

some degree the schools of the medicine of antiquity, had sunk to the level of using prayers and incantations and relics as their regular means of cure. Curiously enough, too, the Saracens had the merit, claimed for the Byzantines, of letting their women share rather freely in their culture of all kinds.¹ What is more, the later Saracens of Spain, whatever the measure of their own scientific progress, were without question a great seminal force in the civilisation of Western Christendom, which drew from them its beginnings in mathematics, philosophy, chemistry, astronomy, and medicine, and to some extent even in literature² and architecture,³ to say nothing of the effect on the useful arts of the contact of the Crusaders with the Saracens of the East.

Saracens as
culture-
originators
in Spain &
elsewhere.

As to Arab medicine, see Withington, as cited, pp. 139, 170; and Sprengel, *History of Medicine*, French tr. vol. ii (1815), pp. 262-64—a passage which contradicts Sprengel's previous disparagements. Compare p. 343. The *histoire particulière* in this chapter (v of Sect. 6) generally countervails the hostile summaries. Sprengel proceeded on the prejudice (i, 215) that there was no "rational science" anywhere before the Greeks; as if there were not many irrational elements in the science not only of the Greeks but of the moderns. A much better qualified historian of Arab medicine, Dr. Lucien Leclerc, writes (*Histoire de la médecine arabe*, 1876, i, 462) that in the eleventh century "the medical productions [of the Arabs] continue to develop an independent aspect, and have already a certain stamp of originality. Already the Arabs feel themselves rich on their own footing. We see appearing certain writings not less remarkable for the novelty of the form than for the value of the substance." Again, Dr. Ernst von Meyer, the historian of chemistry, sums up (*Hist. of Chemistry*, M'Gowan's tr. 2nd ed. p. 28), that "the germs of chemical knowledge attained to a marvellous growth among the Arabians." It may be noted that there is record of a hospital in Bagdad at the beginning of the ninth century, and that there were many there in the tenth (Leclerc, i, 559).

A rational argument is brought against Semitic "faculty" by Dr. Cunningham, it should be admitted, in the contention that the Phœnicians figured poorly as copyists of Greek art (*Western Civilisation*, p. 69, following Renan). But this argument entirely ignores the element of time that is needed to develop any art in any civilisation. The Phœnician civilisation was

¹ Prescott, *History of Ferdinand and Isabella*, Kirk's ed. 1889, pp. 187, 188.

² Cp. Bouterwek, *History of Spanish and Portuguese Literature*, Eng. tr. 1823, i, 4, and Sismondi, *Literature of the South of Europe*, Eng. tr. i, 61, 64, 68, 80-90. As to Arabic study of linguistics, cp. Nöldeke, p. 17.

³ Cp. Testa, *History of the War of Frederick I. upon the Communes of Lombardy*, Eng. tr. p. 100.

overthrown before it had time to assimilate Greek art developments, which themselves were the work of centuries even in a highly favourable set of conditions. Nöldeke, though less unscientific than Spiegel, partly follows him in insisting that Phœnician architecture copied Egyptian, and that the later Semites copied the Greek, as if the Greeks in turn had not had predecessors and guides. Starting with the fixed fallacy that the Semites were "one-sided," he reasons in a circle to the effect that their one-sidedness was "highly prejudicial to the development of science," while compelled to admit the importance of the work of the Babylonians in astronomy. (*Sketches from Eastern History*, Eng. tr. pp. 15-18.)

It is now current doctrine that "for nearly eight centuries, under her Mohammedan rulers, Spain set to all Europe a shining example of a civilised and enlightened State. Her fertile provinces, rendered doubly prolific by the industry and engineering skill of her conquerors, bore fruit an hundredfold. Cities innumerable sprang up in the rich valleys of the Guadalquivir and the Guadiana.....Art, literature, and science prospered as they prospered nowhere else in Europe. Students flocked from France and Germany and England to drink from the fountain of learning which flowed only in the cities of the Moors. The surgeons and doctors of Andalusia were in the van of science; women were encouraged to devote themselves to serious study; and the lady doctor was not unknown among the people of Cordova. Mathematics, astronomy and botany, history [?], philosophy and jurisprudence [?] were to be mastered in Spain, and Spain alone. The practical work of the field, the scientific methods of irrigation, the arts of fortification and shipbuilding, the highest and most elaborate products of the loom, the graver and the hammer, the potter's wheel and the mason's trowel, were brought to perfection by the Spanish Moors."

See Stanley Lane-Poole, *The Moors in Spain*, pref. It could be wished that Mr. Lane-Poole had given English readers, as he so well could, a study of Saracen civilisation, instead of a "Story of the Nation" on the old lines. For corroboration of the passage see Dozy, *Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne*, 1861, iii, 109, 110; Prescott, *History of Ferdinand and Isabella*, Kirk's ed. 1889, pp. 186-88, 192, 195-99; Draper, *Intellectual Development of Europe*, ed. 1875, ii, 30-53; Sismondi, *Historical View of the Literature of the South of Europe*, Eng. tr. i, 50-54, 64-68, 76-84, 89. Cp. Seignobos, *Histoire de la Civilisation au Moyen Age*, 3e éd. pp. 48-62; Gebhart, *Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, 1879, pp. 185-89; Bosworth Smith, *Mohammed and Mohammedanism*, 2nd ed. pp. 217, 286;

Nöldeke, as cited, p. 105; Bouterwek, as cited, i, 3; Baden-Powell, *History of Natural Philosophy*, 1834, pp. 94-104; U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, Hume's ed. 1900, vol. i, ch. 16.

All this being so, the course of deciding that the Arabs retrogressed because "they" were impatient and discontinuous is on a level with the thesis that nature has a horror of a vacuum. The Arab civilisation was arrested and anchylosed by forces which in other civilisations operated in exactly the same modes. The first great trouble was the element of perpetual domestic strife, which was uncured by the monarchic system, since every succession was liable to dispute. Under such conditions just government could not flourish; and Moslem taxation always tended to be suicidally unscrupulous.¹ Disputes of succession, indeed, wrought hardly more strife among the Saracens than has taken place among Greeks and Romans, and Christians of all nations, down to modern times; even the ecclesiastical and feudal doctrine of legitimacy, developed by the Latin and Greek Churches, having failed to prevent dynastic wars in Christendom. But the Saracens, neighbored everywhere by Christians who bore them a twofold hostility, had peculiar need of union, and ran special risks from dissension; and in Spain their disunion was their ruin. At the same time their civilisation was strangled intellectually by a force which, though actually in operation in Christendom also, was there sufficiently countered by a saving condition which the Saracens finally lacked. The force of constriction was the cult of the Sacred Book; the counteracting force in Christendom was diversity and friction of governments and cultures—a condition which passed out of the Saracen equation.

How fatally restrictive the cult of the completed Sacred Book can be is obvious in the history of Byzantium. It was in terms of the claims of the Christian creed that the Eastern Emperors proscribed pagan philosophy and science, reducing the life of the whole Eastern world as far as possible to one rigid and unreasoned code. That the mental life of Italy and France was relatively progressive even in the Middle Ages was substantially due—(1) to Saracen stimulus, and (2) to the friction and ferment set up by the diversity of life in the Italian republics, and the Italian and French and German universities. Byzantium was in comparison a China or an Egypt. The saving elements of political diversity, culture competition, and culture contact have in later Europe completed

NOTE .

¹ Van Vloten, *Recherches sur la domination arabe*, Amsterdam, 1894, pp. 7-12.

the frustration of the tendency of church, creed, and Bible to destroy alike science and philosophy. In Islam, on the other hand, the arresting force finally triumphed over the progressive because of the social and political conditions. (1) The political field, though stormy, finally lacked diversity in terms of the universality of the monarchic principle, which was imposed by the military basis and bound up with the creed: uniformity of ideal was thus furthered. (2) There was practically no fresh culture contact possible after the assimilation of the remains of Greek science and the stimulus of Jewish philosophy; for medieval Christendom had no culture to give; and the more thoroughly the Papacy and the Christian monarchy in Spain were organised, the more hostile they grew to the Moors. (3) The economic stimulus among the latter tended to be restricted more and more to the religious class, till that class was able to suppress all independent mental activity.

reasons
for Saracen
failure.

The last is the salient circumstance. In any society, the special cultivation of serious literature and the arts and sciences depends on one or more of three conditions—(a) the existence of a cultured class living on unearned incomes, as in ancient Athens, middle Rome, and modern England and France; (b) public expenditure on art and culture, as in ancient Athens, Renaissance Italy and modern France, and in the German university system *par excellence*; or (c) the personal concern of princes and other patrons to encourage ability. In the nature of the case it was mainly on this last and most precarious stimulus that Saracen culture depended. Taking it at its zenith, under such rulers as Haroun Alraschid and El-Mamoun at Bagdad, and Abderrahmān III and Hakam II of Cordova, we find its advance always more or less dependent on the bounty of the caliph; and even if, like Abderrahmān and his son Hakam, he founded all manner of public and free schools, it depended on the bias of his successors rather than on public opinion or municipal custom whether the movement should continue. Abderrahmān's achievement, seen even through Christian eyes, was so manifold as to constitute him one of the great rulers of all history; but the task of making Moorish civilisation permanent was one which no series of such statesmen could have compassed. The natural course of progress would have been through stable monarchy to constitutionalism. But Christian barbarism, with its perpetual assault, kept the Saracens forever at the stage of active militarism, which is the negation of constitutionalism; and their very refinement was a political danger, no less than their dynastic strifes.

social con-
ditions for
cultivation
of arts &
science.

On the other hand, the continuous stress of militarism was in

ordinary course much more favourable to fanaticism than to free thought; and to fanaticism the Koran, like the Bible, was and is a perpetual stimulant. It was as a militant faith that Islam maintained itself; and in such a civilisation the Sacred Book, which claimed to be the highest of all lore, and was all the while so easy a one, giving to ignorance and conceit the consciousness of supreme knowledge without any mental discipline whatever, was sure of abundant devotees.¹ In an uninstructed community—and of course the mass of the Saracen population was uninstructed²—the cult of the Sacred Book needs no special endowment; it can always be depended on to secure revenues for itself, even as may the medicine-man in an African tribe. To this day the propagation of the Koran is subscribed for in Turkey as the Bible Society is subscribed to among ourselves, ignorance earning thus the felicity of prescribing for human welfare in the mass, and at the same time propitiating Omnipotence, at the lowest possible outlay of study and reflection. Enthusiasms which can thus flourish in the twentieth century were of course abundant in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh;³ and thus we find that when a caliph was suspected by the pietists of caring too little for their lore, he ran the risk of being rebelled against with a speed and zeal in the ratio of their conviction of divine knowledge. Islam, unlike the State churches of Greece, Rome, and England, has democratic rootage in the practice of setting ordinary laymen to recite the prayers and preach the sermons in the mosques: it, in fact, resembles Methodism more than any of the established Christian churches in respect of its blending of clerisy and laity. Such a system, when thoroughly fanaticised, has enormous powers of turbulence; and in Moorish Spain we find them early exercised. Abderrahmān I, whose policy of tolerance towards Jews and Christians transcended all previous Christian practice, and thus won for his realm a great stimulus in the way of variety of culture-elements and of industry, had kept the religious class in due control; but his well-meaning son Hishām was priest-ridden to the last degree; and when his successor Hakam showed an indisposition to patronise pietists to the same extent they raised revolt after revolt (806–815), all put down by massacre.

Islam's democratic rootage; resemblance to Methodism.

¹ As to the religious zeal of the Berbers in the way of Moslem dissent, on all fours with the phenomena of Protestantism, see Lane-Poole, as cited, p. 53.

² Dozy (*Histoire des Musulmans d'Espagne*, 1861, iii, 109) decides that "in Andalusia nearly everyone could read and write"; but even if this were true, which is very doubtful (seeing that on the same page the historian tells how Hakam founded twenty-three free schools for the children of the poor in Cordova), the reading would be almost solely confined to the Koran.

³ The mere preaching and miracle-working of the Marabouts among the Berbers set up successively the movements of the Fatimites, the Almoravides, and the Almohades (Lane-Poole, p. 54).

Mr. Lane-Poole notes (p. 73) the interesting fact that the theologians were largely of Spanish stock, the natives having in general embraced Islam. Thus the fanaticism of the Berbers was reinforced by that of the older population, which, as Buckle showed, was made abnormally devout, not by inheritance of character, but by the constant effect of terrorising environment, in the form of earthquakes.

The elements of the situation remained fundamentally unchanged; and when the Moorish military power began to feel more and more the pressure of the strengthening Christian foe, it lay in the nature of the case that the fanatical species should predominate. The rationalistic and indifferent types would figure as the enemies of their race, very much as such types would have done in Covenanting Scotland. At length, in the eleventh century, the weakened Moorish princes had to call in the aid of the fanatical Almoravides from Barbary; and these, with the full support of the priesthood and the pious, established themselves at the head of affairs, reducing everything as far as possible to the standards of the eighth century.¹ And when the new barbarism in time grew corrupt, as that of the Goths and Vandals had done in earlier ages, the "Unitarian" Almohades in turn (twelfth century) overthrew the Almoravides in Spain as they had already done in Africa, only to be themselves overthrown a hundred years later by the Christians. Thereafter the curtailed Moorish power, pent up in Southern Spain, reverted to the spirit of fanaticism which national failure generates in religious minds; and from the thirteenth century to the final overthrow at the end of the fifteenth the intellectual life of Saracen Spain was but a long stagnation. N.B.

A civilisation driven back on superstition and fanaticism² thus gave way to a revived barbarism, which itself, after a few centuries of power, was arrested in its progress by the same order of forces, and has ever since remained in the rear of European development. A remarkable exception, indeed, is to be noted in the case of Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), who in the narrow world of Tunis attained to a grasp of the science of history such as no Christian historian up to his time had remotely approached.³ Such an intellectual phenomenon sufficiently disposes of the current formulas about the innate incapacities of "the Semitic mind." But whether it were that he ex.

¹ Concerning the intolerance of this reaction, see Dozy, iii, 248-54. Cp. iii, 16-21, as to the normal fanaticism of the Moorish populace.

² See Dozy, iii, 286, as to the general lapse from rationalism to faith.

³ See the whole estimate of Prof. Flint, *History of the Philosophy of History*, 1893, pp. 157-71.

dared not say what he thought of the fatal influence of the Sacred Book, or that on that side he was really, as he is ostensibly, quite uncritical, Khaldun fails, in his telling survey of Arab decadence, to set forth the decisive condition of intellectual arrest; and his luminous impeachment of the civilisation of his race failed to enlighten it.

In Persia the same forces wrought closely similar results. The Greek stimulus, after working wonders in science and rational thought, failed to sustain a society that could not politically evolve beyond despotism; and economic evil and intellectual decay together undermined the empire of the Caliphs,¹ till the Turks could overrun it as the Christians did Moorish Spain; they themselves, however, adding no new culture developments, because under them no new culture contacts were possible.

Of the Moslem civilisation as a whole, it must be said that on the material side, in Spain and the East, it was such a success as had not been attained under the Romans previously (though it was exceeded in Egypt by the Lagids), and has not been reached in Christian Spain since the fall of Boabdil. Economically, the Moorish regimen was sound and stable in comparison with that of imperial Spain, which, like Rome, merely set up a factitious civilisation on the basis of imported bullion and provincial tribute, and decayed industrially while nominally growing in empire and power. When the history of Spain from the seventeenth century onward is compared with that of the Saracens up to their overthrow, the nullity of explanations in terms of race qualities becomes sufficiently plain—unless, indeed, it is argued that Moorish blood is the secret of Spanish decadence. But that surmise too is folly. Spanish decadence is a perfectly simple sociological sequence;² and a Spanish renaissance is not only conceivable, but likely, under conditions of free science and free thought. Nor is it on the whole less likely that the Arab stock will in time to come contribute afresh and largely to civilisation. The one element which can finally distinguish one race from another—acquired physiological adaptation to a given climate—marks the Arab races as best fitted for the recovery of great southern and eastern regions which, once enormously productive, have since the fall of the Roman and Byzantine Empires been reduced to sterility and poverty. The Greeks in their recovered fatherland, and the French in Algeria,

Moslem success
in material
civilization
(cf. Egypt).

¹ Cp. Dugat, *Histoire des philosophes et des théologiens musulmans*, 1878, pp. 337-48; Freeman, *History and Conquests of the Saracens*, p. 124; and the author's *Short History of Freethought*, 2nd. ed. i, 267-68, 277-79.

² See it discussed in *A Short History of Freethought*, 2nd. ed. i, ch. x, § 3; ii, 56 sq. And see below, pt. v, ch. iv, § 2.

have not thus far been much more successful than the Turks in developing material prosperity. If North Africa, Syria, and Mesopotamia are again to be rich and fruitful lands, it must be in the hands of an acclimatised race; and the Arab stocks are in this regard among the most eligible.

But there is no reason why the Turks should not share in such a renaissance.¹ Their incivilisation is no more a matter of race character than the decline of the Moors or the backwardness of the Spaniards: it is the enforced result of the attitude of special enmity taken up towards the Turkish intruders from the first by all their Christian neighbours. By sheer force of outside pressure, co-operating with the sinister sway of the Sacred Book, Turkey has been kept fanatical, barbarous, uncultured, utterly militarist, and therefore financially misgoverned. The moral inferiority of the long-oppressed Christian peoples of the Levant, whose dishonesty was till lately proverbial, was such as to strengthen the Moslem in the conceit of superiority; while the need to maintain a relatively great military force as against dangerous neighbours has been for him a check upon all endowment of culture. To change all this, it needs that either force or prudence should so modify the system of government as to give freer course to industry and ideas; that the military system should be restricted; and that European knowledge should be brought to bear on education, till the fettering force of religion is frustrated, as in the progressive countries of Christendom. For Turkey and Spain, for Moslems and for Christians, the laws of progress and decadence are the same; and if only the more fortunate peoples can learn to help instead of hindering the backward, realising that every civilisation is industrially and intellectually an aid to every other, the future course of things may be blessedly different from that of the past. But the closest students of the past will doubtless be as a rule slow to predict such a transformation.²

¹ This was written before 1900.

² Deutsch, however (*Literary Remains*, p. 172), predicted it with confidence.

CHAPTER III

ROME

THE culture conditions of Rome seem to cause no perplexity even to those who find Greek civilisation a mystery. They are certainly obvious enough. By reason of the primary natural direction of Roman life to plunder and conquest, with a minimum of commerce and peaceful contacts, Roman culture was as backward as that of Greece was forward. The early Etruscan culture having been relegated to the status of archæology, however respectfully treated,¹ and the popular language having become that of all classes, the republican period had to begin again at the beginning. Latin literature practically commenced in the third century B.C., when that of Greece was past its meridian; and the fact that Lucius Andronicus and Nævius, the early playwrights, were men of Greek culture, and that Ennius translated the Greek rationalist Evêmeros (Euhêmeros), point to the Hellenic origins of Rome's intellectual life. Her first art, on the other hand, was substantially derived from the Etruscans, who also laid the simple beginnings of the Roman drama, later built upon under Greek influence. But even with the Etruscan stimulus—itself a case of arrested development—the art went no great way before the conquest of Greece; and even under Greek stimulus the literature was progressive for only two centuries, beginning to decline as soon as the Empire was firmly established.

Of the relative poverty of early Roman art, the cause is seen even by Mommsen to lie partly in the religious environment, religion being the only incentive which at that culture stage could have operated (and this only with economic fostering); but the nature of the religious environment he implicitly sets down as usual to the character of the race,² as contrasted with the character of the Greeks. Obviously it is necessary to seek a reason for the religious

¹ See E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 703; cp. A. Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, i, 274-79, as to the survivals. The reversion of the remaining Etruscan aristocracy in Rome to the language of the common people, under stress of strife with Etruria, is a phenomenon on all fours with the abandonment of French by the upper-class English in the fourteenth century, as a result of hostility with France.

² Even Eduard Meyer decides in this fashion (*Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 530) that to Italy "was denied the capacity to shape a culture for itself, to energise independently and creatively in the sphere of art, poetry, religion, and science"—this after expressly noting (ii, 155) how Greece itself developed only under the stimulus of alien culture. Compare §§ 339, 340 (ii, 533-36).

Note

origins of
Roman art.

conditions to begin with; and this is to be found in the absence from early Rome of exactly those natural and political conditions which made Greece so manifold in its culture. We have seen how, where Greece was divided into a score of physically "self-contained" states, no one of which could readily overrun the others, Rome was placed on a natural career of conquest; and this at a culture stage much lower than that of Ionic Greece of the same period. Manifold and important culture contacts there must have been for Hellenes before the Homeric poems were possible; but Rome at the beginning of the republican period was in contact only with the other Italic tribes, the Phœnicians, the Grecian cities, and the Etruscans; and with these her relations were hostile. In early Ionia, again, Greek poetry flourished as a species of luxury under a feudal system constituted by a caste of rich nobles who had acquired wealth by conquest of an old and rich civilisation. Roman militarism began in agricultural poverty; and the absorption of the whole energies of the group in warfare involved the relegation of the arts of song and poetry to the care of the women and boys, as something beneath adult male notice.¹ Roman religion in the same way was left as a species of archæology to a small group of priests and priestly aristocrats, charged to observe the ancient usages. It would thus inevitably remain primitive—that is, it would remain at a stage which the Greeks had mostly passed at the Homeric period; and when wealth and leisure came, Greek culture was there to overshadow it. To say that the Latins racially lacked the mythopœic faculty is to fall back on the old plan of explaining phenomena in terms of themselves. As a matter of fact, the mere number of deities, of personified forces, in the Roman mythology is very large,² only there is lacking the embroidery of concrete fiction which gives vividness to the mythology of the Greeks. The Romans relatively failed to develop the mythopœic faculty because their conditions caused them to energise more in other ways.³

There is, however, obvious reason to believe that among the Italian peoples there was at one time a great deal more of myth

¹ Mommsen, *History of Rome*, Eng. tr. 1894, i, 285-300 (bk. i, ch. xv).

² "No people has ever possessed a vaster pantheon," observes M. Boissier, while noting the slightness of the characterisation (*La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, 4e édition, i, 8). The lack of characterisation would seem to have encouraged multiplication.

³ The fact that the Etruscans, like the other Italian peoples, remained at the stage of unintellectual formalism (Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 528-29; Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, i, 273), suffices to show that not in race genius but in stage and conditions of culture lies the explanation. All early religion in official hands is formalist—witness the Pentateuch. The preoccupied Italians left their cults, as did the Phœnicians, to archæological officials, while the leisured Greeks carried them into poetry and art under conditions which fostered these activities.

N.B.

than has survived.¹ What is preserved is mainly fragments of the mythology of one set of tribes, and that in only a slightly developed form. All the other Italic peoples had been subdued by the Romans before any of them had come into the general use of letters;² and instead of being put in a position to develop their own myths and cults, or to co-ordinate the former in the Greek fashion, they were absorbed in the Roman system, which took their Gods to its pantheon, and at the same time imposed on them those of Rome. Much of their mythic lore would thus perish, for the literate Romans had not been concerned to cultivate even their own. Early Roman life being divided between war and agriculture, and there being no free literary class to concern itself with the embellishment of the myths, there subsisted only the simple myths and rituals of agriculture and folklore, the numerous list of personified functions connected with all the phases of life, and the customary ceremonial of augury and invocation in war. The augurs and pontifices were the public men and statesmen, and they made religion a State function. What occult lore there was they made a class monopoly—an effectual preventive in itself of a Hellenic development of myth. Apart from the special sets or colleges of priests there were specially appointed colleges of religio-archæological specialists—first, the six augurs and the five *pontifices*, then the *duoviri sacris faciundis*, afterwards increased to ten and to fifteen, who collected Greek oracles and saw to the Sibylline books; later the twenty *fetiales* or heralds, and so on. “These colleges have been often, but erroneously, confounded with the priesthoods. The priesthoods were charged with the worship of a specific divinity; the skilled colleges, on the other hand, were charged with the preservation of traditional rules regarding the more general religious observances. These close corporations supplying their own vacancies, of course from the ranks of the burgesses, became in this way the depositaries of skilled arts and sciences.”³

Religion being thus for centuries so peculiarly an official matter of settled tradition, no unauthorised myth-maker could get a hearing. Even what was known would be kept as far as possible a corporation secret,⁴ as indeed were some of the mystery practices in Egypt and

¹ The point is discussed in the author's *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. pp. 74-90; *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 45-46.

² Whether or not we accept Mommsen's view (bk. i, c. xiv) that the use of the alphabet in Italy dates from about 1000 B.C. On this cp. Schwegler, i, 36.

³ Mommsen, *History of Rome*, bk. i, ch. xii, Eng. tr. ed. 1868, i. 189. Cp. Boissier, as cited, i, 354, as to the respective functions of priests and pontiffs.

⁴ It is only through fragmentary vestiges (Servius on Virgil, *Georg.* i, 21; cp. Varro in Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, vi, 7-10) that we know the contents of the book of *Indigitamenta* kept by the pontifices. It seems to have been a list, not of the *Dii Indigetes*

Greece. But whereas in Greece the art of sculpture, once introduced, was stimulated by and reacted on mythology in every temple in every town, the rigid limitation of early Roman public life to the business of war would on that side have closed the door on sculpture,¹ even if it could otherwise have found entrance. The check laid on the efflorescence of the religious instinct was a double check on the efflorescence of art. The net result is described with some exaggeration by an eminent mythologist, in a passage which reduces to something like unity of idea the tissues of contradiction spun by Mommsen:—

For the Latins their Gods, although their name was legion, remained mysterious beings without forms, feelings, or passions; and they influenced human affairs without sharing or having any sympathy with human hopes, fears, or joys. Neither had they, like the Greek deities, any society among themselves. There was for them no Olympus where they might gather and take counsel with the father of Gods and men. They had no parentage, no marriage, no offspring. They thus became a mere multitude of oppressive beings, living beyond the circle of human interests, yet constantly interfering with it; and their worship was thus as terrible a bondage as any under which the world has yet suffered. Not being associated with any definite bodily shapes, they could not, like the beautiful creations of the Greek mind, promote the growth of the highest art of the sculptor, the painter, and the poet.²

It is necessary here to make some corrections and one expansion. The statement as to parentage, marriage, and offspring is clearly wrong. Cox here follows Keightley, whose pre-scientific view is still common. Keightley admits that the early Latin Gods and Goddesses occur in pairs, as Saturn and Ops, Janus and Jana; and that they were called *Patres* and *Matres*.³ To assert after this that they were never thought of as generating offspring, merely because the bulk of the old folk-mythology is lost, is to ascribe uncritically to the Latins an abstention from the most universal forms of primitive myth-making. The proposition as to "terrible bondage," again, cannot stand historically; for, to say nothing of the religions of

commonly so-called, but of all the multitudinous powers presiding over the various operations of life. See Schwegler, *Römische Geschichte*, i, 32; Teuffel, *Hist. of Roman Lit.* ed. Schwabe, Eng. trans. 1900, i, 104; Boissier, *La religion romaine d'Auguste aux Antonins*, i, 4, and note. "I have no doubt," writes Mr. Ward Fowler (*The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, 1911, p. 168), "that Wissowa is right in explaining *Indigitamenta* as *Gebetsformeln*, formulæ of invocation; in which the most important matter, we may add, would be the name of the deity. See his *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, p. 177 foll." Corssen put this view before Wissowa.

¹ According to Varro (cited by Augustine, *De civ. Dei*, iv, 31), the early Romans for 170 years worshipped the Gods without images.

² Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, *Mythology of the Aryan Nations*, ed. 1882, p. 169.

³ Keightley, *Mythol. of Anc. Greece and Italy*, 1838, pp. 506-7.

Mexico and Palestine, and some of those of India, the Roman life was certainly much less darkened by creed than has been that of many Christian countries, for instance Protestant Scotland and Catholic Spain.

[M. Boissier (*La religion romaine*, i, 2) decided that the Romans were religiously ruled more by fear than hope, and that their worship consisted chiefly of "timid supplications and rigorous expiations." Mommsen, on the other hand (ch. xii, p. 191), pronounces that "the Latin religion was grounded mainly on man's enjoyment of earthly pleasures." Both statements would be equally true of all ancient religions. Compare M. Boissier's later remarks, pp. 21-25, 26, 28, wherein he contradicts himself as does Mommsen.]

As regards, again, the failure of the early Latin pantheon to stimulate sculpture and poetry, it has to be noticed that sculpture and poetry tended to make as well as to be made by mythology in Greece. The argument against the Latin pantheon is in fact an argument in a circle. If the Latin Gods were not "associated with any definite bodily shapes" (parentage, marriage, and offspring they certainly *had*), it could only be when and *because* they were not yet sculptured. Greek Gods before they were sculptured would be conceived just as variably. Were *they* then thought of as formless? The proposition is strictly inconceivable. Latin Gods must have been imagined very much as were and are those of other barbarous races, who are notoriously thought of as having sex, form, and passions. Greek mythology simply reached the art stage sooner. The cults of Hellas did not start with a mythology full-blown, thereby creating the arts; the mythology grew step by step with and in the arts, in a continuous mutual reaction; many Greek myths being really tales framed to explain the art-figures of other mythologies, Egyptian and Asiatic. Thus the primitive bareness of the Latin mythology signifies not a natural saplessness which could give no increase to art, but (1) loss of lore and (2) a lack of the artistic and literary factors which record and stimulate higher mythologic growth.

Thus limited in their native culture, the Roman upper class were inevitably much affected by higher foreign cultures when they met these under conditions of wealth and leisure. Long before that stage, indeed, they consulted Greek oracles and collected responses; and they had informally assimilated before the conquest a whole series of Greek Gods without giving them public worship.¹ The

¹ Meyer, ii, 531.

very Goddess of the early Latin League, the Aventine Diana, was imaged by a copy of Artemis of Ephesus, the Goddess of the Ionian League.¹ As time went on the more psychologically developed cults of the East were bound to attract the Romans of all classes. What of religious emotion there was in the early days must have played in large part around the worship which the State left free to the citizens as individuals—the worship of the *Lares* and *Penates*, the cults of the hearth and the family; and in this connection the primitive mythopœic instinct must have evolved a great deal of private mythology which never found its way into literature. But as the very possession of *Lares* and *Penates*, ancestral and domestic spirits, was originally a class privilege, not shared by the landless and the homeless, these had step by step to be made free of public institutions of a similar species—the *Lares Praestites* of the whole city, festally worshipped on the first day of May, and other *Lares Publici, Rurales, Compitales, Viales*, and so on—just as they were helped to bread. Even these concessions, however, failed to make the old system suffice for the transforming State; and individual foreign worships with a specific attraction were one by one inevitably introduced—that of Æsculapius in the year 291 B.C., in a panic about pestilence; that of Cybele, the Mother of the Gods, in 205: both by formal decision of the Senate. The manner of the latter importation is instructive. Beginning the Hannibalic war in a spirit of religious patriotism, the Senate decreed the destruction of the temples of the alien Isis and Serapis.² But as the war went on, and the devotion shown to the native Gods was seen to be unrewarded, the Senate themselves, yielding to the general perturbation which showed itself in constant resort to foreign rites by the women,³ prescribed resort to the Greek sacrificial rites of Apollo.⁴ Later they called in the cult of Cybele from Phrygia;⁵ and other cults informally, but none the less irresistibly, followed.

In all such steps two forces were at work—the readiness of the plebeians to welcome a foreign religion in which the patricians had, as it were, no vested rights; and the tendency of the more plastic patricians themselves, especially the women, to turn to a worship with emotional attractions. When the plebeians sought admission for their class to the higher offices of State, they were told with unaffected seriousness that their men had not the religious qualifications—they lacked the hereditary gift of reading auspices, the

¹ Mommsen, ch. 12.

⁴ *Id.* xxv, 12.

² Valerius Maximus, i, 3.

⁵ *Id.* xxix, 10, 14.

³ Livy, xxv, 1.

lore of things sacred.¹ So, when they did force entrance, their alleged blunders in these matters were exclaimed against as going far to ruin the republic. This was not a way to make the populace revere the national religion; and as the population of foreign race steadily increased by conquest and enslavement, alien cults found more and more hold. "It was always in the popular quarters of the city that these movements began."²

The first great unofficial importation seems to have been the orgiastic worship of Dionysos, who specially bore for the Romans his epithet of Bacchus, and was identified with their probably aboriginal *Liber*. This worship, carried on in secret assemblies, was held by the conservatives to be a hotbed of vice and crime, and was, according to Livy, bloodily punished (B.C. 186). So essentially absurd, however, is Livy's childish narrative that it is impossible to take anything in it for certain save the bare fact that the worship was put under restrictions, as tending to promote secret conspiracies.³ But from this time forward, roughly speaking, Rome may be said to have entered into the mythological heritage of Greece, even as she did into her positive treasure of art work and of oriental gold. Every cult of the conquered Mediterranean world found a footing in the capital, the mere craving for new sensations among the upper class being sufficient to overcome their political bias to the old system. It is clear that when Augustus found scores of Roman temples in disrepair after the long storms of the civil wars, it was not that "religion" was out of vogue, but that it was superseded by what the Romans called "superstition"—something extraneous, something over and above the public system of rites and ceremonies. In point of fact, the people of Rome were in the mass no longer of Roman stock, but a collection of many alien races, indifferent to the indigenous cults. The emperor's restorations could but give a subsidised continuity to the official services: what vitally flourished were the cults which ministered to the new psychological needs of a population more and more divorced from great public interests, and increasingly alien in its heredity—the stimulant and hysterical worships of Adonis, of Attis, of the Lover Goddess coupled with the first, or the Mourning Mother Goddess with the second, of Isis and Osiris and their child—rituals of alternate lamentation and rejoicing, of initiations, austerities, confessions, penances, self-abasement, and

¹ Cp. Boissier, as cited, i, 39.

² Boissier, i, 346. Cp. Gibbon, ch. 2, Bohn ed. i, 40-41, and Wenck's note.

³ Livy, xxxix, 18. The farrago of charges of crime we have no more reason to credit than we have in regard to the similar charges made later against the Christians.

the promise of immortality. On the general soil of devotion thus formed, there finally grew up side by side Mithraism and Christianity, the rival religions of the decadence, of which the second triumphed in virtue of having by far the larger number of adaptations to its environment.) N,

But while Rome was thus at length fully possessed by the spirit of religious imagination which had so fruitfully stirred the art of Greece, there ensued no new birth of faculty. It was with the arts as with literature: the stimulus from Greece was received by a society rapidly on the way to that social state which in Greece had choked the springs of progress. In the last generations of the Republic the literary development was markedly rapid. In the century which saw Rome, after a terrific struggle, victorious over Carthage and prepared for the grapple with Macedon, the first practitioners of literature were playwrights, or slaves, or clients of great men, or teachers like Ennius, who could find in the now leisured and in part intelligent or at least inquisitive upper class a sufficient encouragement to a literary career. That class did not want recitals of the crude folklore of their fathers, so completely eclipsed by that of Greece, which was further associated with the literary form of drama, virtually new to the Romans.¹ Drama, always the form of literature which can best support itself, is the form most cultivated down till the period of popular abasement and civil convulsion, though of a dozen dramatists we have only Plautus and Terence left in anything like completeness; and while the tragedy of Pacuvius and Attius was unquestionably an imitation of the Greek, it may have had in its kind as much merit as the comedies that have been preserved. Even more rapid than the development, however, is the social gangrene that kills the popular taste; for when we reach the time of Augustus there is no longer a literary drama, save perhaps for the small audiences of the wooden theatres, and the private performances of amateurs;² parades and pantomimes alone can attract the mindless multitude; and the era of autocrats begins on well-laid foundations of ignorance and artificial incivilisation.) as now?

As with the literature of the people, so with that of the lettered class. In the last generation of freedom, we have in Lucretius and Catullus two of the great poets of all antiquity, compared with whose forceful inspiration Virgil and Horace already begin to seem sicklied o'er with the pale cast of decline. Thenceforth the glory

¹ Cp. Carl Peter, *Geschichte Roms*, 1881, i, 550.

² Cp. Merivale, *History*, small ed. iv, 67-70, and Gibbon, ch. 31 (Bohn ed. iii, 420).

begins to die away; and though the red blade of Juvenal is brandished with a hand of power, and Lucan clangs forth a stern memorial note, and Petronius sparkles with a sinister brilliancy, there is no mistaking the downward course of things under Cæsarism. It is true we find Juvenal complaining that only the emperor does anything for literature:—

Et spes et ratio studiorum in Caesare tantum.
Solus enim tristes hac tempestate Camoenas
Respexit.¹

It is the one word of praise he ever gives to the autocrat, be it Domitian or another; and the commentators decide that only at the beginning of Domitian's reign would it apply. In effect, the satire is a description of the Roman upper class as grown indifferent to poetry, or to any but their own. But it is not on the economic side that the autocracy and the aristocracy of the Empire are to be specially indicted. The economic difficulty was very much the same under the Republic, when only by play-writing could literary men as such make a living. As Juvenal goes on to say, Horace when he cried *Evohe* was well fed, and if Virgil had lacked slave and lodging the serpents would have been lacking to the fury's hair, and the tongueless trumpet have sounded nothing great. Lucretius, Catullus, and Virgil were all inheritors of a patrimony; and Horace needed first an official post and later a patron's munificence to enable him to live as a poet. The mere sale of their books could not possibly have supported any one of them, so low were prices kept by the small demand.² What was true of the poets was still truer of the historians. Thus in the Republic as in the Empire, the men of letters, apart from the playwrights, tended to be drawn solely from the small class with inherited incomes. The curse of the Empire was that even when the sanest emperors, as the Antonines, sought to endow studies,³ they could not buy moral or intellectual energy. The senate of poltroons who crouched before the Neros and Caligulas were the upper-class version of the population which lived by bread and the circus; and in that air neither great art nor great thought could breathe. Roman sculpture is but enslaved Greek sculpture taken into pay; Latin literature ceases to be Roman

¹ Sat. vii, 1.

² Martial, i, 67, 118; xiii, 3. But cp. Becker, *Gallus*, Sc. iii, Excur. 3.

³ Vespasian began the endowment of professorships of rhetoric (Suetonius, *Vespasian*, 18). As to the Antonines, see Gibbon, ch. ii, *note*, near end; and cp. Hatch, *Influence of Greek Ideas upon the Christian Church*, 1900, pp. 38-39; and Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*, i, 166. Vespasian's endowments, it should be noted, were given only to the professors of rhetoric. The philosophers (presumably the Stoics, but also the astrologers) he banished, as did Domitian. On this cp. Merivale, *History*, vol. vii, ch. 60.

with Tacitus. The noble apparition of Marcus Aurelius shines out of the darkening ages like some unearthly incarnation, collecting in one life and in one book all the light and healing left in the waning civilisations; beside the babble of Fronto his speech is as that of one of the wise Gods of the ancient fantasy. Henceforth we have but ancillary history, and, in imaginative literature, be it of Apuleius or of Claudian, the portents of another age. *Roma fuit.*

The last stages of the transition from the pagan to the Middle Ages can best be traced in the history of the northern province of Gaul. Subjected to regular imperial administration within a generation of its conquest by Cæsar, Gaul for some centuries actually gained in civilisation, the imperial regimen being relatively more favourable to nearly every species of material progress than that of the old chiefs.¹ The emperors even in the fourth century are found maintaining there the professorships of rhetoric, language, law, philosophy and medicine first founded by Marcus Antoninus;² and until finance began to fail and the barbarians to invade, the material conditions were not retrograde. But the general intellectual life was merely imitative and retrospective; and the middle and upper classes, for which the higher schools existed, were already decaying in Gaul as elsewhere. The old trouble, besides, the official veto on all vital political discussion—if indeed any appetite for such discussion survived—drove literature either into mere erudition or into triviality. On the other hand, the growing Church offered a field of ostensibly free intellectual activity, and so was for a time highly productive, in point of sheer quantity of writing; a circumstance naturally placed by later inquirers to the credit of its creed. The phenomenon was of course simply one of the passage of energy by the line of least resistance. Within the Church, to which they turned as did thoughtful Greeks to philosophy after the rise of Alexander's Empire, men of mental tastes and moderate culture found both shelter and support; and the first Gaulish monasteries, unlike those of Egypt and the East, were, as M. Guizot has noted, places for conference rather than for solitary life.³ There, for men who believed the creed, which was as credible as the older doctrines, there was a constant exercise for the mind on interests that were relatively real, albeit profoundly divided from the interests of the community. Thus, at a time when the community needed all its mental energy to meet its political need, that mental energy was

¹ Cp. Guizot, *Histoire de la civilisation en France*, 13e éd. i, 48, 49.

² *Id.* pp. 113-15.

³ *Id.*, i, 121, 122.

spent in the discussion of insoluble and insane problems, of predestination and freewill, of faith and works, of fasts, celibacy, the Trinity, immortality, and the worship of saints. Men such as Ambrose and Jerome in Italy, Paulinus, Cassian, Hilary, and Salvian in Gaul, Chrysostom in the East, and Augustine in the South, represent as it were the last vibrations of the civilised intelligence; their energy, vainly spent on what they felt to be great issues, hints of the amount of force that was still running to waste throughout the Empire.

Soon, however, and even before the barbarian tide had overflowed the intellectual world, the fatal principle at the core of the new creed began to paralyse even the life that centred around that. In a world of political tyranny, an established church claiming to stand for the whole of supernatural truth must needs resort to tyranny as soon as it could wield the weapons. The civil strifes which broke out alike in the Eastern and the Western Empire in the third and fourth centuries, and the multitude of sects which rapidly honeycombed the Church, were so many more forces of social disintegration; and churchmen, reasoning that difference of dogma was the ground of civil warfare as well as of war in the Church, must needs take the course that had before been taken in politics.

After the original Arian battle had raged itself out in Egypt, Gregory of Nazianzun at Constantinople, Ambrose at Milan, and Martin at Tours,¹ fought it over again. One point secured, others were settled in turn; and as soon as the influence of Augustine set up a prevailing system of thought, theology was as much a matter of rule and precedent as government. As we read Augustine's *City of God*, with its strenuous demonstration that the calamities which men ascribe to the new religion are the fruit of their own misdeeds, we realise to the full the dissolution of antiquity. All that is valid in his polemic is the exposure of the absurdity of the old faiths, long before detected by the reason of the few, but maintained by believers and unbelievers alike for reasons of State. The due Nemesis came in the rise of a faith which first flourished on and promoted an utter disregard of State concerns, then helped directly to rob the State of the mental energy it most needed, and finally wrought for the paralysis of what mental energy itself had attracted. Of constructive truth, of the thought whereby a State could live, the polemist had much less than was once possessed by the men who

¹ Guizot (as cited, i, 135) makes much of the fact that Hilary, Ambrose, and Martin opposed the *capital* punishment of heretics. He ignores the circumstance that Martin led an attack on all the pagan idols and temples of his neighbourhood, in which the peasants who resisted were slain.

framed or credited the fables he derided. He could destroy, but could not build up. And so it was with the Church, as regarded the commonweal. "Of all the various systems of government that have been attempted on this earth, theocracy, or more properly hierocracy, is undoubtedly one of the very worst."¹

But one thing the Church could construct and conserve—the fabric of her own wealth and power. Hence it came about that the Church, in itself a State within the State, was one of the three or four concrete survivals of antiquity round which modern civilisation nucleated. Of the four, the Church, often treated as the most valuable, was really the least so, inasmuch as it wrought always more for the hindrance of progress and the sundering of communities than for advance and unification. The truly civilising forces were the other three: the first being the body of Roman law, the product of Roman experience and Greek thought in combination; and the second, the literature of antiquity, in large part lost till the time we call the New Birth, when its recovery impregnated and inspired, though it perhaps also overburdened and lamed, the unformed intelligence of modern Europe. The third was the heritage of the arts of life and of beauty, preserved in part by the populations of the western towns which survived and propagated their species through the ages of dominant barbarism; in part by the cohering society of Byzantium. From these ancient germs placed in new soil is modern civilisation derived.

¹ U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, M. Hume's ed. 1900, i, 115.

EPILOGUE

A GENERAL VIEW OF DECADENCE

WE are now, perhaps, in a position to contemplate the wood without being distracted by the trees, and without forgetting, on the other hand, that it is an aggregate of trees individually conditioned by aggregation.

The record of Græco-Roman, as of all other ancient civilisation, with the partial exception of that of China, is one of a complete decadence—in this case a twofold decadence: a passing from collective energy and achievement to collective decrepitude and mental impotence, from intellectual freedom and force to the dogmatic arrest of thought, from artistic splendour to the very negation of the finest forms of art. However we may dispute about the nature of progress, we all agree that this was decadence. Not even the Christian Greek, the least freethinking of educated moderns, supposes that the life of his race went upwards from the time of Constantine. The Italian to this day aspires—by way of Tripoli, among other things—to bear some comparison with the Roman, whose “greatness” he envies. Decadence, then, is confessed. It concerns us, if we would have a historical philosophy at all, to think it all in terms of general causation.

At the outset, we shall do well to realise that in the long transmutation there was no day, save those of sudden and dire disaster, on which the human elements of the State organisms concerned were collectively conscious of any great change in their way of life. And days of dire disaster had occurred in the times to which we look back as those of energetic expansion. Early Rome had been actually captured by Etruscans, by Gauls; “she” had ostensibly come to the verge of overthrow by Hannibal a whole era before she was sacked by the Goths; Athens had been sacked by the Persians long before the Roman invasion. What was the determining difference in the consciousness of the citizens at the two epochs? Clearly that between the minds of men went to “fend for themselves” collectively and of men went to be ruled and prescribed for by a master—a difference, therefore, in power of resistance and of

recovery. And this difference had itself been wrought by long mutations—from the day of Sulla to the day of Tiberius in Rome, from the day of Alexander to that of Sulla in Greece. No one generation had been born in full “freedom,” to pass away in complete subordination to an autocrat. The earlier generations, like the later, had been habituated to slave-owning, superstition, and the thought of war. The substantial and fatal change was in the degree of simple average manhood among the free. National decadence, in a word, is loss of manhood—a thing not easily lost.

A Conservative statesman of our day, wont to apply analytic criticism chiefly for partisan purposes, has attempted a comparatively disinterested analysis of the problem before us, in a short but not inconsiderate survey of the decadence of the old world. At the outset he rightly notes the inconsistency with which men still tend to hold by the old idea of an inevitable ageing and ultimate decrepitude of States and civilisations, while holding no less confidently to the modern notion, practically unattained by the ancients, of an inevitable progress. “Why,” he asks, “*should* civilisations thus wear out and great communities decay? and what evidence is there that in fact they do?”¹ It may or may not be by reason of political bias that the questioner—who indeed avows that he is pursuing one of “those wandering trains of thought where we allow ourselves the luxury of putting wide-ranging questions, to which our ignorance forbids any confident reply”—propounds no clear answer to either query, contenting himself with suggesting that modern civilisation, in virtue of its strengthening hold on physical science, stands a chance of escaping the doom that fell on the old. But such a curtailed answer moves us afresh to seek a more complete one.

N. ex.

Our questioner, contemplating the “fall” of Rome, argues that the cause cannot have been even so serious an evil as slavery, which had been in operation from the beginning. He overlooks the fact that it had greatly increased in the period of far-reaching conquest,² and so misses an element in the solution. Passing over this, he recognises one proximate “cause,” diminution of population; and he in effect seems to trace to this source the secondary factor of fiscal collapse—the breaking down of the tax-paying classes everywhere under the ever-increasing burden of State exaction. The final fiscal process he oddly describes as “a crude experiment in socialism.” Putting the decay of population and the increase of burdens

¹ *Decadence.* (Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture.) By the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour, 1908, p. 8.

² See above, pp. 23-24. On the whole question see the very full survey of W. R. Patterson, *The Nemesis of Nations*, 1907, p. 265 sq.

together, he pronounces that "they absolutely require themselves to be explained by causes more general and more remote"; and his answer—confessedly a mere restatement of the problem—is just the word "Decadence." The process is simply formulated, once more, in terms of its name. The questioner does not even take the further analytical step of asking how the Eastern Empire came to endure a thousand years longer than the Western; and why the decadence did not similarly operate there.

If anything has been made out in the foregoing survey, we have got further than this; and indeed from any point of view the arrest of the analysis is surprising. Supposing failure of population to be the central phenomenon, we have obviously to ask: What were the political differentia of the progressive and the ostensibly declining states of population? How were the peoples ruled when they were strong, expansive, and collectively equal to their burdens? Surely the answer is obvious. Republican Greece and Republican Rome were self-governing communities, or aggregates of such, supporting themselves by individualist production of all kinds, breeding beyond and not under the apparent limit of food-production. When Romanised Italy ceased to produce a sufficiency of men, she had ceased to produce a sufficiency of things; and this latter failure, entailing the other, can be shown to have been a direct result of the exaction of all manner of subsistence from conquered territories. So far, there is no mystery.

Our querist, however, affirms a diminution of population not only in Italy but throughout the Empire. Here we must first question the assertion. Pestilences, such as that of 166 A.C., doubtless visited most parts of the Empire; but pestilences belong also to the pre-imperial period, and need not here be specially considered. As to Greece, the facts have been already given. The depopulation of that, after Alexander, was primarily a matter of exodus to the richer conquered lands, where a new Hellenistic civilisation arose under purely monarchic rule, and therefore unaccompanied by the all-round, self-developing mental energy which had marked the life of "free" Greece. In Byzantium, of course, the mental stagnation, under Christian autocracy, was no less complete. But there is no evidence whatever that after Constantine the principle of population failed in the Eastern Empire, especially when that was restricted by the amputation of the tributary territories.¹

¹ Gibbon's generalisation (end of ch. 10) as to a "diminution of the human species" throughout the Empire is confessedly founded on very imperfect evidence, applying only to Alexandria, and very doubtful even at that point.

Note

Did population then fail in Gaul and Spain and Africa? If so, when? As to Gaul, there is evidence that after the conquest population and productivity increased, though the latter had not previously been low—witness the loot taken by Cæsar at Toulouse. Gaul was certainly taxed exorbitantly; but Julian, as we saw, prudently lessened the drain; and Mommsen describes both Gaul and Spain as flourishing in their Romanised period.¹ They continued, in fact, to be, with North Africa, the main sources of the revenue of the Western Empire down to its collapse. Materially, they in some respects went forward, notably in the case of the region of old Carthage. The element wherein they were decadent was precisely that of free manhood, everywhere eviscerated by autocratic and bureaucratic rule. Therefore it was that, like Britain—similarly productive of revenue in the imperial period—they were unable to defend themselves against the final barbarian inroads. Had Honorius carried out his scheme for a measure of Home Rule in Gaul,² and followed it up by a similar scheme for Spain, Italy indeed might all the sooner have lost her hold on them as milch kine, but both provinces might conceivably have developed a new life centuries before they historically did.

The Conservative statesman has in fact, and very naturally, excluded from consideration the central political factor. Echoing the Gibbon-Mommsen-Renan thesis as to the excellence of the Antonine government of the Mediterranean world, he ignores as those writers did the vital problem: Wherein lies the felicity of a world wholly at the mercy of the chance of the election of a good emperor by a mercenary soldiery? To fall back on phrases about the Empire “respecting local feelings, encouraging local government,” and being “accepted by the conquered as the natural organisation of the world,” is merely to burke the real issue as to the political viability of communities satisfied with such a system, content to rest the social pyramid forever on its apex. To say that the conditions of the Empire under the Antonines were “getting better” is merely to close the eyes to the frightful hazard of imperial succession. A world absolutely dependent for its betterment—nay, even for its safe continuance—on the chance of a good succession of despots is a world doomed by the mere law of variation.

If we will but gauge moral and economic forces in human affairs as we gauge physical forces in that toil of science of which the

¹ *History*, vol. v (*The Provinces*). Cp. Merivale, *General History*, p. 682.

² See Gibbon, ch. 31, end. On Gibbon's and Guizot's interpretation of the scheme, see Prof. Bury's note on Gibbon, *in loc.*

Conservative statesman has learned to recognise the efficacy, we shall deliver ourselves from the mystery-mongering which he is fain to substitute for the old shibboleth of "the divine will." To trace causation in a known civilisation is not to pretend either to understand all social sequences in all ages or to predict the destinate future: it is but to recognise the real reactions of human proclivities and procedures which habit and prejudice have been wont to contemplate uncritically. The late Sir John Seeley, who at times hardly advances on Kingsley as an interpreter of history, grappled in his day with our problem; and he too specified the Antonine age as a notably hopeful period, from which he dates the decadence:—

"A century of unparalleled tranquillity and virtuous government is followed immediately by a period of hopeless ruin and dissolution. A century of rest is followed not by renewed vigour, but by incurable exhaustion. Some principle of decay must have been at work; but what principle? We answer: it was a period of sterility or barrenness in human beings; the human harvest was bad. And among the causes of this barrenness we find, in the more barbarous nations, the enfeeblement produced by the too abrupt introduction of civilisation and universally the absence of industrial habits, and the disposition to listlessness which belongs to the military character."¹

One is tempted to apply the theory of human crops to the case of the chair of history at Cambridge. Prof. Seeley's theory is an edifying variant on that of Mr. Balfour. Where one thesis finds the key to all in the emperor, the other sees failure of the human harvest the moment the imperial succession goes wrong. And while the Professor offers the semblance of a reason for the alleged failure in the human breed, it is really too nugatory for discussion. If the "barbarous nations" alluded to were Gaul and Spain, they had suffered the "abrupt introduction of civilisation" more than two hundred years before. Egypt and Syria and Greece and North Africa had older civilisations than the Roman. Germany was not decadent. The decay of industrial life in Italy had begun long before the Empire. As well might we say that a bad human crop there had preceded the Etruscan conquest, the invasion by Hannibal, and the civil wars. To cite, as does Prof. Seeley, the pestilence of the year 166 as a beginning of depopulation, is to ignore the problem of three hundred years of previous depopulation in Italy, and to set up a misconception as to the rest of the Empire. According to Gibbon, the long pestilence of the years 250–265 was the worst of all.²

¹ *Lectures and Essays*, 1870: Lecture on "Roman Imperialism," p. 54. ² Ch. 10, *end.*

More plausibly, Prof. Seeley goes on to argue that "what the plague had been to the population, that the *fiscus* was to industry. It broke the bruised reed; it converted feebleness into utter and incurable debility. Roman finance had no conception of the impolicy of laying taxation so as to depress enterprise and trade. The *fiscus* destroyed capital in the Roman Empire. The desire of accumulation languished where the Government lay in wait for all savings—*locupletissimus quisque in prædam correptus*. All the intricate combinations by which man is connected to man in a progressive society disappeared."¹ But this is a finally excessive description of a process which had been in full swing in the time of Cicero, and which subsisted for three hundred years after Marcus Aurelius in the West. A generation after Marcus came the powerful Severus, whose son Caracalla could find millions of money to build his immense baths at Rome, still monstrous in their ruins; and seventy years after Caracalla, Diocletian, wielding the Empire at its utmost extension, could build still vaster baths for the imperial city at which he had ceased to dwell. With a debased silver coinage,² the emperors of that day seemed to feel no fatal lack of real revenue, and maintained, at great cost, huge armies for the control and defence of their enormous realm.

It is impossible to see why the age of the Antonines should be taken as a turning point in the Empire's history rather than the age of Diocletian. That great organiser seems to have partly provoked the insurrection of the Bagaudæ in Gaul by taxation; but the Bagaudæ were a *jacquerie* oppressed by the nobles, as their fathers had been before Cæsar, and as their posterity was long afterwards; and their wrongs may as well have been at the hands of their lords as at those of the autocrat.³ However that might be, Roman rule in Gaul survived the revolt of the Bagaudæ, yielding a great revenue to Constantine; and at the time of the fall of Rome Gaul was much more productive than Italy. All this is beside the case. To say that "the downfall of the Empire is accounted for" by the *fiscus*⁴ is to raise the question whether the Empire, as such, could have been run by any other method. The Professor himself pronounces that "Government in its helplessness was driven" to fiscal oppression. Then fiscal oppression belonged to the nature of the Empire. Once

¹ Essay cited, p. 56.

² Prof. Bury (note to Gibbon in his ed. i, 281) cites the debased silver coinage as a proof of the "distress of the Empire" and the "bankruptcy of the Government." This is an unwarranted inference. See above, p. 80.

³ Cp. Gibbon, ch. 13, Bohn ed. i, 427-28; Merivale, *General History*, pp. 572-74. Bagaudæ seem to have recruited the army of Julian. (Ed. note on Gibbon, as cited, ii, 474.)

⁴ Seeley, as cited, p. 57.

more we return to the true line of sequence and explanation. Every step and stage in decadence belonged to the process of conquest, of confiscation, of subjection of foreign races, who were made to pay for the vast machinery that kept them subject till they were unfit for self-defence.

[What is true of the Roman fisc was true till the other day of the Turkish, another product of militarist imperialism, similarly collateral with mental stagnation. Depopulation and arrest of production in the East under Turkish rule are to be explained in substantially the way in which we have explained them for ancient Rome. And it is significant that the prospect of regeneration for Turkey has begun after the amputation of many of the provinces over which she maintained an alien rule. Her future visibly depends on the continuance of the processes of self-maintenance and development of the principle of self-government throughout the subsisting State.]

There is a danger that, in insisting on the primarily moral causation of the process of social disease and decay, we may on the one hand relapse into a delusive sense of moral superiority, and on the other hand fail to realise how the subjective moral divagation becomes politically effectual in structural and economic change. It is the understood process of causation that is alone truly instructive. But the instruction is deepened in the ratio of our realisation of the decay. Though it is clear that before Rome many a civilisation had gone to violent wreck, there is in recorded history no more overwhelming memory of long triumph and long downfall than that "from the far-distant morning when a small clan of peasants and shepherds felled the forests on the Palatine to raise altars to its tribal deities, down to the tragic hour in which the sun of Græco-Latin civilisation set over the deserted fields, the abandoned cities, the homeless, ignorant, and brutalised peoples of Latin Europe."¹ And this whole tremendous arc of triumph and decline is to be understood as the historic expression of the specially conditioned bias of conquest in one people.

The decline is the due sequence of the "rise": everything roots in the wrong relation of communities throughout the Empire. The extension of such a social disease as slavery is one of the symptoms, one of the sequelæ, of the central malady.² A totally progressive State eliminates or minimises slavery; a declining one fails to do so. The economic malady involved affects primarily the dominant or

¹ Ferrero, *Greatness and Decline of Rome*, Eng. tr. 1907, vol. i, pref.

² Cp. Patterson, *Nemesis of Nations*, as cited.

parasitic State or central part, its condition of parasitism being more deadly than its draining effect on the others. *Their* malady lay in their state of subjugation, which was an impoverishment of character and political faculty; and thus it came about that the collapse of the centre of organisation meant the fall of the entire civilisation of Western Europe before the new barbarism.

Rome had so visibly ruined all that we are apt to forget how the process of moral and political retrogression had begun in the Greek world long before. There, however, the Roman conquest was but a consummation; and the economic and political continuance of the Eastern Empire was concurrent with a moral and intellectual contraction which was never recovered from. In a word, varying conditions determined the differences of continuance and evolution in the two spheres. But the causation is none the less clear throughout.

It might be supposed that this reverberating lesson could have been read in only one way—as a warning to the nations against taking the Roman road of conquest and dominion. And yet it is doubtful whether modern States have been at all guided by that lesson, as compared with the extent to which they have been overruled by the sheer difficulty of repeating the evolution. The problem has been faced by Lord Cromer, a ripe ruler, in his very scholarly essay on *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*. The experienced administrator is quite alive to the analogy between the part played of old by Rome around the Mediterranean and in Europe, and that played to-day by England in India and, in some measure, in Egypt. Raised in some degree above the ordinary hallucination of mere dominion, the confused pride of the average man in his country's rule over large portions of the earth, the veteran governor notes that, whereas there was a general acquiescence of the subject peoples in the imperial rule of Rome, no *imperium* to-day has won any such cordial acceptance.¹ Neither France in Algeria and Tunis nor Britain in India and Egypt is an assimilating and unifying power. We may note the proximate explanation, which he does not at first give—to wit, the sundering force of crystallised religious systems. As he later puts it, following Sir Alfred Lyall, religions make nations, where the Romans had to deal with tribes.² But that need not greatly affect our view of the political problem, which would remain if the religious factor were eliminated; and it is over the political problem that Lord Cromer most significantly balances.

Falling back on the method of fatalism, he pronounces, like

¹ *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, 1910, pp. 37-38, 73-91.

² *Id.* p. 91.

others before him, "that Rome, equally with the modern expansive Powers, more especially Great Britain and Russia, was impelled onwards by the imperious and irresistible necessity of acquiring defensible frontiers; that the public opinion of the world scoffed 2,000 years ago, as it does now, at the alleged necessity; and that each onward move was attributed to an insatiable lust for extended dominion."¹ As in all fatalistic reasoning, we are here faced by radical self-contradiction. The "public opinion of the world," which Lord Cromer allows to include a large part of Roman opinion,² could not scoff at an "irresistible necessity": it knew that it was no more irresistibly necessary for A to conquer B than for B to conquer A; and in ascribing to Rome an "insatiable lust for extended dominion" it merely credited Rome with an appetite known to inhere in all States. Rome succeeded in her aim; others failed. Pisa, overborne by Florence, had in her day overborne other communities. Lord Cromer has begged the vital question, which is: Can States, or can they not, live neighbourly? To say that Rome could not because of the ambitions or menaces of others is idle: the menace was reciprocal.

For practical purposes, of course, the thesis is sometimes adequate all round, as when France and Britain, face to face in North America and in India, strove each to oust the other. But at times the plea becomes visibly farcical, as in the recent case of Russia in the Far East, and the earlier case of Britain with regard to Afghanistan. We can all remember the temporary growth of the doctrine of "a scientific frontier." First you want a river; then you need the territory beyond the river; then you need the line of hills commanding that territory; then the territory behind the hills becomes a *sine qua non*.³ In this case the doctrine has disappeared with the policy, and *that* disappeared simply because it failed. The event has proved that the doctrine was a chimera. And nobody to-day probably will maintain that Russia lay under an imperious and irresistible necessity to go and be defeated by the Japanese in Manchuria; or that she could not conceivably have stopped short of that extremity.

The use sometimes made of the word "cupidity" is apt to obscure the problem. There is cupidity of power and conquest as well as of territory, revenue, plunder. Roman cupidity was of all kinds. But so was that of "the" Greeks. Lord Cromer employs

¹ *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, pp. 19-20.

² *Id.* p. 22.

³ Compare Lord Cromer's mention (p. 32) of the doubt as to whether the Himalayas made a secure frontier.

the old false dichotomy—above discussed—that marks the Greeks as “individualistic” and the Romans as somehow unitary.¹ As we have seen, the original Roman City-State was just the same kind of thing as the Greek: it was opportunity that made “the Romans” expand, whereas “the Greeks,” down to Alexander, remained segregated in their States. What was common and fatal to both, what led Greece to dissolution and Rome to downfall, was the primary impulse to combat, the inability to refrain from jealousy, hate, and war. And for the moderns, seeing this, the problem is, Can they refrain?

Note

Note

Either we are thus to learn from history, or all history is as a novel without a purpose. And Lord Cromer, as a man of action, cannot in effect take this attitude, though he recoils from any clear statement of the lesson. On the one hand, he makes the most of the differentia between ancient and modern Imperialism. English rulers in India, he admits, originally aimed at home revenue, and did for a time practise sheer plunder;² the British rule no longer does either: which is in effect an admission that one “imperious and irresistible necessity” of the Roman rule has been successfully resisted—shall we say, by modern enlightenment? But he will not frankly take the further step and say that for the ideal of dominion over backward races we should substitute the ideal of their education and purposive evolution. Rather he makes the most of the difficulties, enlarging in the familiar fashion on the dividedness and differentiation of the Indian peoples and the relative stationariness of Islam: two undeniable propositions, of which the first is nothing to the purpose, since we are discussing the lines of progressive policy; while the second merely incurs the rejoinder that Christendom was long as stationary as Islam, and that Christian Abyssinia is so still.

As was, indeed, to be expected, Lord Cromer will rather homologate the whole Roman process, decadence and collapse and all, than pronounce it what it was, a vast divagation in human progress. Ultimately he does not even blench at the proposition that the whole ruin “had to” take place³ by way of preparing for the civilisation that was to follow, even as he argues that “the” Romans “had to” undertake fresh wars where they (on the urging, as he admits, of their wisest men) had sought to evade further conquest by recognising “buffer States”⁴—as who should say that whatever course a majority or a Government do take “had to” be

¹ *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, p. 14. ² *Id.*, pp. 43, 65-68. ³ *Id.*, p. 62. ⁴ *Id.*, p. 22.

taken. The answer to such reasoning is the mention of the fact, which he admits, that it was "a supreme principle of the Roman Government to acknowledge no frontier Power with equal rights."¹ Can it be still a question whether that principle is to be transcended?

On the final issue as to what the ruling nations "have to" do to-day as regards the subject peoples, the disinterested student can hardly hesitate, however the ex-administrator may feel bound to balance. "The Englishman," Lord Cromer tells us, truly enough as regards the average citizen, "would be puzzled to give any definite answer" to the question *Quo vadis?* in matters imperial.² He may well be, when Lord Cromer visibly is, despite the ostensible emphasis with which he exhorts his countrymen to keep "the *animus manendi* strong within them."³ The danger is that, noting the formal conclusion rather than the implicit lesson of Lord Cromer's very able survey, "the Englishman" may turn from his puzzle to some new insanity of imperialism. Not many years have passed since English wiseacres were speculating on a "break-up" of China, and a dominion of some other State over her huge area and multitudinous millions. He would be a bad sample of modernity who should now regret that China is apparently on the way, like Japan, to build up a new progressive civilisation in the "unchanging East."⁴ But it is perhaps as much to the sheer impracticability of further great conquests as to any alert and conscious reading of the lesson of history that we owe the growing disposition of modern States to seek their good in their own development. If so, provided that the ideal be changed, "it is well, if not so well."

¹ *Ancient and Modern Imperialism*, p. 26, citing Mommsen.

² *Id.* p. 118.

³ *Id.* p. 126.

⁴ Mr. Balfour, using this egregious expression in his lecture on Decadence (p. 35), explains that "the 'East' is a term most loosely used. It does not here include China and Japan, and *does* include parts of Africa." At the same time it does not refer to the ancient Jews and Phœnicians. One is moved to ask, Does it include the Turks and the Persians? If not, in view of all the other exceptions, might it not be well to drop the "unchanging" altogether?

PART IV

THE CASE OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLICS

NOTE ON LITERATURE

No quite satisfactory history of Italy has appeared in English. The standard modern Italian history, that of Cesare Cantù, has been translated into French; but in English there has been no general history of any length since Procter and Spalding. Col. Procter's *History of Italy* (published as by G. Perceval, 1825; 2nd ed. 1844) has merit, but is not abreast of modern studies. Spalding's *Italy and the Italian Islands* (3 vols. 3rd ed. 1845) is an excellent work of its kind, covering Italian history from the earliest times, but is also in need of revision. The comprehensive work of Dr. T. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders* (2nd ed. 1892-99, 8 vols.) comes, down to the death of Charlemagne.

Of special histories there are several. One of the best and latest is that of *The Lombard Communes*, by Prof. W. F. Butler (1906). Captain H. E. Napier, in the preface to his *Florentine History* (1846, 6 vols.) rightly contended that "no people can be known by riding post through their country against time"; but his six learned volumes are ill-written and ill-assimilated. The best complete history of Florence, the typical Italian Republic, is the long *Histoire de Florence* by F. T. Perrens (9 tom. 1877-84; Eng. tr. of one vol. by Hannah Lynch, 1892). T. A. Trollope's *History of the Commonwealth of Florence* (1865, 4 vols.) is less indigestible than Napier's, but is gratuitously diffuse, and is written in large part in unfortunate imitation of the pseudo-dramatic manner of Carlyle. It is further blemished by an absurd index. Neither this nor Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt's *History of the Venetian Republic* (1860, 4 vols.; new ed. in two large vols. 1900) has much sociological value, though the latter is copious and painstaking, albeit also diffuse. The *Genoa* of J. Theodore Bent (1881) is an interesting sketch; but the well-read author fails in orderly construction.

A good short manual is the *Italy* of Mr. Hunt (Macmillan's Historical Course); and an excellent compendium is supplied by the two treatises of Oscar Browning (1894-95), *Guelphs and Ghibellines* (covering the period 1250-1409) and *The Age of the Condottieri*, covering the Renaissance, to 1530. Bryce and Hallam are alike helpful to general views; and it is still

profitable to return to the condensed *History of the Italian Republics* by Sismondi (written for the English "Cabinet Cyclopædia" in 1832), though it needs revision in detail. In his two volumes entitled *The Fall of the Roman Empire* (1834) that author has given a useful conspectus of the period covered by Gibbon's great work. Sismondi's larger and earlier *Histoire des républiques italiennes* has never ceased to be well worth study, though the *Geschichte von Italien* of H. Leo (1829) improves upon it in several respects. It has been revised and condensed (Routledge, 1 large vol. 1906) by Mr. William Boultong. For the early period the most comprehensive survey is the *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter* of Ludo Moritz Hartmann (3 Bde. in 5, 1897-1911) which comes down to the tenth century.

Among modern monographs that of Alfred von Reumont on *Lorenzo de' Medici* (Eng. tr. 1876, 2 vols.) in nearly every way supersedes the old work of Roscoe, whose *Leo X*, again, is practically superseded by later works on the Renaissance, in particular those of Burckhardt (Eng. tr. of Geiger's ed. in 1 vol. 1892) and the late J. A. Symonds. Miss Duffy has a good chapter on Florentine trade and finance in her *Story of the Tuscan Republics*, 1892; and the short work of F. T. Perrens, *La civilisation florentine du 13e au 16e siècle* (1892—in the *Bibliothèque d'histoire illustrée*) is luminous throughout; but Ranke's *History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations* (Eng. tr. 1887), which deals with the Italy of 1494-1514, is little more than a sand-heap of incident. On the economic side there is a good research in Pignotti's essay on Tuscan Commerce in his *History of Tuscany* (Eng. tr. 1823, vol. iii). Much interesting detail is given, with much needless rhetoric, in *The Guilds of Florence*, by Edgcumbe Staley, 1906.

Of great general value is the elaborate work of Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom im Mittelalter* (4te Aufl. 8 Bde. 1886-96; Eng. tr. by Mrs. Hamilton, 8 vols. 1895-1902), which, however, suffers from the disparity of its purposes, combining as it does, a topographical history of the city of Rome with a full history of its politics. It remains a valuable mass of materials rather than a history proper. The same criticism applies to the very meritorious *Geschichte der Stadt Rom* of A. von Reumont (3 Bde. 1867-70), which begins with the very origin of the city, and comes down to our own time.

But there has risen in contemporary Italy a school of historical students who are rewriting the history of the great period in the light of the voluminous archives which have been preserved by municipalities. One outcome of this line of investigation is Prof. Villari's *The Two First Centuries of Florentine History* (Eng. tr. of first 2 vols. 1894). New light, further, has been thrown on the commercial history of Italy in the Dark Ages and early Middle Ages by the admirable research

of Prof. W. von Heyd, of which the French translation by Furcy Raynaud, *Histoire du commerce du Levant au moyen age* (1886, 2 tom.) is recast and considerably enlarged by the author, while the Renaissance period is illuminated by R. Pöhlmann's treatise, *Die Wirthschafts Politik der Florentiner Renaissance und das Princip der Verkehrsfreiheit* (Leipzig, 1878).

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS

§ 1

To understand aright the phenomenon of medieval Italian civilisation we need first to realise that it was at bottom a fresh growth on the culture roots of the cities of Romanised Italy. When the imperial centre was shifted to the East, as already remarked, the people of Italy began a fresh adaptation to their conditions; those of Rome, instead of leading, standing most zealously to the old way of things. All the barbarian irruptions did but harass and hinder the new development; they finally counted for little in its upward course. There is a prevalent hallucination, akin to others concerning the "Teutonic race," in the shape of a belief that Italy was somehow "regenerated" by the "free nations of the North." No accepted formula could well be further away from the facts. If the political qualities of the "Teutonic race," whatever that may mean, are to be generalised on the facts of the invasions of Italy by the Germanic tribes, from Theodoric to Frederick Barbarossa, they must be summed up as consisting in a general incapacity for progressive civilisation. The invaders were, in fact, too disparate in their stage of evolution from that of the southern civilisation to be capable of assimilating it and carrying it on. Living a life of strife and plunder like the early Romans, they found in the disarmed Italians, and in their rapidly degenerate predecessors of their own stock, an easier prey than the Romans had ever known till they went to the East; but in the qualities either of military or of civil organisation they were conspicuously inferior to the Romans of the early Republic. Men of the highest executive ability appeared from time to time among their leaders; a circumstance of great interest and importance, as suggesting that a percentage of genius occurs in all stages of human culture; but the mass of the invaders was always signally devoid of the very characteristics so romantically attributed to them by German, English, and even French Teutophiles—to wit, the gifts

N. (of union, discipline, order, and self-government. These elements of civilisation depend on the functioning of the nerve centres, and are not to be evolved by mere multiplication of animated flesh, which was the main constructive process carried on in ancient Germania. Precisely because they were, as Tacitus noted, the most homogeneous of the European races of that era,¹ they were incapable of any rapid and durable social development. It is only mixed races that can evolve or sustain a complex civilisation.

“The Germans,” as we historically trace them at the beginning of our era, were barbarians (*i.e.*, men between savagery and civilisation) in the most rudimentary stage, making scanty beginnings in agriculture; devoid of the useful arts, save those normally practised by savages; given to drunkenness; chronically at war; and alternating at other times between utter sloth and energetic hunting—the pursuit which best fitted them for war. Because the peoples thus situated were in comparison with the Romans “chaste” and monogamous—a common enough virtue in savage life²—they are supposed by their admirers to have been excellent material for a work of racial regeneration. Only in an indirect sense does this hold good. As a new “cross” to the Italian stocks they may indeed have made for beneficial variation; but by themselves they were mere raw material, morally and psychologically. Their reputed virtue of chastity disappeared as soon as the barbarians passed from a northern to a southern climate,³ their vices so speedily exceeding the measure of paganism that even a degree of physiological degeneration soon set in. Even in their own land, met by a fiercer barbarism than their own, they collapsed miserably before the Huns. As regards the arts and sciences, moral and physical, it is impossible to trace to the invaders any share in the progress of Italy,⁴ save in so far as they were doubtless a serviceable cross with the older native stocks. To their own stock, which had been relatively too homogeneous, the gain of crossing was mixed. Aurelian had put the case with rude truth when he told a bragging embassy of Goths that they knew neither the arts of war nor those of peace;⁵ and so long as the Empire in any section had resources

¹ *Germania*, c. 2.

² For a good view of the many points in common between Teutonic barbarism and normal savagery, see the synopsis of Guizot, *Histoire de la civilisation en France*, i, 7ième leçon. Lamprecht acquiesces (*What is History?* 1905, p. 213).

³ “Everything about them [the Longobards], even for many years after they have entered upon the sacred soil of Italy, speaks of mere savage delight in bloodshed and the rudest forms of sensual indulgence” (Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, 2nd ed. v, 156. Cp. Lamprecht, *What is History?* pp. 48-49.)

⁴ Ranke’s statement (*Latin and Teutonic Nations*, Eng. tr. p. 1) that the “collective German nations at last brought about” a Latino-Teutonic unity is a merely empirical proposition, true in no organic sense.

⁵ Gibbon, ch. 11, Bohn ed. i, 365.

enough to levy and maintain trained armies, it was able to destroy any combination of the Teutons. There was always generalship enough for that, down till the days of Teutonic civilisation. Claudius the Second routed their swarms as utterly as ever did Marius or Cæsar; Stilicho annihilated Rodogast, and always out-generalled Alaric; Aetius, after routing Franks, Burgundians, and Visigoths, overwhelmed the vast host of Attila's Huns; and in a later age the single unsleeping brain of Belisarius, scantily weaponed with men and money by a jealous sovereign, could drive back from Rome in shame and ruin all the barbarian levy of Wittich.¹

As against the "Teutonic" theory of Italian regeneration, a hearing may reasonably be claimed for the "Etruscan," thus set forth:—"The Etruscans were undoubtedly one of the most remarkable nations of antiquity—the great civilisers of Italy—and their influence not only extended over the whole of the ancient world but has affected every subsequent age.....That portion of the Peninsula where civilisation earliest flourished, whence infant Rome drew her first lessons, has in subsequent ages maintained its pre-eminence.....It was Etruria which produced Giotto, Brunelleschi, Fra Angelico, Luca Signorelli, Fra Bartolomeo, Michael Angelo, Hildebrand, 'the starry Galileo,' and such a noble band of painters, sculptors and architects as no other country of modern Europe can boast. Certainly no other region of Italy has produced such a galaxy of brilliant intellects.....Much may be owing to the natural superiority of the race, which, in spite of the revolutions of ages, remains essentially the same, and preserves a distinctive character." (G. Dennis, *The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, 3rd ed. 1883, Introd. vol. i, pp. cii-iv.) Assumption for assumption, this is as defensible as the others.

What happened in Italy after Odoaker was that, for sheer lack of unitary government on the part of the invaders, the cities, which preserved the seeds and norms of the old civilisation, gradually grew into new organic life. Under the early Empire they had been disarmed and unwalled, to make them incapable of revolt. Aurelian, stemming the barbarian tide, began to wall them afresh; but, as we have seen, the withdrawal of the seat of empire left Italy economically incapable of action on an imperial scale; and the personal imbecility of such emperors as Honorius filled up the cup of the humiliation of what once was Rome. But the invaders on the whole did little better; and the material they brought was more

¹ It is true that none of the generals mentioned was an Italian. Stilicho was indeed a Vandal; Aetius was a Scythian; Belisarius was a Thracian; and Narses probably a Persian. But they handled armies made up of all races; and their common qualification was a military science to be learned only from Roman tradition. Cp. Finlay, *History of Greece from its Conquest by the Romans*, ed. 1877, i, 211.

hopeless than what they found. The passage from full barbarism to order and civilisation cannot conceivably be made in one generation or one age. Athaulf, the able successor of Alaric, passed his competent judgment on the matter in words which outweigh all the rhetoric of modern romanticism: "He was wont to say that his warmest wish had at first been to obliterate the Roman name, and to make one sole Gothic empire, so that all that which had been Romania should be called Gothia, and that he, Athaulf, should play the same part as did Cæsar Augustus. But when by much experience he was convinced that the Goths were incapable of obedience to laws, because of their unbridled barbarism, and that the State without laws would cease to be a State, he had chosen to seek glory in rebuilding its integrity and increasing the Roman power by Gothic forces, so that posterity should at least regard him as the restorer of the empire which he was unable to replace. Therefore he strove to avoid war and to establish peace."¹

It needed only command of the machinery of systematic government—if indeed the same qualities had not been in full play long before—to develop in the Teutons every species of evil that could be charged against the Southern. The fallacy of attributing the crimes of Byzantium to the physiological degeneration of an "old" race is exposed the moment we compare the record with the history of the Franks, as told by Gregory of Tours. Christian writers continue to hold up Nero as a typical product of decadent paganism, saying nothing of the Christian Chilperic, "the Nero of France," or of his father, less ill-famed, Clothaire, the slayer of children, the polygamist, the strictly orthodox Churchman, "certain that Jesus Christ will remunerate us for all the good we do" to his priests.² Odious women were as powerful in Frankish courts as in Byzantine; and the tale of the end of Brunehild is not to be matched in pagan annals. Savage treachery, perjury, parricide, fratricide, filicide, assassination, massacre, debauchery, are if possible more constant notes in the tale of the young barbarism, as told by the admiring saint, than in that of the long-descended civilisation of Constantinople; and the rank and file seem to have been worthy of the heads.

One note of Gibbon's, on "barbaric virtue," *à propos* of the character of Totila, has given one of his editors (Bohn ed.

¹ Paulus Orosius, vii, 43. The record has every appearance of trustworthiness, the historian premising that at Bethlehem he heard the blessed Jerome tell how he had known a wise old inhabitant of Narbonne, who was highly placed under Theodosius, and had known Athaulf intimately; and who often told Jerome how that great and wise king thus delivered himself.

² Sismondi, citing the *Diplomata*, tom. iv, p. 616.

iv, 505) the opportunity to assert that the "natural superiority" of the invaders was manifest wherever they came in contact with their civilised antagonists. As if Aurelian and Belisarius were not the moral equals of Totila. Yet in a previous note (ch. 38, ed. cited, iv, 181) on the Frankish history of Gregory of Tours, Gibbon had truly remarked that "it would not be easy, within the same historical space, to find more vice and less virtue." On that head Sismondi declares (*Histoire des Français*, ed. 1821, i, 403-4; *Fall of the Roman Empire*, i, 263) that "there was not a Merovingian king that was not a father before the age of fifteen and decrepit at thirty." Dunham (*History of the Germanic Empire*, 1834, i, 10) improves on this to the extent of asserting that "those abominable princes generally—such were their premature vices—died of old age before thirty." It is a fair surmise that, Clovis being a barbarian of great executive genius (cp. Guizot, *Essais sur l'histoire de France*, p. 43), his stock was specially liable to degeneration through indulgence. But Motley, whose Teutophile and Celtophobe declamation at times reaches nearly the lowest depth touched by his school, will have it (*Rise of the Dutch Republic*, ed. 1863, p. 12) that later "the Carlovingian race had been exhausted by producing a race of heroes." Any formula avails to support the dogma that "the German was loyal as the Celt was dissolute" (*id.* p. 6).

It is perhaps arguable that the early Teuton had a moral code peculiar to himself. Sismondi (*Fall*, i, 246) remarks, concerning Clothaire's son Gontran, called by Gregory "the good king Gontran," as compared with his brothers: "His morality indeed passed for good; he is only known to have had two wives and one mistress, and he repudiated the first before he married the second; his temper was, moreover, reputed to be a kindly one, for, with the exception of his wife's physician, who was hewn in pieces because he was unable to cure her; of his two brothers-in-law, whom he caused to be assassinated; and of his bastard brother, Gondebald, who was slain by treachery, no other act of cruelty is recorded of him than that he razed the town of Cominges to the ground and massacred all the inhabitants, men, women, and children." Sismondi has also appreciated (p. 205) what Gibbon has missed, the point of the letter of St. Avitus to Gondebald of Burgundy, who had killed his three brothers, exhorting him "to weep no longer with such ineffable piety the death of his brothers, since it was the good fortune of the kingdom which diminished the number of persons invested with royal authority, and preserved to the world such only as were necessary to rule it." Cp. Sismondi's *Hist. des Français*, i, 173.

A great name, such as Theodoric's, tends to dazzle the eye that

looks on the history of the time; but the great name, on scrutiny, is seen to stand for all the progress made in a generation. Theodoric, though he would never learn to read,¹ had a civilised education as regards the arts of government, and what was masterly in his rule may at least as well be attributed to that as to his barbaric stock.² It is important to note that in his reign, by reason of being forced to live on her own products, Italy actually attains the capacity to export grain after feeding herself³—a result to which the king's rule may conceivably have contributed.⁴ In any case, the able ruler represents but a moment of order in an epic of anarchy.⁵ After Theodoric, four kings in turn are assassinated, each by his successor; and the new monarchy begins to go the way of the old. What Belisarius began Narses finished, turning to his ends the hatreds between the Teutonic tribes. Narses gone, a fresh wave of barbarism flowed in under Alboin the Longobard, who in due course was assassinated by his outraged wife; and his successor was assassinated in turn. Yet again, the new barbarism began to wear all the features of disorderly decay; and the Longobard kingdom subsisted for over two hundred years, under twenty-one kings, without decisively conquering Venetia, or the Romagna, or Rome, or the Greek municipalities of the south.⁶ Then came the Frankish conquest, completed under Charlemagne, on the invitation of the Pope, given because the Franks were good Athanasians and the Longobards Arians. The great emperor did what a great man could to civilise his barbarian empire; but instead of fitting it to subsist without him he destroyed what self-governing power it had.⁷ Soon after his death, accordingly, the stone rolled downhill once more; and when Otto of Saxony entered Rome in 951, Italy had undergone five hundred years of Teutonic domination without owing to Teuton activity, save indirectly, one step in civil progress.

¹ Because of his contempt for the religious controversies to which the literature of his time mainly ran.

² See Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom*, B. ii, Kap. 2, as to his constant concern for culture and established usage.

³ Cassiodorus, l. i, c. 34; iii, 44; iv, 5, 7. Cp. Finlay, ed. cited, i, 236, *note*. At the same time it is to be remembered that the population was in some districts greatly reduced. See below, p. 194. And there were, of course, Italian scarcities from time to time. Cassiodorus, v, 35; x, 27; xi, 5.

⁴ Cp. Gibbon, ch. 39 (Bohn ed. iv, 270-71), as to the general care of the administration and the prosperity of agriculture.

⁵ "Gross war Ruhm und Glanz seines [Theodoric's] Reiches; die inneren Schäden und Gefahren desselben blieben damals noch verhüllt, kaum etwa dem Kaiser und den Merovingen erkennbar" (F. Dahn, *Urgeschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker*, in Oncken's *Allg. Gesch.* 1881, i, 246).

⁶ Machiavelli points out (*Istorie Fiorentine*, l. i) that this was the result of their having, at the death of their tyrant Clef, suspended the election of kings and set up the system of thirty dukes or marquises—an arrangement unfavourable to further conquest.

⁷ See Guizot, *Essais sur l'histoire de France*, 7e édit. pp. 185, 189, 195. But cp. pp. 198-201 as to the rise of hereditary feudality. Cp. also the *Histoire de la civilisation en France*, 13e édit. iii, 103; iv, 77-79.

It thus appears that, while barbaric imperialism has different aspects from that of "civilisation," having a possible alterative virtue where the conditions are in themselves stagnant, even then its work is at best negative, and never truly constructive. Charlemagne's work, being one of personal ambition, was in large part destructive even where it ostensibly made for civilisation; and at his death the Germanic world was as literally degenerate, in the sense of being enfeebled for self-defence, as was the Roman world in the period of its imperial decay.¹ It is true that, despite the political chaos which followed on the disintegration of his system, there is henceforth no such apparent continuity of decadence as had followed on the Merovingian conquest,² and his period shows a new intellectual activity.³ But it is a fallacy to suppose that he created this activity, which is traceable to many sources. At most, Charlemagne furthered general civilisation by forcing new culture contacts in Central Europe⁴, and bringing capable men from other countries, notably Alcuin, but also many from Ireland.⁵ But these favourable conditions were not permanent; there was no steady evolution; and we are left asking whether progress might not have occurred in a higher degree had the emperor's work been left unattempted.⁶ In any case, it is long after his time that civilisation is seen to make a steady recovery; and there is probably justice in the verdict of Sismondi, that Otto, an administrator of no less capacity than Charlemagne, did more for it than he.⁷ Guizot, while refusing to admit that the work of Charlemagne passed away, admits Sismondi's proposition that in the tenth century civilised society in Europe was dissolving in all directions.⁸ The subsequent new life came not of imperialism but of the loosening of empire, and not from the Teuton world but from the Latin. It is from the new municipal developments inferribly set up before and under Otto⁹ that the fresh growth derives.

¹ Cp. Sismondi, *Républiques italiennes*, ed. cited, i, 85.

² Guizot, *Histoire de la civilisation en France*, ii, 134, 162; Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 8th ed. pp. 71-74.

³ See Guizot's table, pp. 130-32.

⁴ For a favourable view of the case see Schröder's *Geschichte Karl's des Grossen*, 1869, Kapp. 15, 16; Bryce, as cited, pp. 71-74; and Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom*, B. v, Kap. i, § 2. Gregorovius (p. 20) calls Charlemagne "the Moses of the Middle Ages, who had happily led mankind through the wilderness of barbarism"—a proposition grounded on race-pride rather than on evidence.

⁵ Cp. Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Medieval Thought*, 1884, pp. 15-16, 22.

⁶ There is reason to infer that the very movement of theological thought which marks the ninth century was due to Moslem contacts. These might have been more fruitful under peace conditions than under those of Charlemagne's campaigns.

⁷ *Républiques*, i, 91. "The Holy Roman Empire, taking the name.....as denoting the sovereignty of Germany and Italy vested in a Germanic prince, is the creation of Otto the Great" (Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, p. 80). Gregorovius, instead of giving Otto some such praise as he bestows on Karl, pronounces this time that "the Roman Empire was now regenerated by the German nation" (B. vi, Kap. iii, § 1).

⁸ Guizot, *Civilisation*, iii, 103; Sismondi, *Républiques*, i, 87. In his *Essais*, however (p. 238, etc.), Guizot speaks of the "belle mais stérile tentative de Charlemagne." See the problem discussed in the author's essay on Gibbon, in *Pioneer Humanists*, p. 335 sq.

⁹ Sismondi, *Républiques*, i, 95. See below, pp. 198-99.

N.

Mommsen, in one of those primitively biassed anti-Celtic passages which bar his pretensions to rank as a philosophic historian, declares of the elusive Celtæ of antiquity, in dogged disregard of the question (so often put by German scholars and so often answered against him¹) whether they were not Germans, that, "always occupied with combats and heroic actions, they were scattered far and wide, from Ireland to Spain and Asia Minor; but all their enterprises melted like snow in spring; they created nowhere a great State, and developed no specific civilisation."² The passage would be exactly as true if written of the Teutons. Every tendency and quality which Mommsen in this context³ specifies as Celtic is strictly applicable to the race supposed to be so different from the Celts. "Attachment to the natal soil, so characteristic of the Italians and Germans, was foreign to them.....Their political constitution was imperfect; not only was their national unity feebly recognised,⁴ as happens with all nations at their outset, but the separate communities were lacking in unity of aim, in solid control, in serious political sentiment, and in persistence. The sole organisation of which they were capable was the military,⁵ in which the ties of discipline dispensed the individual from personal efforts." "They preferred the pastoral life to agriculture." "Always we find them ready to roam, or, in other words, to begin the march.....following the profession of arms as a system of organised pillage"; and so on. Such were in strict truth the peculiarities of the Germani, from Tacitus to the Middle Ages; while, on the contrary, there is plenty of evidence that not merely the Gauls but the Britons of Cæsar's day were much better agriculturists than the Germani.⁶

In the early stage the Germani actually shifted their ground every year;⁷ and for every migration or crusade recorded of Celtæ, three are recorded of Teutons. The successive swarms who conquered Italy showed an almost invincible repugnance to the practice of agriculture; in the mass they knew no law and no ideal save the military; they were constantly at tribal war with each other, Frank with Longobard and Goth with Burgundian; Ostrogoths and Gepidæ

¹ *E.g.* Wieseler, *Die deutsche Nationalität der kleinasiatischen Galater*, 1877; Holtzmann, *Kelten und Germanen*, 1855.

² *History of Rome*, bk. ii, ch. iv.

³ The author has examined a later deliverance of Mommsen's on the subject in *The Saxon and the Celt*, pt. iii, § 1.

⁴ In a later passage (bk. v, ch. 7) Mommsen credits the Celts with "unsurpassed fervour of national feeling." His *History* abounds in such contradictions.

⁵ In the passage cited in the last note, the historian asserts that the Celts were unable "to attain, or barely to tolerate.....any sort of fixed military discipline." Such is the consistency of malice.

⁶ *Cp.* Elton, *Origins of English History*, 2nd ed. 1890, p. 115.

⁷ Tacitus, *Germania*, c. 26; Cæsar, *Bell. Gall.* vi, 21.

fought on the side of Attila at Chalons against Visigoths, Franks, Burgundians, and Saxons; they had no idea of racial unity; and not one of their kingdoms ever went well for two successive generations. The story of the Merovingians is one nightmare of ferocious discord; that of the Suevi in Spain, and of the Visigoths in Aquitaine, is mainly a memory of fratricide. As regards organisation, the only Teutonic kings who ever made any headway were those who, like Theodoric, had a civilised education, or, like the great Charles and Louis the Second, eagerly learned all that Roman tradition could teach them. The main stock were so incapable of political combination that, after the deposition of the last incapable Carlovingian (888), they could not arrest their anarchy even to resist the Huns and Saracens. Their later conquests of Italy came to nothing; and in the end, by the admission of Teutonic men of science,¹ there is nothing to show, in all the southern lands they once conquered, that they had ever been there. The supposed type has disappeared; the language never imposed itself; the Vandal kingdom in Africa went down like a house of cards before Belisarius;² the Teutondom of Spain was swept away by the Moors, and it was finally the mixed population that there effected the reconquest. No race had ever a fairer opportunity than the Visigoths in Spain, with a rich land and an undivided monarchy. "Yet after three centuries of undisputed enjoyment, their rule was overthrown at once and for ever by a handful of marauders from Africa. The Goth.....had been weighed in the balance and found wanting."³ In Spain, France, and Italy alike, the language remained Romance; "not a word is to be found in the local nomenclature of Castile, nor yet of the Asturias, to tell the tale of the Visigoth";⁴ even in England, where also the Teutonic peoples for six hundred years failed to attain either progressive civilisation or political order, the Norman conquerors, speaking a Romance language, vitally modified by it the vocabulary of the conquered. So flagrant are the facts that Savigny and Eichhorn in their day both gave the opinion that "the German nations have had to run through their history with an ingrained tendency in their character towards political dismemberment and social inequality." The contrary theory was a later development.⁵

¹ See Virchow, as cited in Penka's *Die Herkunft der Arier*, 1886, p. 98.

² "Never was there a more rapid conquest than that of the vast kingdom of the Vandals" (Sismondi, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, Eng. tr. i, 221).

³ U. R. Burke, *History of Spain*, Hume's ed. i, 115. The special explanation of Visigothic decadence is held by this historian to lie (1) in the elective character of the monarchy, which left the king powerless to check the extortions of the nobles who degraded and enfeebled the common people, and (2) in the ascendancy of the Church.

⁴ Burke, as cited, i, 119.

⁵ Cp. Prof. Paul Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England*, 1892, pp. 10-11, 17.

If, instead of seeking simply for the scientific truth, we sought to meet Teutomania with Celtomania, we might argue that it was only where there was a Celtic basis that civilisation prospered in the tracks of the Roman Empire.¹ Mommsen, in the passage first above cited, declares that the Celts, meaning the Cisalpine Galli, "loved to assemble in towns and villages, which consequently grew and gained in importance among the Celts sooner than in the rest of Italy"—this just after alleging that they preferred pastoral life to agriculture, and just before saying that they were always on the march. If the first statement be true, it would seem to follow that the Celts laid the groundwork of medieval Italian civilisation; for it was in the towns of what had been Cisalpine Gaul that that civilisation flourished. Parts of Northern Italy had in fact been comparatively unaffected by the process which rooted out the peasantry in the South; and there was agriculture and population in the valley of the Po when they had vanished from large areas around and south of Rome.² It is certain that "Celtic" Gaul—whence Charlemagne (semi-civilised by the old environment) wrought hard, but almost in vain, to impose civilisation on Germany—reached unity and civilisation in the Middle Ages, while Germany remained divided and semi-barbaric; that Ireland preserved classical learning and gave it back to the rest of Europe when it had well-nigh disappeared thence;³ that England was civilised only after the Norman Conquest; and that Germany, utterly disrupted by the Reformation where France regained unity, was so thrown back in development by her desperate intestine strifes that only in the eighteenth century did she begin to produce a modern literature. One of the most flagrant of modern fables is that which credits to "Teutonic genius" the great order of church architecture which arose in medieval and later France.⁴ "That sublime manifestation of 'poetry in stone' so strangely called Gothic architecture is not only not Visigothic, but it was unknown in Spain for four hundred

¹ Guizot (*Hist. de la Civ. en France*, i, 2e leçon) has an extraordinary passage to the effect that while German and English civilisation was German *in origin*, that of France is *romaine dès ses premiers pas*. As if there had not been a primary Gallic society as well as a Germanic. If Mommsen be right, the Galli before their conquest were much more advanced in civilisation than the Germani. In point of fact, the Celtæ of Southern France had commercial contact with the Greeks before they had any with the Romans. And in the very passage under notice, Guizot goes on to say that the life and institutions of *northern* France had been essentially *Germanic*. The theorem is hopelessly confused. The plain facts are that German "civilisation" came from Italy and Romanised Gaul, albeit later, as fully as did that of Gaul from Italy.

² Cp. Prof. Butler, *The Lombard Communes*, 1906, pp. 23, 28-30.

³ Poole, *Illustrations*, as cited, p. 11.

⁴ For a pleasing attempt to retain the credit for Teutonism, on the score that German invaders had "determined the character of the population" in the region of Paris, where the new architecture arose, see Dr. E. Richard's *History of German Civilisation*, New York, 1911, pp. 203-4. It is not explained at what stage the German responsibility for French evolution ceased.

years after the destruction of the Goths."¹ The Goth was not a builder but a wrecker.

But if anything has been proved by the foregoing analyses, it is that race theories are, for the most part, survivals of barbaric pseudo-science; that culture stage and not race (save as regards the need for mixture), conditions and not hereditary character, are the clues to the development of all nations, "race" being a calculable factor only where many thousands of years of given environments have made a conspicuous similarity of type, setting up a disadvantageous homogeneity. It was simply their prior and fuller contact with Greece and Rome, and further their greater mixture of stocks, that civilised the Galli so much earlier than the Germani. On the other hand, the national failure in Spain and Italy of the Teutonic stocks, as such, proves only that idle northern barbarians, imposing themselves as a warrior caste on an industrious southern population, were (1) not good material for industrial development, and (2) were probably at a physiological disadvantage in the new climate. Southerners would doubtless have failed similarly in Scandinavia.

I know of no thorough investigation of the amalgamation of the stocks, or the absorption or disappearance of the northern. There is some reason to suppose that early in Rome's career of conquest there began in the capital a substitution of more southerly physiological types—eastern and Spanish—for those of the early Latins. But the Italians at all times seem to have undergone a climatic selection which adapted them to Italy, where the northerners, whether Celt or Teuton, were not so adapted. The supposed divergence of character between northern and southern Italians, insisted on by the former in our own time, certainly cannot be explained by any Teutonic intermixture; for the Teutons were settled in all parts of Italy, and nowhere does the traditional blond type remain. Exactly such differences, it should be remembered, are locally alleged as between Norwegians and Danes, northern and southern Germans, and northern and southern English. If there be any real generic and persistent difference of temperament (there is none in variety of moral bias and mental capacity) or of nervous energy, it is presumably to be traced to climate. Some aspects of the problem are discussed at length in *The Saxon and the Celt*, pt. i, §§ 4, 5.

§ 2

The new life of Italy, so to speak, came of the ultimate

¹ Burke, as cited, i, 118. On the "Gothic mania," cp. Michelet, *Hist. de France*, vii—*Renaissance*: Introd. § 10 and note in App.

impotence of the northern invaders for imperialism. Again and again, from the time of Odoaker, we find signs of a growth of new life in the cities, now partly thrown on their own resources; and it is only the too great stress of the subsequent invasions that postpones their fuller growth for so many centuries. It is to be remembered that these invasions wrought absolute devastation where, even under Roman rule, there had been comparative well-being. Thus the province of Illyria, between the Alps and the Danube, whose outlying and exposed character made it unattractive to the senatorial monopolists, was under the Empire well populated by a free peasantry, who abundantly recruited the army.¹ In the successive invasions this population was almost obliterated; and when Odoaker conquered the Rugians, who then held the territory, he brought multitudes of them into stricken Italy, to people and cultivate its waste lands.² Theodoric, in turn, is held to have revived prosperity after overthrowing Odoaker; and we have seen reason to believe that after the loss of Africa even southern Italy perforce revived her agriculture;³ but early in Theodoric's reign (496) we find Pope Gelasius declaring, doubtless with exaggeration, that in the provinces of Aemilia and Tuscany human life was almost extinct; while Ambrose writes that Bologna, Modena, Reggio, Piacenza, and the adjacent country remained ruined and desolate.⁴ After Theodoric, Belisarius, in a struggle that exhausted central Italy, almost annihilated the Goths; and under Narses, who finished the conquest, there was again some recovery, the scattered remnants of the population congregating in the towns, so that Milan and others made fresh headway,⁵ though the country remained in large part deserted.

N.B.

This would seem to have been the turning-point in the long welter of Italian history. The Longobard conquest under Alboin forced on the process of driving the older inhabitants into the cities. The Ostrogothic kings, while they unwallled the towns they captured, had fortified Pavia, which was able to resist Alboin for four years, thus giving the other towns their lesson; and as he advanced the natives fled before him to Venice, to Genoa, to the cities of the Pentapolis, to Pisa, to Rome, to Gaeta, to Naples, and to Amalfi.⁶

¹ Sismondi, *Fall of the Roman Empire*, as cited, i, 35, 172, 238.

² Gibbon, ch. 36, *end.*

³ Above, pp. 188.

⁴ Citations in Gibbon, ch. 36; Bohn ed. iv, 105. For a somewhat fuller sketch than Gibbon's see Manso, *Geschichte des ost-gothischen Reiches in Italien*, 1824, §§ 73-79. Cp. Spalding, *Italy*, i, 398-400. It is possible that Gelasius and Ambrose were thinking mainly of the disappearance of the landowners, and were overlooking the serfs. Deserted villas would give the effect of desolation while the mass of the common people remained.

⁵ Sismondi, *Fall*, i, 236. Cp. Gibbon, ch. 43; Bohn ed. iv, 536.

⁶ Sismondi, *Fall*, i, 240; Gibbon, ch. 45, ed. cited, v, 116-18.

Above all, the cities of the coast, still adhering to the Greek Empire, and impregnable from land, were now allowed to retain for their own defence the revenue they had formerly paid to Constantinople; Naples won the right to elect her own dukes; and Venice won the status of an equal ally of Byzantium.¹ Thus once more there began to grow up, in tendency if not in form and name, republics of civilised and industrious men, in the teeth of barbarism and under the shadow of the name of empire.² Even in the eighth and ninth centuries the free populations of Rome and Ravenna were enrolled under the four heads of *clerici*, *optimates militiæ*, the *milites* or *exercitus*, and the *cives onesti* or free *populus*.³ Beneath all were the great mass of unfree; but here at least was a beginning of new municipal life. The Longobards had not, as has been so often written, revived the spirit of liberty; conquest is the negation of the reciprocity in which alone liberty subsists; but they had driven other men into the conditions where the idea of liberty could revive; and in so far as "Lombard" civilisation in the next two hundred years distanced that of the Franks,⁴ it was owing to the revival of old industries in the towns and the reactions of the other Italian cities, no less than to the renewed growth of rural population and agriculture.

Sismondi (*Républiques*, i, 55, 402-5; *Fall*, i, 242) uses the conventional phrase as to the Longobards reviving the spirit of freedom, while actually showing its fallacy. In his *Short History of the Italian Republics* (p. 13), he tells in the same breath that the invaders "introduced" several of their sentiments, "particularly the habit of independence and resistance to authority," and that in their conquests they considered the inhabitants "their property equally with the land." Dunham (*Europe in the Middle Ages*, 1835, i, 8) similarly speaks of the Longobards as "infusing a new spirit" into the "slavish minds of the Italians," and then proceeds (p. 9) to show that what happened was a flight of Italians from Longobard tyranny. He admits further (p. 17) that the Longobard code of laws was "less favourable to social happiness than almost any other, the Visigothic, perhaps, alone excepted"; and (p. 19) that the Longobards, wherever they could, "destroyed the [free] municipal institutions by subjecting the cities to the

¹ Gibbon, as cited, v, 118.

² Sismondi, *Fall*, i, 241. The movement, as Sismondi notes, extended to Spain, to Africa, to Illyria, and to Gaul.

³ Butler, *The Communes of Lombardy*, p. 45.

⁴ Sismondi, *Fall*, i, 259. The historian decides that "the race of the conquerors took root and thrived in the soil, without entirely superseding that of the conquered natives, whose language still prevailed," but gives no proofs for the first proposition. The uncritical handling of these questions in the histories leaves essential problems still unsolved. Cp. Hodgkin, *Italy and her Invaders*, 2nd ed. vi (bk. vii), 579-93; vii (bk. viii), 384, 385. Mr. Boulting does not try to solve the problem.

jurisdiction of the great military feudatories, the true and only tyrants of the country." Gibbon decides that the Longobards possessed freedom to elect their sovereign, and sense to decline the frequent use of that dangerous privilege (ch. 45, Bohn ed. v, 125); but pronounces their government milder and better than that of the other new barbarian kingdoms (p. 127). Sismondi again (*Fall*, i, 259; so also Boulting in his recast of the *Républiques*, p. 8) declares that their laws, for a barbarian people, were "wise and equal." The midway truth seems to be that the dukes or provincial rulers came to feel some identity of interest with their subjects. Later jurists called their laws *asininum jus, quoddam jus quod faciebant reges per se* (Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*, 2nd ed. i, 45).

Prof. Butler, in his generally excellent history of *The Lombard Communes*, is unduly receptive of the old formula that "the infusion of Teutonic blood had given new life to the Peninsula" (p. 37; also p. 38). His own narrative conflicts with the assertion; for he writes that the long isolation of such cities as Cremona in the midst of Teuton enemies "must have led to a rekindling of military and municipal spirit and the power of initiative" (p. 35). He notes, too, that the building up of a new and active "aristocracy" in the cities from plebeian elements was hateful to the Teuton, as represented by Otto of Freisingen in the time of Barbarossa (p. 48). And what had the Teutons to do with the making of Venice? And what of the similar movement in Spain, Africa, Illyria, and Gaul?

If the foregoing criticism be valid, it must be further turned against the expressions of Bishop Stubbs concerning the effect of the Teutonic conquest in setting up the Romance literatures. "The breath of life of the new literatures," he writes (*Const. Hist.* 4th ed. i, 7), "was Germanic.....The poetry of the new nations is that of the leading race.....even in Italy it owes all its sweetness and light to the *freedom* which has breathed from beyond the Alps." Here the thesis shifts unavowedly from "race" to "freedom," and all the while no data whatever are offered for generalisations which decide in a line some of the root problems of sociology. A laborious scholar can thus write as if in matters of total historic generalisation there were needed neither proof nor argument, while the most patient research is needed to settle a single detail of particular history.

On the whole, it may be psychologically accurate to say that the invaders, by setting up a new caste of freemen where before all classes were alike subordinate to the imperial tyranny, created a variation in the direction of a new self-government, the spectacle of privilege stimulating the unprivileged to desire it. But any conquest whatever might do this; and it is a plain paralogism to conclude that where the subjugated people does *not* react the fault is its own, while where it does the credit is to go to the

conquerors. It does not seem to have occurred to anyone to reason that the Norman Conquest of England was as such the bringer of the liberty later achieved there. Yet, as regards the Teutonic invasions of Italy, the principle passes current on all sides; and Guizot endorses it in one lecture (*Hist. de la civ. en France*, i, 7ième leçon, *end*), though in the next he gives an objective account which practically discredits it.

As regards the ideals of justice and freedom in general, the Teutonic laws, being framed not for a normal barbarian state but for a society of conquerors and conquered, were in some respects rather more iniquitous than the Roman. In particular the Ostrogothic laws of Theodoric and his son punish the crimes of the rich by fines, and put to death the poor for the same offences; while the degradation of the slave is in all the early Teutonic codes constantly insisted on. (Cp. Milman, *Hist. Lat. Chr.* 4th ed. ii, 36, and refs. Roman law also, however, differed in practice for rich and poor. Cp. Cassiodorus, l. ii, pp. 24, 25; iii, 20, 36; iv, 39; v, 14, and Finlay, ed. cited. i, 236.) Whether or not Gregory the Great, as has been asserted (Milman, as cited, p. 52), was the first to free slaves on the principle of human equality, he did not get the idea from the Teutons.

It took centuries, in any case, to develop the new upward tendency to a decisive degree. The Frankish conquest, like others, disarmed and unwallled the population as far as possible; and it seems to have been only in the tenth century, when the Hungarians repeatedly raided northern Italy (900–24), and the Saracens the southern coasts and the isles, that a general permission was given to the towns to defend themselves.¹ This time the balance of power lay with the defence; and to the mere disorderliness of the barbarian rule on one hand may in part be attributed the relative success of the cities of the later Empire as compared with those of the earlier. Latin Rome had not only disarmed its cities but accustomed them for centuries to ease and idleness; and before a numerous foe, bent on conquest, they made no resistance. Goths, Longobards, and Franks in turn sought to keep all but their own strong places disarmed; but their system could not wholly prevent the growth of a militant spirit in the industrial towns. On the other hand, the Hungarians and Saracens were bent not on conquest but on mere plunder, and were thus manageable foes. Had the Normans, say, come at this time

¹ This is again Sismondi's generalisation (*Histoire des républiques italiennes*, ed. 1826, i, 21; *Short History*, p. 14; Boultong-Sismondi, p. 60). He has been followed by Procter (Perceval's *History of Italy*, 1825, 2nd ed. 1844, p. 9); by Dunham (*Europe in the Middle Ages*, i, 23); by Symonds (*Renaissance in Italy*, 2nd ed. i, 48); and by Prof. W. F. Butler (*The Communes of Lombardy*, p. 46). It is noteworthy that at the same period Henry the Fowler encouraged free cities in Germany for the same reason.

into Italy, they could have overrun the quasi-Teutonic communities as easily as the Teutons had done the Romans or each other. But the conditions being as they were, the swing was towards the independence of the cities; at first under the headship of the bishops, who in the period of collapse of the Carolingian empire obtained part of the authority previously wielded by counts.¹ At this stage the bishop was by his position partly identified with the people, whom he would on occasion champion against the counts. Thus a new conception of social organisation was shaped by the pressures of the times; and when Otto came in 951 the foundations of the republics were laid. The next stage was the effacement of the authority of the counts within the cities; the next an extension of the bishops' authority over the whole diocese, which was as a rule the old Roman *civitas* or county. Thus the new municipalities came into being partly under the ægis of the Church.

Hallam (*Middle Ages*, ch. iii, pt. i) describes Sismondi as stating that Otto "erected" the Lombard cities into municipal communities, and dissents from that view. But Sismondi (*Républiques*, i, 95) expressly says that there are no charters, and that the municipal independence of the cities is to be inferred from their subsequent claims of prescription. As there is nothing to show for any regular government from the outside in the preceding period of turmoil, the inference that *some* self-government existed before and under Otto is really forced upon us. Ranke (*Latin and Teutonic Nations*, Eng. tr. p. 11) pronounces that the first *consuls* of the Italian cities, chosen by themselves, appear at the date of the first Crusade, 1100. "Beyond all question, we meet with them first in Genoa on the occasion of an expedition to the Holy Land." (They appear again in 1117 at a meeting of reconciliation for all Lombardy at Milan. Prof. W. F. Butler, *The Communes of Lombardy*, 1906, pp. 76-77.) But this clearly does not exclude prior forms of self-government for domestic needs. Consuls of some kind are noted "in Fano and other places in 883; in Rome in 901; Orvieto, 975; Ravenna, 990; Ferrara, 1015; Pisa and Genoa, 1100; Florence, 1101." Boulting-Sismondi, p. 63. (This last date appears to be an error. The document hitherto dated 1102 belongs to 1182. Villari, *Two First Centuries of Florentine History*, Eng. tr. pp. 55, 84. But there is documentary evidence for Florentine consuls in 1136. *Id.* p. 115.) Hallam himself points out that in the years 1002-6 the annalists, in recording the wars of the cities, speak "of the people and not of their leaders, which is the true republican tone of history"; and

¹ Butler, pp. 40-43; Boulting-Sismondi, pp. 23-27.

notes that a contemporary chronicle shows the people of Pavia and Milan acting as independent states in 1047.

This state of things would naturally arise when the emperor and the nobles lived in a state of mutual jealousy. Cp. Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 127–29, 139–40, 150, 176. Mr. Bryce does not attempt to clear up the dispute, but he recognises that the liberties of the cities would naturally “shoot up in the absence of the emperors and the feuds of the princes.” And this is the view finally of Heinrich Leo: “Seit Otto bemerken wir eine auffallende Aenderung in der Politik der ganzen nördlichen Italiens” (*Geschichte von Italien*, 1829, i, 325; Bk. iv, Kap. i, § 1). Leo points out that the granting of exemptions to the north Italian cities came from the Ottos. “It was not, however,” he goes on, “as it has been supposed we must assume, the blending of Roman *citizenship* (which in the Lombard cities had never existed¹ in the form of commune or municipality [*Gemeinde*]) with the Lombard and German, but the blending of the survivors and the labourers, mostly of Roman descent, with the almost entirely German-derived free *Gemeinde*, through which the exemptions were obtained, and which gave a new aspect to the Italian cities” (pp. 326–27).

Similarly Karl Hegel, after noting the analogies between Roman *collegia* and German guilds, decides that “the German guilds were of native (*einheimischen*) origin, the same needs setting up the same order of institutions.” He adds that the Christian Church first evoked in the guilds a real brotherly feeling. (*Städte und Gilden der germanischen Völker in Mittelalter*, 1891, Einleit. p. 10.) He admits, however, that the guilds, when first traced under Charlemagne, are forbidden under the name *Gildonia*, as oath-societies; and that they seem to have been unknown among the Franks (pp. 4, 6).

§ 3

Almost concurrently with the new growth of political life in the cities, rural life readjusted itself under a system concerning the merits of which there has been as much dispute as concerning its origins—the system of feudalism. Broadly speaking, that began in the relation between the leaders of the Germanic invasion and their chief followers, who, receiving lands as their share, or at another time as a reward, were expected as a matter of course to back the king in time of war, and in their turn ruled their lands and retainers on that principle. When the principle of heredity was established as regarded the crown, it was necessarily affirmed as regards land tenures; and

¹ Note by Leo.—“Except in the cities acquired latest, and by capitulation from the Romans”—i.e. the Greek Empire.

soon it was applied as a matter of course to nearly all the higher royal offices and "benefices" in the Frankish empire,¹ which after Charlemagne became the model for the Germanic and the French and English kingdoms. Thus "the aristocratic system was in possession of society"; and the conflict which inevitably arose between the feudal baronage and the monarchic power served in time to aggrandise the cities, whose support was so important to both sides.

[See Stubbs, *Constitutional History of England*, 4th ed. i, 273-74, *note*, for a sketch of the discussion as to the rise of feudalism. It has been obscured, especially among the later writers, by lack of regard for exact and consistent statement. Thus Bishop Stubbs endorses Waitz's dictum that "the gift of an estate by the king involved no *defined* obligation of service"; going on to say (p. 275) that a king's *beneficium* was received "with a *special undertaking* to be faithful"; and again adding the footnote: "Not a *promise* of *definite* service, but a *pledge* to *continue faithful in the conduct in consideration of which the reward is given.*" Again, the bishop admits that by this condition the giver had a hold on the land, "through which he was able to enforce fidelity" (p. 275, *note*); yet goes on to say (p. 277) that homage and fealty "depended on conscience only for their fulfilment." Bishop Stubbs further remarks (i, 278) that there was a "great difference in social results between French (= Frankish) and German feudalism," by reason of the prostrate state of the old Gallic population; going on however to add: "But the *result was the same*, feudal government, a graduated system of jurisdiction based on land tenure, in which every lord judged, taxed, and commanded the class next below him; in which abject slavery formed the lowest, and irresponsible tyranny the highest grade; in which private war, private coinage, private prisons, took the place of the imperial institutions of government." Of course the bishop has previously (p. 274, *note*) endorsed Waitz's view, that "all the people were bound to be faithful to the king"; but the passage above cited seems to be his final generalisation.]

Feudalism.

Whatever its social value, the feudal system is essentially a blend of Roman and barbarian points of polity; and in France, the place of its development, Gallic usage played a modifying part. It is dubiously described as growing up "from two great sources—the *beneficium* and the practice of commendation"—the first consisting (a) in gifts of land by the kings out of their own estates, and (b) in surrenders of land to churches or powerful men, on condition that

¹ Guizot, *Essais*, pp. 199-201; Stubbs, i, 277. Cp. refs. in Buckle, author's ed. p. 348-49.

the surrenderer holds it as tenant for rent or service; while commendation consisted in becoming a vassal without any surrender of title. "The union of the beneficiary tie with that of commendation completed the idea of feudal obligation." The *beneficium* again, "is partly of Roman, partly of German origin," and "the reduction of a large Roman population," nominally freemen under the Roman system, "to dependence," placed it on a common footing with the German semi-free cultivator, "and conduced to the wide extension of the institution. Commendation, on the other hand, may have had a Gallic or Celtic origin....." In one or other of these developments, the German *comitatus* or chief's war-band, originally so different, "ultimately merged its existence." On the whole, then, the Teutons followed Gallo-Roman leads.

[See Stubbs, i, 275, 276; cp. p. 4; and Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, pp. 123-24. Under Otto, observes Mr. Bryce (p. 125), "the institutions of primitive Germany were almost all gone." Elsewhere Bishop Stubbs decides (p. 10) that "the essence of feudal law is custom," and again (p. 71), that "no creative genius can be expected among the rude leaders of the tribes of North Germany. The new life started at the point at which the old had been broken off." Then in the matter of the feudal system, "the old" must have been mainly the Gallo-Roman, for feudalism arose in Frankish Gaul, not in Germany. In an early passage (p. 3) Dr. Stubbs confuses matters by describing the government of France as "originally little more than a simple adaptation of the old German polity to the government of a conquered race," but proceeds to admit that "the Franks, gradually uniting in religion, blood, and language with the [Romanised] Gauls, retained and developed the idea of feudal subordination....." The rest of the sentence again introduces error. For a good general view of the evolution of feudalism see Prof. Abdy's *Lectures on Feudalism*, 1890, lect. v-vii.]

To pass a moral judgment on this system, either for or against, is to invert the problem. It was simply the most stable, or rather the most elastic arrangement possible in the species of society in which it arose; and we are now concerned with it merely as a conditioning influence in European civilisation. Hallam, severe towards all other men's generalisations, lightly pronounces that "in the reciprocal services of lord and vassal, there was ample scope for every magnanimous and disinterested energy," and that "the heart of man, when placed in circumstances which have a tendency to excite them, will seldom be deficient in such sentiments." On the other hand he concedes that "the bulk of the people, it is true,