLITICS

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THE  
EVOLUTION OF STATES

AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH POLITICS

BY  
J. M. ROBERTSON

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1912

“The sociologist has three main quests—first, he must try to discover the conditions that determine mere aggregation and concourse. Secondly, he must try to discover the law that governs social choices—the law, that is, of the subjective process. Thirdly, he must try to discover also the law that governs the natural selection and the survival of choices—the law, that is, of the objective process.”

—*Professor Giddings.*

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## PREFACE

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THE following treatise is an expansion, under a new title, of one originally published (1900) under the name of *An Introduction to English Politics*. Several friendly reviewers of that work objected, not unjustly, that its title was something of a misnomer, or at least an imperfect indication of its contents. It had, as a matter of fact, originated remotely in a lecture delivered as preliminary to a course on "Modern English Politicians" (from Bolingbroke to Gladstone), the aim of the prefatory address being to trace in older politics, home and foreign, general laws which should partly serve as guides to modern cases, or at least as preparation for their scientific study; while the main course dealt with modern political problems as they have arisen in the careers and been handled by the measures of modern English statesmen. It was that opening exposition, developed into an essay, and published as a series of magazine articles, that had been further expanded into this treatise, by way of covering the ground more usefully; and the original name is therefore retained as a sub-title.

It is perhaps unnecessary to explain that the book makes no pretension to being a complete or systematic treatment of political history, or of political forms and theories. The object in view from the first has been, not the technical anatomy or documentary history of institutions, but the bringing into light of the ruling forces in all political life, ancient and modern alike. It seeks to help the reader to fulfil the precept of Montaigne: "*Qu'il ne luy apprenne pas tant les histoires qu'à en juger.*"

Since it was first written, there has been so much fresh sociological study of history that I need not repeat the

justification originally offered for my undertaking. Alike as to ancient and modern history, the effort of scholars is now more and more towards comprehension of historic causation in terms of determining conditions, the economic above all; so much so that I have profited somewhat in my revision from various recent works, and might with more leisure have done so more fully. Revised as it is, however, the book may serve to expound views of history which are still not generally accepted, and to call in question fallacious formulas which seem to me still unduly common.

On any view, much remains to be done before the statement of historic causation can reach scientific thoroughness; and it may well be that some of my theories will incur modification. All I claim for them is that they are made in the light of a study of the concrete process; and I am satisfied that fuller light is to be obtained only in that direction. In the end, doubtless, conflicts of historical interpretation will turn upon problems of psychology. A contemporary German expert of distinction, Prof. Lamprecht, in his able lectures on the problem *What is History?* (Eng. trans. 1905), lays it down that the main problem of every scientific history of mankind is the "deducing from the history of the most important communities of men the evolution of the breadth of consciousness"; and again that "the full historical comprehension of a single change or of a single phenomenon, with their historical significance, can only be acquired from the most general principles; that is to say, from the application of the highest universal-historical categories." If I understand Prof. Lamprecht aright, he here means simply that we properly understand the motivation of men in the past in terms of our own psychosis, conceived as in touch only with their data. This seems to me substantially sound. But on the other hand I doubt the utility of his apparent purpose of explaining modern historic developments in terms of special psychic changes or movements in communities, considered as forces. That way seems to lie reversion to the old and vain device of explaining the course of nations in terms of their "characters."

Lamprecht  
N.B.

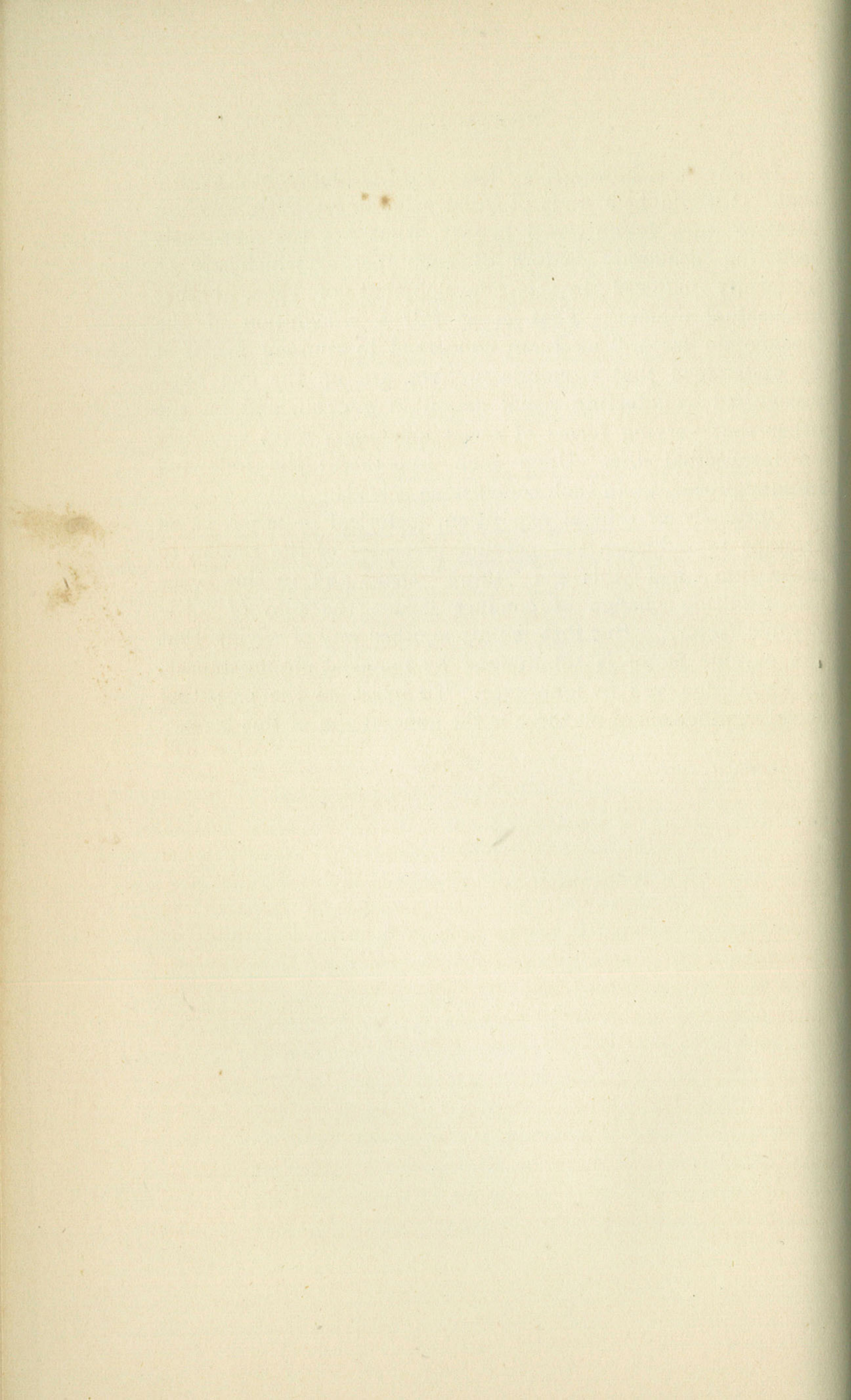
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In any case, however, we have Prof. Lamprecht's avowal that "It would be a study of great value to establish, by comparative work in universal history, what are the constantly recurring economic factors of each period which are so uniformly followed by the development of other higher intellectual values." That is as full a recognition of the "economic factor" as I am concerned to contend for, if it be understood that economic motives are on the one hand recognised as affecting social action in general, and on the other that varying forms of social machinery react variously on intellectual life. Upon such hypotheses the following inquiry proceeds; to such conclusions it leads.

Obviously all critical exposition, historical or other, is an attempt to influence the psychic processes of the reader, to make him "feel" this and "think" that; and in this sense any resulting change of conduct means the play of "the psychic factor." But that is only another way of saying that the psychic factor is conditioned by material circumstances, by knowledge, and by ignorance. To insist on the perpetual social significance of all three is the general aim of this book.

*September, 1912.*





PART I  
POLITICAL FORCES IN ANCIENT HISTORY

CHAPTER I  
THE SUBJECT MATTER

§ 1

POLITICS, in its most general and fundamental character, is the strife of wills on the ground of social action. As international politics is the sum of the strifes and compromises of States, so home politics is the sum of the strifes and compromises of classes, interests, factions, sects, theorists, in all countries and in all ages. In studying it, then, we study the evolution of an aggregate, a quasi-organism, in terms of the clashing forces of its units and of their spontaneous combinations.

This may seem too obvious and simple a truth to need formal telling; and yet no truth is more often missed or set aside by writers who deal with political history. The past course of nations, when it is sought to be explained at all, is by two writers out of three accounted for by certain supposed qualities of character in the given nation as a whole, instead of by the specially conditioned play of forces common to all peoples.<sup>1</sup> For instance, M. Taine, in the preface to the first volume of his fascinating work, *Les origines de la France contemporaine*, goes about to justify his own political indifferentism by stating that in eighty years his country had thirteen times changed its constitution. "We," he says, have done this; and "we have not yet found that which suits us."<sup>2</sup> It is

<sup>1</sup> It is one of the shortcomings of Buckle that, though he at least once (*Introd. to Hist. of Civ. in Eng.*, Routledge's ed. p. 352) recognises the futility of explaining history in terms of national character, he repeatedly lapses to that method, and speaks of peoples as if they were of one will, bent, and mind. (Ed. cited, edit. notes pp. 354, 385, 540, 553, 558, 719, etc.). See below, pt. iii, ch. iii, second note, as to Eduard Meyer.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly De Tocqueville begins *L'ancien régime et la révolution* with "Les Français ont fait....." (*Avant-Propos*, 2e éd. p. 5), and makes the successors of the Revolutionists "les mêmes Français" (p. 12). Soon he makes the Revolution an entity (p. 35). Compare with Taine's passage the programme of the first number of Le Play's *La Réforme Sociale*, 1881 (cited by H. Higgs, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Boston, July, 1890, p. 418), which might almost have been written by Taine. In the case of Le Play the ideal of a quasi-patriarchal order, very stable and very fixed, led to an attitude resembling at points

N. ex.

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here implied that a body of men collectively and concurrently seeking for a fixed constitution have failed, and that the failure is discreditable—that those who thus seek and fail have been badly employed. It is by implication denied that successive changes of a constitution may fitly be regarded as a process of growth and healthy adjustment of parts: the ideal of political health is assumed to be a state of fixity. Thus does indifferentism, naturally if not necessarily, miss the point of view from which itself is to be studied as one of the forces whose conflict the true historian ought to analyse.

ex. There is no national "we" aiming collectively at a fixed and final constitution; nor are the successive constitutions of France as such more significant of failure or permanent harm than the successive changes in the professedly unchanged constitution of Great Britain, though the violent kinds of change are as such harmful. If M. Taine had but applied with rigour the logic he once before prescribed, soundly if wittily, for all problems alike, he could not have begun his history with that delusive abstraction of a one-minded community, failing to achieve "their" or "its" purpose. "*Je n'en sais rien,*" he remarks with a shrug, over the protest of M. Royer-Collard that certain scientific reasoning will make Frenchmen revolutionary; "*est-ce qu'il y a des Français ?*"<sup>1</sup> In dead earnest he now assumes that France consists just of the single species "Frenchmen," whose constitution-building is a corporate attempt to build a French house to live in; when all that is truly historical in his own book goes to show clearly enough that French constitutions, like all others, are products of ever-varying and conflicting passions and interests of sets of people in France who are "Frenchmen" merely when they happen to act in concert against other geographical groups. At no moment were all of the French people consenting parties to any one of the thirteen constitutions. Then there was no collective failure.

Of course M. Taine knew this well enough in his capacity of narrator; but as teacher he could not escape from the rut dug for his thought by his fatalism. He must needs make the synthetic abstraction of "we," which excludes the political analysis essential to any practical explanation; and it inevitably followed that his generalisations were merely pseudo-biological, and not what is most

that of Taine. It is easy to see how the natural recoil from political turmoil has, since the French Revolution, developed successive schools such as those of Saint Simon, Comte, and Le Play, all aiming at stability and order, all seeking to elbow out the cosmic force of Change. In Taine's case the result was an acceptance of Spencer's "administrative nihilism."

<sup>1</sup> *Les philosophes classiques du XIXe siècle en France*, 3ième éd. p. 37.

wanted in history—sociological truth rooted in psychology and biology. In denuding himself alike of hopes and fears, M. Taine really gave the great illustration of the truth of his own penetrating comment on Mérimée,<sup>1</sup> that he who will be duped by nothing ends in being the dupe of his distrust. He will not be duped by this ideal or that; he will not care enough for any to have a strong wish to see it realised; and so he comes to be duped by the wish to disprove all, to work down all sociology to the plane of cynical pseudo-biology. The enthusiastic amateur can show it, can convict the critic of hearing only the devil's advocate in every moral process,<sup>2</sup> and of becoming at length the historic oracle of those, of all readers, who are most alien to his philosophy.

Such an outcome, in the work of such a critic, is vividly instructive. At worst, indeed, he has a positive value as the extremest reactionist against the merely partisan method of history, which is almost all we have had in England since the French Revolution, down to the other day. After M. Taine has passed, fools' paradises must needs fall in market value. But when the devil's advocate has made his round, we must still plough and eat, and the paradises must just be laid out for new sowing. The evil of theoretical extremes is not so much their falsehood as their irrelevance. If we are to instruct each other in conduct, it must be in terms of sympathies and antipathies; and if we are to profit by a study of politicians, who are among the most generally typical of men, and of politics, which is the expression of so much of life, we must go about it as humanists and not as fatalists.

## § 2

Humanity, however, will not suffice to save us from false philosophy if, as humanists, we seek to gain our polemical ends by M. Taine's didactic methods. He, naturally so much of an analyst, took to pseudo-synthesis when he wished with little labour to discredit certain popular aspirations. But pseudo-synthesis is the favourite expository process of many men with ardent aspirations,

<sup>1</sup> *Lettres de Prosper Mérimée à une Inconnue*, préf. *end.* When, however, M. Taine wrote on Sainte-Beuve's death (1869), he laid down, as one of the necessities of the search for "the true truth," this very determination "to be the dupe of nothing and nobody, above all of oneself" (*Derniers Essais*, p. 52). Years before an acute critic had said of his literary criticism: "M. Taine, at bottom, let us say it with bated breath, is the dupe of himself when he supposes himself to have given a rigorous formula, an exact definition, a chemical analysis of his author" (Frédéric Morin, *Les hommes et les livres contemporains*, 1862, p. 33). Compare the brochure of Professor Edouard Droz, *La critique littéraire et la science*, 1893, discussed in the present writer's *New Essays towards a Critical Method*, 1897, p. 13 sq.

<sup>2</sup> See *Napoléon et ses détracteurs*, par le Prince Napoléon, p. 13, and *passim*.

N. ( and of many writers who are friendly enough to the aspirations of their fellows. By pseudo-synthesis I mean that process, above exemplified, of "cooking" an intricate moral problem by setting up one or more imaginary entities, to whose volition or potency the result is attributed. It was the method of medieval science; and it is still popular among the experts as well as the amateurs of historical science. It was the ordinary expedient of Comte, in whose pages history becomes a Jonsonian masque of personified abstractions; and Buckle too often resorts to it. But hear a learned and judicious English Liberal, not to be suspected of doctrinary extravagance:—

"As in time past Rome had sacrificed domestic freedom that she might be the mistress of others, so now" [in the later Empire] "to be universal she, the conqueror, had descended to the level of the conquered" [in respect of Caracalla's edict giving to all subjects of the Empire the rights of Roman citizenship]. "But the sacrifice had not wanted its reward. From her came the laws and the language that had overspread the world; at her feet the nations laid the offerings of their labour; she was the head of the Empire and of civilisation."<sup>1</sup>

Note. ( The "she" of this passage I take to be as purely imaginary an entity as Phlogiston; and it is not easy to see how a method of explanation which in physical science is found worse than barren can give any edification in the study of history. To say nothing of the familiar explanation that Caracalla's sole motive in conferring the citizenship on the provincials was the desire to lay on them corresponding taxes,<sup>2</sup> the proposition has no footing in political actualities. "Rome's self-abnegation that she might Romanise the world"<sup>3</sup> expresses no fact in Roman volition, thought, or deed; it is not the mention of a sentiment which swayed men's action, but the attempt to reduce a medley of actions to the semblance of a joint volition. There was no "Rome" capable of "self-abnegation" and susceptible of "reward." Why, then, should it be said? It is said either because the writer permits himself to fill in a perspective with a kind of pigment which he would not employ in his foreground, or because he is still too much under the sway of old methods when he is generalising conventional knowledge instead of analytically reaching

<sup>1</sup> Professor Bryce, *The Holy Roman Empire*, 8th ed. p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon, ch. vi (Bohn ed. i, pp. 201, 212-13). In the same way, Julius Cæsar, and the triumvirs after him, were in their day moved to extend citizenship in Italy because of the falling-off in the free Roman population. Widened citizenship meant a wider field for Italian recruiting. At that time the extension involved not taxation, but immunities; but, according to Cicero, Antony received great sums from the Sicilians in payment for the privilege he conferred upon them. *Ad Atticum*, xiv, 12; *Philipp.* ii, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Bryce, p. 9.

new.<sup>1</sup> Either way the lapse is only too intelligible. And if an innovating expert, dealing with old facts, runs such risks, great must be those run by plain people when they seek to attain a generalised knowledge of facts which are the battle-ground of current ideals. Only by perpetual analysis can we hope partly to escape the snare of the pseudo-synthetic, the traps of rhetoric and exegetic fiction.

## § 3

The term "pseudo-synthesis" implies, of course, that there may be a true synthesis. What is necessary to such synthesis is that there shall have been a preliminary analysis; but a synthesis once justly made is the greatest of helps to new analyses. Now there is one such which may safely be brought to bear on the study of practical politics, because it is an axiom alike of inorganic physics and of biology, and a commonplace of human science, though seldom used as a means of historic generalisation. This is the simple principle that all energy divides ostensibly into forces of attraction and of repulsion.

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[The principle thus stated should be compared with the theorem of Kant as to the correlative forces of sociability and unsociability (*Idee zu einer allgemein Geschichte*), and the important and luminous formula of Professor Giddings, that all sociological processes, properly so called, turn upon "consciousness of kind" (*Principles of Sociology*, 1896, 3rd ed. pp. 17-19, and Preface; and in earlier writings by Professor Giddings, there mentioned). The scientific value of that formula is obvious; but other ways of stating the case may still serve a purpose. The view in the text I find to have been partly anticipated by Shaftesbury, *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, 1709, pt. iii, § 2 (*Characteristics*, ed. 1733, i, pp. 111-12), who is followed by Eusèbe Salverte, *De la Civilisation depuis les premiers Temps historiques*, 1813, p. 53. Shaftesbury even anticipates in part the formula of Professor Giddings in the passage: "If anything be natural, in any Creature or any Kind, 'tis that which is preservative of the Kind itself," and in the sequel. As Professor Giddings traces (pref. to 3rd ed. p. x) the first suggestion of his "consciousness of kind" to Adam Smith's *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*,

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<sup>1</sup> A different explanation holds in the case of Hegel, who—after very pointedly affirming that "nothing great in the world has been accomplished without passion" (*Leidenschaft*), in the sense of individual interest and self-seeking aim, and that "an individual is such and such a one, not a man in general, for that is not an existence, but one in particular" (*Philos. der Geschichte*, 2te Aufl. p. 30)—proceeds to express historical processes in terms of universal spirit, abstract universality, and so forth. Here the trouble is the cherished tendency to verbal abstraction.

which is certainly in the line of descent from Shaftesbury, there may really be a causal connection.]

N. ( That principle obviously holds of the relations of men in society as it does of their muscular action and of their moral and intellectual life; and so fundamental is the fact that when we study human history in view of it, we find it more and more difficult to suppose that it will ever cease to hold. That is to say, it is almost impossible to conceive a state of life in which the forces of attraction and repulsion shall not operate energetically in the moral and intellectual relations of human beings. From the primitive and the barbaric stages in which the sight of an alien moves the savage to such destructive rage as is seen in some dogs at the sight of others, or in which a difference of personal odour rouses a no less spontaneous repulsion—as in Chinese against Europeans, or in Europeans against Chinese<sup>1</sup>—down to the fierce battle in self-governing countries over every innovating law, or that strife of opinion in which these lines play their part, the clash of opposing tendencies is perpetual, ubiquitous, inevitable. And so difficult is it to conceive any cessation that at once many observers leap from the general principle to the particular conclusion that all the *modes* in which the action and reaction, the attractions and repulsions of individuals and groups, have operated in the past must needs operate in the future. They conclude, that is, that the particular phenomenon of WAR, above all, is chronic, and can never definitely disappear. Thus M. Zola, looking around him and finding strife everywhere, decides that all the past *forms* of strife are inevitably recurrent.<sup>2</sup> It may be well at the outset to insist that the general principle involves no such particular necessity.

N. v. ( War is simply a form in which the instincts of attraction and repulsion have operated in human societies during ages in which certain psychological and physiological types have been normal. It may very well recur, with growing infrequency, for a long time to come; but it is not rationally to be regarded as a necessary function of the grand biological forces. What does seem certain is a different thing—that the forces of attraction and repulsion will always operate in *some* form; and that the very fact of their finding less expression in the mode of physical strife will imply their coming

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Professor H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, 1911, pp. 214–15. Smell appears to be an insuperable bar to any general association of "whites" with "blacks," and it probably enters into many racial repugnances. Compare the curious device of Lombard women to set up by an artificial bad smell a repugnance on the part of their alien suitors such as they themselves may have felt. Gummere, *Germanic Origins*, 1892, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Cited by Tolstoy, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, ch. vi, end.

into play in other modes, such as the strife of ideals, doctrines, and class interests as they are expressed in politics without bloodshed. The general law is that the forces of attraction and repulsion, as exhibited in human thought or feeling, run during the earlier stages of growth in channels which may be broadly regarded as animal; and that when altered political and social conditions partly or wholly close these channels, the biological forces open for themselves new ones.

War is precisely the blindest, the least rational, the least human of all the forms of human conflict, inasmuch as it is the collective clashing of communities whose members, divided among themselves by many real differences of interest, bias, and attraction, are set against each other, as wholes—if by anything higher than animal pugnacity—either by the mere ideals or appetites of rulers or leaders, or by more or less imaginary differences of interest, seen under the moral illusion of the most primitive of social instincts—the *sensus gregis*. As evolution proceeds, the blind form may be expected to disappear, and the more reasoned forms—that is, the inter-social and intellectual—to develop.

CHAPTER II  
ROMAN POLITICAL EVOLUTION

§ 1

A SURVEY of the ancient history best known to us may help to make clearer the fatality of strife and the impossibility of solving it save by transcending the physical plane. The habit of summing up all Roman history as so many planned actions of "the Romans," or of "Rome," is in singular contrast with the imbroglio of the records. In the social stage discovered to us by the analysis of the oldest known institutions, "early" Rome is already an artificial political organism, far removed from the simple life of tribal barbarism.<sup>1</sup> There are three tribes; the very name of tribe, it may be, comes from the number three<sup>2</sup> in the flexion *tribus*; and the subdivisions are fixed by the numbers three and ten.<sup>3</sup> Behind the artificial "tribe" is a past in which, it may be, a group of villages forms the *pagus* or settlement.<sup>4</sup>

N. Already privilege and caste are fully established, even between classes of freemen; and only by inference can we reach the probable first bases of civic union among the ruling caste. They were clearly a caste of conquerors. Their *curiæ*, apparently the oldest form of group after the family or the clan,<sup>5</sup> are artificially arranged, numbering thirty, each *curia* containing nominally a hundred *gentes*, each *gens* nominally ten families.

Eduard Meyer (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 511) decides for the view of L. Lange, that the historic appellation of

<sup>1</sup> Cp. A. Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, 1853, i, 610-615; Pelham, *Outlines of Roman History*, 1893, p. 25. When Professor Ferrero (*Greatness and Decline of Rome*, Eng. trans. 1907, i, 5) pronounces that "The Romans were a primitive people without the defects peculiar to a primitive people," he sets up a needless mystification. They had the defects of their own culture stage, which was far beyond that of "primitives" in the general sense of the term. They were "semi-civilised barbarians," with a long past of institutional life.

<sup>2</sup> It might be an interesting inquiry whether a grouping by threes could have arisen from a primary union of two exogamous clans.

<sup>3</sup> Schwegler, i, 616. The origin of *tribus* from *three* is not an accident special to the Romans. Among the Spartans and Dorians likewise there were three stocks (cp. K. O. Müller, *The Dorians*, Eng. tr. 1830, i, 35-37; Fustel de Coulanges, *La Cité antique*, 8e édit. p. 135, note 2); and the great number of Greek epithets in which "three" or "thrice" enters is a proof of the special importance anciently attached to the number. Cp. K. D. Hüllmann, *Ursprung der römischen Verfassung durch Vergleichen erlättert*, 1835, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, 1901, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Pelham, p. 20; Fustel de Coulanges, p. 132, sq.; Schwegler, i, 610, 615; Ihne, *Early Rome*, 1897, p. 108; Ortolan, *Hist. de la Législation romaine*, ed. Labbé, 1880, pp. 35, 36.



Roman citizens, *Quirites*, derives from *curia*. The ancients had several theories as to the name. One (Festus) was that the Sabine goddess Curis gave her name to the Sabine town Cures (cp. Athenê, Athenai), whence, according to the legend, had come a band under Titus Tatius, who conquered the Capitoline and Quirinal hills, and had for tribe-god Quirinus. Cp. Ihne, *Early Rome*, p. 82. Mommsen (Eng. tr. 1862, i, 57, 78, *notes*) has secured currency for the other tradition, argued for by F. W. Newman (*Regal Rome*, 1852, pp. 55-56), that the root is the Sabine word *curis*, *quiris*, a spear. For this somewhat unpalatable theory there is support in the fact that in the cognate Gaelic *coir*, pronounced *quîr*, means a spear, and that there is derived thence *curiadh*, a warrior. Mommsen is followed by Merivale, *General History of Rome*, 5th ed. p. 13; and Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, p. 33. Pott and Becker, who derived *Quirites* from *curia*, explain the latter word as *co-viria*, the band of warriors. And as the view that "Athenê" comes from "Athenai," not *vice versâ*, has the stronger claims to acceptance, the more acceptable presumption is that "Curis" and Quirinus evolved from the *curia*. If *Quirites* meant spearmen, how could Cæsar be understood to cow mutineers by simply addressing them as Quirites [=citizens]? The curia theory is supported by the facts that "the Roman constitutional tradition.....makes the division into curies alone originate with the origin of the city"; that it "appears as an essential part of the Latin municipal system;" and that of all the old divisions it seems to be the only one that "really fulfilled important functions in the primitive constitutional organisation" (Mommsen, B. i, ch. v, pp. 73-75).

These *curiæ* may be conceived as derived from inner tribal or clan groups formed in the conquering stage, since they are ostensibly united by their collective or curial *sacra*, the rites for which the grouped *gentes*—who each have their private *sacra*—assemble in a special place, under a special priest. They still retain the usage of a common banquet,<sup>1</sup> the earliest form of collective religion known to us.<sup>2</sup> Apart from the members of the *curiæ* are the conquered *plebs*,<sup>3</sup> "the many" not enslaved, but payers of tribute; without share in the *curiæ* or vote in the *comitia*, or assembly, and without part in the curial or other *sacra*.

<sup>1</sup> Schwegler, i, 611, following Dionysius. Cp. Meyer, ii, 514.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Fustel de Coulanges, pp. 13, 24, 132, 179; Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1889, pp. 245, 247, 251, etc.; Jevons, *Introd. to the History of Religion*, ch. xii.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Schwegler, i, 628; Ihne, *Early Rome*, p. 107; Dupond, *Magistratures romaines sous la République*, 1877, p. 19. The source of the plebs is one of the vexed points of Roman origins; and the view that they were primarily a conquered population is not yet generally accepted. See Shuckburgh, *History of Rome*, 1894, p. 44. The true solution seems to be that the plebs were always being added to in various ways—by aliens, by "broken men," by discarded clients, and by fugitives. Cp. Fustel de Coulanges, p. 279.

On this head there has been some gratuitous confusion. Schwegler (i, 621 *sq.*) gives convincing reasons for the view that in early times the plebs were not members of the *curiæ*. Cp. Ihne, as cited, pp. 110, 127; and Fustel de Coulanges, p. 278 *sq.* Meyer (ii, 513, 521) asserts, on the contrary, without any specification of periods, that the *curiæ* included plebeians as well as patricians. The contradiction seems to arise out of inattention to chronology, or a misreading of Mommsen. That historian rightly sets forth in his history (B. ii, ch. i; Eng. trans. ed. 1862, i, 264–65) that the plebs were not admitted into the *comitia curiata* before the "Servian" period; adding that these bodies were "at the same time" almost totally deprived of their prerogatives. In his *Römisches Forschungen*, 1864, i, 144 *sq.*, he shows that they were admitted in the "historic period"—when the *comitia* in question had ceased to have any legal power, and when, as he elsewhere states, the admission "practically gave little more than the capacity for adrogation" (*Römisches Staatsrecht*, Bd. iii, Abth. i, p. 93). Here again he states that "to equal rights in the curies, especially to the right of vote in the *comitia*, the plebeians attained only in the later times" (*Id.* p. 72). Yet Professor Pelham, in asserting (p. 21; cp. p. 46) that "the primitive Roman people of the thirty *curiæ* included all the freemen of the community, simple as well as gentle," gives the note: "The view here taken on the vexed question of the purely patrician character of the *curiæ* is that of Mommsen (*Röm. Forschungen*, vol. i)."

When this error is corrected, the question ceases to be vexed. Schwegler has disposed of the blunder of Dionysius, who ascribes to the plebeians a share in the *curiæ* from the beginning; and it is not disputed that they were allowed to enter when the *comitia curiata* had been practically superseded by the *comitia centuriata*. It is to be noted that the denial of the inclusion of the plebeians in the original *curiæ* does not apply to the *clientes*, whose status, though non-patrician, had been different from that of the true plebs. M. Delaunay, who argues that the plebeians were all along admitted to the *curiæ*, adds the qualification: "Doubtless not the entire mass of the plebeians, but only those who were.....attached to the *gentes*" (Robiou et Delaunay, *Les Institutions de l'ancienne Rome*, 1884, i, 21). But who were these *gentilitia* if not the *clientes*? (cp. *loc. cit.* p. 26).

N. ( The *populus* at this stage, then, is not "the people" in the modern sense; it is the aggregate of the privileged *curiæ*, and does not include the plebs,<sup>1</sup> which at this stage is not even

<sup>1</sup> Schwegler, i, 621–28, 636–38; Fustel de Coulanges, p. 277. Note the expression *populo plebique* in Livy, xxix, 27; Cicero, *Pro Murena*, i; Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, i, 17. Ortolan (endorsed by Labbé) argues (work cited, p. 31) that *populus plebsque* no more implies

part of the army. But a separate quasi-plebeian class, the *clientes* of the patricians, are in a state of special dependence upon the latter, and in a subordinate fashion share their privileges.

The *clientes* have very much the air of being primarily the servile or inferior part of the early clan or *gens*, as distinct from its "gentlemen." Cp. Burton, *Hist. of Scotland*, viii, 524-25, as to the lower and the higher (duniewassal) orders in the Scottish Highland clans. "In the old life of the *pagus* and the *gens* the weaker sought the protection of the stronger by a willing vassalage" (Greenidge, *Roman Public Life*, p. 6). The *clientes* are the nominal as distinct from the real "family" of the chief or *patronus*. M. Delaunay (*Les Institutions de l'ancienne Rome*, as cited, i, 27) thinks with Mommsen (so also Dupond, pp. 20-21) that they were mainly freedmen, but gives no evidence. As to the meaning and etymology of the word (*clientes* from *cluere* or *cliere*, "to listen" or "obey"), cp. Newman, *Regal Rome*, p. 49; Ortolan, p. 29; Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*, III, i, 1887, p. 63. The theory that the plebeians were all *clientes* (Ortolan, pp. 25, 27) seems untenable, though Mommsen (*Staatsrecht*, III, i, 63) pronounces that "all non-patricians were clients"; and Meyer (ii, 521) appears to acquiesce. Only in theory can the mass of the plebs have been clients at any time. Cp. Fustel de Coulanges, pp. 277-78. The *clientes*, it seems clear, were as such admitted to the *comitia*, whereas the plebs were not. See the citations of Fustel de Coulanges from Livy, ii, 56-64; also iii, 14 (Dupond, p. 22, doubts the fact). On any view, the *clientela* rapidly dwindled, passing into the plebs (cp. Dupond, p. 23; Livy, vi, 18). As to its early status see Fustel de Coulanges, p. 273 sq. Ortolan, after representing all plebeians as clients, speaks (p. 31) of plebeians belonging to no *gens* (so Aulus Gellius, x, 20).

Wealth is not yet a matter of landowning—the main element of property is cattle;<sup>1</sup> and the bulk of the land is *ager occupa-*

separation than *senatus populusque*. But this argument destroys itself. The Senate as such was distinct from the *populus*, as having *auctoritas*, while the *populus* had only *potestas*. The phrase then was not a pleonasm. By this very analogy *populus plebsque* implies a vital legal distinction. Niebuhr, who first made the facts clear (cp. his *Lectures*, Eng. trans. ed. 1870, p. 107), followed Vico, who was led to the true view by knowledge of the separateness of the *popolo* from the *commune* in the Italian republics.

<sup>1</sup> Schwegler, i, 619; E. W. Robertson, as cited, p. xxvii. Yet the constant tradition is that not only did the mass of the people live mainly on farinaceous food and vegetables, but the upper classes also in the early period ate meat only on festival days. Cp. Guhl and Koner, *The Life of the Greeks and Romans*, Eng. trans., pp. 501-2; Pliny, *H. N.*, xviii, 3, 19; Ramsay, *Roman Antiquities*, 1851, p. 437. The cattle then were presumably sold to the people of the Etruscan and Campanian cities. Professor Ferrero leaves this problem in a state of mystery. The early Romans, he writes, had "few head of cattle" (i, 2); but land capture, he admits, meant increase (p. 5); and at the time of the Roman Protectorate over all Italy (266 B.C.) he recognises "vast wandering herds of oxen and sheep, without stable or pen" (p. 9), conducted by slave shepherds. On such lands there must have been a considerable amount of cattle-breeding at a much earlier period. On the other hand, noting that the Romans early imported terracottas and metals from Etruria, Phœnicia, and Carthage, "besides ivory-work and ornaments, perfumes for funerals, purple for the ceremonial robes of the magistrates, and a few slaves" (p. 3), Professor Ferrero lightly affirms that "it was not difficult to pay for these in exports: timber for shipbuilding, and salt, practically made up the list."

*torius*, a great "common" on which all men's cattle feed. The voteless free plebeian has simply his home and homestead, "toft and croft," the latter being two yokes (= five roods) of land, on which he raises the grain and olives and vegetables that feed his household.<sup>1</sup> This goes to his heir. Here arises another problem. E. W. Robertson (as last cited) decides that the "two yokes" can have been only "the homestead, and could not have included the farm or property attached to it." The *heredium*, he holds, following Pliny (*Hist. Nat.*, xix, 19), and citing Livy (vi, 36), was only in the *hortus*, the house and garden, "and not in the arable or pasture land." But surely the arable was on a different footing from the pasture land (*ager compascus*). Corn was not grown in common, unless it were by the *gentes* (Mommsen, vol. i, pp. 38, 72, 193). The solution seems to be that given by Greenidge, that as "the *heredium* consisted only of two *jugera* (Festus, p. 53), an amount obviously insufficient for the maintenance of a family," "there must have been *ager privatus* as well, owned by some larger unit, and this unit would naturally have been the gens" (*Roman Public Life*, p. 15).

Among general historians of Rome Mommsen seems to be the first to note this circumstance, and he gives neither details nor evidence. Schwegler, discussing (i, 619) the theory of Puchta that there was no private property in Rome before the "arrival" of the plebs, admits that among the ancient Germans the land was yearly apportioned among the groups as such, but finds that "Roman tradition tells of nothing of the kind." (So Greenidge, p. 15.) In any case, Mommsen, while insisting that "the fields (*sic*) of the *gentes* (*Geschlechts-Genossen*) in the earliest period lay together" (*Staatsrecht*, III, i, 24; cp. p. 94), admits that such gentile ownership had at an early stage disappeared (*früh verschwundenen*). There was then no communal tillage in the historic period. Cincinnatus, in the legend, returns to the plough on his own croft. Further, the early complaints cited by Livy as to the "two yokes" being "hardly enough to raise a roof on or to make a grave in" were addressed by the tribunes on behalf of plebeians to patricians who each had above five hundred yokes. The non-client plebeians then had no share in the land of the *gentes* or clans, being themselves in large part dispossessed by conquest.

Meyer (ii, 519) pronounces that the plot of two yokes was, "of course, no farm, but a kitchen-garden," adding: "It is also the personal land of the small farmers and day-labourers who look after the lands of the large landholders, not the original private holding in contrast to the mark belonging in common to the *gens* (*Geschlecht*) or commune (*Gauverband*)." But on the previous page Meyer says that "the land was settled not by the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Schwegler, i, 451, 617-19; ii, 108; E. W. Robertson, *Historical Essays in connection with the Land, the Church, etc.*, 1872, pp. xxvi-vii, 244.

*gentes*, but communally (*genossenschaftlich*) by unions of equal freemen." If these, then, were the *curiæ* (the Mark, says Meyer in this connection, did *not* belong to the *gentes*), they did not include the plebs; and we come back to the datum that the free plebeian had no means of support save his five roods and what beasts he had on the public pasture. The pasture-land, again, is surmised by Mommsen (ch. xiii, p. 201) to have been small in area relatively to the arable-land communally owned and cultivated by the *gentes* or clans—a proposition irreconcilable with the evidence as to the quantity of cattle. As to the two yokes of land, Schwegler decides (i, 618) that it was "nowise inadequate" as arable-land, in view of the extraordinary fruitfulness of Italy, and, further, of the circumstance that "the free burghers had also the use of the common land" (for pasture). We are to remember that Italian land could yield two crops in a year. (Niebuhr, *Lebensnachrichten*, ii, 245, cited by Schwegler.)

On the general problem as to why or how the land once communally tilled ceased to be so, we have still no better light than the old generalisation of Hobbes in reply to his own question: "Upon what impulsives, when all was equally every man's in common, men did rather think it fitting that every man should have his inclosure?" "I found," he puts it, "that from a community of goods there must needs arise contention whose enjoyment should be greatest, and from that contention all kind of calamities must unavoidably ensue." [Epistle Dedicatory to *Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Civil Society* (translation of *De Cive*), 1651. Cp. Goldwin Smith, *The United States*, 1893, p. 23.]

The patrician, of course, had a larger homestead, at least "four yokes" in the earlier stages; later seven; later still twenty-five.<sup>1</sup> But the patricians were "a class of occupying landholders rather than proprietary landowners."<sup>2</sup> The "public land" was literally so, save in so far as the patricians would have the ampler (and often untaxed or low-rented) use of it for their much larger herds;<sup>3</sup> or, it may be, for cultivation by their clients or slaves. *Heredia*, however, were saleable, and herein lay one usual path to the dispossession and enslavement of freemen; while at all stages there went on that pressure of population on means of subsistence which underlies all economic history.

Thus far, however, mere conquest has done less to impoverish and enslave the mass than the economic process is to do later.

<sup>1</sup> E. W. Robertson, as cited, pp. 243-44; Schwegler, i, 617-19.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Robertson, p. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> Schwegler, i, 619, and refs.; Robertson, pp. 244-45; Ferrero, i, 9; Greenidge, *Rom. Pub. Life*, p. 35.

The conquerors, probably highland herdsmen to begin with, take estates for themselves, but leave the mass of the conquered in possession or use of land for which they pay tribute, and upon which they can independently live.<sup>1</sup> And thus far they live mainly as small pastoral farmers.<sup>2</sup>

Trade and artisanship were for long but slightly developed, and were mainly in the hands of slaves, dependent "clients," or foreigners; and artisans and aliens were not admitted into the legions.<sup>3</sup> The ruling caste occupied, potentially<sup>4</sup> if not constantly, the city proper, the two or three fortified hills<sup>5</sup> on which at this stage it stands. They were certainly not the founders. The Palatine and the Quirinal hills had been occupied by Latins and Sabines respectively long before the time traditionally assigned to the "founding" of Rome; and there were communities there before them. Modern excavators trace many successive strata of civilisation before that which we call the Roman; and the probability is that the Romans of history, like the kindred Sabines, conquered a previous city "aristocracy" of kindred race, whose place and possessions they took. The previous inhabitants had presumably grown weak for self-defence by reason of some such disintegrating economic evolution as was soon to affect the conquerors themselves. Such a disintegration may well have taken place in the case of Alba Longa, of which the prior supremacy seems entirely credible.<sup>6</sup> But before Alba Longa there had been a civilisation<sup>7</sup> on the Roman hills which perhaps outwent in economic evolution anything attained in the Roman period until the last century of the Republic.

This was already inferred in the eighteenth century by Ferguson (*History of the Roman Republic*, 1783, ch. i, note; perhaps following Maffei [1727], cited by Schwegler, i, 807), from the nature of the remains of the great *cloacæ*, which he held could not have been built by any of the early Roman kings. That view is since adopted by various authorities; see Middleton's *Remains of Ancient Rome*, 1892, i, 104-107; and Robiou et Delaunay, *Les Institutions de l'ancienne Rome*, 1884,

<sup>1</sup> Cp. E. W. Robertson, as cited, p. xxv.

<sup>2</sup> Schwegler, i, 629; Robertson, p. xxvii.

<sup>3</sup> Schwegler, i, 620 and refs.

<sup>4</sup> Mommsen (ch. xiii, i, 200) puts this point in some confusion, making the patricians live mostly in the country. Meyer (ii, 521) seems to put a quite contrary view. Greenidge (*History of Rome*, 1904, p. 11) agrees with Mommsen, putting town houses as a development of the second century B.C.

<sup>5</sup> According to Niebuhr (*Lectures*, xv; Eng. trans. ed. 1870, p. 81) and Mommsen (ch. iv), the Palatine and the Quirinal. (But cp. Greenidge, p. 2.) The Palatine was probably the first occupied by Romans. Schwegler, i, 442. Cp. Merivale, *General History of Rome*, 5th ed. p. 3, as to its special advantages. The Quirinal was held by the Sabines. Cp. Koch, *Roman History*, Eng. trans. p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Ihne, *Early Rome*, p. 82.

<sup>7</sup> Presumably "Pelagian." Cp. K. O. Müller, *The Dorians*, Eng. trans. i, 15; Schwegler, i, 155 sq.

vol. ii, ch. i, § 1. Cp. Merivale, *General History of Rome*, pp. 9–11; Burton, *Etruscan Bologna*, 1876, pp. 170–74. Livy (i, 38) ascribes great *cloacæ* to the legendary Tarquin the elder. Professor Ettore Pais, on the other hand, confidently decides that the *cloaca maxima* belongs to the republican period, and dates it about 170 B.C. In any case, we know that an ante-Roman civilisation underlies the historic, and may now decide with Mr. Mahaffy that “as civilisation of some kind was vastly older on the Hill of Troy than any of us had imagined, so the site of every historic city is likely to have been the habitation of countless generations” (*Survey of Greek Civ.* 1897, p. 28).

## § 2

There had in fact been a “decline and fall of Rome” before the Rome we know began to be. Relatively to their predecessors, the early Romans were even as the northerners who in a later age were to capture historic Rome—vigorous barbarians beginning a new era on a footing of fraternity in conquest; and the condition of their early success as State-builders seems to have been precisely the joining of several tribe-groups in a real federation,<sup>1</sup> securing local peace as between the hill-holders. It has been said that Rome grew up without any known aid from men of political genius such as Solon.<sup>2</sup> But men of genius have counted for something in all stages of upward human evolution. The guiders of early Rome are lost in a cloud of myth and fable; but some man or men of civic faculty there must have been to shape tendency, though doubtless a main factor in the early union was the simple *collocation* of the hills first fortified. Granting that Servius Tullius is a mythical king, the elaborate constitution assigned to him stood for *some* planning by able men, and has several main points in common with that given to Athens by Solon.

Whatever were the part played by individual leaders, Roman or Etruscan, there clearly came into play in early Rome as in Athens the important factor of mixture of stocks. Romans and Sabines united to begin with; and the conquered plebs, destined later to enter the constitution and share in all the civic offices, represented some such source of recuperation to the Roman aristocracy as did the Saxons to that of England after the Norman Conquest. If we add the probable factor of an Etruscan element, Rome is to be conceived as standing for a ruling class of more

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the result of a partial conquest. Cp. Mommsen, vol. i, ch. 6, *ad init.*, as to the precedence of the Palatine priests over those of the Quirinal.

<sup>2</sup> So Ihne, *Early Rome*, p. 5.

various faculty than was to be found in any of the rival communities singly. The progressive absorption of the most enterprising of the plebeians was again, probably, an exception to the rule of Italic life as to that of other races, so that in following the class struggles of Rome we are to note not so much the violence of the process as the fact that, so far as it went, it was relatively fortunate. And its success, again, is conceivably due to the fact, among others, that from an early period the region of the seven defensible hills was a refuge or centre for men breaking away from the other Italian communities, where conservatism held firm.

Behind the legend of the flocking of all manner of "broken men" to the standard of Romulus lies the probability that the ancient "asylum" behind the Capitol brought a variety of types to the place; and as in Athens so in Rome, such variety of stock might well raise the level of faculty. But it was a faculty for aggression. Given the initial federation of Romans and Sabines, the one general force of comity or cohesion, apart from the more public cults, is the bond of mere collective antagonism to other communities. The total polity is one of war; and never in the history of civilisation has that ground of comity long averted the economic process by which social inequality deepens and widens. It is thus entirely credible that, through this economic process, which we shall trace later, the early Roman polity came to a pass at which its conquest by Etruscan "kings" was welcomed by the plebs, sinking into poverty or held in outlawry under primitive "capitalistic" exploitation. There is no clear historic record of the process; but all the better evidence goes to prove its occurrence.<sup>1</sup>

The most plausible theory of the constitution ascribed to Servius Tullius is that it was imposed by Etruscan conquerors. The earlier Romans had been quasi-sacerdotally ruled by priest-kings of the primitive type, "kings of the sacrifice," whose religious powers were balanced by the secular interest of the patrician heads of families—themselves priests of their family cults. The "Servian" constitution put down the *rex sacrificulus*, divided the city into four tribes, and its territory into twenty-six districts, each under a headman or headmen. The city at the same time was in part new walled, and the seven hills united; while the mass of the free population were divided into five classes according to their property, and enrolled for

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Pelham, ch. iii. Ihne, who argues that the narratives concerning the Etruscan kings are no more trustworthy than those as to their predecessors, recognises that Pliny's record of the humiliating conditions of peace imposed on the Romans by Porsenna "would not have been made if the fact of the subjugation of Rome by an Etruscan king had not been incontestable" (*Early Rome*, p. 79; cp. pp. 85-86).



military purposes in 193 "centuries." In the first and richest class were forty centuries of men above forty-six for the defence of the city, and forty of younger men for service in the field; while the second, third, and fourth classes were divided into twenty centuries each, and the fifth class into thirty. The poorest of all were grouped in a separate century, the "Proletarians," or "breeders," without military duties; and the trumpeters, armourers, and carpenters in four more. New assemblies, the *comitia centuriata*, were formed, in which all members of the centuries shared, the old *comitia curiata* being thus virtually superseded. The military organisation was made the basis of a fiscal one, in which the classes were taxed on the capital value of their property. As freedom from direct taxation was the mark of the ancient "free" communities in general, the whole arrangement seems to be one that only a conqueror could have imposed; and the tradition ran that Servius was regarded as the friend of the poor, who made his birthday an annual festival.

But plebeian distress was probably not the sole, perhaps not the primary, factor in the convulsion. All along, the process of inequality had gone on among plebeians and patricians alike, some of the former rising to wealth and some of the latter sinking to relative poverty. Thus arises in effect the struggle of a "middle class" to share the political and social privileges of the "upper"; and there is reason to think that the Etruscan conquest was furthered by rich plebeians as against the patricians. The new constitution was what the Greeks called a "timocracy," or "rule of property"; and though in respect of the *comitia centuriata* plebeians were admitted to the franchise, it was under such provisions as to voting that the richer classes easily held the balance of power.<sup>1</sup> At the same time the patricians retained the religious power of the old kings, as custodians of the ritual mysteries—a great source of dominion. Thus the crisis was only temporarily relieved, and the struggle was renewed again and again, both under and after the kings. We can broadly divine that the anti-patrician rule of the king, who would rely on the plebs, unified against him the patricians or "free" citizens, who sought to keep down the masses; while, on the other hand, the increasing outlaw plebs was unified by its sheer need.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Mérimée, *Études sur l'histoire romaine*, t. i, *Guerre sociale*, 1844, p. 352 sq.; Mommsen, B. ii, ch. i (i, 265).

<sup>2</sup> Cicero (*De Officiis*, ii, 12) and Sallust (cited by Augustine, *De Civ. Dei*, iii, 16) preserved the belief (accepted by Niebuhr) that the oppression of the poor by the rich had been restrained under the kings. Cp. Mahaffy (*Problems in Greek History*, pp. 81-83; *Social Life in Greece*, 3rd ed. p. 83) and Wachsmuth (*Hist. Antiq. of the Greeks*, Eng. tr. i, 416) as to Greek despots. And see Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, ii, 203, as to the weakness of Rome through class-strifes after the expulsion of the kings.

As to the rule of the kings, whether native or Etruscan, no exact knowledge is now possible. We can but trace some of their functions in certain constitutional forms. Thus the Senate, or Council of the Elders, appears to have been the council of the king, selected by him, but capable of nominating his successor.<sup>1</sup> Whatever were its original function, it became in time the supreme power in the State, growing alike in numbers and in power, overruling or eclipsing the *comitia curiata*, *comitia centuriata*, and other bodies in which the general mass, first of patrician citizens and later of enfranchised plebeians, were enrolled.<sup>2</sup> But it is not through the complicated archæology of the Roman constitution, latterly compiled with such an infinity of scholarly labour, that the nature of Roman evolution is really to be known. The technique of the system resulted from an endless process of compromise among social forces; and it is in the actual clash and play of those forces, as revealed in the simple records, that the human significance of it all is to be felt. In this way we substitute for a vague and false conception of unitary growth one of perpetual strife of classes, interests, and individualities.

In the doubtful transition period, as the tradition goes, it is in the time of discontented plebeian subjection, after the expulsion of the king (510 B.C.), that the Etruscan enemy captures the city (497); and the surmise that the battle of Lake Regillus was not really a Roman victory<sup>3</sup> is partly strengthened by the fact that soon after it there occur the division into twenty-five tribes, the tumults of the *nexi*, and the successful Secession of the Plebs, ending in their incorporation, with two tribunes to represent their interests (494). There is a clear presumption that only from a weakened patriciate, forced to seek union, could the plebs have won their tribunate and enfranchisement. On the other hand, it is after victories over the Volscians that the consul Spurius Cassius, who had proposed to divide among landless men the land conquered from the Hernicans, is said to have been executed (485) by the triumphant aristocracy; and it is in another period of security, when the Veientes and Sabines are depressed (473), that the tribune Cneius Genucius is murdered for having ventured to bring a consular to trial. Always we are in presence of a brutal caste, in the main utterly selfish, some of whose members are at all times as prone to the use of the dagger

<sup>1</sup> Greenidge, pp. 47-48; Mommsen, i, 72.

<sup>2</sup> Greenidge, pp. 147, 262, 273.

<sup>3</sup> Niebuhr, *Lect.* xxv, 3rd Eng. ed. p. 134. So Ihne, *Early Rome*, p. 80; and also Schwegler, ii, 200. Mommsen takes the traditional view. Cp. Shuckburgh (*History of Rome*, p. 71), who remarks that the battle was at least not a decisive victory. Meyer (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 812) gives no verdict.

as an Italian *camorra* of our own day. Yet it is by the forcing of concessions on this caste that the Roman polity is kept vigorous and adaptable in comparison with those of the surrounding States which Rome subordinated or overran.

While Rome thrives, a new project for popular law reform is defeated (462); and it is after Cincinnatus, according to the legend, barely saves the State (458) that the tribunes are raised from five to ten, and the land is divided among the poor (456); though at the same time decemvirs are appointed and the conservative Twelve (at first Ten) Tables are drawn up (451-450). Thus partially strengthened, the plebs are able soon to force the abdication of the decemvirate (449) by the old menace of their withdrawal; and for a time the commonalty sufficiently holds its own, getting (445) the right of marriage with patricians, and (444) the institution of military tribunes with consular power;<sup>1</sup> though fresh distribution of land is prevented, and the patricians learn to divide the tribunes against each other. Thus class dissension goes on till the Gauls capture the city (390), multitudes of the Romans flying to Veii. Then it is that the plebeian party, after the Gauls have gone, are willing to transfer the seat of government to Veii; and the threat would doubtless win them some concessions in the rebuilding of Rome. But population always blindly increases; and the cancer of poverty spreads, despite the chronic planting of colonies in subject territory. Manlius is executed for trying to relieve debtors; but some land is reluctantly distributed. New wars create new popular distress, and new colonies fail to relieve it. At length the Licinian laws, relieving debtors and limiting estates, are proposed (376), and after nine years of agitation are passed at the crisis (367) at which the Gauls (who themselves had in the meantime undergone dissensions) again attack Rome; while the powers of the consuls (limited in 443 by the appointment of two Censors) are now further limited by the creation of a Prætor (patrician) and of Curule *ædiles*, alternately taken from the two strata.

This makes a temporary palliation, and in time the now privileged plebeians<sup>2</sup> lean to the patrician side and status; while fresh wars with Hernicans, Gauls, Etruscans, and Samnites check class strife, and the patricians recover preponderance, passing a law (358)

<sup>1</sup> The demand for the admission of plebeians to the consulate was thus met on the patrician plea that religion vetoed it. Only in 367 was it enacted that one of the two consuls should always be a plebeian.

<sup>2</sup> Plebeians first admitted to the Quæstorship, 421 B.C.; to the Military Tribuneship, 400; to the Consulate, 367; to the Dictatorship, 356; to the Censorship, 351; to the Prætorship, 337. This left the patricians in possession of the important privilege of membership of the sacred colleges. But that, in turn, was opened to plebeians in 300 or 296.

to check "new men." This is immediately followed by counter measures, limiting interest to ten per cent. and putting a five per cent. tax on manumissions; but the eternal distress of debtors is renewed, and a vain attempt is made to meet it (352) by State loans, and again by reducing interest to five per cent. (347). Increase of plebeian poverty again causes reactions, and after a mutiny futile laws are passed prohibiting interest altogether (342); the dictator Publilius carries popular political laws (339) checking the power of the Senate, and debtors are once more protected (326). After many wars, checking all domestic progress, popular distress causes a last Secession of the Plebs (287) and new political concessions to them; but still wars multiply, till all Italy is Romanised (266). The now mixed warlike aristocracy of birth, wealth, and office monopolises power in the Senate; and the residual plebs gradually ceases to be a distinct moral force, its last great struggle being made under the Gracchi, to whom it gives no valid support.

If we consider this evolution purely as a play of domestic political forces, we recognise it from first to last as a simple conflict of class needs and interests, partially modified at times by movements of true public spirit on the part of such men as the patricians who supported the Licinian laws, and such men as the Gracchi. The State-organism is the result of the struggles and pressures of its elements. What happened in the chronic readjustments was never a democratisation of the State, but at most an institutional protection of the poorer plebeians, and an admission of the richer to something like equal status with the optimates. Never was the "people" really united by any common home interest beyond the need of extorting some privileges. Only to that extent were the richer plebeians at one with the poorer; and there can be little doubt that as soon as the former secured the privileges they craved they tended to abuse them as the patricians had done. There was no *personnel* adequate to the effective working of the Licinian laws in face of a perpetual process of conquest which infallibly evoked always the instinct of acquisition, and never the science which might have controlled it. The early division of the State-territory into twenty-five tribes (495), of whom twenty-one were rural, determined the limitation of the political problem to the simple sharing of land; and every effort of public-spirited men to arrest the aggregation of lands in the hands of a few meant a convulsive explosion of resistance by the wealthy.

From the Polonian prattle of Cicero to his son we can gather how all schemes of reconstruction were viewed by the ruling class,

whether in retrospect or prospect. The slaying of Tiberius Gracchus by Scipio Nasica is a standing theme of praise;<sup>1</sup> the lesson of the course of things social towards a steep sunderance of "haves" and "have-nots" is angrily evaded. Cicero knew as well as any the need for social reconstruction in Rome;<sup>2</sup> and he repeatedly records the sagacity of Lucius Marcus Philippus, who had been tribune and consul in Cicero's boyhood. As consul, Philippus had resisted the attempts of M. Livius Drusus to reform the Senate and provide for the poorer citizens and the Italians; but inasmuch as he had during his tribuneship avowed the fact that there were not left two thousand men in the State who owned property, Cicero denounces the avowal as pernicious.<sup>3</sup> The ideal aristocratic course was to resist all political change and slay those who attempted it—Drusus as the Gracchi before him. It was as a consummation of that policy that there exploded the so-called Marsian or Social War, in which Rome and the Italian States around her grappled and tore for years together like their ancestors of the tribal period; whereafter Marians and Sullans in turn rent Rome, till Sulla's iron dictatorship, restoring class supremacy, marked the beginning of the end of self-governing institutions, and prepared for the day of autocracy, which was not to come without another agony of long-protracted civil war. It is the supreme proof of the deadliness of the path of conquest that for most Romans the end of Roman "freedom" was a relief.

## § 3

The effect of continuous foreign war in frustrating democracy is here plain. On the one hand, the peasant-farmers are reduced to debt and slavery by their inability to farm their lands in war-time, while the patrician's lands are worked by his slaves. On the other hand, their distress is met by a share in the lands conquered; and after the soldiers are allowed pay (406 B.C.) they are more and more ready to join in conquest. Not only is popular discontent put off by the prospect of foreign plunder, but the perpetual state of aggressive war, while tending first to pauperise most of the small cultivators who make the army, breeds a new public spirit on a low plane, a sinister fraternity of conquest. Ethics must needs worsen throughout the State when the primitive instinct of strife developed into a policy of plunder; and worsened ethics means a positive weakening of a society's total strength. There is no lesson that men are slower to learn—and this naturally, because they see the success of unjust

<sup>1</sup> *De Officiis*, i, 22, 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Ad Atticum*, i, 19.

<sup>3</sup> *De Officiis*, ii, 21.

conquest—yet there is no truth easier to prove from history. Early Rome was strong as against strong enemies, because not only were its people hardily bred, but the majority were on the whole satisfied that they had just laws: the reciprocal sense of recognised *rights* sustained public spirit at the possible maximum. But the rights are thoroughly selfish at best; and it is the diversion of their selfishness to the task of continuous conquest that “saves” the community from early dissolution, preserving it for the life of dominion, which in turn destroys the old forces of cohesion, and leaves a community fit only for subjection to a military autocracy. The society of mutual selfish rights has a measure of cohesion of its own, up to the point of conflict between the “haves” and the “have-nots.” An outwardly similar cohesion can, indeed, be sustained for a time by mere concurrence in piracy; but it lies in the very nature of society that union so engineered, cohesion so secured, is fleeting. Men whose main discipline is the practice of tyranny over aliens become simply incapable of strict reciprocity towards kin, and there must ensue either internecine strife or the degradation of the weaker elements, or a sequence of these results.

This is what happened in Rome. One of the first political signs of the contagion of the life of rapine in the later Republic is the growth of public bribery as a means to further wealth. Administrative posts being the chief of these means, candidates for them set about buying votes in the modern manner.<sup>1</sup> As early as 432 B.C. the law against canvassing by candidates<sup>2</sup> (*lex de ambitu*) suggests the recognition of electoral corruption; and later there followed a whole series of futile vetoes—futile because the social conditions grew always morally worse. The *lex Æmilia Bæbia* (182 B.C.) forbade all money gifts by candidates; and twenty-three years later another law decreed that offenders should be exiled. This also failing, there followed the *leges tabellariæ*, establishing the ballot (139–137). Still the disease persisted, because there was no stop now possible to the career of conquest, which had undermined the very instincts whereon law depends; and on the treacherous struggle for place and pelf by way of bribery there supervened the direct grapple over the ill-gotten gains. The Roman ruling class had evolved into a horde of filibustering fortune-hunters, as did the Greeks under and after Alexander; and the political sequels of despotism and civil war were substantially the same.

The process was gradual, and the phenomena are at times apt to

<sup>1</sup> See Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, iv, 272–76, for some interesting details; and refs. in Mérimée, *Guerre Sociale*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Livy, iv, 25.

delude us. When a political machinery was set up that conduced to systematic and extending warfare in which the commonwealth was often at stake, the community had a new albeit fatal bond of cohesion, and the destructive or repulsive energies for generations found a wide field outside of the State. It is when the aristocratic Republic, succeeding finally in the long struggle with Carthage for the wealth of Sicily and Spain and the control of the Mediterranean, has further overrun Greece and pretty well exhausted the immediate fields of conquest, that the forces of repulsion again begin to work destructively within the body politic itself, and men and classes become the fools of their animosities. The wars of faction, the popular propaganda of the Gracchi, the murderous strifes of Marius and Sulla, the rivalries of Pompey and Crassus, Conservatives and Democrats, Cæsar and Pompey, the pandemonium on Cæsar's death, all in turn represent the renewed operation within the State of the crude energies of cohesion and strife which had been so long employed in foreign war. And the strife is progressively worse, because the materials are more complex and more corrupt. The aristocracy are more arrogant and hardened, the free farmer class has in large part disappeared, and the populace are more debauched.<sup>1</sup>

The perpetual wars had multiplied slaves; and the slaves added a new and desperate element to the social problem. It was the proof of the fatal lack in Rome of vital ethical feeling—or, let us say, of social science—that this deadly iniquity was never effectually recoiled from, or even impugned as it had been, before Aristotle, among the more highly evolved of the Greeks.<sup>2</sup> As wealth and luxury, pride and power accumulated, the usage of slave labour spread ever further and ate ever deeper into the population, brutalising alike the enslaved and the free.

It was doubtless a partial recognition of this that motivated, in Cicero's day, the large number of affranchisements of slaves (Wallon, *Hist. de l'Esclavage*, ii, 409). But fresh enslavements went on; the amelioration consisted in the brevity of the period of enslavement in cases of good conduct. And the evil was in

<sup>1</sup> A writer in many respects instructive (W. Warde Fowler, *The City State of the Greeks and Romans*, 1893, p. 194), in pursuance of the thesis that "the Romans" had an "innate political wisdom" and an "inborn genius" for accommodation, speaks of the process of democratic self-assertion and aristocratic concession as "leaving no bad blood behind," this when social disease was spreading all round. The theorem of "national genius" will suffice to impair any exposition, however judicious otherwise. And this is the fundamental flaw in the argument of Bagehot in *Physics and Politics*. Though he notes the possibility of the objection that he is positing "occult qualities" (p. 24), he never eliminates that objection, falling back as he does on an assumed "gift" in "the Romans" (p. 81), instead of asking how an activity was evoked and fostered.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. the *Politics*, i, 6.

the main a product of conquest. It is fairly established by Dureau de la Malle (*Écon. polit des Romains*, 1840, vol. i, liv. ii, ch. 2) that down to the second Punic War Roman slaves were few. They would be for the most part *nexi*, victims of debt. As conquests multiplied prisoners, the class increased rapidly. Broadly speaking, the house servants were all slaves, as were the bulk of the shepherds in the great *latifundia*, the crews of the galleys, and many of the artisans. The total number has doubtless been greatly exaggerated, both in ancient and modern times, as has been the population of the imperial city. Athenæus is responsible for many wild estimates. (Cp. Letronne, as cited by Dureau, liv. ii, ch. 4.) Dureau arrives by careful calculation at an estimate of an Italian population of some five millions about the year 529 A.U.C., of whom some two and three quarter millions were free and some two and a quarter millions were slaves or *metæci*, aliens without political rights (i, 296). The population of Rome as late as Aurelian he puts at between 500,000 and 600,000 (i, 368). (See Prof. Bury's note in his ed. of Gibbon, iii, 308, for different views. Gibbon, Bunsen, and Hodgkin put the figure at about a million.) The exact proportion of slaves to free is not of the essence of the problem. A society with nine slaves for every eleven free was sufficiently committed to degeneration.

But the fatality of war was as irresistible as the fatality of plebeian degradation; and the collapse of the slave war in Sicily (132), and the political movement of the Gracchi, alongside of the new warlike triumphs in Spain and Southern Gaul (121—the first great successes since the fall of Carthage), illustrate the general principle that a ruling class or house may always reckon on checking domestic criticism and popular self-assertion by turning the animal energies of the people to animal strife with another nation, in which case union correlates with strife. Wars imply comradeship and the putting aside of domestic strife for the time being; and a war with Illyria was made the pretext for suspending the operation of the new land law passed by the elder Gracchus when the younger later sought to carry it out. The triumphs of Marius, again, over Jugurtha and the Cimbri availed nothing to unify the parties in the State, or to secure his own. In democratising the army by drawing on a demoralised *demos*, he did but make it a more facile tool for the general, a thing more detached from the body politic.<sup>1</sup> The tendency of all classes in Rome to unite against the claims of the outside Italians was from the first a stumbling-block

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Professor Pelham's *Outline of Roman History*, 1893, p. 197; Mérimée, *Guerre Sociale*, pp. 217, 220.



to the democrats within Rome; and the final identification of the popular interest, in the period of Marius and Sulla, with an anti-Roman policy among the Marians, gave to Sulla, strong in the prestige of recent conquest, the position of advantage, apart from his own strength. Further, as Montesquieu very justly notes, civil wars turn an entire nation into soldiers, and give it a formidable advantage over its enemies when it regains unity.<sup>1</sup> But this again is only for a time; there is no enduring society where there is no general sense of reciprocal justice among free men; and systematic militarism and plunder are the negation of moral reciprocity.

One partial exception, it is true, must be made. In the early days of the Republic the poor soldier stood to lose his farm by his patriotism. Soon the fighters had to be paid; and from the day of Marius onwards Roman commanders perforce provided for their veterans—so often their accomplices in the violation of their country's laws and liberties. The provision was made on the one hand by donations from the loot, on the other by grants of land taken from others, it might be in Italy itself. Sulla so rewarded his swordsmen; the triumvirs took the land of eighteen Italian towns to divide among their legionaries.<sup>2</sup> To the end the emperors had constantly to provide for their time-expired men by confiscations. Thus did empire pay for its instrument.

## § 4

The animal energies themselves, in time, are affected by domestic conditions; and when Cæsar comes on the scene Rome is visibly far on the way to a state of things such as had long before appeared in older civilisations<sup>3</sup>—a state of things commonly but rather loosely called degenerate, in which the animal energies are grown less robust, and the life therefore in some respects more civilised. Such a course had been run in Italy long before the rise of Rome, notably in Etruria, where, after a conquest of aborigines by a small body of invaders,<sup>4</sup> who were in touch with early Greek culture, the civilisation remains at that archaic stage while Greek civilisation continues to progress.<sup>5</sup> There, with a small aristocracy lording it over a people of serfs,<sup>6</sup> progress of all kinds was arrested, and even the religion of the conquerors assimilated to that of the aborigines.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains, et de leur décadence*, ch. xi. He refers to the many cases in point in modern European history.

<sup>2</sup> Dio Cassius, xlvii, 14; xlviii, 6; Appian, *Bell. Civ.* iv, 3; v, 5, 22.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 30, as to Carthage.

<sup>4</sup> Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, i, 269.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, i, 272-73.

<sup>6</sup> See Livy, xxxiii, 36, as to the *conjuratio servorum* throughout Etruria in 557 A.U.C.

<sup>7</sup> Schwegler, i, 270, 275.

In the Rome of Cæsar we see, after much fluctuation, with a more complex and less enfeebled structure of population, the beginnings of the same fixation of classes; while, at the same time, there has been such psychological variation as can begin to give new and ostensibly higher channels to the immanent forces of union and strife. This is the social condition that, given the required military evolution, above all lends itself to imperialism or absolute monarchy; which system in turn best maintains itself by a policy of conquest, so employing the animal energies and keeping up the cohesive force of militarist pride throughout all classes. Even now, of course, in a semi-enslaved populace, as in a slave population pure and simple,<sup>1</sup> there were possibilities of insurrection; and it was at length empirically politic for the emperors to give the populace its daily bread and its daily games, as well as to keep it charmed with the spectacle of conquest. The expedient of doles of food did not at once condemn itself by dangerously multiplying mouths, because, although it was only in the upper classes that men commonly refused to marry and have legitimate children, population was now restrained by the preventive checks of vice, city life, and wholesale abortion,<sup>2</sup> which are so much more effective—alike against child and mother<sup>3</sup>—than the random resort to infanticide, though that too had greatly increased.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, as the field of practicable conquest again approaches exhaustion and no sufficiently strong rival arises to conquer the conquerors, nothing can hinder that people of all classes, having no ideals tending to social and intellectual advance, and no sufficient channel for the instinct of union in the politics of the autocracy, shall find some channels of a new kind.<sup>5</sup> These are opened in due course, and take the shape especially of religious combinations or churches. Such modes had appeared even in the earlier stages of civic disintegration, when the semi-private or

<sup>1</sup> Compare the slave wars of Rome in Sicily with the modern disorders (1892) in the same region, and with Aristotle's testimony as to the constant tendency of the slave populations in Greece to conspire against their owners (*Politics*, ii, 9).

<sup>2</sup> Juvenal, *Sat.* vi, 368, 593-96; Ovid, *Amor.* i. ii, elegg. 13, 14. It is uncertain whether among the ancients any prudential preventive check was thought of. On the whole question see Malthus' fourteenth chapter. Malthus, however, omits to notice that the Romans probably learned the arts of abortion from the Greeks, Egyptians, and Syrians.

<sup>3</sup> Ovid speaks of the many women killed, *Amor.* ii, xiv, 38.

<sup>4</sup> Malthus cites Tacitus, *De Mor. Germanorum*, c. 19; Minucius Felix, c. 30; Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* xxix, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Cp. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics*, Treatise ii, pt. iii, § 2 (i, 114). Guizot seems to find the process surprising: "Singulier phénomène! C'est au moment où l'Empire se brise et disparaît, que l'Eglise chrétienne se rallie et se forme définitivement. L'unité politique périt, l'unité religieuse s'élève" (*Histoire de la civilisation en France*, éd. 1874, i, 339). He does not recognise the case as one of cause and effect. Of course, the fall of the State is not necessary to set up new combinations. It suffices that men should be without political influence or national consciousness—*e.g.*, the secret societies of China in recent times.

sectarian cults had begun to compete successfully with the public or civic. They did so by appealing more freshly and directly to the growths of emotional feeling (the outcome in part of physiological modification)<sup>1</sup> which no longer found outlet in primary forms, such as warfare and primitive revelry. After having themselves consented in times of panic to the introduction of several cults in the name of the public interest, the ruling classes, instinctively conservative by the law of their existence, take fright at the startling popularity of the unofficial Bacchic mysteries, and decide to stamp out the movement.<sup>2</sup> But the attempt is futile, the causal conditions remaining; and soon Judaism, Osirianism, Mithraism, the worships of Attis, Adonis, Bacchus, Isis, Serapis, all more or less bound up with divination and sorcery, make way in the disintegrating body politic.<sup>3</sup> The wheel of social evolution had, so to speak, "gone full circle" since the first Roman *curia*, the basis of the State, subsisted as groups with their special *sacra*, finding in these their reason for cohering. Decadent Rome, all other principles of subordinate cohesion having been worked out, resolves itself once more into groups similarly motivated. But the principle is newly conditioned, and the *sacra* now begin the struggle for existence among themselves. The rise of Christianity is simply the success of a system which, on a good economic foundation, copied from that of the Jewish synagogues, assimilates the main attractions of similar worships, while availing itself of exoteric and democratic as well as esoteric methods. It thus necessarily gains ground among the multitude, rich as well as poor;<sup>4</sup> and its ultimate acceptance by the autocrat was due to the very exclusiveness which at first made it intolerable. Once diffused widely enough to set up the largest religious organisation in the Empire, it became the best possible instrument of centralisation and control, and as such it was accepted and employed.<sup>5</sup>

And now again we see how inevitably the force of attraction correlates with the force of repulsion. The new channels of the spirit of union, being dug not by reason but by ignorance, become

<sup>1</sup> An inquiry, or series of inquiries, into the physiological side of social and political development is obviously necessary, and must be made before sociology can on this side attain much scientific precision. I know, however, no general treatise on the subject except an old essay on *Changes Produced in the Nervous System by Civilisation*, by Dr. Robert Verity (2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1839). This is suggestive, but, of course, tentative. Cp. Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, Eng. trans. i, 298-99.

<sup>2</sup> Livy, xxxix, 8-18. See below, pt. iii, ch. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Salverte, *De la Civilisation*, p. 52.

<sup>4</sup> The subject is discussed in the author's essay on Mithraism in *Pagan Christs*.

<sup>5</sup> M. Hochart (*Études d'histoire religieuse*, 1890, ch. ix) argues that Constantine was never really converted to Christianity; and this is perhaps the best explanation of his long postponement of his baptism.

new channels for the reverse flow of the spirit of strife; and as sectarian zeal spreads, in the absence of openings, good or bad, for public spirit, there arise new forms of domestic hate and struggle. Crude religious fervours, excluding, or arising in lack of, the play of the saner and higher forms of thought and feeling, beget crude antipathies;<sup>1</sup> and Christianity leads back to bloody strifes and seditions such as had not been seen since the fall of the Republic. There is not intellectuality enough to raise men above this new superinduced barbarism of ignorant instinct; half of the old Christendom, disintegrated like the old politics, is overrun by a more robust barbarism that adopts a simpler creed; and the new barbaric Christendom exhibits in its turn all the modes of operation of the biological forces that had been seen in the old.

## § 5

Thus far we have considered Roman evolution in terms of a moral estimate of the reactions of classes. But lest we lose sight of the principle of total causation, it is fitting to restate the process in terms of that conception, thus explaining it non-morally. We may view Rome, to begin with, as a case of the unique aggrandisement of a State in virtue of fit conditions and institutions. Thus (1) the comparatively uncommercial situation of the early Latins, leaving them, beyond cattle-breeding and agriculture, no occupation save war for surplus energy, and no readier way of acquiring wealth;<sup>2</sup> (2) the physical collocation of a group of seven defensive hills, so close that they must be held by a federated group;<sup>3</sup> (3) the ethnic collocation of a set of tribe groups of nearly equal vigour and ardour, strengthening each other's sinews by constant struggling; (4) the creation (not prescient, but purely as a provision against kingship) of the peculiar institution of the annual consulate,<sup>4</sup> securing a perpetuity of motive to conquest and a continuous flow of administrative energy;<sup>5</sup> (5) the peculiar need, imposed by this very habit of

<sup>1</sup> Compare episodes in the history of the Salvation Army in England (1890), where that body was seen prepared to practise continuous fighting. It had no thought of "Christian" conciliation.

<sup>2</sup> Various causes, the chief being probably Greek piracy, had caused in pre-Roman Etruria a decay of the original seaports. See Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, i, 273.

<sup>3</sup> On this cp. Ihne, *Early Rome*, p. 6; and Mommsen, ch. iv.

<sup>4</sup> This may have been set up in imitation of the Carthaginian institution of *Suffetae*, which would be well known to the Etruscans of the monarchic period, who had much traffic with Carthage. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 701. But it may also be explained by the simple fact that the original army was divided into two legions (*id.* ii, 812).

<sup>5</sup> On this see Montesquieu, *Grandeur des Romains*, c. 1. No one has elucidated so much of Roman history in so little space as Montesquieu has done in this little book, which Buckle rightly set above the *Esprit des Lois*. (Cp. the eulogy of Taine, in his *Tite-Live*.) Its real insight may perhaps best be appreciated by comparing it with the modern work of M. Charles Gouraud, *Histoire des Causes de la Grandeur de l'Angleterre* (1856), in which it will be hard to find any specification of real causes.

all-round warfare, for accommodation between the ruling and ruled classes, and for the safeguarding of the interests of the latter by laws and franchises; (6) the central position of Rome in Italy, enabling her to subdue it piecemeal; and finally (7) the development by all these means of a specialist aristocracy, habitually trained to administration<sup>1</sup>—all these genetic conditions combined to build up the most remarkable military empire the world has ever seen. They obtrude, it is clear, half of the explanation of the fact that the Romans rose to empire where the much more early civilised Greek cities of Italy did not.

Of the latter fact we still receive the old explanation that it came of "the habit, which had ever been the curse of Hellenism, of jealous separation and frequent war between town and town, as well as internal feuds in the several cities themselves."<sup>2</sup> But this is clearly *no vera causa*, as these symptoms are duplicated in the history of Rome itself. The determining forces must, then, be looked for in the special conditions. The Greeks, indeed, brought with them the tradition of the separate City-State; but just as the cities remained independent in Greece by reason of natural conditions,<sup>3</sup> so the Greek cities of Italy remained isolated and stationary at a certain strength, because their basis and way of life were commercial, so that while they restricted each other's growth or dominance they were in times of peace mutually nutritive. They wanted customers, not plunder. For the Romans plunder was the first social need after agriculture, and as they began they continued. When Jugurtha learned that anything could be had of the Romans for gold, he had but read an open secret.

Of course, the functions that were originally determined by external conditions came in time to be initial causes—the teeth and claws, so to speak, fixing the way of life for the body politic. The upper-class Romans became, as it were, the experts, the specialists of war and empire and administration. Until they became wholly demoralised by habitual plunder, they showed, despite their intense

<sup>1</sup> The specification of this detail is one of the items of real explanation in Mr. Warde Fowler's scholarly and sympathetic account of the development of the Roman City-State (work cited, c. viii). He credits the Romans with an "innate genius" for combination and constitutionalism as compared with the Greeks, not noticing the fact that Roman unity was in the main a matter of conquest of non-Romans by Romans; that the conquest was furthered by the Roman institutions; that the institutions were first, so to speak, fortuitously shaped in favour of systematic war and conquest by the revolt against kingship; that war and conquest, again, were taken to almost inevitably as the main road to wealth; and that the accommodations of later times were forced on the upper classes by the career of warfare, to which domestic peace was indispensable. (Cp. Hegel as to the element of coercion and patrician policy in the Roman social system. *Philos. der Gesch.*, Theil iii, Abschnitt i, Kap. i.) See below, § 6, as to the very different conditions of the Greek City-States.

<sup>2</sup> E. S. Shuckburgh, *History of Rome*, 1894, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> See below, ch. iii, *end*; ch. iv, § 2 (c).

primeval superstition of citizenship,<sup>1</sup> a degree of sagacity in the conciliation of their defeated rivals which was a main cause of their being able to hold out against Hannibal, and which contrasts markedly with the oppressive and self-defeating policy of imperial Carthage, Athens, and Sparta. Their tradition in part was still that of conquering herdsmen, not wholly turned into mere exploiters of humanity. Pitted against any monarch, they were finally invincible, because a still-growing class supplied their administrators, as the swarming provinces supplied their soldiers, and because for all alike war meant plunder and new lands, as well as glory. Pitted against a republic like Carthage, even when its armies were led by a man of genius, they were still insuppressible, inasmuch as Carthage was a community of traders employing mercenaries, where Rome was a community in arms, producing generals as Carthage produced merchants. Mithridates failed in turn, as Hannibal failed. The genius of one commander, exploiting passive material, could not avail against the accumulated faculty for organisation in the still self-renewing Roman patriciate.<sup>2</sup>

Carthage had, in fact, preceded Rome on the line of the evolution of class egoism. Herself an expression of the pressure of the social problem in the older Semitic world, she began as a colony, staved off domestic strife by colonies, by empire, and by doles,<sup>3</sup> and was already near the economic stage reached only centuries later by the Roman Empire. Save for Rome, her polity might have endured on the imperialist basis for centuries; but, as it was, it was socially exhausted relatively to the task and the danger, depending as it did on hired foreign troops and coerced allies. It is idle to speak, as men still do, of Hannibal's stay in Capua as a fatal mistake.<sup>4</sup> Had Hannibal taken Rome, the ultimate triumph of the Romans would have been just as certain. Their State was bound to outlast the other, so long as it maintained to any extent its old basis of a fecund rural population of free cultivators, supplying a zealous soldiery, headed by a specialised class equally dependent on conquest for all advancement. For the trading Carthaginians, war was, beyond a certain point, a mere act of self-defence; they could not have held and administered Italy had they taken it. The supreme general could last only one lifetime; the nation of warriors

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Livy, viii, 3-5. <sup>2</sup> Cp. Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, Eng. trans. i, 240.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Aristotle, *Politics*, ii, 11; vi, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Already in Montesquieu's *Grandeur des Romains* it is pointed out that for Hannibal's soldiers, loaded with plunder, anywhere was Capua. Montesquieu rightly observes that the stock phrase on that head is one of the things everybody says because it has once been said. And it is repeated still.

still yielded a succession of captains, always learning something more of war, and raising the standard of capacity as the progress of machinery widens the scope of all engineers.

The author of a recent and meritorious *History of Rome*, Mr. Shuckburgh, is satisfied to quote (p. 231) from Polybius, as explaining the fall of Carthage, the generalisation that "Italians as a nation are by nature superior to Phœnicians and Libyans, both in strength of body and courage of soul"; and to add: "That is the root of the matter, from which all else is a natural growth." This only leaves us asking: "What was the natural root of the alleged physiological superiority?" There must have been reasons. If they were "racial" or climatic, whence the later implied degeneration of the Romans in body or soul, or both? We are driven to the explanation lying in polity and institutions, which it should have been Mr. Shuckburgh's special aim to give, undertaking as he does to deal with "the state of the countries conquered by the Romans." And such explanations are actually offered by Polybius (vi, 53).

## § 6

And yet the deterioration of the Roman State is visibly as sure a sequence as its progress. Nothing that men might then have proposed could save it. In Cicero's day the Senate had become a den of thieves. The spectacle of the wealth of Lucullus, taken in Napoleonic fashion from the opulent East, set governor after governor elsewhere upon a course of ruthless extortion which depraved Rome as infallibly as it devastated the subject States.

Roman exploitation of conquest began in the relatively moderate fashion of self-supporting victors willing to live and let live. Sicily was at first (210) taxed by Marcellus in a fashion of which Livy makes boast;<sup>1</sup> and after the suppression of the slaves' revolt in 131 B.C., the system was further reformed. Seventeen towns, retaining their lands, paid a fixed tax to the Republic; eight were immune, save for an annual contribution of 800,000 *modius* of wheat for free doles in Rome; and the rest of the island paid a tenth of all produce, as under Hiero.<sup>2</sup> Later, the realms of the kings of Macedonia, Pergamos, and Bithynia, and the lands of Cyrene and Cyprus, were made the public patrimony of the conquering State. Sardinia, Spain, North Africa, and Asia were in general taxed a tenth of their produce of all kinds. As the exploitation went on, individual governors added to all this regular taxation a vast irregular plunder

<sup>1</sup> Livy, xxv, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *In Verrem*, iii, 6; iv, 65; v, 21, 22.

on their own account; and nearly every attempt to impeach them was foiled by their accomplices in the Senate.<sup>1</sup> Verres in Sicily, Fonteius in Southern Gaul, Piso in Macedonia, Appius in Cilicia, Flaccus in Asia Minor, wrung infinite gold and loot immeasurable from the victim races by every device of rapacious brigandage, trampling on every semblance of justice, and then devised the ironic infamy of despatching corrupted or terrorised deputations of citizens to Rome to testify to the beneficence of their rule.<sup>2</sup>

It was a riot of robbery in which no public virtue could live. To moralise on the scarcity of Catos is an ill way of spending time if it be not recognised that Catos had latterly become as impossible as eaters of acorns in the upper grades of the ever-plundering State. Cato himself is a product of the last vestiges of the stage before universal conquest; and he begins to show in his own later years all the symptoms of the period of lawless plutocracy. To yearn for a series of such figures is to ask that men shall be capable of holding doggedly by an ethic of honest barbarism while living the lives of pirates and slavers, according no moral sympathy to the larger world of aliens and slaves, yet cherishing a high public spirit for the small world of the patrician State. The man himself was a mere moral anomaly; and in Cato the Younger, dreaming to the last of a loyal republican life, but always ready at his fellow-citizens' behest to go and beat down the rights or liberties of any other State,<sup>3</sup> we have the paternal bias reproduced in an incurable duality. He sought for honour among thieves, himself being one. Concerning the Catonic attitude towards the "degeneration" of Roman patrician life in the age of conquest, it has been truly said that "the policy of shameless selfishness which was pursued by the Roman Senate during this period, and reached its climax in their abominable conduct towards the unhappy, prostrate city of Carthage—the frivolous wars, tending to nothing but aggrandisement and enrichment, waged by Rome continuously after the second Punic War—destroyed the old Roman character<sup>4</sup> far more effectually than Grecian art and philosophy could ever have done. Henceforth there was a fearful increase in internal corruption, immorality,

<sup>1</sup> Sallust, *Bell. Jugurth.*, c. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *In Verrem*, iii, 20, 38, 81; v, 34; *In Pisonem*, 34-36; *Pro Flacco*, 12; *Pro Fonteio*, 5; *Pro lege Manilia*, 13. See the record in Dureau de la Malle, *Econ. polit. des Romains*, 1840, vol. ii, liv. iv, ch. 8. Cp. Ferrero, i, 113-14, 183.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. Long, *Decline of the Roman Republic*, ii, 78-81, and Merivale, *General History of Rome*, pp. 299-300, as to the plunder and annexation of Cyprus. "Whether the annals of British India contain so foul a crime," writes Long, "I leave those to determine who know more of Indian affairs than I do."

<sup>4</sup> An admission that national "character" is not a connatural or fixed bias, but a simple function of variables.



bribery, an insatiable eagerness for riches, disregarding everything else and impudently setting aside laws, orders of the Senate, and legal proceedings, making war unauthorised, celebrating triumphs without permission, plundering the provinces, robbing the allies."<sup>1</sup> And the ideal of conquest inspired it all.

We have only to ask ourselves, What was the administrative class to do? in order to see the fatality of its course. The State must needs go on seeking conquest, by reason alike of the lower-class and the upper-class problem. The administrators must administer, or rust. The moneyed men must have fresh plunder, fresh sources of profit. The proletaries must be either fed or set fighting, else they would clamour and revolt. And as the frontiers of resistance receded, and new war was more and more a matter of far-reaching campaigns, the large administering class at home, men of action devoid of progressive culture, ran to brutal vice and frantic sedition as inevitably as returned sailors to debauch; while the distant leader, passing years of camp life at the head of professional troops, became more and more surely a power extraneous to the Republic. When a State comes to depend for its coherence on a standing army, the head of the army inevitably becomes the head of the State. The Republic passed, as a matter of course, into the Empire, with its army of mercenaries, the senatorial class having outlived the main conditions of its health and energetic stability; the autocracy at once began to delete the remaining brains by banishing or slaying all who openly criticised it;<sup>2</sup> and the Empire, even while maintaining its power by the spell of its great traditional organisation, ran through stage after stage of civic degeneration under good and bad emperors alike, simply because it had and could have no intellectual life commensurate with its physical scope. Its function involved moral atrophy. It needs the strenuous empiricism of a Mommsen to find ground for comfort in the apparition of a Cæsar in a State that must needs worsen under Cæsars even more profoundly than it did before its malady gave Cæsar his opportunity.

Not that the Empire could of itself have died as an organism. There are no such deaths in politics; and the frequent use of the phrase testifies to a hallucination that must greatly hamper political science. The ancient generalisation<sup>3</sup> as to the youth, maturity, and decrepitude and death of States is true only in respect of their

<sup>1</sup> Teuffel, *Hist. of Roman Literature*, ed. Schwabe, Eng. trans. i, 122 (§ 91).

<sup>2</sup> See the process traced in W. A. Schmidt's *Geschichte der Denk und Glaubensfreiheit im ersten Jahrhundert der Kaiserherrschaft und des Christenthums*, 1847.

<sup>3</sup> Polybius, vi, 51. See below, ch. iv, § 1 (11).

variations of relative military and economic strength, which follow no general rule.

The comparison of the life of political bodies to that of individuals was long ago rightly rejected as vicious by Volney (*Leçons d'Histoire*, 1794, 6ième Séance), who insisted that political destruction occurred only through vices of polity, inasmuch as all polities have been framed with one of the three intentions of *increasing, maintaining, or overthrowing*. The explanation is obscure, but the negation of the old formula is just. The issue was taken up and pronounced upon to the same effect in the closing chapter of C. A. Walckenaer's *Essai sur l'histoire de l'espèce humaine*, 1798. (Professor Flint, in his *History of the Philosophy of History*, cites Walckenaer, but does not mention Volney's *Leçons*.) Le Play, in modern times, has put the truth clearly and strongly: "At no epoch of its history is a people fatally doomed either to progress or decline. It does not necessarily pass, like an individual, from youth to old age" (cited by H. Higgs in *American Quarterly Journal of Economics*, July, 1890, p. 428). It is to be regretted that Dr. Draper should have adhered to the fallacy of the necessary decay and death of nations in his suggestive work on the *Intellectual Development of Europe* (ed. 1875, i, 13-20; ii, 393-98). He was doubtless influenced by the American tendency to regard Europe and Asia as groups of "old countries." The word "decay" may of course be used with the implication of mere "sickness," as by Lord Mahon in the opening sentence of his *Life of Belisarius*; but even in that use it gives a lead to fallacy.

Had there been no swarming and aggressive barbarians, standing to later Rome as Rome had done to Carthage—collectively exigent of moral equality as Romans had once been, and therefore conjunctly mighty as against the morally etiolated Italians—the Western Roman Empire would have gone on just as the Eastern<sup>1</sup> so long did, just as China has so long done—would have subsisted with little or no progress, most factors of progress being eliminated from its sphere. It ought now to be unnecessary to point out that Christianity was no such factor, but rather the reverse, as the history of Byzantium so thoroughly proves. No Christian writer of antiquity, save perhaps Augustine<sup>2</sup> in a moment of moral aspiration, shows any perception of the political causation of the

<sup>1</sup> I am aware that Mr. Bury protests against this division; but his own difficulty in calling the middle (Byzantine) Empire the "later Roman Empire," while implicitly accepting the "Holy" Empire as *another* "later Roman Empire," is the best proof that the established nomenclature is the most convenient. Nobody is misled by it. A compromise might perhaps be made on the form "Greek Empire," contended for by M. Sathes (*Monumenta Historiæ Hellenicæ*, i, pref. p. 5), following on M. Rambaud.

<sup>2</sup> As cited below, pt. v, ch. i.

decay and fall of the Empire.<sup>1</sup> The forces of intellectual progress that did arise and collapse in the decline and the Dark Ages were extra-Christian heretical forces—Sabellian, Arian, Pelagian, anti-ritualistic, anti-monastic, Iconoclastic. These once deleted, Christianity was no more a progressive force among the new peoples than it was among the old; and the later European progress demonstrably came from wholly different causes—new empire, forcing partial peace; Saracen contact, bringing physics, chemistry, and mathematics; new discovery, making new commerce; recovery of pagan lore, making new speculation; printing, making books abundant; gunpowder, making arms a specialty; and the fresh competition and disruption of States, setting up fruitful differences, albeit also preparing new wars. To try to trace these causes in detail would be to attempt a complete sociological sketch of European history, a task far beyond the scope of the present work; though we shall later make certain special surveys that may suffice to illustrate the general law. In the meantime, the foregoing and other bird's-eye views of some ancient developments may illustrate those of modern times.

<sup>1</sup> Salvian, for instance, sees in the barbarian irruption a punishment of Christian sins; he never dreams of asking the cause of the Christian and pre-Christian corruption. Prudentius, again, is a thorough imperialist. See the critique and citations of M. Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*, ii, 136-141, 407. Origen had set the note a century before Constantine (*Contra Celsum*, viii, 68-72).

### CHAPTER III

## GREEK POLITICAL EVOLUTION

THE politico-economic history of Greece has been less cleared up than that of Rome, by reason not only of the greater complexity of the problem, but of the predominance of literary specialism in Greek studies.

The modern Greek historian, Paparrigopoulo, has published in French an *Histoire de la Civilisation hellénique* (Paris, 1878), which condenses his learned Greek work in five volumes; but the general view, though sometimes suggestive, is both scanty and superficial as regards ancient Greek history, and runs to an unprofitable effort at showing the "unity" of all Hellenic history, Pagan and Christian, in terms of an assumed conception of Hellenic character.

The posthumous *Griechische Culturgeschichte* of Jakob Burckhardt (1898) throws little light on social evolution. Trustworthy, weighty, and lucid, like all Burckhardt's work, it is rather a survey of Greek moral conditions than a study of social development, thus adding something of synthesis to the previous scholarly literature on the subject without reducing the phenomena to any theory of causation. It includes, however, good studies of vital social developments, such as slavery, to which Grote and Thirlwall paid surprisingly little attention, and which Mahaffy handles inadequately. This is also to be studied in W. R. Patterson's *Nemesis of Nations* (1907)—with some caution as regards the political generalisations.

Since the first edition of the present work there has appeared, in Dr. G. B. Grundy's *Thucydides and the History of his Age* (1911) a new recognition of the fundamental character of economic conditions in Greek as in other history. Dr. Grundy, finding no academic precedent for his sociological method, has urged as new truths propositions which for economic historians are or should have been axioms. The result, however, is a really stimulating and valuable presentment of Greek history in terms of causal forces.

The chapters on Greece in Dr. Cunningham's *Western Civilisation* (1898), though they contain not a few explanations of Greek culture-phenomena on the old lines, in terms of themselves, are helpful for the purposes of the present inquiry,

since they really study causation, as do Meyer's *Wirtschaftliche Entwicklung des Alterthums* and some other recent German treatises, of which Dr. Cunningham makes use.

Much use, however, remains to be made of these and previous expert studies. Boeckh's great work on the *Public Economy of the Athenians*, which, though containing economic absurdities, hardly deserves even in that regard the strictures passed on it by the first English translator (Sir G. C. Lewis, 1828; 2nd ed. 1842; superior American ed. tr. from 2nd German ed. by A. Lamb, 1857), has not very fruitfully affected the later historians proper. The third German edition by Fränkel, 1886, typifies the course of scholarship. It corrects details and adds a mass of *apparatus criticus* equal in bulk to the whole original work, but supplies no new ideas. Heeren's section on Greece in his *Ideen*, etc., translated as a *Sketch of the Political History of Ancient Greece* (1829), and also as part of Heeren's *Thoughts on the Politics*, etc., of the *Ancient World*, is too full of early misconceptions to be well worth returning to, save for its general view. On the other hand, Grote's great *History of Greece*, though unmatched in its own species, and though a far more philosophical performance than that of Mitford (which Professor Mahaffy and the King of Greece agree in preferring for its doctrine), is substantially a narrative and critical history on the established lines, and does not aim at being more than incidentally sociological; and that of Bishop Thirlwall, though in parts superior in this regard, is substantially in similar case. At several points, indeed, Grote truly illuminates the sociological problem—notably in his view of the reactions between the Greek drama and the Greek life. Of the German general histories, that of Holm (Eng. tr. 4 vols. 1894–98) is a trustworthy and judicious embodiment of the latest research, but has no special intellectual weight, and is somewhat needlessly prolix. The history of Dr. Evelyn Abbott, so far as it has gone, has fully equal value in most respects; but both leave the need for a sociological history unsatisfied. Mr. Warde Fowler's *City State of the Greeks and Romans* (1893) points in the right direction, but needs following up.

Apart from Burckhardt and Cunningham, the nearest approach yet made to a sociological study of Greek civilisation is the series of works on Greek social history by Professor Mahaffy (*Social Life in Greece; Greek Life and Thought from the Age of Alexander to the Roman Conquest; The Greek World under Roman Sway; Problems of Greek History; and Survey of Greek Civilisation*). These learned and brilliant volumes have great value as giving more vivid ideas of Greek life than are conveyed by any of the regular histories, and as constantly stimulating reflection; but they lack method, omit much, and abound regrettably in capricious and inconsistent dicta. The *Survey* is disappointing as emphasising rather than making good the defects

of the previous treatises. G. F. Hertzberg's *Geschichte Griechenlands unter der Herrschaft der Römer* (1866), and indeed all his works on Greek history, are always worth consulting.

Some help may be had from the volume on Greece in the *Industrial History of the Free Nations* by W. T. M'Cullagh (1846); but that fails to throw any light on what should have been its primary problem, the rise of Greek industry, and is rather sentimental than scientific in spirit. For later Greece, Finlay (*History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans*, revised ed. 7 vols. 1877) becomes illuminating by his interest in economic law, though he holds uncritically enough by some now exploded principles, and exhibits some religious prejudice. His somewhat entangled opening sections express his difficulties as a pioneer in sociological history—difficulties only too abundantly apparent in the following pages. Professor J. B. Bury's *History of the Later Roman Empire* (2 vols. 1889) is an admirable work; but it does not attempt, save incidentally, to supersede Finlay in matters economic.

### § 1

The political history of ancient Greece, similarly summarised, will serve perhaps even better the purpose of illuminating later evolution. That history has served historian after historian as a means of modern polemic. The first considerable English historians of Greece, Gillies and Mitford, pointed to the evil fate of Greek democracy as a conclusive argument against countenancing democracy now; never stopping to ask whether ancient monarchies had fared any better than the democracies. And it is perfectly true that present-day democracies will tend to bad fortune just as did the ancient unless they bottom themselves more firmly and guide themselves by a deeper political science. It will not suffice that we have rejected the foundation of slavery, on which all the Greek polities rested. The strifes between the demos and the aristocracy in the Greek City-States would have arisen just as surely, though more slowly, if the demos, instead of being an upper-grade populace owning slaves, had included the whole mass of the artisan and serving class.<sup>1</sup> Where population increases at anything like the natural animal rate, and infanticide is not overwhelming, poverty must either force emigration or breed strife between the "have-nots" and the "haves," barring such continuous stress of war as suffices at once to thin numbers and yield conquerors the lands of the slain

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Mr. Godkin, *Problems of Modern Democracy*, 1896, pp. 327-28, as to the recent rise of class hatred in the United States.

losers. During some centuries the pressure was in part relieved by colonisation, as had already happened among the Phœnicians;<sup>1</sup> the colonies themselves in turn, with their more rapid evolution, developing the inevitable strife of rich and poor more quickly and more violently than the mother cities.<sup>2</sup> Among these, it was when that relief seemed to be exhausted that strife became most dangerous, being obscurely perceived to be a means to advancement and prosperity for individuals, as well as for the State which could extort tribute or plunder from the others. War, however, limits agriculture, so that food supply is kept proportionately small; and with peace the principle of population soon overtakes lost ground; so that, though the Greek States like others tended to gain in solidarity under the stimulus of foreign war, the pressure of poverty was always breeding fresh division.

If we take up Grecian history after the settling down of the prehistoric invasions, which complicated the ordinary process of rupture and fission, that process is seen occurring so frequently, and in so many different States, that there can be no question as to the presence of a general sociological law, not to be counteracted in any community save by a radical change of conditions. Everywhere the phenomena are broadly the same. The upper class ("upper" in virtue either of primary advantages or of special faculty for acquiring wealth) attains to providing for its future by holding multitudes of poorer citizens in debt—the ancient adumbration of the modern developments of landlordism, national debts, and large joint-stock enterprises, which yield inheritable incomes. In early times, probably, debt led as often to adult enslavement in Greece as in Rome;<sup>3</sup> but in a world of small and warring City-States, shaken by domestic division, constantly making slaves by capture and purchase, and always exposed to the risk of their insurrection, this was too dangerous a course to be long persisted in,<sup>4</sup> and the creditor was led to press his mortgaged debtor in other

<sup>1</sup> Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 142.

<sup>2</sup> "Freedom flourishes in colonies. Ancient usages cannot be preserved.....as at home. ....Where every man lives by the labour of his hands, equality arises, even where it did not originally exist" (Heeren, *Pol. Hist. of Greece*, Eng. tr. p. 88. Cp. Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 99). Note, in this connection, the whole development of Magna Græcia. Sybaris was "perhaps in 510 B.C. the greatest of all Grecian cities" (Grote, part ii, ch. 37). As to the early strifes in the colonies, cp. Meyer, ii, 681.

<sup>3</sup> Such was the legal course of things before Solon (Grote, ii, 465-66; Ingram, *History of Slavery*, p. 16; cp. Schömann, *Griechische Alterthümer*, 2te Aufl. i, 341; Aristotle, *Polity of Athens*, cc. 2, 4, 6; Wachsmuth, *Histor. Antiq. of the Greeks*, § 33, Eng. tr. 1837, i, 244).

<sup>4</sup> Cp. Schömann, i, 114; Burckhardt, *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, i, 159; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, ii, 642. In the historic period the majority of slaves are said to have been of non-Greek race (Schömann, i, 112; Burckhardt, i, 158). But this is said without much evidence. The custom was to kill adult male captives and enslave the women and children. Men captives who were spared by the Athenians were put to slavery in the mines (Burckhardt, citing Polyænus, II, i, 26).

ways. The son or the daughter was sold to pay the father's dues, or to serve in perpetual payment of interest; and the cultivator's share was ever at the lowest point. The pressure increases till the mass of debtors are harassed into insurrection, or are used by an adventurer to establish himself as despot.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, in later days, the documents of debt are publicly destroyed;<sup>2</sup> sometimes the land is divided afresh.<sup>3</sup> Landholders burdened with debt would vote for the former course and resist the latter;<sup>4</sup> and as that was clamoured for at Athens in early times, it may be presumed that in some places it was resorted to. Sometimes even a refunding of interest would be insisted on.<sup>5</sup> Naturally such means of rectification availed only for a moment; the despot stood a fair chance of being assassinated; the triumphant demos would be caballed against; the exiled nobles, with the cold rage of Theognis in their hearts, would return; and the last state of the people would be worse than the first; till again slackened vigilance on one side, and intolerable hardship on the other, renewed the cycle of violent change.

In the course of ages there was perforce some approach to equipoise;<sup>6</sup> but it was presumably at the normal cost of a definite abasement of the populace;<sup>7</sup> and it was by a famous stroke of statecraft that Athens was able so to solve her first great crisis as to make possible some centuries of expanding democratic life. The name of Solon is associated with an early crisis (594 B.C.) in which debt and destitution among the Athenian demos (then still for the most part small cultivators, for whom the city was a refuge fortress, but as a rule no longer owning the land they tilled) brought matters to the same point as was marked in Rome by the Secession of the Plebs. The Athenian oligarchy was very much like the Roman; and when the two sides agreed to call in Solon as arbitrator it was with a fairly general expectation that he would take the opportunity to become tyrant. The people knew him to be opposed to plutocratic tyranny; the nobles and traders, anxious for security, thought him sure to be their friend; and both sorts had small objection to such a one as "despot." But Solon, a noble of moderate means, who had gained prestige in the wars of Athens with her neighbour,

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Telys at Sybaris, Theagenes at Megara, and Kypselus at Corinth, in the sixth century B.C.; and Klearchus at Herakleia in the fourth (Grote, ii, 414, 418; iv, 95; x, 394). Compare the appeals made to Solon by both parties to make himself despot (Plutarch, *Solon*, c. 14).

<sup>2</sup> As at Sparta under Agis IV (Plutarch, *Agis*, c. 13; Thirlwall, c. lxii, 1st ed. viii, 142). The claims were restored at Agis's death (*id.* p. 163).

<sup>3</sup> As by Cleomenes, soon after (*id.* p. 164).

<sup>4</sup> *E.g.* Agesilaus in the same crisis.

<sup>5</sup> See Grote, ii, 381, as to the general development.

<sup>6</sup> But *cp.* Grote, ii, 420, as to the case of Megara.

<sup>7</sup> As at Megara (Grote, ii, 418).



Megara, and some knowledge of life as a travelling trader, brought to his problem a higher vision than that of a Roman patrician, and doubtless had a less barbarous stock to deal with. Later ages, loosely manipulating tradition, ascribed to him a variety of laws that he cannot have made;<sup>1</sup> but all the records concur in crediting him with a "Seisachtheia," a "shaking-off-of-burdens," and a healing of the worst of the open wounds of the body politic. All existing mortgages were cancelled; all enslavement for debt was abolished; Athenians who had been sold into alien slavery were bought back (probably by a contribution from relieved debtors<sup>2</sup>); and the coinage was recast—whether or not by way of reducing State payments is not clear.

Grote (ii, 471), while eulogising Solon's plan as a whole, accepts the view that he debased the money-standard; while Boeck (*Metrologie*, ch. 15) holds him to have further altered the weights and measures. For the former view there is clear support in Plutarch (*Solon*, c. 15), and for the latter in the lately recovered Aristotelian *Polity of Athens* (c. 10). But when Messrs. Mitchell and Caspari, in their abridgment of Grote (p. 45), declare that the latter document makes clear that the coinage measure was solely for the promotion of trade, and entirely independent of the Seisachtheia (so also Bury, p. 183), they unduly stress the evidence. The document, which is hardly Aristotelian in structure, proceeds doubtfully on tradition and not upon record; and there may be some truth in the old view of Androtion (Plut. c. 15), that Solon only reduced the rate of interest while altering the money-standard. The point is really obscure. Cp. Abbott, *Hist. of Greece*, i, 407-8; Grote, ii, 472-76; Meyer, ii, 651-52; Cox, *Gen. Hist. of Greece*, 2nd ed. pp. 76-79. So far are we from exact knowledge that it is still a moot point whether the tenant *Hektemorioi* or "Sixth-men" paid or received a sixth part of their total product. Cp. Mitchell and Caspari, abr. of Grote, p. 14, note; Cox, *Gen. Hist. of Greece*, 2nd ed. p. 77; Bury, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. 1906, p. 181; Meyer, ii, 642; Abbott, *Hist. of Greece*, i, 289.

While the burdened peasants and labourers were thus ostensibly given a new economic outlook on life, they were further humanised by being given a share in the common polity. To the Ecclesia or "Congregation" of the people Solon gave the power of electing the public magistrates; and by way of controlling somewhat the power of the Areopagus or Senate, he established a "pre-considering" Council or "Lower House" of Four Hundred, chosen from all save

<sup>1</sup> Grote, ii, 490-94.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Meyer, ii, 651.

the poor class, thus giving the State "two anchors." And though the executive was in the hands of the aristocracy, subject only to popular election, the burdens of the community were soundly adjusted by a new or improved classification of citizens according to their incomes ("timocracy"), which worked out somewhat as a graduated income-tax, whether by way of a money-rate or in respect of their share in military duties and public "liturgies," which had to be maintained by the richer citizens.

As to this vexed question, see Boeckh, *Staatsaushaltung der Athener*, B. iv, c. 5 (Grote's ref. wrong), as expounded and checked by Grote (ii, 485-88). Messrs. Mitchell and Caspari, in their abridgment of Grote (pp. 22, 49, *notes*), reject the whole interpretation (which is reached by a combination of ancient data, Plutarch [c. 18] telling nothing as to taxation). But they adduce only the negative argument that "as we know that Peisistratos, the champion of the poorer classes, subsequently levied a uniform tax of five or ten per cent., it is absurd to suppose that the highly democratic principle of a sliding-scale had been previously adopted by Solon. Peisistratos would not have dared to attempt a reaction from a sliding-scale income-tax to a sort of poll-tax." To this it might be replied that the "flat rate" of Peisistratos—which ought to modify the conception of him as the "friend of the poor"—may have been an addition to previous taxes; and that the division of citizens into income-classes must have stood for *something* in the way of burdens. The solution would seem to be that these were not regular money taxes. "Regular direct taxes were as little known in free Athens as in any other ancient State; they are the marks of absolute monarchy, of unfreedom" (Meyer, ii, 644). "Seemingly, it was not until later times that this distribution of classes served the purposes of taxation" (Maisch, *Manual of Greek Antiquities*, Eng. tr. p. 40). But already the cost of certain public services, classed under the head of "liturgies," was laid upon the rich; and there may well have been a process of collective contribution towards these at a time when very rich citizens cannot have been numerous.

Doubtless the graduated income-tax would have been unworkable in a systematic way, though in the "Servian" timocracy of early Rome a *tributum* seems to have been imposed on the classes (Livy, ii, 9).

At yet other points Solon prepared the ground for the democratic structure of the later Athenian polity. By overthrowing the sacrosanct power of the aristocratic priestly houses, who had aggrandised themselves by it like the nobles of early Rome, he prevented the growth of a hierocracy. By constituting out of all the citizens,

including the Thetes or peasant cultivators, a kind of universal jury-court, out of which the panels of judges were to be taken by lot, he put the people on the way of becoming a court of appeal against the upper-class archons, who recruited the Areopagus. "The constitution of the judicial courts (*Heliaia*) out of the whole people was the secret of democracy which Solon discovered. It is his title to fame in the history of the growth of popular government in Europe."<sup>1</sup>

N.B.

The whole reform was indeed a great achievement; and so far definitive that from that time forward Athens needed no further resort to "Seisachtheia" or to alteration of the money-standard. Solon had in fact eliminated the worst disruptive force at work in the community—the enslavement of the debtor; a reform so radical,<sup>2</sup> when considered as one man's work, that to note its moral limits may seem to imply blindness to its value. Henceforth, on the lines of the democracy which he made possible, Athenians were so far homogeneous that their slaves were aliens. Beyond that point they could not rise; after Solon, as before, they were at daggers drawn with neighbouring Statelets, and to the end it remained tolerable to them to enslave the men of other Greek-speaking communities. Floated over the first reef by Solon, they never found a pilot to clear the second—the principle of group-enmity. Upon that the Hellenic civilisation finally foundered.

Even in respect of what he achieved, Solon received but a chequered recognition in his own time. The peasantry had expected him to divide the land among them;<sup>3</sup> and when they found that the abolition of enslavement for debt did not mean much less stress of life, they were ready to forfeit all the political rights he had given them for some more tangible betterment.

The simple fact that a generation later Peisistratos was able to become tyrant in the teeth of the aged Solon's vehement opposition is intelligible only as standing for the feeling of many of the common people that through a *tyrannos* alone could their interests be maintained against the perpetual conspiracy of the upper class to overreach them.<sup>4</sup> It may be that Solon had alienated the rural folk by his concern for commerce, which would be likely to mean the

<sup>1</sup> Bury, pp. 183-84.

<sup>2</sup> Eduard Meyer writes of Solon (ii, 649) that "aller Radicalismus liegt ihm fern"; and, two pages later, as to the freeing of the peasantry, that "Hier konnte nur ein radikales Mittel, ein Bruch des formellen Rechts, Hilfe bringen."

<sup>3</sup> Grote (ii, 471) finds this incredible; it is hard to see why. Plutarch (14, 16) is explicit on the point; so also the *Athenian Polity*, c. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Friends of Solon's in the upper classes took advantage of a disclosure of his plans to buy up land in advance, escaping full payment under his law cancelling debts (Plutarch, *Solon*, c. 15; Aristotle, *Athenian Polity*, c. 6). See Plutarch, c. 16, as to the moderation and popularity of Peisistratos.