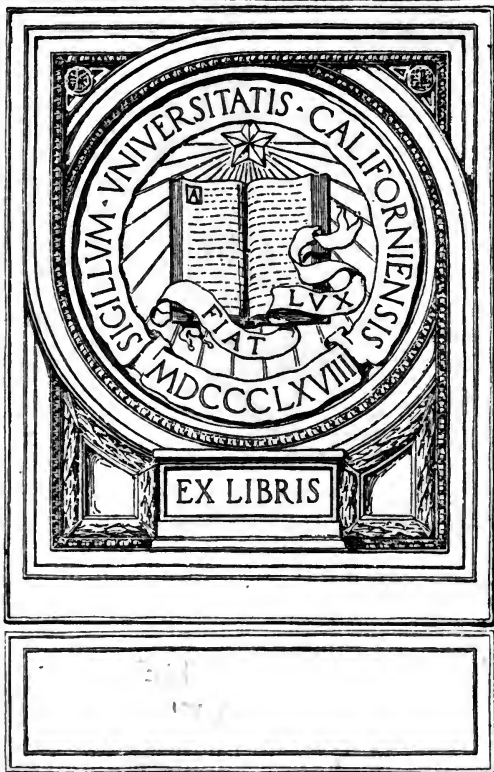
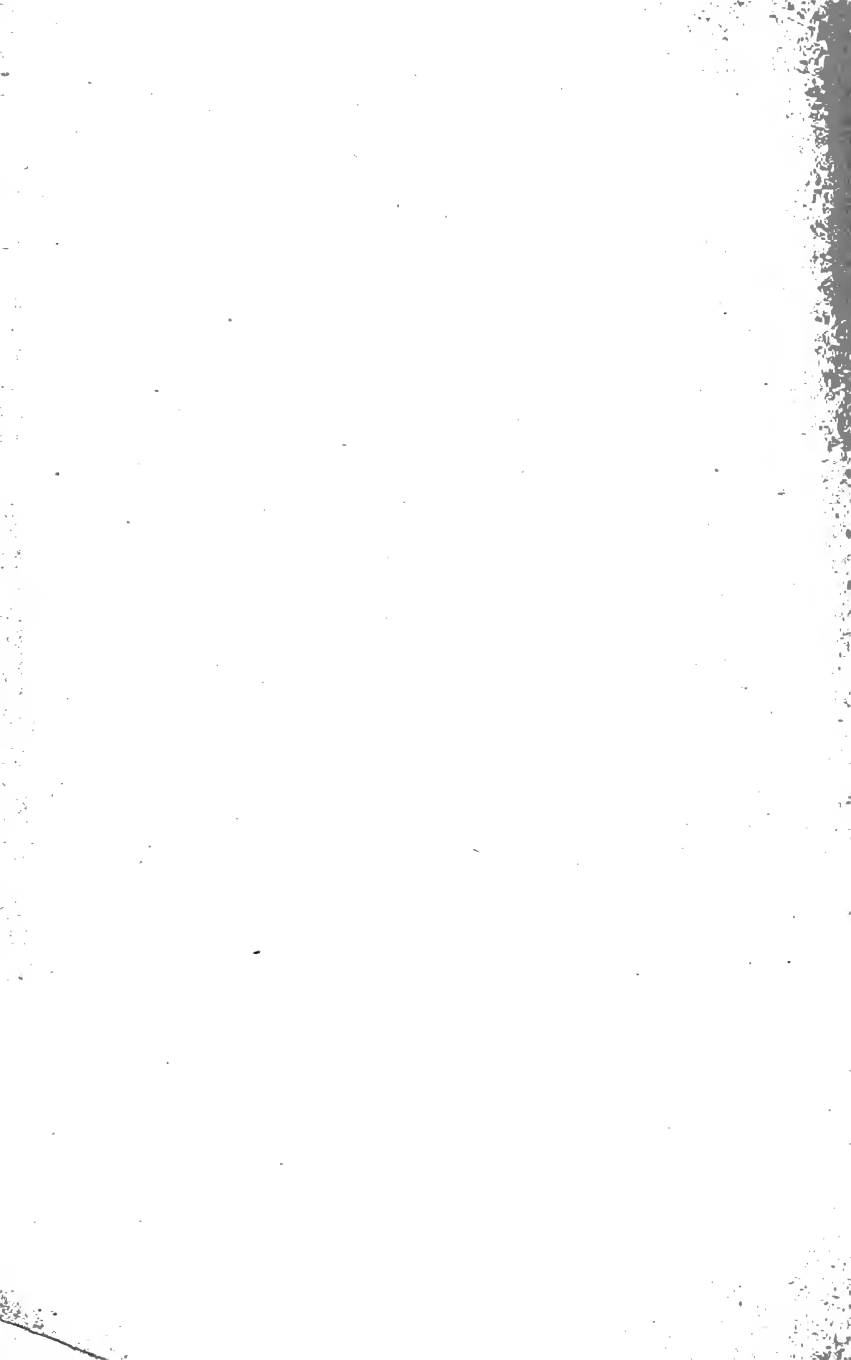


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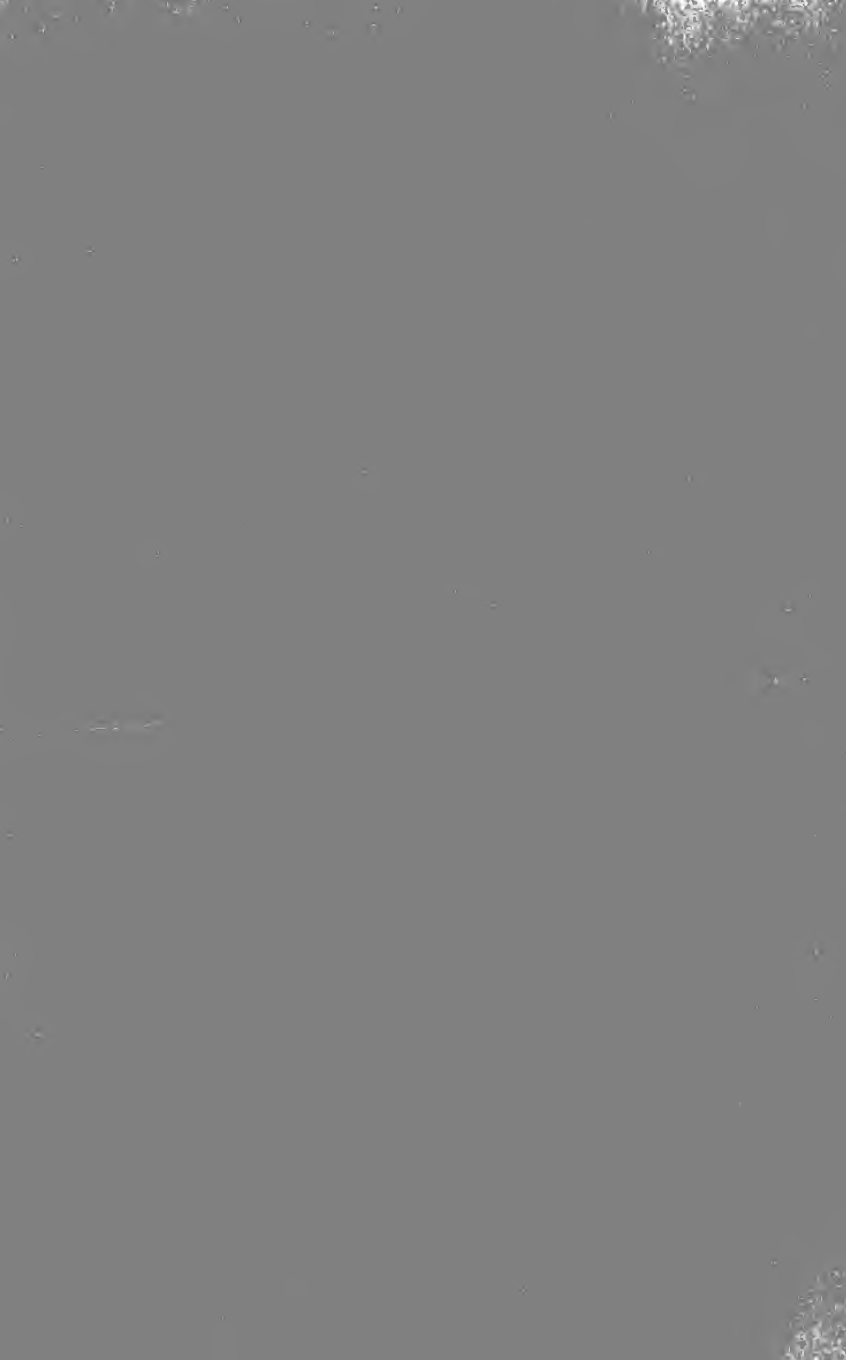
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CONSOLIDATION
AND DECLINE



CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE

BY

CHARLES NEEDL SALTER



LONDON

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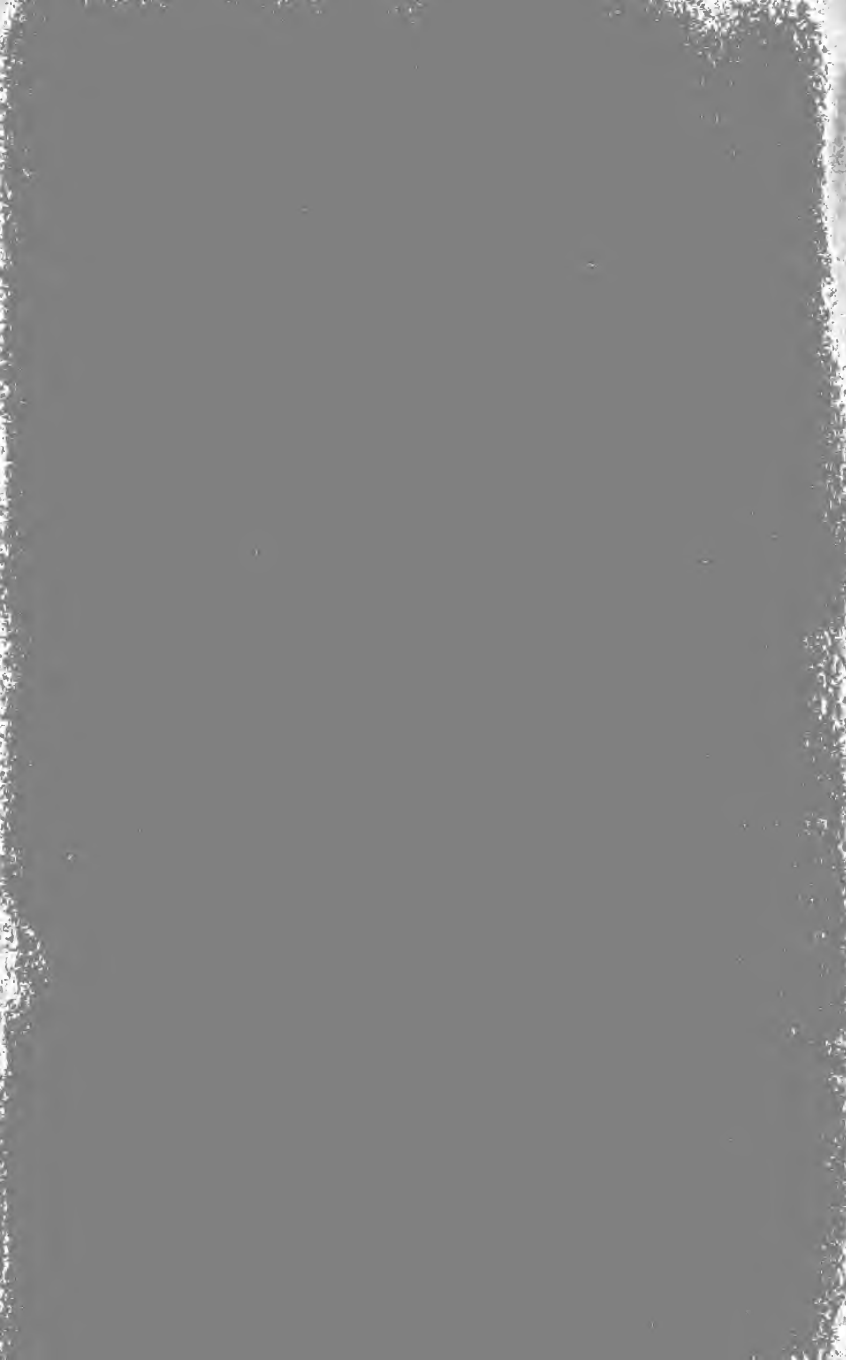
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CONSOLIDATION AND DECLINE

CHAPTER I

CIVILISATION AND THE COSMOS

AT the stage of development that has now been reached, an opportunity is afforded to review the events that have taken place in the past, and discover the principles by which their course has been governed. In earlier times sufficient material had not been accumulated to support any certain conclusions, but at present it is the abundance rather than the want of it that causes perplexity. While they are unclassified and disconnected, the events of the past seem unintelligible; but if they were reduced to some arrangement, they would acquire a meaning and interest. The conditions which now exist are not altogether new, but have existed before and been reproduced after a long interval of barbarism

and confusion. They will appear in their proper light, therefore, when a bridge has been built over the gulf that lies between ancient and modern times.

That the work may be carried to completion a wide retrospect is required. As the foundation must be laid before the superstructure can be raised, it is necessary to revert to antiquity in order to arrive at a clear understanding of modern times. The relations of the parts to each other do not become clear until a comprehensive view has been taken of the whole, and when the intermediate period is excluded, what is ancient no longer appears old in comparison with what is modern; as is noted by Bacon, whose words are even more appropriate now than when they were written: "To speak the truth, antiquity is the youth of the world. These are the ancient times when the world is ancient, and not those which are accounted ancient by computing backwards from the present." On the other hand it is useless to inquire into remote ages as to which there are no reliable records. The statements that are made concerning prehistoric periods do not merit serious attention. As there is no way of verifying them, they can neither be refuted nor accepted. But by getting a grasp of ascertained facts, it

would be possible to escape from the sea of vague opinions and occupy a position on firm ground. The mist in which the past is enveloped would then be dispersed, and its meaning be clearly seen; "for after all," to use Ibsen's words, "there must be a meaning in it. Life, existence, destiny, cannot be so utterly meaningless;" though, before events have been connected and governing principles discovered, it is not unnatural to think that "perhaps the whole thing goes simply by haphazard, taking its own course, like a drifting wreck without a rudder."

At the beginning of the creation, according to old national traditions, there existed in the north an abode of cloud and cold which was called Niflheim, and in the south an abode of fire and flame which was called Muspellheim, and between them lay a yawning chasm called Ginnunga-gap. This was the primæval chaos, out of which the cosmos, that is to say the world, afterwards arose. The sea, earth, and sky, which are the three great divisions of nature, were not then clearly distinguished, and there was no way of getting across the intermediate gap. But when cosmos has appeared, chaos has vanished. Uniformity is displaced by diversity, and dis-

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tance is no longer an obstacle. In the natural revolution of time, things which seemed to be far apart are brought near together. It is the work of creation, therefore, to bridge over the yawning chasm, and establish communication between the one side and the other. With this end in view, Ovid, when he is about to describe the many transformations wrought in the course of time, first makes mention of the formless mass out of which they were all produced, speaking of it as follows: "Before the sea, earth, and sky, which covers all things, nature had everywhere one aspect, which was called chaos." While the work of creation was proceeding, and new forms were being brought into existence, there were no signs of decline. But when everything that was latent has become apparent, opposite processes, that were formerly held in check, begin to operate. The revolving cosmos, having been circumnavigated and thoroughly explored, does not remain for ever the same. For that which produces nothing that is free from decay cannot be free from decay itself. After the climax of development has been reached, it manifests a tendency to dissolution, and begins to relapse into the primæval chaos. It does not possess a perfect circle, but is subject to the

vicissitudes of light and darkness. When it is day on the one side it is night on the other, and when it is summer in the south it is winter in the north. As with the cycle of the seasons, so also it is with the cycle of the age. In the period of light it was foreseen and foretold that a period of darkness was to come, which would terminate in a conflagration followed by a renovation of the world. The gods that once dwelt among men, protecting their cities and presiding over their lands, forsook the earth when it was cumbered with artificial obstructions, and gave no more manifestations of their power. This darkness, which prevails even over the gods themselves, is known as Ragnarok. In the end it was asserted that fire would gain the mastery and destroy the whole world; after which catastrophe a new and beautiful world would arise, and the departed gods come to life again. The words of Cicero are to the same effect. Owing to the gradual exhaustion of moisture it was believed, he says, "that at the last there would be a conflagration of the whole world—*ut ad extremum omnis mundus ignesceret:*" and that afterwards, since fire has power to vivify as well as to destroy, "*renovatio mundi fieret*—there would be a renovation of the world." Fire and water

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are represented as being engaged in a continual conflict with each other. In early times the water is abundant, and is able to keep the fire under ; but as the conflict is prolonged it becomes exhausted. The rivers fail, and the brooks and wells dry up and disappear. The trees are withered, and there is no grass for the cattle. At last, when the whole land has become utterly dry, the fire suddenly breaks out and cannot be extinguished ; as the words of Lucretius also indicate. The long conflict will have an end, he says, "when the sun and every kind of heat, having dried up all moisture, shall have prevailed ; a result which they are ever tending to bring about, but so far do not attain it."

In modern times order has again been produced out of the confusion into which the ancient world was plunged, and barbarism has continually receded before the advance of civilisation. This is a word which is familiar enough, but the ideas associated with it are usually vague and indefinite. Though the changes that have been brought about under its influence have been so remarkable, it would not be easy to find a satisfactory answer to the question, What is civilisation ? Wherever it has been introduced, barbarous customs have been abandoned, and the barriers

within which they were observed have been thrown down. Its home is in the west, but it has not been derived by one nation from another, but each has acquired it independently by a gradual development. The word itself, which is of Latin origin, is a guide to the source from which the thing denoted by it has been derived. It represents the influence, not of any nation, but of Rome, the city which subjugated the nations. Though it appears under different modes in different localities, its chief characteristics are everywhere the same. No people can come in contact with it and at the same time preserve a pure nationality. The institutions of the ancient civilisation have been reproduced in modern times, and national customs and usages have been forgotten as mediæval communities have disappeared. Restrictions that were long jealously maintained have been removed, and distinctions that were once clearly marked have been merged in a monotonous cosmopolitanism.

The city which is called Rome is a city in which all nations are represented. At first her citizens were drawn from the surrounding peoples; but in a later age the rights of citizenship were extended to the whole of Italy. After the establishment of the Empire, when the subjection of

many different peoples to the same rule had given rise to cosmopolitanism, it was possible for persons of any nationality to obtain the Roman citizenship, so that Romans were not necessarily Italians by birth. That the inhabitants of any city might obtain the citizenship of Rome is apparent from the words of Cicero. Speaking of Cato, he says: "I consider him and all other citizens from a municipal town to have two countries; the one of their birth, and the other of their citizenship. To take the case of Cato; he was born at Tusculum, and was afterwards admitted to the citizenship of Rome. As he was, therefore, a Tusculan by extraction, and a Roman by citizenship, he had one country as his birthplace, and another as his country in law." The citizenship of Rome, therefore, is a citizenship of the world. Under the influence of civilisation, the nations of the west have abandoned their own purely national customs and usages, and adopted modern institutions in their stead.

When the boundaries of the ancient world had been reached, the Romans could proceed no further on their career of conquest. The fall of the Western Empire was not followed by the rise of any new and different dynasty, but by a period of barbarism and confusion.

Universal dynasties had been established prior to it by the kings of the east. Alexander the Great, also, was fired with the ambition of possessing the world, and surpassed all that were before him in the extent of his conquests. But the Latin civilisation belongs to the iron age in which the Romans rose to power, and its influence had never been felt in the kingdoms of the east and the autonomous communities of the Greeks, or Hellenes, which were situated between the east and the west. When all nations were subjected to the Roman dominion, the climax of development was reached, and a reaction followed. Having once been deprived of their independence, they could never afterwards recover it. No new and different dynasty, therefore, arose and took the place of the Roman Empire, as it had taken the place of the dynasties that were before it. Rome, being the head of the world, must endure as long as it endures. After the establishment of her Empire, nothing further remained to be accomplished. Latent strength being exhausted, the decline set in and lasted for several centuries, at the close of which the ancient civilisation was overwhelmed by a flood of barbarism.

The period which lies between ancient and

modern times is known as the Dark Ages. There was an interval of a thousand years between the fall of the Roman Empire in the west and the Renaissance, or Rebirth, when intermediate barriers began to be overthrown, and the discovery of a new world opened up other fields for investigation. Although no other universal dynasty could arise in the place of the Western Empire, yet when it fell in ancient times, the dynasty that existed at the beginning could not be restored. The revolving cycle of the age had not then come back to the point from which it started. It was not enough to have reached the Pillars of Hercules, but it was necessary to circumnavigate the globe. The sunrise does not appear in the east immediately after the hues of the sunset have faded from the west; but the night must first intervene.

It was the destiny of Rome to obtain universal dominion; and after all the nations of the ancient world had been subjugated, she seemed to have fulfilled it. But the ancient world was not the cosmos itself. The Romans of the Augustan age looked forward to a future enlargement of the bounds of the Empire. "The realm of Troy is allowed to rise again," says Virgil. And speak-

ing of the Rome which existed in his days, Ovid also says :—

“Olim
Immensi caput orbis erit.”

(“In time to come it will be the head of an immense world.”) The labour could not be brought to an end in ancient times when remote regions had not yet been explored. A great flood of waters had to be crossed, in order that the work which had been begun on the one side might be finished on the other. The continuity of the Empire has never been interrupted. It fell that it might rise again after a long interval of darkness. Civilisation was not utterly destroyed by the barbarians. Before they descended from the north, the civil power of Rome had been transferred from the west to the east by the Emperor Constantine and established in the city which bears his name, where it was preserved in the time of gloom and disintegration. Neither was the pontifical power destroyed, which had remained behind; for though the barbarians could not be resisted by those who wielded weapons of war, yet their rude minds were overawed by the imposing appearance of those who celebrated rites and ceremonies. While, therefore, the edifices and institutions, which were the

visible manifestations of the power of Rome, were overthrown by the deluge, the power itself survived, and has persisted into modern times.

The Eastern Empire, of which Constantinople, or Byzantium, was the seat, continued throughout the thousand years of darkness. But after the city of Constantine, to which the name of New Rome was also given, had been captured by the Ottoman Turks, civilisation was preserved, as it were by another migration. It appeared, at that period which is known as the Renaissance, among the nations of the west which had in ancient times been subjected to the Roman dominion. The civil institutions which the barbarians had overthrown began to be again set up. As it was not a birth simply that took place, but a rebirth, it is clear that what then appeared had existed before. The institutions of the modern civilisation, therefore, are not to be regarded as being altogether new, but as reproductions of those of the ancient civilisation. The effects of the Renaissance are observable among all the nations of the west that were included in the Empire in ancient times. The Roman style of architecture was then again adopted, and the works of Roman literature also, that had long been unheeded and forgotten, began again to attract attention. The

representative works of the period of the Renaissance are affected by the revival of works originally produced in ancient times. The new learning, as it was called, was not something entirely new, but the polite learning that had existed before revived after the interval of barbarism. What was born at the Renaissance was the modern civilisation. Rome, as it were, arose from the dead. The adventurous voyages that were then made rendered possible the foundation of a Second Empire. When the old confines of thought and action were transgressed, and the imagination and cupidity of mankind excited by the new prospects that were laid open before them, she accommodated herself to the altered circumstances, and, to use Pope's words, "old in new state, another, yet the same," embarked upon a second career of conquest. During the Dark Ages she had lain dormant; but when a new world was discovered, she awoke, and proceeded to conquer it as she had conquered the old. But she has appeared in a disguise in modern times and concealed her identity by the use of another phraseology. As if the fall of the First Empire were an evil omen, the same things were called by different names when the Second was founded.

The history of what are known as modern times dates from the Renaissance. Previously the nations of the west had been in a condition of barbarism, and were not engaged in the systematic acquisition of new territory. The period in which the Renaissance took place in England was the Elizabethan age. From that time the forces of centralisation have been working incessantly, and mediæval communities have been gradually dissolved. The structure of the Second Empire was not built in accordance with any preconceived plan. Those who raised it up were hardly conscious of what they were really doing. It is only now that it is completed that those who look back upon the course of events in the past become aware of an orderly development, culminating in a restored Empire. The following words of Spenser, who himself lived in the Elizabethan age, show that civilisation then made its first appearance in England, and that previously barbarism had prevailed. "England," he says, "was very rude and barbarous; for it is but even the other day since England grew civil." From the Elizabethan to the Victorian age, the march of the modern civilisation has been continuous and irresistible. The great restoration, or *Instauratio Magna*, which Bacon projected at

the period of the Renaissance, has been actually brought about in the period in which the climax of development has been reached. Speaking of the work he had proposed to himself, he says: "We hope to give it no contemptible beginning, and anticipate that the fortune of the human race will bring it to such a termination as is difficult for men in their present condition to conceive or imagine." It was not until the appearance of the modern civilisation that a regular language arose out of the chaos of barbarism. Even in Bacon's time it was so far from having acquired rigidity, and so poor in technical terms, that his more important works are written in Latin, which was then the general language of Europe. "Before the revival of classic literature," says Gibbon, "the barbarians in Europe were immersed in ignorance, and their vulgar tongues were marked with the rudeness and poverty of their manners." The Western Empire of ancient times, as compared with the universal dynasties that were before it, was a new dynasty; but the Western Empire of modern times is not an entirely new and different dynasty, but the Empire of Rome revived after the thousand years of darkness. It was founded in the Elizabethan, restored in the Victorian age.

The influence of the modern civilisation was not immediately felt among the nations which had not in ancient times been subjected to the Roman dominion. The effects of the Renaissance are but slightly marked in those countries of Europe that were separated from the First Empire. Neither are they observable among the peoples of the east that had risen to power during the Dark Ages that preceded it. After the fall of the Empire of Rome in the west, many of her Asiatic provinces fell into the hands of the Persians. The Eastern Empire was but the phantom of the Western Empire of ancient times, and its rulers possessed the semblance of power rather than the reality; but owing to the security of the site of Constantinople it survived the desolations of the Dark Ages. In the time of Mohammed and his successors an Arabian dynasty arose, which extended from India to the Pillars of Hercules. The Saracens besieged Constantinople, but did not succeed in capturing it. Persia was completely reduced under their power. They also subdued Sicily, and even sailed through the mouth of the Tiber. But though they plundered some temples in the vicinity of Rome, they turned away from the city itself.

When the Khalifate was established at Baghdad, the Roman Empire of the east was put under tribute by Harun al Rashid, the contemporary of Charlemagne. After his death the power of the Khalifs gradually decreased. But as soon as one danger passed away, another appeared. The provinces that were recovered from the Saracens were afterwards conquered by the Turks, whose incursions threatened Constantinople, and alarmed the western nations. When, therefore, the Roman emperor sent ambassadors to solicit their assistance they readily responded to the call; and crusades were proclaimed in which all the chivalry of Europe engaged. Thus the inflowing stream of barbarism from the east was counteracted by an opposing stream of barbarism from the west, and Constantinople and civilisation were still preserved. *

At the commencement of the period of the crusades, the feudal chiefs of the nations of the west had done homage to the Roman emperor at Constantinople as they passed from Europe into Asia. But after the Franks, who are also called Latins, had acquired possession of Syria, hostilities arose between them and the Greeks, in the course of which Constantinople was

eventually captured. During the period in which it was occupied by the Latins, by which term the nations of the west were commonly designated, it still continued to be the seat of the Roman Empire. The rulers were different, but the institutions remained the same. But a feudal chieftain was not fitted to fill the throne of the Cæsars, and after the lapse of some years, the city was recovered by the Greeks.

The incursions of the barbarians were incessant throughout the thousand years of darkness. Under the leadership of Jinghiz Khan and his successors, hordes of Tartars and Moguls overran Asia and northern Europe. "The remote nations of the Baltic and the ocean trembled at the approach of the Tartars," says Gibbon. "They sailed," he says again, "most probably to the isle of Borneo under the equinoctial line." On the other side of the world also their depredations extended as far westward as Poland. In the general overthrow of cities Constantinople escaped; but Baghdad was sacked, and the last of the Khalifs who reigned there put to death; a disaster which recalls the words of Sadi, who lived in those days: "The Tigris will continue to flow through Baghdad for ages, even after the Khalif is dead and gone." The withdrawal of

the Tartars was followed by the rise of the Ottoman Turks. After they had crossed the Hellespont and attached the nations of the Danube to their Empire, it became evident that the fall of Constantinople could not be much longer delayed. "Constantinople," says Gibbon, "whose decline is almost coeval with her foundation, had often, in the lapse of a thousand years, been assaulted by the barbarians of the east and west." But nothing now remained to it beyond the walls; and though the Moslems did not yet commence the siege, they were only waiting until a favourable opportunity arrived.

In the period which immediately preceded the extinction of the Roman Empire in the east and the Renaissance in the west, Tamerlane, the famous Mogul conqueror, appeared. After he had subdued Persia, he invaded India and captured the royal city of Delhi, which afterwards became the residence of the Great Mogul. The Sultan who opposed his progress through Syria was defeated and made a prisoner. Tamerlane, victorious over all his enemies, withdrew to Samarcand, and shortly afterwards died. But the Turks soon recovered from their defeat, and as every obstacle had now been removed, preparations were made for the siege of Constanti-

nople. The fire by which the Greeks had so often repelled the attacks of the barbarians afforded them no protection after the discovery of gunpowder. Its fortifications having been dismantled by the cannon which the Sultan directed against them, the city was captured, and became the seat of the Ottoman Empire.

The Dark Ages had now drawn to a close, and the Renaissance had taken place in Europe. After the fall of Constantinople and the extinction of the Roman Empire in the east, many of the Hellenes, attracted by the revival of learning in the west, migrated to Italy. The waves of barbarism, that raged throughout the Dark Ages, have been stilled since the Renaissance. The saying that history repeats itself has been verified among the nations of the west in modern times. The institutions of the ancient civilisation have risen again out of the waters by which they were overwhelmed, and reproduced themselves on the firm ground. These reproductions were faint at first, but in the course of two or three centuries of growth they became distinct; and at the close of the century of efflorescence the likeness between them and their prototypes may easily be perceived. Resuscitated Rome, through the several centres of her Second Empire, has once

more subjected the nations to her dominion. The barriers within which mediæval communities preserved their privileges have been broken down since the great upheaval which took place in the days of Napoleon. When the wars with which the period of efflorescence opened came to an end, exceptional opportunities were afforded to those who were energetic and enterprising enough to take advantage of them. The removal of restrictions that had long been jealously maintained was followed by a great expansion. At the time of the upheaval known as the French Revolution men as it were made a fresh start. The race was open to all competitors, and the prizes that might be won were numerous and valuable. Energies that had previously been repressed suddenly found an outlet, and an unwonted activity was everywhere displayed. Simultaneously with this expansion numerous reforms were effected, by which the fabric of the constitution was altered as the altered circumstances required. When the old distinctions were obliterated and one promiscuous aggregation arose in the place of the many separate and independent communities, it was necessary that a new and artificial barrier should be set up in the place of the natural barriers that had been thrown down.

The French Revolution marked the completion of the centuries of growth and the commencement of the century of efflorescence, in which the climax of development has been reached. The flower, which does not appear till the last, was latent from the very beginning, and the restoration of the Empire is the result which the forces of centralisation have been working ever since the Renaissance to bring about. The discoveries and inventions of science have removed all those obstacles that were formerly regarded as insuperable, and the institutions of the modern civilisation have been extended to the remotest countries. The Roman dominion reaches from furthest east to furthest west, and the words of Macaulay may be applied with no less propriety to modern than to ancient times :—

“Where fur-clad hunters wander
 Amidst the northern ice,
 Where through the sand of morning-land
 The camel bears the spice,
 Where Atlas flings his shadow
 Far o’er the western foam,
 Shall be great fear on all who hear
 The mighty name of Rome.”

The nations of the west are still ruled by the city to which they were once brought into subjection. Rome has, as it were, utilised her

ancient conquests to make other conquests in modern times. By the same methods by which they were themselves subdued while they were barbarians, they have been able in their turn, since the modern civilisation appeared among them, to subdue other barbarous nations. The irresistible power of Rome, which in ancient times was exercised against them, has in modern times been exercised through them. Since the period of the Renaissance, when the systematic acquisition of new territory was begun, and the foundations of the Second Empire were laid, natural boundaries have been disregarded, and artificial frontiers defined in their stead. It is the forces of centralisation rather than the nations through which they have operated that have overcome all opposition. Those that have subjugated others have conquered because Rome, in the disguise in which she has appeared in modern times, has been fighting on their side. They could never have attained their present position in the world if they had not adopted modern institutions in place of their own purely national customs and usages. The power they have exercised is that of Rome, the great archetype of the imperial city.

When the ancient civilisation broke up, the

order which existed in ancient times was plunged into confusion; and the order which now exists is identified with the modern civilisation. The fate of the Second Empire, therefore, is a question which naturally suggests itself, and much depends on the answer it receives. As no other universal dynasty can arise in its place, the Roman Empire must endure unless the cosmos itself should relapse into chaos. Though it once suffered a decline and fall, yet a rebirth has taken place in modern times, and Rome is called the Eternal City, and the stability of her institutions is considered to be assured. In the opinion of Gibbon the Second Empire might be expected to escape the fate of the First, because it was unlikely that the Roman world would ever again be overwhelmed by a deluge of barbarians. Since the power of Rome had survived the desolations of the Dark Ages and persisted into modern times, it was not without reason that he should have been disposed to believe in the stability of her civil institutions, which had in his days already been distinctly reproduced. "The savage nations of the globe," he says, "are the common enemies of civilised society, and we may inquire, with anxious curiosity, whether Europe is still threatened

with a repetition of those calamities which formerly oppressed the arms and institutions of Rome." He then proceeds to enumerate what he calls "the probable causes of our actual security"; among which are that "such formidable emigrations no longer issue from the north"; and that "cannon and fortifications now form an impregnable barrier against the Tartar horse; and Europe is secure from any future irruption of barbarians, since before they can conquer they must cease to be barbarous." He admits, however, that the suppositions on which his conclusions rest may prove fallacious, and that "ages of laborious ascent have been followed by a moment of rapid downfall."

But when the climax of development is reached, the issue is made clear by the elimination of intermediate controversies. The Western Empire has now been extended over the world itself. Rome has therefore fulfilled her destiny in obtaining universal dominion. In ancient times it was often doubted whether the world was round; but at the period of the Renaissance this fact was established beyond all dispute. Such a thing as perpetual progress is therefore impossible. Those who have made the voyage round the world find themselves in the same

position at its conclusion as they were at its commencement. When the revolving cycle of the age has come back to the point from which it started, obstacles that were formerly insuperable are removed. In ancient times the gulf had not yet been crossed, and the work could not be finished. It was necessary, therefore, that the Empire of Rome should revive after the thousand years of darkness. But should the modern civilisation break up, its institutions could not be expected to be reproduced in the future, like those of the ancient, on account of the possibility of their further extension. The case of the Second Empire is very different from that of the First. The globe itself has now been circumnavigated and the remotest regions explored. The Far East and the Far West do not lie apart, but are the extremes which meet when the whole intervening distance has been traversed and the revolution of the circle is completed. As the end draws near, the beginning also is approached, and the iron age of imperial rule is brought into juxtaposition with the golden age of royal rule.

There is a great contrast between the position which the nations of the west have attained in the world since the Renaissance and that which

they occupied during the Dark Ages. Having adopted civil institutions, they have ceased to observe their own purely national customs and usages. The Latin civilisation is to be distinguished from other influences by which the different nations were affected while they retained their independence within the boundaries assigned to them by nature, and had little intercourse with each other. The indiscriminate use of the word has given rise to much confusion. Such expressions, for example, as primitive civilisations are misleading and incorrect. Those who employ them import the ideas of the iron age into periods to which they are foreign. Civilisation has its home in the west, and did not appear until the Romans rose to power. The Greeks had not yet come in contact with it in the period in which they were associated in separate and autonomous communities. As, to civilised peoples, barbarism is the antithesis of civilisation, so to the Hellenes, while they retained their independence, it was the antithesis of Hellenism. They called the Persians barbarians, a people who were far from being unpolished. The term barbarian, therefore, was originally used with respect to languages rather than to manners, to which it was subsequently

applied when the different nations, which had been separated from each other while they were independent, were all alike subjected to the Roman dominion.

Hitherto the modern civilisation has always been associated with progress, and especially in the Victorian age, during which a complete re-organisation has been carried out in all departments. In no other period has such a wonderful expansion been witnessed as that which has taken place in the century of efflorescence. But the hopes that were cherished at its commencement are being succeeded at its close by a certain perplexity as to the future. Signs of disintegration suggest the conclusion that the course of development will be the same in modern as in ancient times. After the forces of centralisation have spent themselves, a reaction takes place and opposite processes begin to operate. There are no sound reasons to support a belief in perpetual progress. In the history of every dynasty, as in the life of the individual, the successive stages of growth, efflorescence, consolidation, and decline may be observed. Nature prevails over every artificial obstruction, and the civil institutions that have been again set up must, when she reasserts her power, be again thrown down.

But the fate of the whole human race is not identified with that of the modern civilisation. When the Western Empire has been extended over the whole existing cosmos, the cycle of the age has completed its revolution. After a long period of repression nature suddenly reasserts her power, and the artificial obstructions accumulated in the course of the iron age are carried away in order that the Eastern Kingdom may be restored in the renovated earth.

The subjection of many peoples to the same rule tended to obliterate distinctions that had been clearly marked while they retained their independence. Those who were merely citizens of the world did not possess the privileges that had been enjoyed by those who were associated in independent communities. The bonds that had attached them to a single locality were broken, and the barriers within which they had preserved a pure nationality overthrown. All power was centralised in Rome, and nothing further remained to be accomplished. Now that the climax of development has been reached, the same situation has been reproduced. Everything that was latent has become apparent, and the activity and turbulence of the period of efflorescence are succeeded by a general relaxa-

tion. The conditions which exist under the modern civilisation, therefore, may be illustrated by reverting to those which existed under the ancient. When the work of creation is finished, the Middle Ages are excluded, and the Empire that was once established in the ancient world, or microcosmos, is found to have been restored in the modern world, or macrocosmos.

CHAPTER II

KING ROMULUS TO CÆSAR AUGUSTUS

“If you wish to go back to the very beginning, Rome was small,” says Ovid, writing in the Augustan age, when she had become the head of the world; “but small though she was, she contained the promise of her present magnificence.” From the very foundation of their city the Romans played the part of aggressors, since even the *pomoerium*, or the land immediately bordering upon its walls, was originally hostile country. They regarded it as their proper task to subdue all independent peoples, and were quick to avail themselves of an opportunity of making war upon them. “Their neighbours harassed them on every side,” says Florus, “because they inherited no land from their fathers.” These words show that it was rather the Romans who attacked their neighbours than their neighbours them. Since they possessed nothing by inheritance, they were compelled to obtain the things of others by conquest. Their attention, therefore, was given first

of all to the affairs of war, and in this art at least they claimed to have the pre-eminence. They went continually forward on their career of conquest, from the time of Romulus to the period in which the Empire was consolidated by Augustus. No sooner did they subdue one people than they turned their arms against another, until they had subjected the human race itself to their dominion. For several centuries, however, they were engaged in struggles with their neighbours, and their name was unknown in distant countries. It took them a longer time to make themselves masters of Italy than it did to conquer the rest of the world.

The royal form of political constitution was established at Rome at the first. In comparing one form of political constitution with another, Cicero says: "If a single and simple form had to be approved, I should approve that which is royal." But because it is easily perverted into its opposite, that is to say into the form of political constitution which by the Greeks was called a tyranny, he preferred above all others a constitution "tempered," to describe it in his own words, "from those three kinds, the royal, the aristocratic, and the popular:—*ex tribus generibus illis, regali et optumati et populari.*" The Roman

Republic was in his opinion an example of this constitution, for the power of the consuls was, he says, "royal in its nature," though it was restricted in point of time. Owing to its being thus tempered and modified, he believed it to be more durable than any other constitution. But only a few years after he had written these words it was completely overturned, and the Republic came, as he himself says, "under the power of one man."

All the nations which at the last acknowledged Cæsar as their head were at the first ruled by kings. Even the political constitution of the Athenians, who at a later period could not bear to hear the name of king, was royal in the earliest times. King Romulus was venerated as an example of the just ruler. "After he had suddenly disappeared during an eclipse of the sun," says Cicero, "he obtained so great an honour as to be considered included in the number of the gods." The truth, however, would appear to be that he was slain by the senators, who, fearing lest their crime should be discovered, caused him to be deified and erected a temple in his honour. He was succeeded by Numa, to whom the Romans ascribed the institution of their rites and ceremonies. By the seventh and

last king of Rome, who is taken by Cicero for an example of the unjust ruler, the original and royal form of political constitution was perverted into its opposite. "Now that we have seen Tarquin," he says, "not by usurping any new power, but by making an unjust use of the power which he already possessed, overturn the whole fabric of our royal constitution, let us contrast such a person with his antithesis." The pride of Tarquin was the cause of his fall. The Romans, unable to endure his rule any longer, rose up against him, and banished his whole race from their city.

The *res publica*, that is, the state, then came into existence. After they had asserted their liberty, the Romans took care that they might not lose it in the future. In the place of their king they appointed two consuls, who held office for a year only. It was at this period also that the law was proposed which protected Roman citizens from being arbitrarily put to death by giving them the right to appeal. But after they had expelled their king they became divided into factions, and engaged in a bitter dispute with regard to the public land, or *ager publicus*. As they possessed no share of it and were subjected to an intolerable oppression, the plebs at last

withdrew to the Sacred Mount with the intention of founding a new city. But the life of the Republic depended on the harmonious co-operation of its members, and efforts were made by the patricians to bring about a reconciliation. By making certain concessions they persuaded them to return, tribunes being henceforth appointed from among themselves to defend their interests. "Tribunes of the plebs," says Cicero, "were appointed in opposition to the consular power."

Within a short time, however, strife again arose between the two orders, and after it had lasted for some years, the consuls and tribunes vacated their offices, and the fasces were delivered to ten men, known as the Decemvirate, who may be regarded as the lawgivers of ancient Rome. It was they who framed the Twelve Tables, a compilation of laws that were imported from the cities of Greece, or Hellas. After their rule, at first just, had changed into a tyranny, they were deposed, and the consuls and tribunes were again appointed.

At this period the Romans for the first time encountered the barbarians of the north. "The Gauls," says Florus, "were a nation so terrible in every way, that they seemed clearly to be born for the destruction of men and the sack of cities." These wandering hordes, "setting out," he says

again, "from the furthest limits of the world and the ocean that surrounds all things," overran Italy and inflicted so disastrous a defeat on the Romans at the river Allia, that they were obliged to abandon the city and retire to the Capitol. The original Rome was then laid in ashes by the victorious barbarians.

But as soon as the Gauls had departed, a new city arose out of the ruins of the old. The Romans speedily recovered from the misfortunes that had befallen them, and by attacking the surrounding peoples one by one, at last reduced them all into complete subjection. They next came into conflict with the Hellenic cities that were situated in the south of Italy. These invoked the assistance of their kinsmen, and Pyrrhus crossed over to Tarentum, bringing all the forces of Macedonia with him. In the first battles the advantage was gained by the successor of the great Alexander; but rather through the terror caused by his huge beasts than the prowess of his army. Eventually, however, the new dynasty that was rising in the west prevailed. After the war had been carried on for some years, the Romans completely defeated the forces of the Greeks. Pyrrhus fled across the sea to his own country, and the captives were so many, and the

spoil taken from the wealthy Hellenic cities so great, that the triumphal procession was more splendid than any that had entered the city before. The subjugation of Italy was thus at last completed, but not until nearly five hundred years had been spent in the task.

Rome now entered upon her great struggle with Carthage, which possessed the commerce and dominion that had formerly belonged to Tyre. Sicily supplied the occasion of a war which had long been inevitable. The Carthaginians had already placed garrisons in most of the cities of the island, and the Romans could not afford to look quietly on while so powerful a people was conquering a country which they regarded as if it were a part of Italy. They therefore left the land on which all their battles had hitherto been fought, and ventured for the first time upon the sea, "under the pretext," says Florus, "of assisting their allies, but in reality being attracted by the prey." The methods by which the Romans obtained the empire of the world are here frankly stated. They moved forward their frontiers, not so much by attacking other peoples directly, as by intervening in disputes between them and their own allies, as is shown by the words of Cicero: "By defending

our allies, we have now obtained possession of the whole world." In their first naval battle the Romans were victorious, and on land also they were no less successful in their operations. They expelled the Carthaginians from the cities they had occupied in Sicily, and transferred the war into Africa, where they captured and destroyed many fortresses and towns. But when they were about to besiege Carthage itself they met with a reverse, and their general fell into the hands of the enemy. At the same time a disaster befell them on the sea, their fleet being wrecked in a violent storm. But fortune soon came over to their side once more, and a naval victory, so great that it seemed as if all Carthage had been destroyed in the sea, brought the first Punic, or Phœnician, war to a conclusion.

After a brief interval the struggle was resumed. In Spain, Hannibal had made full preparations to carry out the oath which he had sworn of taking vengeance on the Romans. When he had subdued the greater part of that country, he proceeded to invade Italy, and overcame, first the Alps, and then the armies that were sent against him, in three successive battles. In the fourth, which took place at Cannæ, the Romans suffered a defeat which their own historian describes as

“an almost fatal wound.” After such a calamity they were no longer able to oppose his advance, and it seemed as if the city itself could not escape falling into his hands. But as he would not have overcome the Romans by occupying Rome, the great Carthaginian general adopted another plan of operations. The subjugated peoples of Italy were afforded an opportunity of recovering their independence, and many of them gave their support to Hannibal. But the Romans, though greatly weakened by their defeats, still possessed a reserve of latent strength; and through the success of Scipio in Spain, and the strategy of Fabius, whose plan of overcoming the Carthaginians by not fighting procured for him the title of Cunctator, they were gradually restored to their former condition. After Scipio had completed the conquest of Spain, he crossed over into Africa, and Hannibal was thus at last compelled to leave Italy. In the decisive battle the Roman general was victorious, and it was then placed beyond all doubt which city was to be the seat of the Empire of the west.

When they were no longer restrained by the fear of a rival, all nations were exposed to the aggression of the Romans. Many submitted to them of their own accord, and those that resisted

they easily subdued. Wars were carried on in different countries at the same time, and Macedonia and Achaia were included in their conquests. Nor would the evil destiny of Carthage suffer it to escape. When it began to rise to power again, its final destruction was resolved upon by the senate. It was therefore blockaded both by land and sea; but the Carthaginians, in their desperate circumstances, offered so stubborn a resistance, that the siege proved far more difficult and occupied a much longer time than had been expected. The conflagration that followed its capture reduced Carthage to ashes. In the same period Corinth also, then the most opulent city of Greece, was plundered and burnt.

The name of Rome was now known and feared throughout the world, and though there were many nations which still retained their independence, yet their subjugation was but a matter of time. The centuries of growth were approaching completion, and a century of efflorescence was about to commence. The great expansion which took place in this period was due to the manifestation of a strength which had previously been latent. The rate of progress is in reality no greater at one time than another. Though the flower does not actually appear till the last, it

was being gradually developed throughout the period of growth.

The thought of defeat never entered into the minds of the Romans, whose ambition was to subject all nations to their dominion. Unlike the resourceful Ulysses, who always preferred the winding way, when once an object was proposed to them they pressed straight towards it with an indomitable perseverance, and overcame all the obstacles that lay in their path until they had attained it. The greater originality and the superior skill in the different crafts, which other peoples claimed, seemed to them insignificant compared with the possession of power. They trusted to the strength of their right arm rather than to the keenness of their intellect. So long as their city continued to be the seat of government, they felt that they could afford to disregard everything else. There was no way of resisting them, when they had proved themselves able to subdue all nations and suppress every insurrection. Events move more quickly as the end draws near, and in the turbulent period which immediately preceded the establishment of the Empire their advance was more rapid than it had been in the period of growth. The realisation of the anticipations that had been cherished from

the earliest times was deferred until the close of the period of efflorescence, in which the climax of development was reached and the power which had formerly been distributed among many autonomous cities was all centralised in the one imperial city.

It was during the great upheaval that preceded the establishment of the Empire that civil wars arose for the first time. Hitherto the Romans and their allies had engaged in wars only with foreign peoples, but now they began to turn their arms against themselves. The fury which the civil wars provoked spread over all countries of the ancient world, and even in the city and forum Roman citizens fought with one another as if they had been gladiators. All foreign wars were regarded by the Romans as justifiable, but not those which they called civil. For it was their proper task to subdue all independent peoples and extend the influence of the Latin civilisation. When, therefore, they turned their arms against each other, so that citizens, or *cives*, fought with citizens, they were not directly fulfilling it.

Throughout the last century of its existence the Republic was distracted with party-strife. The authority of the senate was diminished as the Roman conquests were augmented, and thus

an opportunity was afforded to Cæsar to obtain absolute power. When wars were carried on out of Italy, it could no longer exercise an effective control over the generals nor restrain the violence of contending factions. The imperator who had gained many victories abroad acquired an unbounded influence when he returned to the city, and was really the master of those of whom he seemed to be the servant. The overthrow of the Republic was the inevitable result of the continual acquisition of new territory. When the Roman dominion became universal, one strong man was required to consolidate and preserve it. At the close of the period in which the climax of development was reached, it was necessary that a head should be given to the world.

The equestrian order grew wealthy and powerful in this period of efflorescence. The Equites, "whom," says Sallust, "the hope of acquiring a civil status had detached from the people," were the middle class of ancient Rome. The publicans, or farmers of the taxes, usually came from their order, which obtained many new privileges at this time. By the transference to them of the judicial power, which had previously belonged to the senate, they were rendered less liable to conviction when charges of peculation or extortion

were brought against them. The formation of new provinces, which tended to diminish the authority of the senate and nobles, gave more influence to those who were the farmers of the taxes. After the subversion of the kingdoms of the east, a great change is observable in the manners of the Romans. The old discipline was relaxed, and luxury and extravagance took the place of the primitive simplicity and frugality. The period of expansion was favourable for the acquisition of wealth. As the judges, or *judices*, were selected from their own order, the new nobles were able to appropriate to themselves large sums out of the public revenues; as appears from the words of Florus: "A senatu in equitem translata judiciorum potestas vectigalia, id est, imperii patrimonium supprimebat"—("The transference of the judicial power from the senate to the middle class caused the suppression of the taxes, that is, the patrimony of the Empire.")

It was customary for prisoners taken in war to be brought to Rome and sold in the public market, so that slaves had now become very plentiful and cheap. The people of Italy, therefore, derived no benefit from the acquisition of new territory. The large estates of the wealthy, or *latifundia*, as they were afterwards called, were

cultivated by foreign slaves, and they were driven off the land altogether. Many attempts were made to bring them back to it, but they failed to effect any permanent improvement in their condition. "How could the plebs be brought back to the lands," asks Florus, "except by the ejection of those who were in possession; who were nevertheless themselves part of the *populus*, and were holding estates left to them by their forefathers, by long prescription as if by right of inheritance?"

The great number of the slaves was a menace to the security of the state. The cruelty to which they were subjected caused those who were in Sicily to revolt. They captured the camps of the prætors and laid waste the estates of their masters. A second insurrection was no less disastrous to the Romans, who suffered several defeats before it was suppressed.

To remedy the evils that had arisen, various reforms were introduced. Colonies were founded in the provinces, and the privileges of the Roman citizenship extended to the whole of Italy. Agrarian laws also were proposed, and the old dispute with regard to the *ager publicus*, or domain of the state, was renewed. Tiberius Gracchus, having been elected to the tribuneship, "fell

away from the party of merit," to use the words of a Roman historian, "and by promising the citizenship to the whole of Italy, and promulgating at the same time agrarian laws, confounded all classes with each other." He wished to fix the number of acres of the public land which a citizen might possess, and to divide the land that remained, after this restriction had been imposed, among the people. After much opposition his proposals were adopted, and commissioners were appointed for dividing the lands, and founding colonies in the provinces. But those who were in possession resented any curtailment of their rights, and resorted to violence after other means had failed. Gracchus was charged with assuming royal power, and while he was delivering an harangue to his supporters, a party including, it is said, "the nobles, the senate, the better and greater part of the middle class, and those among the people who were uncorrupted by his pernicious views," rushed upon him and put him to death.

But these fierce struggles between opposing factions never terminated with the death of their leaders. After the removal of Tiberius Gracchus, "the same fury," says the historian, "took possession of his brother Caius." On

his being appointed tribune of the people, he endeavoured to effect even greater reforms. Laws were proposed by him providing for free distributions of corn, by which it afterwards became the custom to appease those clamours for *panem et circenses*, that were so frequent in the period of decline. The promise of the privileges of citizenship gained for him the support of the Italian allies, and his influence became very great. But the charge of assuming royal power, which the Romans could never tolerate, proved fatal to him, as it had to his brother Tiberius. He was compelled to flee from the city, and his enemies, who were unable to capture him alive, threw his dead body into the Tiber.

The allies, however, still persisted in their efforts to obtain the *civitas*, or Roman citizenship. After their just demands had been repeatedly refused, they chose a new capital, which they called Italicum, and took up arms against the city to which they had formerly been accustomed to give their aid. This social war—that is, war with *socii*, or allies—devastated Italy and caused great loss to the Romans, who at last conceded to those whom they had vanquished the rights of citizenship they had

before denied. The people of Italy, therefore, became civilised in ancient times; but the rest of the nations of the west mostly remained in a condition of barbarism, and were kept in subjection by the establishment of *castra*, or military camps, in different parts of their country.

The venality which prevailed among the Romans at this time was manifested in a striking manner in their war with Jugurtha, the king of the Numidians. In the time of the second Phœnician war, the Numidians had been their allies; and at a later period, when they were besieging the city of Numantia in Spain, Jugurtha, being the son of the king's brother, was intrusted by him with the command of a force that was sent to their assistance. During the siege he greatly distinguished himself, and made many friends in the army, from whom he acquired the information that "anything might be bought at Rome." On his return to Numidia, the king, after reading the letter he brought from the Roman general, "adopted him as his son," to use Sallust's words, "and by his will appointed him joint-heir with his own children." Perceiving his superior abilities and his influence with the Romans, he hoped, by making him a participator in the kingdom, to prevent him from seizing the whole after

his death. But his precautions were unavailing, and the princes were unable to administer its affairs without dissension, according to the saying of Sadi: "Ten dervishes can sleep under one blanket, but two kings cannot be accommodated in one country." Within a very short time Jugurtha, having beheaded one of his rivals, and expelled the other whose name was Adherbal, made himself king of all Numidia.

Adherbal then appealed for assistance to the senate, which was at first inclined to grant his request. But before it had come to a decision, Jugurtha, who was more intimately acquainted with the character of the Romans, sent ambassadors to the city with large sums of money to bestow upon his old friends, and all others who happened to be then possessed of influence. After these gifts had been judiciously distributed, "so complete a change followed," says Sallust, "that Jugurtha, from being an object of the greatest odium, came to be regarded with extreme favour by the nobility." Instead of any severe measures being adopted against him, the senate decreed that the kingdom should be divided between him and Adherbal. When the commissioners appointed for this purpose arrived in Numidia, he prevailed upon them by his

bribes to assign the more fertile portion of the country to himself; and as soon as they had departed, he suddenly invaded the territory of Adherbal, and, having forced him to surrender, put him to death. A Roman army was then transported into Africa, but owing to the avarice of the consul who commanded it, a treaty was soon arranged and the war brought to a close.

When these proceedings became known at Rome, there was a loud outcry against the small faction who had betrayed the public interest for their private gain. The tribunes were not slow to avail themselves of an opportunity of stirring up the people against the nobles, and a prætor was sent to bring Jugurtha himself to Rome, that he might give information concerning those who were accused of having accepted his bribes. The public faith was pledged for his safety, and as he relied upon the support of his friends, Jugurtha resolved to obey the summons of the Roman people. On the day when their assembly met, he was called upon to make his statement before it; but, owing to the opposition of one of the tribunes whom he had corrupted beforehand, the investigation fell through. Emboldened by these events, Jugurtha ventured to procure the assassi-

nation of a rival, who happened at that time to be staying in Rome, and was claiming for himself the kingdom of Numidia. But the odium which this deed aroused against him was too great for him to stand against, and he was ordered by the senate to depart from Italy. "As he was leaving Rome," says Sallust, "he is reported, after frequently looking back upon it in silence, to have at last declared that it was a city that might be bought, and would perish quickly if it should find a purchaser."

The war was now renewed and another army was sent into Numidia. After some time had elapsed, the Roman general, wishing to get possession of the king's treasures, laid siege to the city in which they were deposited. But Jugurtha induced him to abandon his attempt and follow him into a remote part of the country; and when he had corrupted many of the centurions through his emissaries, he surrounded the invading army on a dark night, and attacked it suddenly on all sides. Many of those whom he had tampered with went over to him, "and the chief centurion of the third legion," says Sallust, "gave the enemy an entrance through the very fortification which he had been appointed to guard." This purchased victory enabled Jugurtha

to dictate the terms of peace, and the Roman army was compelled to evacuate Numidia.

Party-strife now broke out in the city with increased virulence. "There was a complete division into two factions," says Sallust, with reference to the fierce struggles which took place in this turbulent period, "and the Republic was torn asunder between them." It was evident that the Romans had been vanquished, not so much by the enemy, as by their own avarice. Another investigation was ordered, and severe punishments were inflicted on the guilty. The senate refused to recognise the treaty which had been concluded, and preparations were immediately made for renewing the war. The consul Metellus, on arriving in Africa, restored discipline in the army, which had become completely disorganised, and met with better fortune than his predecessors; but Jugurtha, in spite of the inferiority of his troops, was able to prevent him from gaining any decisive advantage.

During this campaign conspicuous ability was displayed by Marius; a man of obscure birth, but of boundless ambition. He had already held the office of tribune, but now, encouraged by a prediction that great honours were portended to him, he was aspiring to the consulship. But when he

asked for leave of absence for the purpose of applying for it, Metellus at first endeavoured to dissuade him from entering upon such a course, as the nobles, to whose party he himself belonged, had for a long time retained this office among themselves, and told him, "that all things were not to be sought after by all men, and that he ought to be satisfied with his present circumstances." Afterwards, however, since Marius frequently repeated his request and was offended at its refusal, he allowed him to return to Rome. When the *comitia* were held, the support of the people enabled him to overcome the opposition of the nobles, who were at this period relying on the merit of their forefathers rather than their own, and, as he himself declared, "he took the consulship from them, like spoils from the vanquished."

In the meantime, the protraction of the war had been the subject of much complaint at Rome. Jugurtha was a skilful general, and Metellus was unable to force him to surrender. He had also strengthened himself by persuading Bocchus, the king of the Moors, who were the neighbours of the Numidians, to come to his assistance. When, therefore, the people were asked whom they wished to have the conduct of the war against Jugurtha, they assigned the province of Numidia

to Marius, and Metellus was obliged to retire in his favour.

After Marius had assumed the command, the Romans were more successful, and many fortresses fell into their hands. As the fortunes of Jugurtha declined, Bocchus became less disposed to support him against such powerful foes, and sending ambassadors to their camp, he sought their friendship and alliance. Marius therefore sent Sulla, who was at this time holding the office of quæstor, to negotiate with the Moorish king; and Jugurtha, whose betrayal was demanded as the price of the Roman friendship, having been invited to a conference, was made a prisoner by treachery. He was then handed over to Sulla, by whom he was conducted to Marius; and a war which had conferred more disgrace than glory upon the Roman arms was thus brought to a conclusion. On his return to Rome a great triumph, in which Jugurtha was led captive, was celebrated by Marius, and on the same day he entered upon his second consulship.

Rome was now again threatened by the incursions of the barbarians of the north. The Teutons and the Cimbrians, abandoning their own country in search of new settlements, descended upon Italy, and overwhelmed the Roman

armies that opposed their advance. But from this great peril the state was delivered by Marius, who encountered the barbarians after they had crossed the Alps and completely defeated them in two memorable battles.

At the close of his sixth consulship, Marius, who was now advanced in years, ceased for a while to take an active part in public affairs. But he had not lost his ambition for honours, and when the conduct of the war against the king Mithridates was given to Sulla, he returned to Rome, and by gaining the support of one of the tribunes, caused the decree of the senate to be set aside and the province of Asia to be assigned to himself. This was the origin of the civil wars, which were carried on with a greater ferocity than any wars against foreign peoples. Indignant at what had been done, Sulla collected an army, and after occupying the Capitol, had several of Marius' supporters put to death. Marius himself with difficulty effected his escape, and underwent great hardships in eluding his pursuers, of which a Roman historian gives the following account: "On his being found naked, and covered with mud, with only his eyes and nose above water, among the reeds about the marsh of Marica, in which he had concealed him-

self while fleeing from the pursuit of Sulla's horsemen, he was dragged out, and, with a cord fastened round his neck, was led to the prison of Minturnæ." But the citizens of Minturnæ, commiserating his condition, decided to release him. Being placed by them on board a ship, he sailed to Africa, where he waited for an opportunity of vengeance, which soon presented itself. While Sulla was carrying on the war in Asia, party-strife was renewed, and a faction which had been expelled from the city recalled Marius to Italy. The report of his return attracted multitudes to his side, and after he had overcome the resistance of the opposite faction, he once more made a victorious entry into Rome. Having then become consul for the seventh time, in accordance with the prediction which had been made to him many years before, and having satiated himself with the slaughter of his enemies, he was seized with an illness and died.

A short time afterwards Sulla brought his soldiers back to Brundisium, laden with the spoil they had taken in the east. An adverse faction was in possession of the city, and the country was being laid waste by the Samnites, the inveterate enemies of the Romans, who supposed that the time when the Republic was distracted

with party-strife was favourable for recovering their independence. But Sulla was fortunate in all his undertakings. He defeated the army which was commanded by Marius' son, and then, in a battle which took place before the Colline gate, repulsed the Samnites, whose general had led them against the city with the determination of utterly destroying it. "Going up and down the ranks of his army," says the historian, "he declared that the last day of the Romans was at hand, and loudly exclaimed that the city was to be overthrown and destroyed, adding, that those wolves, who were the robbers of Italian liberty, would never be exterminated until the forest in which they took refuge was cut down."

As there was no one to resist him, Sulla had himself appointed dictator, and showed the greatest cruelty towards his opponents. Proscriptions were ordered by him for the first time, and thousands of Roman citizens were slaughtered, and their property confiscated. "Whenever any one coveted the house or villa, or even the plate or apparel of another," says Sallust, "he endeavoured to have him placed in the number of the proscribed." After tranquillity had been restored, Sulla greatly restricted the tribunician power, and brought forward many

measures by which the nobles were reinstated in the position from which they had fallen.

But the discontent, with which the state was seething, had been repressed rather than removed, and a few years after the death of Sulla it broke out again in the conspiracy of Catiline, in which men of all ranks and parties were involved. On his return from Africa, whither he had been sent as governor, Catiline, being prevented from applying for the consulship, had formed a design against the faction which was then predominant in the state. When it was frustrated, he engaged in a greater enterprise, which occupies a place by itself in Roman annals, for the reason that it had to do, not so much with any party in the state, as with the state itself. Although the actual results of the conspiracy of Catiline were inconsiderable, yet on account of its object, which Florus describes as being, "to overturn the whole state from its foundations—*totam rempublicam funditus tollere*," it was always regarded with a peculiar horror by the Romans. Whether Marius or Sulla had the advantage mattered but little as far as Rome itself was concerned. However many citizens perished in the massacres and proscriptions which they ordered, the city still remained.

But had the attempt of Catiline succeeded, who was in no sense the leader of a rival faction, then, as Florus further says, "it would have been all over with the magnificent Empire."

At this time there was peace throughout Italy, and no danger was apparent; but the changes which had taken place during the recent upheaval had given rise to a general dissatisfaction, and many of the nobles and senators were associated with Catiline. As soon as he considered the number of his supporters to be sufficient for his purpose, he selected from among them those in whom he reposed most confidence; and having assembled them together in secret, he delivered to them an exhortation, at the close of which, according to the report mentioned by Sallust, "he carried round, in drinking-cups, the blood of a human body mingled with wine; and when all, after an execration, had just tasted it, after the manner which is usual in solemn rites, he disclosed his plan; and the reason given for his doing this was that they might be the more faithful to each other, owing to their being all alike conscious of such an atrocity."

But the proceedings at this meeting were divulged by the indiscretion of one of those who

were present at it, and the citizens became aware of the peril which threatened them. In order that it might be averted, therefore, they bestowed the consulship upon Cicero, who, though a new man, had already held several important offices; and extraordinary powers were granted him by the senate. But the ramifications of the conspiracy were so extensive, that all the ability and vigilance of Cicero were required to combat it. Disquieting rumours were current of secret meetings and portents that foreboded some great disaster, and a feeling of alarm became general. "The city wore a changed aspect," says Sallust. "Instead of that excessive gaiety and hilarity which long tranquillity had engendered, a sudden gloom fell upon all; they became agitated and apprehensive, and felt themselves unsafe in every place and with every person; they were not at war, but they had no peace."

In spite of the precautions that had been adopted against him, Catiline persisted in his purpose, and even came into the senate. But when he had taken his seat, hostile looks were directed towards him from every side, and Cicero, who was always devoted to the support of the state, assailed him in a very celebrated oration. "It produced no more effect, however," says

Florus, "than that the enemy withdrew, openly professing a threat of extinguishing the flame that had been excited against him with a general ruin;" or, as his words are elsewhere reported, "*non aqua, sed ruina;*" that is to say, the fire would not be quenched with water, but with the downfall of the city. After giving full instructions to Lentulus, who had formerly held the office of consul, that he might be able to make all necessary arrangements, he left Rome the same night, and went to the army which had already been collected and was stationed not far away. Among the citizens of the municipal towns he had many supporters, and the Gauls, who had been reduced to great distress by the rapacity of the Roman governors, were also solicited to give their assistance.

The senate then prepared for war, and offered a reward to those who would give information concerning the conspiracy, and a pardon to those who would lay down their arms. But the minds of the people were at this period alienated from the state, and many who did not actually take part in the attempt were nevertheless disposed to regard it with favour. "Notwithstanding the two decrees of the senate," says Sallust, "there was not a single person, out of so great a multitude,

who was induced by the promise of reward to give information concerning the conspiracy, neither did any one leave the camp of Catiline: so great was the force of the disaffection which, like a pestilence, had taken possession of the minds of most of the citizens."

When everything had been made ready by Lentulus, a night was appointed on which each member of the band should perform the task which had been assigned to him. It was arranged that the city should be set on fire in several parts simultaneously, and that, when the conflagration was general, they should all go forth to the camp of Catiline. But Cicero, being informed of their intentions, decided to have Lentulus and certain others immediately apprehended, and, some days afterwards, convoked the senate, that it might deliberate upon the whole matter. Among those who were present at this meeting was Caius Julius Cæsar, who had already acquired great influence. When the consul asked him what he thought should be done with those who had been placed in custody, he recommended, with characteristic clemency, that their lives should be spared; but this course was not pleasing to the austere Cato. "In the name of the immortal gods," he said, "I call upon you, who

have always thought more of your houses and villas, your ornaments and paintings, than you have of the welfare of the state; if you wish to retain those things, whatever they may be, to which you are clinging, if you wish to have leisure for your diversions, rouse yourselves, and come to the help of the state." The strong terms in which he insisted that it was not a question whether this or that party should have the advantage, but that the safety of the city itself was at stake, caused the majority of the senators to adopt his view. Lentulus and the others were accordingly strangled in the Tullian prison forthwith, though it was unlawful to put Roman citizens to death uncondemned.

Catiline, on hearing of these events, at first endeavoured to escape into Gaul; but when his retreat was cut off, he resolved to meet the army which was commanded by the consul. On his own side, there was no freeborn citizen surviving when the engagement was at an end; and on the other, it was discovered that heavy losses had been sustained. "Catiline himself," says Sallust, "was found far in front with his men among the dead bodies of the enemy, still breathing a little, and having expressed on his countenance the fierceness of mind he had possessed in his lifetime."

While these things had been happening in Italy, Pompey, whose services to the Republic had already procured for him the title of Magnus, had been extending the Roman dominion in Asia. During his consulship, in which Crassus was his colleague, he had restored the tribunician power by removing the restrictions which had been imposed by Sulla, and his influence became so great that, some years afterwards, he was intrusted with the conduct of the war against Mithridates, the most powerful of the eastern kings the Romans had encountered. Other generals had already invaded his kingdom, but it was reserved for Pompey to subvert it altogether. He for the first time conveyed a Roman army across the river Euphrates, and completely defeated the king, who was obliged to flee into Scythia. He then advanced into Armenia, whose king at once submitted to him. After he had subdued the nations in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus, he removed his camp to Syria, and made it a Roman province. Passing by Damascus, he continued his march southward until he came to Jerusalem, to which, as it did not surrender, he laid siege. When it was taken, he entered the city, "and saw," says Florus, "that grand mystery of an impious nation, lying open

under, as it were, a sky of gold." All Asia between the Red Sea and the Caspian having been subdued, with the exception of the Persians, with whom a treaty was concluded, and the Indians, who were as yet ignorant of the Roman name, the war was brought to a close and Pompey returned to Italy.

It now seemed as if the rivalries of its leading men would again produce discord in the Roman state, and divide the citizens into opposing factions. The greatness of Pompey had aroused a feeling of jealousy against him, and the senate endeavoured to impair his authority by refusing to ratify the arrangements he had made in Asia, and preventing him from bestowing upon his soldiers the rewards he had promised them. He was therefore induced to associate himself with Cæsar and Crassus, and to form in conjunction with them that "alliance of power," as it is styled by a Roman historian, which is known as the Triumvirate. Crassus possessed great influence on account of his wealth, and Cæsar had just been elected consul. These men now became the three heads of the Roman world; and rivals though they were, the compact which had been concluded between them suited their interests by securing them against the intrigues of their enemies at Rome, and enabling them to engage

in foreign wars. So long as it lasted, therefore, the citizens were restrained from turning their arms against each other. Cæsar, as consul, had all Pompey's acts confirmed, and brought forward an agrarian law by which the Campanian land was divided among twenty thousand citizens, many of whom had recently returned from the war in the east.

These events quite deprived Cicero of the influence he had formerly possessed. As he was no longer protected by the sanctity of office, and did not enjoy the goodwill of the Triumvirate, he had no defence against the attacks of the enemies he had made while he was consul, and was obliged to go into exile. It was not long, however, before the citizens became desirous of his recall; and by the efforts of Pompey, and the decrees of the senate, he was restored to his country.

As Pompey had laid under tribute the kingdoms of the east, Cæsar resolved to subjugate the nations of the west. He wished to increase his influence at Rome by gaining victories abroad, and to have an army under his command that would support him in carrying out his vast projects. Several years were occupied by the war which he conducted against the Gauls, who had often been defeated, but never subdued. When

he approached the Rhine, he was brought into contact with the Germans. An incursion they had made against a people who were the allies of the Romans was the occasion of hostilities. Ambassadors were sent to one of their chiefs to demand reparation, who, on being ordered by them to come to Cæsar, replied: "Who is Cæsar? Let him come himself if he wishes. What is it to him what our Germany does? Do I interpose myself between the Romans?" But the barbarians were obliged to yield to the superior discipline of the invading army. They retired across the Rhine, and when Cæsar built a bridge over it, they took refuge in their forests and fens.

"Everything, both by land and sea, being now conquered," says Florus, "he turned his eyes towards the ocean, and as if this Roman world were not sufficient, he meditated the conquest of another." Though the summer was nearly over, he resolved to transport his legions into Britain, "seeking, as it were," says another Roman historian, "a new world for our Empire and his own." Setting out from Gessoriacum, which is now known as Boulogne, he landed not far from the port of Dover, or Portus Dubris of a later period. He was successful in his operations on the dry land, but many of his ships were shat-

tered by a storm. In the following year he landed again with a larger army than before, and drove back the forces of the Britons who opposed his advance. After he had crossed the river Thames, he obtained the submission of the Trinobantes and their neighbours, and captured the fortified town of Cassibelinus. Peace being then concluded on condition that Britain should pay an annual tribute to the people of Rome, Cæsar returned to his ships with the prisoners and spoil he had taken, and brought his army back in safety to the continent.

A great insurrection had to be quelled before the Gauls were finally subdued. The different tribes, which had been overcome one by one, joined their forces and made a common effort to recover their independence. When Cæsar, who was absent at the time, was informed of these events, displaying his usual promptitude and resolution, he crossed the Alps, which it was supposed would prevent his return, and having collected an army from distant winter quarters, within a short time pacified the whole country. Thus the people who had sacked the Rome that existed in early times were in a later age themselves reduced under her power.

Now that no other countries remained to be

conquered, there seemed to be no reason why the peace of the world should be disturbed for some time to come. But the Nemesis that looks with jealous eyes upon too great power disappointed all such hopes. "Fortune," says Florus, "envying the ruling people of the nations, armed it to its own destruction." After Crassus had perished in his disastrous expedition against the Persians, which his thirst for gold had prompted him to make regardless of the treaty that had been concluded, the compact between Cæsar and Pompey, who had for some time been estranged from each other, was broken, and instead of enjoying a period of tranquillity, the Roman world was shaken with more violent commotions than it had ever felt before. The following is the description which Florus gives of this great war, which terminated in the overthrow of the Republic, and the establishment of the Empire: "The fury of Cæsar and Pompey spread, like some deluge or conflagration, over the city, Italy, peoples, nations, and finally the whole Empire, wherever it extended; so that it cannot rightly be called a civil, or even a social war, neither was it a foreign war; but it was rather a war composed of all these together, or even something more than a war."

When Cæsar demanded the consulship which had been decreed to him in his absence, the senate called upon him to resign the imperium, or military command, and come and apply for it as a private person. But neither he nor Pompey would disband their armies, for each was afraid of the other. The conflict between imperator and senate, which had been impending for some time, could then be deferred no longer. Cæsar used his best endeavours to avert it, but the party of which Pompey was the leader refused to enter into any negotiations with him. As all his overtures were rejected, therefore, he crossed the Rubicon, and marched straight upon Rome. So rapid was his progress that Pompey was unable to offer him any resistance, and was obliged to flee from Italy, with most of the senators. After Cæsar had got possession of Rome, and secured the provinces of the west, he transferred the war into Thessaly, where Pompey had collected a great army from the provinces and tributary kingdoms of the east. The victory of Cæsar at Pharsalia made him the master of the whole Roman world. Pompey survived his defeat, and sailed to Egypt. But his evil fortune followed after him, and as he was about to set foot upon the shore, he was

struck from behind and slain by the orders of the ministers of Ptolemy.

The senatorial party, however, prolonged the struggle for many years after the death of its leader. In Africa, Cato strove in vain to retrieve the lost cause, and in Spain the scattered remnants of the forces of Pompey united to support his sons. At Munda, where the last battle of the war was fought, the issue long remained doubtful. When Cæsar's veterans gave way, it seemed as if the Pompeians would be victorious; but fortune favoured his side in the end, and they were again defeated. Having now overcome all opposition, he returned to Rome, and celebrated a magnificent triumph for the victories he had won in every part of the world. Honours of every kind were heaped upon him by an obsequious senate, which was no longer able to withhold them. The consulship, which had previously been denied him, was granted him for a term of several years, and he retained the title of imperator at the same time. As pontifex maximus, also, he reformed the calendar, which the college of pontiffs had regulated, not according to the revolution of the year, but to suit their own interests. This is noticed by Cicero when, with respect to the time at which

certain ceremonies were to be celebrated, he says: "A careful attention is to be given to intercalation; an ordinance which, having been wisely instituted by Numa, has been allowed to lapse, owing to the negligence of later pontiffs."

Many other undertakings were contemplated by Cæsar, but he did not live to carry them out. The suspicion was aroused that, though he was Cæsar, he was seeking to make himself king; and several of the senators, under the leadership of Brutus and Cassius, conspired to put him to death. Royal rule was regarded by the Romans as being quite distinct from imperial rule, and although Cæsar refused the diadem, yet the mere fact of its having been offered to him was more than they could tolerate; as appears from the words in which this incident is related by one of their own historians: "Mark Antony, his colleague in the consulship, a man who was ready for any deed of presumption, had excited great odium against him by placing a royal diadem on his head." "He refused it," the historian adds, "but in such a way that he did not seem to be offended." In spite of the unfavourable omens that were announced to him, and the many warnings he received, Cæsar entered the senate-house on the Ides of March,

and was slain by the conspirators led by Brutus and Cassius.

Hopes were now entertained that the Republic might be restored; and on the motion of Cicero, an oblivion of the past was decreed by the senate. But imperial rule, so far from being overthrown, was eventually only the more firmly established by the removal of the emperor. All nations having been deprived of their independence, it was necessary that the Romans themselves also should lose the liberties they once enjoyed, and be brought under the power of one man. When Antony came forward as the successor of Cæsar, he gained the support of most of the citizens. Brutus and Cassius then withdrew to Macedonia and Syria, where they were for a while very successful in their operations.

At this time Octavian, whom Cæsar had adopted and appointed his heir by his will, was absent from Italy. But when he heard of the events that had taken place there, he at once returned, and though he was under eighteen years of age, resolved to claim his inheritance and assume the name of Cæsar. Antony, however, would not give way without a struggle, and withdrawing to Gaul, he collected an army and prepared to invade Italy. Thereupon the senate,

supposing that Octavius Cæsar would prove another Pompey, gave him the conduct of the war. But when the enemy had been driven beyond the Alps, becoming afraid of the name of Cæsar, they inclined to the side of Brutus and Cassius, and confirmed them in the possession of their treasures and the command of their armies. Octavian, therefore, whose first care was to avenge his father's death, changed his attitude towards the senate, and strengthened himself by entering into an alliance with Antony. All the hopes that had been cherished of the restoration of the Republic were then taken away. The city was captured by its own generals, who proscribed every one that was offensive to them. Cicero, who had vehemently denounced Antony in the speeches he had delivered to the senate and people, perished with the Republic whose cause he had so persistently advocated.

After they had settled the affairs of Italy, Antony and Octavian turned their attention to the east, and crossed over to Macedonia. At Philippi the armies of Brutus and Cassius were defeated, and the manes of Cæsar appeased by their death. Octavian then returned to Italy; but Antony remained behind, and continued to disturb the peace of the world for the rest of

his days. After leaving Macedonia he passed through Asia, and rewarded his soldiers with the spoil taken on the march. While he was at Tarsus he was visited by Cleopatra, the queen of Egypt. He afterwards accompanied her to Alexandria, and bestowed upon her many of the eastern provinces of the Empire. As he now possessed absolute power in the east, he thought fit to lay aside the toga, or garb of the western civilisation, and invested himself in the attire of an eastern king. "In his hand was a golden sceptre," says Florus, "and by his side a scimitar, and he wore a purple robe fastened with enormous jewels." This conduct caused a complete estrangement between him and the citizens of Rome. It filled them with indignation to think that the Empire, which they had been building up for so many years, should, just as the structure was completed, be transferred from the west to the east. They were inseparably attached to the one city of the seven hills, and the locality in which it was situated. "Although," says Livy, "your valour may, yet the fortune of this place certainly cannot be transferred elsewhere. Here is the Capitol, where the human head was once found, and it was declared that in that locality would be the head of the world and the seat of empire."

The successful operations of Octavian, both by land and sea, had increased his power in the west; but Antony had suffered a repulse from the Persians, and had with difficulty effected his escape into Syria. The league between the two generals was now dissolved, and they engaged in a war for the empire of the world. The decisive battle was fought near Actium, where the fleet of Octavian, under the skilful command of Agrippa, was victorious. Antony and Cleopatra fled to Alexandria, and a few months afterwards put an end to their lives. When Octavian had subdued the savage nations in the vicinity of the Danube, he returned to Rome, and was received with great rejoicing by the senate and people. The title of Augustus was conferred upon him, and his authority was acknowledged wherever the Empire extended.

After the storm comes a calm. There is a great contrast between the years which preceded the establishment of the Empire and those which followed it. The period of efflorescence had drawn to a close, and the object Augustus proposed to himself was not to engage in new enterprises, but to consolidate the results which had already been achieved. He restored order in all the provinces, and showed great prudence in

regulating their affairs. At Rome, also, he introduced many reforms, by which the stability, which the civil wars had banished, was brought back again. This glorious but brief period of consolidation was regarded by the Romans as if it had been the golden age. The primitive simplicity seemed to have been revived, and the devastated land was again cultivated. The subjugated nations had grown weary of war and were glad to be able to enjoy the Augustan peace. "The whole human race," says Florus, "everywhere enjoyed a universal and uninterrupted peace or treaty of peace; and in the seven-hundredth year from the foundation of the city, Cæsar ventured to shut the temple of double-faced Janus."

The establishment of the Empire was the sign that the climax of development had been reached. All nations had been deprived of their independence, and all power was centralised in Rome. Nothing further, therefore, remained to be accomplished. The forces that had been operating within the existing order had spent themselves, and the activity of the period of efflorescence ceased. The cycle had revolved from King Romulus to Cæsar Augustus. Although, therefore, to those who supposed development to

proceed in a straight line, the iron age of imperial rule seemed far removed from the golden age of royal rule, yet those who perceived that it was cyclical were aware that they were really brought into juxtaposition. For when the revolution of the circle is completed, the original starting-point is reached; as is shown by the words with which Florus concludes his history: "The question was discussed in the senate whether, as he had founded the Empire, he should be called Romulus; but the name of Augustus seemed more sacred and venerable, that, even while he was still dwelling on the earth, he might be deified in name and title."

A fitting expression was now given to the magnificence of the Empire in works both of architecture and of literature. By the direction of Augustus, temples were built and other edifices worthy of the city which was the seat of government and of the gods; and those writers whose genius has given lustre to the age acknowledged him as their patron and protector. The Romans, who rose to power in a late period, had the advantage of being able to avail themselves of the works produced by other peoples in earlier times. Though their own works cannot be called creative, they are not merely imitative,

but are rather to be regarded as constructive. They applied old material to a new use. The writings of the Greeks, to which they were largely indebted, were produced in an environment that was very different from their own. Much misconception with regard to the Hellenic cities has arisen under the influence of the Latin civilisation. When the overthrow of intermediate barriers has given rise to cosmopolitanism, natural diversities are disregarded, and the ideas of the iron age are imported into periods to which they are foreign; as they are by Bacon, when, speaking of Greece and Rome, he describes them as "the exemplar states." Whereas Rome was one city which sought to bring all nations into subjection to itself, Greece was a collection of autonomous communes which, though constantly at war with each other, were averse from engaging in wars with foreign peoples. They were situated between the east and the west, and never at a great distance from the sea. There was no city in Hellas which was recognised as its head; but the members of each autonomous commune managed their own affairs among themselves. When the hosts of Asia were led against them by Xerxes, the Persian king, they united to repel the common enemy; but as soon as the

barbarian had departed they separated again in accordance with natural distinctions. They disliked the artificial union which the forces of centralisation produce. The diversities of many Hellenic cities were all swallowed up in the uniformity of a single Roman province.

Manifestations of creative power are usually preceded by a period of repression. The dramatic masterpieces of the Athenians were produced during the period which immediately followed the expulsion of the tyrants, when all the restrictions to which they had previously been subjected were removed. The welfare of the individual was felt to be identical with the communal welfare, and great munificence was shown in adorning the city and performing other services by which its prosperity was promoted. They built many ships also at this period, and obtained the command of the sea, which gave them the supremacy in Hellas. As the harmony on the maintenance of which the welfare of the commune depended arose from the multitude of diversities displaying themselves in freedom upon the basis of equality, all its members were afforded an opportunity of following the craft or calling to which they were by nature adapted.

It is noticeable that among the Greeks, who, being associated in their own autonomous communities, were not obliged to look for direction outside them, leading men were less numerous than they were among the Romans. The attraction of visible heads, which is a necessity to the particles that compose a promiscuous aggregation, is superfluous to the members of a harmonious association. In order that the tyranny which they had overthrown might never again be set up, the Athenians adopted the custom known as ostracism. Whenever a person appeared to them to have acquired too great power, they ostracised him, that is, banished him from their midst, lest, by the weight of his influence, he should disturb the harmony of the commune. "For three years," says Aristotle, in his recently discovered work on the political constitution of the Athenians, "they continued to ostracise the friends of the tyrants, on whose account the custom had been adopted; and after this, in the fourth year, they banished any one else besides who appeared to be too powerful."

The Greeks, who were possessed of originality, were attracted by the spoken word; the Romans, who were lacking in it, preferred the written. In the development of a language, as in the

history of a dynasty, there are periods of growth and decay. It lives in the life of the people who speak it, and is called a dead language when it is spoken no longer. As there were many communities of one Hellenic race, so there were many dialects of one language. Great diversity, therefore, is observable in the creative works of the Hellenes. But when the barriers that had long been jealously upheld were thrown down, and cosmopolitan influences began to be felt, a period of decadence commenced, and the multitude of sophists took the place of the few who were possessed of creative power. The splendour of the Hellenic cities was dimmed, and it was evident that a general dissolution was imminent. Latent strength being exhausted, they lost their independence, and were all alike reduced under the power of the great Alexander. Communal Hellas expanded into cosmopolitan Hellas, and the old distinctions disappeared. The city of Alexandria, which he founded, rose to great prosperity under the Ptolemies who were his successors. It acquired the commerce which had formerly belonged to Tyre and Carthage, and was a celebrated seat of learning. As their dominion grew more extensive, the Romans also became acquainted with the writings of the Greeks,

though their introduction into the city was much opposed at first; and in the period of decline, the language of cosmopolitan Hellas was spoken wherever the influence of the Latin civilisation extended.

The works produced by the Hellenes after the days of Alexander are inferior to those which belong to the period in which they were associated in separate and autonomous communes. When the intermediate barriers were thrown down, there was a substitution of the written for the spoken word, and of culture for creative power. Whereas communal Hellas retained its independence, cosmopolitan Hellas had been reduced into subjection, and the works of each period accord with the environment out of which they arose. But when all this material that had been accumulated in the course of so many years was acquired by the Romans, it assumed a new aspect under the vigorous treatment it received. In the period in which the climax of development was reached they erected those monuments which have been more enduring than any work of bronze or stone. When the streams of barbarism overflowed the Roman world, the works that were merely imitative were carried away, but those that were creative and constructive were preserved in the

time of gloom and disintegration, that they might be brought to light again in a later age. The ideas that are met with in the writings of the Romans, however, originate from others more often than themselves. They were attached to visible institutions, and were slow to apprehend first principles. By the time the river of human knowledge, starting from the east, had flowed out as far as the west, its stream was no longer clear, and they wanted the power to carry themselves right back to its source.

When the Empire devolved upon Augustus, civil strife ceased, and all parties acknowledged him as their head. He was the sovereign of the universe, in whose rule all nations acquiesced. So long as he lived, the Romans continued to enjoy the blessings of the golden age. But when his reign was over, a time of dearth succeeded to the time of plenty. The forces that had been operating within the existing order having spent themselves, the decline set in and became continually more marked, until at last the ancient civilisation was overwhelmed by a flood of barbarism.

CHAPTER III

THE LIBERATED MEANINGS

IN the period of consolidation the genius of the Romans displayed itself in works that were worthy of the magnificence of their Empire. It is necessary that a favourable environment should have been prepared, and the same situation reproduced by a complete revolution, before the mist in which the past is enveloped can be dispersed, and the words that were written long ago come into power again. Languages that were continually changing while they were growing, are found to have acquired rigidity when the work of creation is finished and forms have been brought into existence to convey every variety of meaning. The technical terms and convenient phrases, with which they are at last enriched, are not available in early times, but are created in the gradual course of development. When a language has acquired rigidity, it is liable to break up. It may, as it were, be re-

solved into chaos, out of which other languages may afterwards arise.

Before new ideas can be set forth in words, they must first have been revolved for a certain time in some creative mind. An inward struggle for utterance invariably precedes their clear and definite expression. They originate within a small circle, and are afterwards made known to those who are without. It may be said that there is no such thing as a new idea, since all that are so called were hidden in the primæval chaos and known from the very beginning. But though they may have always been loosely apprehended, it is not until a certain time has elapsed that they are distinctly enunciated. Having been latent during a long period of darkness and confusion, they are at last brought to light by means of the written or spoken word. If any term or phrase be created to give them a clear expression, it is quickly adopted by those who have previously felt the need of it. Afterwards it passes into general use, and so becomes incorporated in the language. Ideas, therefore, that are for the first time distinctly enunciated, notwithstanding their having long been loosely apprehended, are properly regarded as new, and those from whom they originate as possessed of originality.

But in course of time the forms that were hidden in the primæval chaos are all brought into existence and clearly distinguished from each other. The language arrives at the climax of its development, and abounds in those convenient phrases by means of which the multitude of sophists are enabled, without any creative effort, to treat of matters of which they have no clear understanding. The visible forms in which the few revealed the truths they had discovered after a long and difficult search fall into the hands of the many, who apply them to whatever use they please, though they may be entirely ignorant of their contents. When they are multiplied, therefore, the technical terms and convenient phrases, that were created for the sake of accuracy, give rise to confusion. The natural order is inverted, and the letter obscures the thought which is anterior to it.

Original truths are independent of the forms in which they are expressed, and would remain unchanged if these were all swept away. The thought itself, being retained in the mind of the person by whom it has been apprehended, survives when there is no external indication of it. But without the intervention of words, it could not be communicated to others. By means of

the written or spoken word, therefore, a visible or audible expression is given to invisible and inaudible thought. While languages were growing, those who wished to bring latent ideas to light were obliged to create for themselves the phraseology they employed. The supply follows the demand, and the desire for utterance was felt before the means of satisfying it were discovered. But creative power is less frequently manifested when the language has acquired rigidity and is enriched with an abundance of technical terms. The obstacles that once hindered the free expression of thought are removed, and things that were formerly obscure are clearly seen. The human race emerges from the sea of vague opinions, and stands on the dry land of ascertained facts. Knowledge is divided into different apartments, each of which has its own terminology. All subjects are so thoroughly examined that nothing remains to be added to the information which is already possessed concerning them. The chaos of indistinct ideas has vanished, and the work of creation is finished.

But a spoken language is a living organism, and cannot remain always in the same state. After it has acquired rigidity, therefore, a period of decadence commences. Convenient phrases

being available to convey every variety of meaning, there is no longer an inward struggle for utterance. This facility of expression, by obliterating the diversities which creative energy displayed itself in accentuating, brings back the confusion that had been banished. The difficulty of preserving a precise nomenclature in the different departments of knowledge for any length of time is well known. When technical terms pass out of the small circle within which they are at first confined they lose their original significance. The distinctions they were created to mark are overlooked after a constant use has rendered them trite and familiar. A superabundance, no less than an inadequacy, of convenient phrases hinders the clear expression of thought. In the period of a language's decay, vain displays of rhetoric, which are impossible in early times, become frequent. The stereotyped phrase that has lost its original meaning does not remain a mere void, but acquires another meaning, which may be entirely opposed to that which it contained at first. A covert substitution of false for true takes place behind the correct exterior, and the semblance is exalted above the reality to which it was originally subservient.

While the language is growing, new forms are continually being brought into existence; but after the climax of development has been reached, a reaction takes place and opposite processes begin to operate. The few who were possessed of creative power pass away, and in their stead arises the multitude of sophists and imitators, who are prepared, at a moment's notice, to treat of any topic that may be suggested for their discussion. They appropriate the works that were created in the period of growth, and are fortified by the forms in which the original truths were once revealed. But although they handle them so familiarly, it is evident that they are not acquainted with their contents. "The orator who makes florid speeches," says Sadi, "is like a fort which has an armed sentinel at its gate, but not a soul within." Up to a certain point their service is not without its utility. They occupy fields that have already been opened up for investigation, and draw up compilations of facts that have been thoroughly established. But they are not content for long to remain the humble attendants upon others, but endeavour to restate the ideas which they meet with in their works. Hence are produced imitations, which are accompanied by innumer-

able evils. It is impossible that any thought should be better expressed in them than in the original from which it is taken. At best, therefore, they are only unnecessary appendages. But while they can do no good, they may do much harm. From imitation the transition is easy to misrepresentation, and the masters are blamed for the shortcomings of the servants. When they fail to perceive the purport of originals, they are accustomed to raise doubts and difficulties by wrong interpretations, and to pervert the meanings of such passages as do not accord with their own preconceptions. An astonishing amount of ingenuity is expended in obscuring what is obvious and explaining what is perfectly simple. While, therefore, the imitative works cannot add to the creative, they almost always in some measure detract from them. The words said to have been used by the Khalif Omar, when, as tradition asserts, he ordered the destruction of the library of Alexandria, may, by a slight modification, be made applicable also to their case: What is contained in the imitations is either agreeable to what is to be found in the original, or it is not; in the former event, the original is sufficient without them; in the latter, it is fit that they should be destroyed. No

lasting contribution to the stock of human knowledge has ever been made without some creative effort or struggle for utterance.

A reference to bygone ages shows that, in the period of a language's growth, the people who speak it have usually retained their independence, but that, in the period of its decadence, they have often been reduced into subjection. The creations of the few reflect the activity of the times in which they were produced; the imitations of the many are infected with the stagnation of the decline. The imitative process begins to operate when the creative process ceases. The one seeks to attain an external correctness at the outset; the other does not attain it until the final stage has been reached. In the period of growth, when the forms produced from the primæval chaos are still new, imitators are unable to appropriate them; but the environment which exists in the period of decline is entirely favourable for their operations. The gates through which only a few were once permitted to pass are thrown wide open, and the things that used to be guarded with the most jealous care are delivered into the hands of the profane. When they behold this lawless invasion, the masters withdraw, and the servants

occupy the seats which they have vacated. The free creator and the servile imitator exclude each other. The intruding majority, therefore, being left in undisturbed possession, take charge of the things that were formerly under the sole supervision of the minority, and abundantly manifest their incapacity in all their proceedings. They are not able for long to maintain order in the provinces whose affairs they attempt to regulate. Under their inglorious domination, the different departments of knowledge are confounded with each other, and technical terms lose their original significance. They have no clear understanding, but only indistinct ideas, as to the matters of which they treat. The creative process having ceased, the imitative process begins to operate. The original truths are concealed by the very forms by which they were once revealed, and definite knowledge is swallowed up in the promiscuous mass of discordant opinions. The servile imitator undoes the work of the free creator, and restores the primæval chaos.

For one original, there are many imitations. But as the quantity increases, the quality deteriorates. The few, who created in freedom, infused the vigour of the period of growth into

their works, and, like the traveller Ulysses, had had actual experience of the adventures they related. But the many, who imitate in bondage, bring no new ideas into existence, but restate, or rather misrepresent, those which they meet with in the works of others. At no time is a correct exterior more carefully preserved than in the period of decadence. Although the stereotyped phrase has really become like a shell without a kernel, its contents seem to be the same as when it was first created. The covert substitution escapes the notice of those who do not look below the surface. In the natural revolution of time, the original truths are excluded from the forms in which they were expressed at the first, in order that they may be revealed in forms that are entirely new and different at the last. The minority, therefore, never assail the artificial obstructions behind which the majority take refuge but wait until nature reasserts her power and sweeps them all away. After the climax of the language's development has been reached, the distinction becomes manifest between those who cling to the old forms and those who abandon them to regain their excluded meanings. For it is impossible that these should be lost altogether. If they are no longer to be found above the

surface, they must be secreted below. While the few and the many were attached to the same visible forms, they could not be distinguished. But the issue that was formerly obscured is made clear by the *re-volutio*, or rolling-back of the cycle of the age to its original starting-point. The two parties that were indistinguishable in the period of growth, become separated in the period of decadence by an impassable gulf. The one entirely severs its connection with the old forms, and the other then clings to them with a greater tenacity than ever.

After they have deserted their old habitations, the original truths, being irrepressible, begin to reassert themselves in new tendencies. They do not grow old when their expressive forms grow old, but are manifested under different modes in different ages. The thought itself cannot be forever obscured by the letter, to which it is anterior. After a certain time has elapsed, it comes into power again altogether outside it, so that those who are associated with the new tendencies are of necessity dissociated from the devitalised forms. As these have no value after they have lost their original contents, they have everything to gain and nothing to lose by severing their connection with them. If they were all swept away, they

would not be in the least affected, having abandoned them beforehand and obtained a refuge elsewhere. But those who have no hold of the truths themselves are unable to detach themselves from the visible forms by which they are conveyed, and find themselves snared within them when they are reproduced outside them and militate against them.

That new tendencies arise in the latter stages of a language's development is evident from the testimony of history. Among the Greeks, they are represented by the dialectic which appeared when technical terms and convenient phrases were multiplied, and creative power was less frequently manifested. Those who were associated with it were the few, and between it and the rhetoric of the sophists, which appealed to the many, there was a continual conflict. Among the Romans also, the satire which appeared during the decline affords an example of these new tendencies. When the subjects which had been attractive in earlier times had become exhausted and lost their interest, the originality of the satirists displayed itself in works that were entirely new and different.

In the iron age no such deeds were performed as those for which the heroic age was celebrated.

After the Empire had been consolidated, it could not be much further extended, and opportunities were seldom afforded to engage in new enterprises. In a well-known passage Tacitus, the historian of the period of decline, compares the activity of the times which his predecessors had described with the stagnation of the age of Tiberius, when gloom had settled upon the city, and abroad peace was almost undisturbed; "nevertheless," he says, "it will not be unprofitable to examine those events which, though at first sight unimportant, often give rise to movements that have great results." Every period has its representative works, and those which belong to the period of decadence differ widely from those which belong to the period of growth. "What curse is it," asks one of Ibsen's characters, "that makes everything I touch turn ludicrous and mean?"

Since the cycle of the age rolls back to its original starting-point, perpetual progress in a straight line is impossible. The truths which in the intermediate period are gradually excluded from the forms in which they were expressed at the first, are brought into power again at the last when the same situation is reproduced by a complete revolution. It then becomes apparent that those who have taken refuge behind their old

forms are in the wrong, and that those are in the right who are associated with the new tendencies that arise outside them. One of two things must happen to a phrase that has lost its vitality. It must either be abolished, or else become stereotyped and acquire another meaning. Nature abhors a vacuum. In those forms, therefore, which are commonly regarded as being empty, a covert substitution of false for true must have taken place, otherwise they would not have survived the loss of their original contents. The semblance which agreed with the reality in the period of growth, becomes estranged from it in the period of decadence.

While new forms are being brought into existence out of the primæval chaos, the opposite processes cannot come into operation. But when the work of creation is finished, and technical terms and convenient phrases are multiplied, an intruding majority takes possession of the house that has been deserted by the minority. This is the reason why, in the period of decadence, that which seems to be the right side of the gulf is really the wrong. As the stream of a river, which, in the vicinity of its source, is narrow, swift, and clear, becomes broad, sluggish, and turbid, when it approaches the sea;

so the truths which originate within a small circle become obscured, when the forms by which they are conveyed fall into the hands of those who are without. The loss of vitality is compensated for by the gain of prestige. When they retain their original significance no longer, the so-called empty forms are abandoned by the few and appropriated by the many, who apply them to quite a different use from that for which they were created. For a long while their position seems to be secure, for the excluded truths cannot reassert themselves until the revolving cycle of the age has come back to its original starting-point. The fortress which they make their refuge is impregnable, and cannot be taken by assault. Thus the forms and phrases created by the minority in the period of growth, become in the period of decadence the receptacles of what are styled by Ibsen, "majority-truths." Those who assail a correct exterior put themselves in the wrong. But when the end is reached, the original truths reassert themselves altogether outside the forms in which they were expressed at the first. The minority that is associated with the new tendencies appears as the successor of the earlier minority, whose creative works the intruding

majority appropriated and applied to a wrong use. The meanings that were imprisoned in the intermediate period are liberated at the last, and come into power again on the other side of the gulf. Those who recognise them under whatever modes they are manifested, escape from the snare in which those who cannot detach themselves from their old forms are taken when they are reproduced outside them and militate against them. The majority, fortified by the creative works of an earlier minority, oppose the later, which is really its successor. But when the revolving cycle of the age has reached the end by returning to the beginning, those who in the intermediate period seemed to be on the right side are found to be really on the wrong. Deserted by the minority, the house which they occupied is left, to use Ibsen's expression, a "horrible emptiness," from which all things of any value have been removed.

When the covert substitution of false for true takes place, bondage is introduced where freedom once existed. Freedom is inseparably associated with the original truths, and makes its entrances and its exits together with them. As the same visible forms, therefore, afterwards conceal the truths they originally revealed, so the people

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who are attached to them are in the one period free and in the other held in bondage. But those who sever their connection with them, and become associated with the new tendencies that arise outside them, retain their freedom in every age by retaining their hold of the original truths under whatever modes they are manifested. In the period of decadence they are secreted below the surface, and are not to be found in their old habitations. Though the visible forms by which they are conveyed may be handled by every one, yet the truths themselves are in all ages perceived only by the few. While the language is growing, they set them forth in appropriate words until they have been given a clear and definite expression. But when technical terms and convenient phrases are multiplied, and creative power is less frequently manifested, another minority appears as the successor of the earlier, and becomes associated with the new tendencies in which they reassert themselves in the latter stages of the language's development. In both periods, therefore, that of growth and that of decadence, the minority have a hold of the truths themselves, but the majority only of the visible forms by which they are conveyed.

At the end of the age the situation that existed at the beginning is reproduced, and those who intruded in the intermediate period are surprised to find themselves excluded. Before the real issue is made clear their position seems to be secure; but as they are unable to detach themselves from the old forms, they are unable to extricate themselves from the snare in which they are taken when the liberated meanings come into power again outside them and militate against them. Each party shares the fate of that with which it is identified. Those who are attached to the old forms are carried away with them when nature reasserts her power; but those who are associated with the new tendencies that arise outside them survive unaffected. The line of development is not absolutely straight, but comes back in a circle to the point from which it started, so that its extremes at last meet. In the beginning Dulness that dwells in darkness possesses a universal dominion, as is shown by the words of Pope:—

“In eldest time, ere mortals writ or read,
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Dulness o'er all possessed her ancient right,
Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night.”

But when the ideas that were originally indistinct begin to be clearly set forth in appropriate words, she is obliged to retire while the work of creation is proceeding; though she does not disappear altogether, nor relinquish the hope of regaining her lost power, but waits until the climax of development is reached and opposite processes begin to operate. This is noted by Pope in the following lines:—

“Still her old Empire to restore she tries,
For, born a goddess, Dulness never dies.”

After the language has acquired rigidity and is enriched with an abundance of technical terms, the few who were possessed of creative power pass away and the multitude of imitators arises in their stead. By their efforts, Dulness that had been banished is brought back again, and established in her primæval position. The creative process produces what is good, and terminates in order; the imitative process produces what is evil, and terminates in chaos. These future triumphs of Dulness also are foretold by Pope, until at last, when all is about to close with the restoration of her Empire, he says:—

“Yet, yet a moment, one dim ray of light
Indulge, dread Chaos and eternal Night.”

The cycle of the age, therefore, comes back to its original starting-point when its revolution is completed.

In the period of decadence it becomes apparent that permanence is to be ascribed to what is secreted below the surface, rather than to what is established above. The same meanings are conveyed by different forms in different languages and at different periods. Though they remain themselves unchanged, they are manifested under many modes. But this continual variation is not the cause of confusion, for it is from diversity that harmony is produced. The thought itself is independent of the forms in which it is expressed. Even if there were no external indication of it whatever, yet, being retained in the mind of the person by whom it has been apprehended, it would still survive, and might at any time be brought to light again by means of the written or spoken word.

CHAPTER IV

THE SECESSION OF THE MINORITY

IF the inquiry be now transferred from the domain of language to that of nature, the same line of development may again be traced out. "First of all there was chaos," says Hesiod; and the expression, "a chaos," is used by Virgil to mean, from the beginning of the creation. "At that time," says Lucretius, "nothing could be seen here like the objects to which we are accustomed." But when the work was finished, the forms that were originally indistinguishable were separated from each other, and order, or cosmos, was produced out of darkness and confusion. Creative energy displays itself in the accentuation of natural diversities. "Afterwards," Lucretius continues, "the parts began to separate, and similar things began to be joined with similar, and to mark the divisions of the world." The many variable forms in nature were at first expressive of the original truths. But as a living language is continually passing from one

stage of development to another, so also the revolving cosmos is greatly changed by the lapse of time. The original truths, having been given a clear and definite expression, do not reside for ever in the same forms. There are vicissitudes of light and darkness, and periods of growth and decay. "Nothing I should think endures for long under the same form," says Ovid, speaking of the metamorphosis, or alteration of form, which is continually taking place in nature:—

"Nil equidem durare diu sub imagine eadem
Crediderim."

Although they may be stationary in semblance, yet in reality, as was said in ages long gone by, "all things are flowing." Opposite processes begin to operate after the climax of development has been reached. Since the one side of the imperfect circle is covered with darkness while the other is enjoying the light, it comes to pass that the original truths, though they remain themselves unchanged, are in a later age concealed by the same forms by which they were in early times revealed. A long period of repression must precede another manifestation of creative power. But the truths themselves are not identified with the forms by which they are conveyed,

and after they have been totally excluded from them, they reassert themselves outside them and militate against them. When its original meaning is reproduced in a new form, the old, being no longer able to justify its existence, is abolished. But so long as it retains any portion of its original contents it must remain. For the meaning cannot militate against the form that conveys it. The exclusion must be total before the reassertion can take place. When the water is quite exhausted, the fire that has all the time been smouldering below the surface suddenly breaks out, and the period of darkness terminates in a general conflagration. The sea, earth, and sky, which creative energy displayed itself in clearly distinguishing, are again confounded with each other, and the primæval chaos is restored; as is shown by the words which Ovid uses in speaking of a time when the fire had dried up the rivers and parched the earth, and was assailing even the sky itself: "If seas and lands, and the palace of heaven perish, we lapse into the primæval chaos:—

"Si freta, si terrae pereunt, si regia coeli,
In chaos antiquum confundimur."

The world, or cosmos, therefore, which at one time was gradually coming into existence, at

another manifests a tendency to dissolution. It falls back at the last into the chaos out of which it arose at the first. "Matter," says Bacon, "has an inclination and tendency to a dissolution of the world, and a relapse into the primæval chaos."

After the establishment of the Empire further progress was impossible. The climax of development was reached when all power was centralised in Rome. The many autonomous minorities had yielded to the aggression of one majority. All nations had been deprived of their independence, and even the Romans themselves had lost the liberties they once enjoyed. Natural diversities were obliterated in order that an artificial uniformity might be maintained. In the midst of the prevailing cosmopolitanism it was difficult both for individuals to preserve their individuality and nations their nationality. The barriers by which they had been separated while they were independent were thrown down when they were subjugated, and distinctions that had formerly been clearly marked disappeared. Barbarous customs were abandoned, and different peoples became attached to the same civil institutions. A great artificial barrier was set up in the place of the natural barriers that had

been thrown down, and a new distinction arose between the majority who were identified with the existing order and the minority who reproduced themselves outside it. The same covert substitution happened in the case of the consolidated Empire as happens in the case of the stereotyped phrase. The original truths were excluded from the existing order when the freedom with which they are inseparably associated was no longer found above the surface. They had been revealed while the natural barriers were standing; but they were concealed after the artificial barrier was set up. No locality remained where there was an environment that was favourable to them. The imperial majority would not tolerate the existence of any autonomous minority.

But although they had deserted their old habitations, it was impossible that the original truths should be repressed altogether. As soon as they had been totally excluded from the existing order, therefore, they began to reassert themselves in new movements outside it. When distinctions that were once clearly marked were merged in a monotonous cosmopolitanism, things that in early times existed above the surface were removed and secreted below. As new tendencies

arise in the latter stages of a language's development, so in the period of decline new movements arise outside the existing order. The subjection of all nations to the same rule afforded an opportunity for the secession of a minority. The forces of centralisation had spent themselves, and a general relaxation had taken place. Creative power is less frequently manifested after a language has acquired rigidity, and latent strength was exhausted after the Empire had been consolidated. Those who were identified with the existing order could not become associated with movements that were altogether outside it. But the minority who seceded regained the freedom that was no longer to be found above the surface. The whole situation was changed when the excluded truths reasserted themselves. There is a great difference between the movements which arise from the midst of the existing order in the periods of growth and efflorescence, and those which arise altogether outside it in the period of decline. While expansion was taking place, reforms were continually being effected; but it was impossible to reform the consolidated Empire. It must either keep the form it had already adopted or else break up altogether. During the periods of growth and efflorescence, the Romans

had met with many reverses, but these were only temporary checks from which they quickly recovered and went forward again on their career of conquest. But when the decline set in, their aggression could proceed no further; and though they seemed to be stronger than ever, they had really for the first time become weak. At the end of the age there is an elimination of third parties and intermediate controversies. The imperial majority, who had overcome the many national minorities by attacking them one by one, never entered into conflict with the international minority that was secreted below the surface. When resistance was no longer offered them, the struggle that had been carried on for so many years seemed to have terminated, and they seemed to have won the victory. The great artificial barrier behind which they had taken refuge was impregnable. But the natural revolution of the cycle of the age makes perpetual stability impossible no less than perpetual progress. "There is a wheel in human affairs," says Herodotus, "which, as it is continually revolving, does not allow the same persons to be always fortunate." The real issue that had been obscured while the different nations retained their independence, became apparent after they had all alike been

subjugated; and in the place of the many distinctions that had been obliterated, one great distinction arose between the imperial majority on the one side of the gulf and the international minority on the other.

Although for one revolution of the cycle of the seasons there are many revolutions of the cycle of day and night, the fact is never overlooked that the revolving year must at its close come back to its commencement; according to the saying of Herodotus: "The revolving cycle of the seasons comes back to the same point." But in the case of the cycle of the age, so many years must elapse before its extremes can meet that the line of development is regarded as if it were absolutely straight. Owing to the great length of the intermediate period it is difficult to comprehend its revolution. Nevertheless this circle also must at last roll back to its original starting-point, and so bring the great year to a close. "Astrologers have called that period the great year," says Cicero, "which is completed when the sun, moon, and five planets have finished their revolutions and returned to their original situation." And again he says: "When all the stars have come back to the point from which they once started, and, after a long interval of time, restored the original aspect of

the whole heaven, that is what may properly be called the revolution of a year."

The absolutely straight line does not exist in nature, for the extremes of every line that seems to be straight will meet if it be prolonged far enough. Even before the world had been circumnavigated, therefore, it was inferred that it must be round; though this was disputed by some, as appears from Cicero's words: "You say it is not certain that this world is round." The beginning, which was forgotten in the intermediate period, comes into remembrance as the end draws near. When only a part of the time is considered, development seems to proceed in a straight line, but when a survey is taken of the whole, it proves to be cyclical. But it was not strange that those who had taken refuge behind the artificial barrier should have regarded the absolutely straight line, which is only an artificial semblance, as a natural reality. The revolution of the cycle of day and night is evident to every one. The revolution of the cycle of the seasons, however, is not so easily perceived. But in the case of the cycle of the age, the line of development is so long, that its revolution escapes notice altogether.

As in a drama the various events usually lead up to one catastrophe, so, in the cosmos, there

are many minor issues which are subordinate to one great issue. The catastrophe does not actually happen until the closing scene, but it is regularly developed out of the action that precedes it, so that attentive spectators will instinctively know when it is near. It was impossible that the real issue should become apparent, and a crisis be brought about, while separate nations retained their independence within natural barriers. In a well-constructed drama, the catastrophe does not happen until the relations of the different characters to one another have been made quite clear. It intervenes at the critical moment, and takes those who have not been following the course of events by surprise. Development, therefore, is not only cyclical, but also catastrophic; that is to say it culminates in one crowning event, with which all the preceding events have been in some way connected. Immediately before the catastrophe, it would be expected that those who are really in the wrong would seem to be in the right, otherwise there would be no reason for it. The inversion of the natural order of things is its provocation. It dispels misconceptions, and makes all the previous action appear in its proper light.

When a gulf is impassable, if those who are

ranged on the one side are found to be in the wrong, there will be no doubt that those are in the right who are ranged on the other. It is necessary that those who are identified with the order which exists, that is, which is apparent above the surface, should always seem to be in the right. But there is a covert substitution in the domain of nature, as well as in that of language. In the period of decadence, forms that have grown old acquire other meanings; and when the cosmos manifests a tendency to dissolution, and begins to relapse into the primæval chaos, those who are really in the wrong are likely to be fortified by the semblance of right. An examination of the methods they are accustomed to employ in the struggle which they carry on in every age against the living minority, shows that it is the existing majority who are really in the wrong. They would be driven off the field altogether if they did not take refuge behind the creations of others. The majorities of the past are discredited. They therefore appropriate the works of a minority which is dead, that they may be able to oppose the living minority, which is its successor. Their strength lies, not in themselves, but in the muniments by which they are protected. The frowning forti-

fications without hide the weakness of the trembling garrison within. As a phrase, when it has become devitalised and stereotyped, conceals the meaning it was created to reveal, so a minority, when it is dead and consecrated, is found on the opposite side of the gulf to that on which it stood when it was alive and reprobated.

In early times, while the natural barriers were standing, the semblance agreed with the reality, and it was possible that those who seemed to be in the right should also really be so. But after the old distinctions had been obliterated, and the new distinction had arisen between the majority who were identified with the existing order and the minority who seceded and reproduced themselves outside it, the semblance and the reality became estranged and could not be reconciled with each other. In the period of decadence, therefore, it is impossible that those who seem to be in the right, that is, are identified with the artificial semblance, should also be so really, that is, be identified with the natural reality. If a majority has been discredited in its struggle with a minority, the victors are in a later age consecrated by the successors of the vanquished. They are thus translated to the opposite side of the gulf, and pitted against their living

descendants. The majority, therefore, are always on the side of the dead, which cannot be the side on which those who are in the right are ranged. They are not like the fishes that swim freely in the open sea, but are to be found clinging like barnacles round stereotyped phrases, consolidated empires, and consecrated minorities. While it is calm, they seem to be safe; but when it grows rough, they are overwhelmed by the waves which carry away the fabric with which they are identified.

The power which was distributed among many autonomous cities while the natural barriers were standing, was all centralised in the one city of the seven hills after the artificial barrier was set up. The position of those who had taken refuge behind it was unassailable. When the semblance obscures the reality, the natural order is inverted, and the servants occupy the seats of the masters. The fact, therefore, of the majority being predominant in the period of decline was a sign of their being really in the wrong. They were not the rulers by nature, but owed their elevation to circumstances. The semblance having been exalted above the reality, they also were exalted with it.

But until this antagonism is abolished, there

can be no peace, but only a treacherous calm. The victory is not to be won by a superiority in point of numbers. The intrusion of the majority gives them the advantage in the intermediate period; but the whole situation is changed by the secession of the minority at the last. Those who rule before the catastrophe of the drama cannot be the destined rulers. Unless it were preceded by a great usurpation it could not occur. Its function is to reveal the reality, so that it must first have been concealed, and to restore all things to those to whom they originally belonged, so that they must first have been taken away from them. Just as the plot is fully matured, and the usurpers are on the point of attaining their object, it suddenly intervenes and upsets all their calculations.

If a usurper were to put on the royal robes, all who had eyes only for the semblance would suppose him to be the king himself. But it is not enough merely to look at the external decorations, but it is necessary to discover who it is that is invested in them. For the robes which revealed the king while the semblance was subservient to the reality, may conceal a usurper when it is exalted above it. However imposing were the appearance the usurper presented, his

real character would not be in the least altered. Unless he were fortified by the semblance of power, he would have no power at all. Only the king himself can afford to seem not to be the king. Retaining the reality, he would be able to concede to the usurper everything that constituted the semblance. Ulysses, or Odysseus, as he is also called, was disguised as a beggar when he returned to his house at the close of the period of his wanderings. But those who had acquired possession of it in his absence were unable to withstand him in spite of their superiority in point of numbers. When the excluded reality reasserts itself altogether outside the robes in which it was once revealed, those who seemed to be in the right are shown to be really in the wrong. Because they never became aware of the covert substitution, they are completely taken by surprise. They see the forces which they supposed to be on their own side militating against them, and can make no effectual resistance.

As soon as the issue has been made clear, therefore, the usurper is deposed; as was the magus, who represented himself to be Smerdis, the rightful heir, and was set upon the throne by his brother, whom Cambyses, the Persian

king, had appointed steward of the household in his absence. "While Cambyses, son of Cyrus, was delaying in Egypt," says Herodotus, "two magi, who were brothers, revolted against him. One of these Cambyses had left steward of the household." Tidings of these things reached the ears of the king. "What Persian can this be," he asked, after he had considered the matter, "who has revolted against me, usurping the name of Smerdis?" When he learnt that he only seemed to be a Persian, but was in reality a Medic magus, he resolved to return at once to Susa, which was the royal city, in order to dethrone him, but died before he could accomplish his object. The position of the magus then seemed to be secure; but in a short time his real character was discovered, and he was slain by Darius and his six companions.

When the fortress could not be taken by assault, there seemed to be no way by which those who had made it their refuge could be overcome. Though right may be on the side of the minority, yet might, it is said, must always be on the side of the majority. The natural barriers within which separate nations preserved their independence could be thrown down; but the great artificial barrier that was erected in

their stead was impregnable. In early times, if any people transgressed the boundaries assigned to them by nature, the people whose country they invaded might resist them with some prospect of success. But the many autonomous minorities were all obliged to yield to the aggression of the Romans, who rose to power in the iron age. The subjugated nations, therefore, could not recover their independence by renewing the struggle above the surface. After they had once been overcome in a war, or *bellum*, they could not hope to prevail in a second war, or *re-bellio*. The Romans were quick to suppress every insurrection. If they had been unable to resist them while they were independent, much less were they able after they had been subjugated. But when a minority seceded and reproduced itself outside the existing order, the tables were turned on the majority who were inseparably attached to it. The victory was taken away from those who seemed to have won it, and given to those who were ranged on the other side of the intermediate gap. Instead of assailing the artificial obstructions that were erected above the surface, they waited below until nature reasserted her power and swept them all away. No minority that was national could resist the

aggression of the imperial majority, but the minority that was international overcame it without ever entering into conflict with it.

After the disappearance of independent nationality, the communal humanity, which is prior to it, is brought into power again by the revolution of the cycle of the age to its original starting-point. When patriotism could no longer be national, it did not become imperial, but was transferred from the many national minorities above the surface to the one international minority below. Although all nations had been subjugated, it was impossible that the whole human race should be kept in perpetual bondage. The struggle had not terminated because it was no longer carried on above the surface. After the old distinctions had been obliterated, a new distinction arose between the two parties that were separated by an impassable gulf. It was the same war, but the final battle was fought under different conditions from those under which the engagements that preceded it had taken place. The natural union of a harmonious association proved to be more enduring than the artificial union of a promiscuous aggregation.

From the very foundation of their city, universal dominion was the object the Romans had

striven incessantly to attain. But after the Empire had been consolidated, latent strength was exhausted, and the magnificence of the structure concealed the weakness of those who inhabited it. The gifts of fortune are not all of the same kind, but are partly good and partly evil. When they had subjected all nations to their dominion, the season of their prosperity drew to a close. They had already reached the goal of their ambition. The coming time, therefore, could have no good gifts in store for them. In the periods of growth and efflorescence, fortune had always been on their side. They went continually forward on their career of conquest until there was no independent power remaining. But since new movements arise outside the existing order when the forces operating within it have spent themselves, those who were inseparably attached to it could not be fortunate in the end. The retribution which had been deferred while their aggression continued, overtook them when it could proceed no further.

Whereas the ordinary brigand is not fortified by a semblance of right, the Romans, whose rapacity had procured for them the title of "*latrones gentium*," or "the robbers of the nations," were always systematic in their opera-

tions, and protected their conquests with munitions that were impregnable. When once they had occupied a position, it was impossible to dislodge them from it. Those who assailed the artificial defences which they erected only brought destruction upon themselves. The stories that have been handed down from remote ages are not without their significance, and that which is connected with the foundation of Rome indicates that her fortifications were not to be surmounted with impunity. It is recorded by Livy that when Remus, to show his contempt for it, leapt over the wall that Romulus had built, he was slain by him, saying: "So shall it happen to every other person who shall leap over my fortifications." Florus also, in describing the same occurrence, remarks: "He was the first victim, and consecrated the fortification of the new city with his blood."

In early times the different nations inhabited the distinct localities which nature had assigned to them, and observed their own customs and usages under the rule of their own kings. But in a later age the Romans, whose name had previously been unknown in the world, attacked them one after another until they had subjected them all alike to their dominion. "Who or

whence are the Romans?" the Tarentines asked, when they first came in contact with them, a question that is not so easily answered as might be supposed. They were not a nation, inhabiting a country separated from other countries by natural boundaries; but everything they possessed was obtained by conquest. They themselves claimed to be the descendants of the Trojans who belonged to the company of Æneas, from whom both Romulus and Cæsar were declared to be sprung. But it was not until they had grown powerful that they began to inquire into their origin, and sought to establish a connection between their own city and ancient Troy. When once they had entered upon a career of conquest, they were unable to turn back until they had obtained possession of the whole world. In the natural revolution of time, the simplicity and beneficence of the golden age are changed into the rapacity and violence of the iron age, by a gradual but continuous perversion. "In the progress from primitive equity to final injustice," says Gibbon, "the steps are silent, the shades are almost imperceptible, and the absolute monopoly is guarded by positive laws and artificial reason." But when the end is reached, the situation that existed at the beginning is reproduced, and all

things are restored to those to whom they originally belonged.

The anticipation was well founded that those who in the intermediate period seemed as if they were certain of obtaining the final victory would really lose it. In a long race, those who win the prizes are not usually those who have been leading during the greater part of the time. It is not until the end draws near that they suddenly come forward and overtake the other competitors, whose priority seemed, to the uninitiated onlookers, to be assured. While the struggle is still being carried on, therefore, it is impossible to tell how it will terminate; as may be understood from the well-known story of Cræsus and Solon. During his visit to Sardis, Cræsus showed him all his treasures, and asked him whom he considered to be the most fortunate of mankind, supposing that he would be able to name none other than himself. But Solon replied that no human being could be called fortunate until he had reached the end of his term of life. He therefore refused to pronounce any judgment concerning Cræsus at that time, and subsequent events showed that he was right. For not long afterwards Sardis was besieged and captured by Cyrus, who was at this time

extending his dominion on all sides, and Cræsus lost his kingdom and all the wealth he had formerly possessed.

When they had reached the goal of universal dominion, the Romans, being unable to add to their conquests, sought simply to keep what they had already won. But as soon as they desisted from their aggression, they began to suffer the penalties it entailed. "It is more difficult," says Florus, "to hold provinces than to form them." So long as any independent peoples remained for them to make war upon they prospered; but after they had overcome all opposition, they could advance no further. It was necessary that all nations should be subjugated before an international minority could secede. Fortune, therefore, favoured the Romans until they had subjected the human race itself to their imperial rule, and so fulfilled their destiny, as it is described in the well-known line of Virgil: "Tu regere imperio populos Romane memento." But when the period of consolidation drew to a close, the decline set in, and they had experience, for the first time, of a continuous adversity. The Nemesis that is envious of excessive prosperity requires that those who are unduly raised up at one time should be brought

low at another, in order that an equality may be maintained. "The luck is bound to turn," says Ibsen. "Retribution is inexorable." But before they can fall, they must first have climbed to the very top.

The different nations, which in early times were ruled by their own kings, afterwards acknowledged Cæsar as their head. "All ancient nations were at one time ruled by kings," says Cicero. But when the barriers within which they had preserved their independence were thrown down, they were all subjected to the same imperial rule. The Romans themselves also, who at the last were brought under the power of Cæsar, were ruled by kings at the first. The customs and usages of early times are forgotten when the independent communities in which they were observed have disappeared. After the establishment of the Empire, therefore, the Romans consecrated the simplicity of the past, to compensate for the total absence of it in the present, calling it *sancta simplicitas*, that is, something to be admired at a distance, but not to be imitated too closely. But it is a true saying that extremes meet. The iron age of imperial rule seemed, to those who supposed development to proceed in an artificial straight

line, to be far removed from the golden age of royal rule; but those who perceived that it was cyclical were aware that the natural revolution of time would bring them into juxtaposition. It was when he was least expected, and the circumstances were least favourable, that Ulysses, having finished his wanderings, returned to the country from which he originally started. The periods which are furthest removed in semblance are nearest in reality. The yawning chasm is bridged over at the last, and the intervening distance is no longer an obstacle to free communication.

When all nations were subjugated, and the new distinction had arisen between the majority who were identified with the existing order and the minority who reproduced themselves outside it, the real issue which had formerly been obscured was made clear, and the question arose to which side would the victory be given. Although freedom existed no longer above the surface, it had not been lost altogether. When all those distinct localities, which in early times were inhabited by independent nations, were occupied by the Romans, they lost their original contents. The freedom, patriotism, and all other things of any value that had formerly resided

within them, were removed and secreted below the surface, until at last only useless accumulations were left above. By a secession, therefore, the international minority turned the tables on the imperial majority, after they had overcome the many national minorities. When they took possession of their old habitations they found them deserted. The consolidated Empire was a shell without a kernel—an imposing exterior and a “horrible emptiness.” It was impossible that freedom should reassert itself outside the existing order until its exclusion from it was total. It could not militate against itself. Up to the last moment, therefore, the imperial majority seemed as if they were certain of obtaining the final victory, which they really lost. The exclusion was slow, but the reassertion was sudden. Just as they were about to lay their hands upon the prize after which they had been laboriously striving for so many years, it was snatched away from them.

It was by persisting in their endeavours when the circumstances were unfavourable that the Persians unexpectedly effected an entrance into Babylon. The siege was commenced by Cyrus soon after he had captured Sardis. But the difficulties with which he was confronted seemed

insuperable. The walls of Babylon have been renowned in all ages, and its inhabitants had nothing to fear from famine. "They had brought in beforehand," says Herodotus, "enough provisions for many years, and were therefore not at all troubled about the siege." No way appeared by which the Persians could get within the city, when it was secure against every assault from without. Although they had been besieging it for a long time, the situation remained unaltered, and their patience was becoming exhausted.

As every other plan had failed, therefore, Cyrus had recourse to the following stratagem. The river Euphrates, flowing through the midst of Babylon, divided it into two parts. Along each bank there were walls of brick, in which gates of brass were made at the end of each street that led down to the river. "At the end of each street, gates were made in the wall along the river," says Herodotus. "These were made of brass, and led down to the riverside." Cyrus, therefore, stationed part of his army at the extremities of Babylon, where the Euphrates made its entrance and its exit. The other part he led away, and diverted the stream of the river into a lake which had been dug above the city.

When the lower stream, being thus cut off, failed and subsided, the Persians who were left behind entered the channel of the river and got into Babylon, without encountering any resistance, through the gates that were made in the walls along its banks. "If the Babylonians had been aware beforehand," says Herodotus, "or had been told what Cyrus was doing, they would not have allowed the Persians to enter the city unopposed, but would have utterly destroyed them; for by shutting all the gates leading down to the river, and mounting the walls along its banks, they would have caught them as in a net; but as it was, the Persians came upon them unexpectedly." The broad walls that secured them against every assault from without afforded them no protection after an entrance had been effected, and their city was taken at a time when they suspected no danger. "As it happened to be a festival," Herodotus continues, "they were dancing at the time and enjoying themselves, until they learnt how matters stood. This was the way in which Babylon was taken then for the first time."

It was by a stratagem also that it was taken the second time by Darius. When the siege had lasted for many months, and no prospect of success appeared, it seemed useless for the

Persians to persist in their endeavours any longer. A change took place, however, when Zopyrus, "the son of that Megabyzus," says Herodotus, "who was one of the seven who dethroned the magus," gained admission into the city under the pretext of being a deserter. Owing to certain disclosures which he made to the Babylonians, they proved victorious in several minor engagements. They were thus induced to repose perfect confidence in him, and delivered the keys of the gates into his keeping. But when the time arrived which he had appointed with Darius beforehand, he admitted a chosen band of Persians within the walls while the Babylonians were engaged in repelling an attack made by the rest of the army from another quarter. After Babylon had thus been taken for the second time by the Persian king, its fortifications were demolished, and it never again rose to power.

There is more hope of deliverance when bondage is rigorous than when it is mitigated. Because freedom had been totally excluded from the existing order, those who reproduced themselves outside it completely emancipated themselves. The international minority did not seek to compete with the imperial majority, but to

take their place after the artificial obstructions which they had made their refuge had all been swept away. But secession was not equivalent to isolation. Had they simply removed from one locality to another, they would have been upon the same level as the old national minorities. But by waiting below the surface they overcame those who were inseparably attached to the order that existed above without ever entering into conflict with them. The things of which they had been slowly deprived were suddenly restored to them. The freedom, therefore, which the international minority regained was greater than that which the national minorities had lost.

After the forces that had been operating within the existing order had spent themselves, a general relaxation took place. Those who were identified with it relapsed into a state of tranquil self-satisfaction, and supposed that their position was perfectly secure. But their latent strength had ebbed away, and the fortress which they had made their refuge could no longer afford them protection. When new movements arose outside it, they found themselves snared within it. The words used by one of Ibsen's characters are descriptive of their situation: "I've locked and barred myself in." The

activity and turbulence of the period of efflorescence were less dangerous than the unnatural quiet by which they were succeeded. The methods which had given them the advantage in the preliminary engagements could not be employed in the final battle. A minority that remains above the surface is powerless against a majority; but when it is secreted below, a majority is powerless against it. Those who had overcome all who had offered them resistance were themselves overcome by a stratagem. As they were entirely unacquainted with the disposition of the forces that were ranged on the other side of the intermediate gap, they were at a loss what course to adopt against them. The strength of the Romans was turned into weakness when their aggression could proceed no further. As soon as Cæsar saw, he conquered; but when he was unable to see, there was nothing for him to do. The larger party in its struggle with the smaller fared like the giant Polyphemus at the hands of Ulysses. The seceding minority eluded the grasp of the grotesque monster. The might of the majority was of no use to them when there was no man to resist them. While they were groping about in the dark, they did not know that those whom

they were seeking after had escaped and come forth into the light. The decline, having once set in, could not be arrested. It became continually more marked, until at last the order that then existed was overwhelmed by the waves of barbarism. Those who did not wish to be identified with the doomed structure abandoned it and obtained a refuge elsewhere. If there had been any latent strength within it would have been secure against every assault from without; but because it was nothing but an imposing exterior it could no longer be regarded as a safe habitation.

After Helen had been carried away to Troy, the Achæans assembled a great army to recover her and the treasures that had been carried away with her. The siege lasted for ten years, during which many deeds of valour were performed on both sides. At one time the Achæans kept the Trojans pent up within the walls; at another Hector drove them back to the sea and cast fire upon their ships. But when "the ten years," to use Ibsen's words, had drawn to a close, and the time when it was destined that the city should be taken had arrived, fortune seemed to have quite deserted the Achæans. All the attempts they had made to get within the walls had failed.

Achilles had been slain before the Scæan gate. Notwithstanding the long toil they had endured, their prospects were no better than when they first arrived, and they were growing weary of the war. They therefore abandoned the tactics they had previously employed, and had recourse to a stratagem. A wooden horse, which was of great height, was set up in view of the city, and chosen men, among whom was Ulysses, were secreted within it. Leaving this behind, they embarked upon their ships and sailed away.

As no danger was now visible, the gates were thrown open and the Trojans came forth to see the deserted camp and shore. They wondered at the enormous size of the horse, and there was much discussion among them as to what they should do with it. Some proposed that it should be placed in the citadel, while those who were of sounder judgment were suspicious of a gift that came from the other side. They only looked at the outside of the horse, and never explored its interior. Although they were plainly warned not to believe in it, they decided at last to bring it within the walls. A fatal frenzy had taken possession of their minds, and while the festival that was held to celebrate its introduction was proceeding, they had no thought of the coming

calamities. Because those who had been besieging the city were no longer to be seen, they supposed that they had gone away altogether.

But at dead of night, when the city was buried in a deep sleep, Ulysses and his companions emerged from the caverns in which they were secreted, and opened the gates to the rest of the Achæans who had sailed back again in the silence to the shore from which they set out. The Trojans were taken by surprise and could make no effectual resistance. When they roused themselves from their dull stupor, they found that the whole situation was changed. Fortune had gone over to the other side, and the city was set on fire and could no longer be defended by the strength of their right arm. An immense spoil fell into the hands of the victors, and all that the vanquished could do was to save themselves from the flames. "We," says Virgil, "whom neither a ten years' siege nor a thousand ships had subdued, were taken by guile."

The catastrophe of the drama shows that the things which are secreted below the surface are more enduring than those which are established above. The artificial obstructions which are impregnable in the intermediate period are swept away when nature reasserts her power at the last.

The cataclysm is the catastrophe in the drama of the cosmos. It is its function to abolish the artificial semblance, in order that the natural reality may be revealed. The party which seems to be in the right, therefore, has everything to lose by it; that which is so really, everything to gain. The cosmic drama, having been well constructed, must have its catastrophe, which is reserved until the closing scene. While the natural barriers were standing a crisis could not be brought about; but after the artificial barrier had been erected the issue was made clear by the elimination of intermediate controversies, and the two parties that were formerly indistinguishable became separated by an impassable gulf. All things of any value were removed and secreted below the surface, and only useless accumulations were left above. At the close of the period of decline the cataclysm issued from the north. The existing order was plunged into confusion, and civil institutions were overthrown by the victorious barbarians.

After the secession of the minority, the house occupied by the majority is left empty and desolate, and falls into decay. The one party never adheres with a greater tenacity to the

doomed fabric than in the time of apparent security when the other is hastening to effect its escape from it. During the treacherous calm that precedes the storm the two processes of secession and adhesion may be observed working simultaneously. The cataclysm intervenes at the appointed time, and can neither be accelerated nor postponed. It sweeps over the whole surface, but it does not penetrate. It does no injury, therefore, to those who are secreted below; but those who take refuge behind the artificial obstructions erected above are wholly exposed to it. The power that is asserted in it is irresistible, and everything that lies in its path is swept away.

Because those who had been besieging the city were no longer to be seen, it was a mistake to suppose that the struggle had terminated. When they seemed to have gone away, they had at last adopted the only plan by which it could be taken. The emancipation that came from secession was not partial but complete. When the cataclysm was about to fall they could not be tempted to engage in any conflict above the surface. The task of upholding the artificial barrier belonged to those who had erected it.

Those who have reached a place of shelter do not emerge from it when a storm is imminent. The cataclysm, therefore, was the great expectation of the minority, the great dread of the majority. Until it had passed over and prepared a suitable environment, the dynasty that existed at the beginning could not be restored.

Though there is a perfect regularity in the succession of events, there is not a perpetual monotony. After a long repression a sudden reassertion of the power of nature was to be expected, and the fires that were smouldering below the surface were ready to break out at any moment. The artificial obstructions erected above seemed to be impregnable; but those who had taken refuge behind them had neglected to take account of what Cicero calls "the deluges and conflagrations of the earth, which must necessarily happen at the appointed time." The sudden upheavals, for which there appears to be no reason, are brought about by forces that have long been operating in secret. But most of the spectators observe only the visible effects, and have no perception of the hidden causes. The cataclysm, which is regularly developed out of the action that precedes it, takes them by sur-

prise. They regard it as something superinduced, which could not be reckoned with in their calculations. But it does not transcend nature, like the speculations of German philosophers, to which Goethe's lines have reference—

“See that you deeply comprehend,
What doth the mind of man transcend,”

but rather it is through it that nature reasserts herself. An unbroken continuity in the succession of events is not incompatible with a cataclysm. Though it comes suddenly, yet it comes in the gradual course of development. It is the instrument held in reserve by nature from the beginning, in order to rid herself of all artificial encumbrances for ever at the end.

The minority, therefore, have not only right on their side, but also might. After the cataclysm has passed over, the earth is renovated, and all the obstructions with which it was formerly cumbered have disappeared, together with those who took refuge behind them. The things that were secreted below the surface are brought to light again, and restored to the localities from which they were removed. Those who reproduce themselves outside the existing order survive the deluge which overwhelms those who

are identified with it. When it has subsided, the old antagonism is abolished. They step forth once more upon the dry land, without encountering any resistance, and regain the positions which they occupied at the first.

CHAPTER V

THE CATACLYSM

As the customs and usages of separate nations were different, so also were their rites and ceremonies. While they retained their independence within the boundaries assigned to them by nature, they were under the protection of the gods that were attached to the countries they inhabited. "The gods," says Plato, "in former time made a division of the whole earth, receiving different localities by allotment." The tutelary gods of one people, therefore, were different from those of another, and the introduction of foreign gods and foreign rites was prohibited; as Plato says further: "Different gods had different localities allotted to them." But when all nations were subjected to the same imperial rule, and the barriers that had separated them from one another were thrown down, their different rites and ceremonies could no longer be celebrated above the surface in

freedom, and lost the significance they had formerly possessed. Although the original truths themselves must always remain unchanged, yet the forms by which they were conveyed might fall into the hands of the profane, and be applied to quite a different use from that for which they were created. The cosmopolitanism which was the result of the overthrow of all intermediate barriers was unfavourable to the gods, who were attached to distinct localities and separate nationalities. In a later age they forsook the earth which had been their habitation in early times, and gave no more manifestations of their power.

The word which the Romans used to denote the worship of their publicly recognised gods was *re-ligio*. The meaning which is said to lie at its root is the binding power which it exercised over the minds of those who were entangled in its ligaments. As the Romans were not a nation inhabiting a country assigned to them by nature, the gods they recognised were not attached to them at the first, but were transferred to their own city from the cities they captured. When all the nations were subjugated, therefore, all the gods had temples dedicated to them at Rome. The Latin *religio* of the west, being identified

with the order that existed above the surface was totally excluded from the commune that was secreted below. In the last years of the Republic its ordinances were still observed, but they were held in little regard, and had lost the significance they originally possessed; as appears from the manner in which Cicero, himself a member of the college of augurs, speaks of "the auspices over which I preside," in the audience of a small circle: "Even supposing there are such things as auspices, which there really are not, those which we use are only imitations of auspices, and not proper auspices at all." And again he says: "Let us first consider the auspices. A person who is himself an augur finds himself in a difficult position when he has to speak against them." As he was devoted to the support of the state, he always endeavoured to support the worship of the gods under whose protection it was placed. Although they no longer received the honours that had been paid to them in early times, it was necessary that they should still be retained unless something that would serve as a substitute for them could be discovered. For the city would not be safe with no tutelary power in the citadel. It could

not continue powerful if its tutelary gods were powerless. In the period of decline they became much more discredited, but even in the Augustan age Ovid has the line: "Sollicitor nullos esse putare deos"—("I am moved to think there are no gods"). They would not dwell among men while the earth was cumbered with artificial obstructions. When their power was no longer manifested and only their names were left, it was not surprising that their worship should be neglected. "For why," asks Cicero, "should you say that men ought to regard the gods, when the gods not only do not regard men, but care about nothing at all, and do nothing at all?"

The rites and ceremonies of the Latin religio of the west were believed to have been instituted by Numa. They were regulated by the *jus pontificium*, or pontifical law, which had great authority in early times, but was largely superseded by the *jus civile*, or civil law, when the influence of the Latin civilisation became predominant. There was a clear distinction between these two branches of the Roman law, though a tendency was sometimes manifested to confound them with each other, of which Cicero complains. "I would like to know," he says, addressing him-

self to the two Scævolas, who were supreme pontiffs in those days, "why it is that you are desirous of the civil law in addition to the pontifical." And further: "If you were pontiffs only, the pontifical authority would still be remaining; but because you are at the same time very learned in the civil law, you elude it by means of this knowledge."

Though it was natural that the Latin religion should lose its efficacy in a later age, it was necessary that it should still be upheld. The safety of the city was believed to depend upon the due observance of its ordinances. So long as the Palladium was retained, Troy could not be taken; but after this image had been carried off by Ulysses, the wooden horse was introduced in its stead. "Troy would still be remaining," says Ovid, "if she had kept the ordinances of her own Priam." The Romans, being slow to apprehend first principles, were tenacious of all visible institutions, and inseparably attached to the gods under whose protection their city was placed. "If we compare our own condition with that of foreign peoples," says Cicero, "it will appear that though in other matters we are only equal, or even inferior to them, yet in respect

of religio, that is, the worship of gods, we are much superior." Latin authors are to be consulted before all others as to the meaning of Latin words, and there are no better examples of Latinity than the writings of Cicero. A person, therefore, who wished to find what religio meant for the Romans would search in them rather than anywhere else; and in the words above cited—"religione, id est, cultu deorum"—it is plainly declared to mean "the worship of gods." That this definition is deliberate is shown by his repeating it in another place in the expression: "Religionem, quae deorum cultu pio continentur"—("Religio, which consists in the pious worship of gods"). The word *deorum* here has reference to those publicly recognised gods who had temples dedicated to them at Rome. Before a city could be taken it was necessary to call forth—or, to use the technical term, evoke—its tutelary gods. While they were dwelling in their temples within, it was secure against every assault from without. Those, therefore, whose duty it was to see that the Republic suffered no detriment, took care to uphold the Latin religio, that is to say the worship of the gods who had been placed on the list or catalogue of its guardians. The

Romans regarded the gods as permanent institutions, and never supposed that a time would come when they would be so discredited as to be altogether untenable. "All these gods," asks Livy at a time when it was proposed that they should abandon the city, "are you about to forsake?" And again: "What about the eternal fires of Vesta, and the image which, as the pledge of empire, is kept under the protection of her temple?"

After the Achæans had embarked upon their ships and sailed away, the Trojans accepted the gift of the horse which they left behind, and set it up in the citadel, to use Virgil's words, "*pro Palladio*"—"instead of the Palladium"), which had been carried off by Ulysses. They believed the tale that was told them, and supposed that this was the proper course for them to adopt. But it was impossible that its tutelary gods should remain in the city after the introduction of the wooden horse, which had purposely been raised to so great a height that it could be brought into no agreement with the ancient religio; as appears from the line of Virgil: "*Neu populum antiqua sub religione tueri.*" At the moment therefore when the monster, as it passed within the

walls, halted upon the very threshold of the gate, he exclaims in horror: "O divum domus Ilium!"—("Oh Ilium, home of the gods!"). For as it went in they went out, and the Trojans were left in a snare from which they could not escape; as Homer had said many centuries before: "It was destined that they should perish when their city should have enclosed the great wooden horse, wherein sat all the best of the Argives bearing death and doom to the Trojans." The most formidable obstacle, therefore, was removed by Ulysses when he made his way into the citadel in the night-time and carried off the Palladium; and in the assembly of the Argive leaders it was afterwards admitted that the claim which he made on his own behalf was just, when he said: "Illa nocte mihi Trojæ victoria parta est"—("On that night I obtained the victory over Troy"). Though his action had no visible result at the time, it decided the ultimate issue of the war. When the Achæans came back from the sea, all that was set before them was the realisation of a victory that had been won long ago. Ulysses had made everything easy for them beforehand, as Ovid again declares him to have said himself: "Now the labour is at an end; I have removed

the fates that stood in the way, and have captured lofty Troy by creating the possibility of its capture."

When the forces of centralisation had spent themselves, independent nationality had disappeared, and all kings had either been deposed or deprived of the prerogatives they once enjoyed. The Roman dominion, therefore, since all nations are subjected to it, is synonymous with the human race itself; as it is asserted to be by Florus in the expression: "*Romanæ dominationis, id est, humani generis.*" But the struggle was not over when the barriers within which they had preserved their independence were thrown down. In place of the distinctions that had been obliterated, a new distinction arose between the majority who were inseparably attached to the existing order, and the minority who seceded and reproduced themselves outside it. Since the human being is prior to the nation, the communal humanity is brought into power again, after the disappearance of independent nationality, by the revolution of the cycle of the age to its original starting-point. The commune that was secreted below the surface provided a refuge during the decline when the structure of the

existing order was no longer a safe habitation. The revolution of the circle being completed, the intervening distance is no longer an obstacle, and the Western Empire is brought into juxtaposition with the Eastern Kingdom. At the close of the period in which the climax of development was reached, civil strife ceased and all things were subject to the supervision of Cæsar. The empire of the world had passed from the east to the west, and the limits that might not be transgressed in ancient times had been reached. Hitherto the Romans had gone continually forward on their career of conquest, but they felt it to be forbidden to them to pass beyond the Pillars of Hercules and venture on the wide ocean. Formerly the Persian king had been regarded as the great king, until the dynasty was overthrown by the great Alexander. It is not without fitness, therefore, that the first chapter of Sadi's Gulistan should treat of "the customs of kings," and that the famous work of Firdausi should be entitled *The Book of Kings*, or *Shahnameh*. When Xerxes bridged over the Hellespont and led the hosts of Asia against Hellas, he was defeated both by land and sea. The Romans in those days had not

yet risen to power, and if he should subdue the Greeks, the king supposed that he would meet with no further resistance, but that all Europe would be overrun by his barbarous hosts; according to the words which he is himself reported to have used before the assembly of the Persians: "The sun shall look down on no country bordering on ours, but I will make them and you all one country, marching through the whole of Europe." The universal dominion to which the great king aspired was actually obtained by the Romans. The fall of one dynasty had been followed by the rise of another that was new and different, but no other universal dynasty could arise in the place of the Western Empire. After all nations, that is to say the human race itself, had been subjected to the Roman dominion, nothing further remained to be accomplished.

A great flood of waters had to be crossed before the work could be finished, and the royal rule that existed at the beginning restored. The patient Ulysses did not come home immediately after the fall of Troy, but was wandering for many years over the wide world. He had to make a long sea voyage, and visit countries that were far off, before he could return to the country

from which he originally started, as is noted by Ovid :—

“ Exemplum est animi nimium patientis Ulixes
Jactatus dubio per duo lustra mari.”

(“Ulysses furnishes an example of a mind of extraordinary patience, who was tossed about on the sea of uncertainty for ten years”). The raft on which he left the island in which he was detained was wrecked, and it was only with great difficulty that he escaped from the sea. But at the close of the period of his wanderings he embarked on a ship that brought him home by a straight course, and was set down asleep upon his native land, together with all the gifts that had been bestowed upon him. When he awoke it was some time before he recognised it, having been away for so long. A mist was spread over it, and everything appeared strange to him until it was dispersed. The suitors of Penelope would not have believed that the master of the house would ever return. As no tidings had been heard of him since he went away, they supposed him to have been dead long ago and took no note of the revolution of time. When he entered his own house in the disguise of a beggar, they did not know who he was, and gave him a rough

reception. Although the banquet that was to be the last of which they were ever to partake was already being prepared, they remained entirely unconcerned, and could not see the destruction that was coming upon them. Everything went well with them while the appointed years were unfulfilled; but they failed in the final trial of strength. Just as they were on the point of attaining their object, they were suddenly brought into juxtaposition with their antithesis.

When the opportunity for which he had been waiting had arrived, Ulysses threw aside his rags; and carrying the bow that none but he could bend, and the quiver that was full of arrows, took his stand upon the threshold. They looked around for weapons to resist him, but could find none; for he had bidden Telemachus to remove them beforehand, and if any one should miss them, to say: "I have laid them by out of the smoke, since they are no longer like those that Ulysses left behind him in former time when he went to Troy, but they have been rendered useless, so far as the vapour of the fire has reached." Neither was there any way of escape, for all the doors had been locked and barred. They found themselves imprisoned in the hall where they had so often

feasted with impunity, and saw Ulysses himself standing before them, come home again from Troy. So long as he was clad in his rags, he submitted to their violence; but when once he had thrown them aside and begun to shoot, he never ceased until he had slain them all.

After the issue had been made clear, there could be no doubt to which side the victory would be given. "Victory to the king," is a form of salutation which frequently occurs in the drama of the Indians. It was in accordance with the nature of things that the royal rule, which existed when the revolution of the circle was commenced, should be restored when it was completed. Before the cataclysm passed over and prepared a suitable environment, all things of any value that were once found above the surface were removed and secreted below. Between the promiscuous aggregation on the one side, and the harmonious association on the other, there was an impassable gulf. Those who are inseparably attached to the existing order can accommodate themselves to the movements that arise from the midst of it in the periods of growth and efflorescence; but they cannot become associated with those that arise alto-

gether outside it in the period of decline ; for, as Ibsen says, "it means retribution, you see. It comes, as if under a new banner, heralding the turn of fortune."

When Hector laid aside his own armour and put on that of Achilles, it was necessary that Achilles himself should go out against him. The excluded reality reasserted itself and militated against the form in which it was originally revealed. New and beautiful armour was given to him afterwards, and Hector, who was wearing on his shoulders the armour which he had at the first, was unable to withstand him. Being fortified by the semblance, he fled on being confronted with the reality. The old form which he had appropriated could afford him no protection when its original meaning came into power again outside it and militated against it. After Achilles had roused himself from his long inaction, he slew him and dragged his body in the dust behind his chariot.

The Latin religio, like the Latin civilisation, was identified with the Western Empire and the existing cosmos, and was excluded from the Eastern Kingdom and the renovated earth. To the Romans, who were attached to what was

established above the surface, the commune which did not exist was incomprehensible. Though the rites and ceremonies that had been instituted by Numa had long ago lost their original significance, they were still celebrated as if no covert substitution had taken place; as is shown by the words of Cicero: "The long peace of the time of Numa was the mother of law and religio to this city; and he was the writer of those ordinances also which, as you are aware, are still extant." They were unable to detach themselves from the visible forms in which the excluded meanings were originally expressed. Cicero himself, though it did not escape his notice that they had lost their vitality, endeavoured to defend them as far as possible. Privately he had little regard for them, but publicly he was in favour of their being still retained. "To begin," he says, "with the art of the soothsayers, which I think should be upheld for the sake of the state and the common religio. But now that we are alone we may make inquiry without offence, especially as I am uncertain about many things."

There were some, however, among the Romans who completely disentangled themselves from the

ligaments of the Latin religio, and penetrated by their keenness of perception into the hidden causes of things. The overthrow of all those obstacles which were once placed across the path of discovery and hindered the advance of knowledge is celebrated in a memorable passage by Lucretius. After describing the times of darkness and ignorance, "when," as he says, "human life lay upon the ground, oppressed beneath a ponderous religio," he shows how the whole situation is changed by an inquiry into the nature of things, so that in the end, to use his own words, "religio is in turn laid low and crushed under our feet, and the victory exalts us to heaven." He then reverts to bygone ages, and adduces testimony from them in support of the assertion which he makes in the line: "Religio peperit scelerata atque impia facta"—("Religio has caused nefarious and impious deeds").

When the excluded reality reasserts itself, the tables are turned on those who take refuge behind the semblance. The fortress from which they could not be dislodged is changed into a prison from which they cannot escape. Since fortune goes over to the other side at the last, the victory is not won by those who have the

advantage in the intermediate period. For ten years the city of Veii resisted all the attempts that were made to capture it, but at the close of this period a change took place and a prospect of success appeared to those who were besieging it; as the following oracle declared: "Then press on boldly towards the walls of the enemy, remembering that, by these fates which are now made known concerning that city which you have been besieging for so many years, the victory is taken away from it and given to you." Encouraged by these words, the Romans, having failed to take the city by assault, resolved to abandon the tactics they had previously employed and dig a passage underneath it.

The time when it was destined that Veii should fall having now arrived, preparations were made for carrying out the stratagem that had been devised. While the rest of the army engaged the attention of the inhabitants by advancing towards the walls, a chosen band entered the subterranean passage, which had been carried right up to the citadel itself. The people of Veii were astonished that they should be renewing the attack after they had suffered so many repulses, "ignorant," says Livy, "that the day they were now spending was their

last, and fearing nothing less than that their fortifications were undermined, and the citadel was by this time full of enemies." They ran to the walls, never doubting that they would be able to drive them back as on other occasions.

In the meantime, those who were lying in wait below had overheard a soothsayer above the surface declaring that the victory must now be given to one side or the other. Regarding this as a favourable omen, they emerged from their hiding-place and quickly got possession of the citadel. The gates being then thrown open and the rest of the army admitted within the walls, the city was destroyed, and all the treasures it contained were removed to Rome. Having withstood every assault that had been made upon it from without, it was captured at last by the passage that was dug underground. "How great was the power of Veii a ten years' siege shows," says Florus. "The destruction of the city was at last effected, not by scaling-ladders nor by a breach in the walls, but by a mine and subterranean artifices."

The Romans were adverse to any enterprise which was so conducted that they could exercise no supervision over it. By attacking the nations

one by one, they had subdued them all, and expected to keep them in perpetual subjection. The commune, therefore, that was secreted below the surface in the period of decline was regarded by them with suspicion. Different peoples that are separated while they retain their independence, are brought into contact after they have been subjugated. It was a disquieting thought to those who had taken refuge behind the artificial barrier that something was happening below the surface of which they were entirely ignorant. They were fully informed concerning every existing community, but as they had no penetration, they were unable to comprehend that which did not exist at all.

In ancient times all cities had their tutelary gods, who were supposed to regard them with a special favour. Thus the title "custodem Athenarum," or "protector of Athens," is given by Cicero to Apollo, who was thought to be the sun. Though the whole world, or universe, was the common habitation of the gods, they had distinct localities allotted to them to which they were especially attached. It gave the inhabitants of a city a sense of security to think that their tutelary gods were dwelling in their midst. They

therefore built houses or temples for their reception, and assigned to them attendants or priests who would know how to propitiate them. For the rites of one god differed from those of another. Cities were often called after the names of the gods who were considered to be their protectors. Thus Artemisium is called after Artemis, or Diana, under which name the moon was worshipped; and Rome itself is called after Romulus, who, after his disappearance, was placed on the canon, or catalogue of publicly recognised gods. The Romans, who were not the inhabitants of a country separated from other countries by natural boundaries, and whose publicly recognised gods were not attached to them at the first, were accustomed to transfer the tutelary gods of the cities they captured to their own city. "We have both transferred foreign gods to Rome," says Livy, "and have established new gods." It had been their policy from the beginning, by erecting temples in their city for the reception of all the gods, to keep in subjection all the nations. For the city which was the seat of the gods would also be the seat of government. At an early period of her history, therefore, Rome is styled by Florus, "a city destined to be the habi-

tation of gods and men:—*destinata hominum ac deorum domicilio civitas.*” The different nations must all alike be ruled by the city in which their tutelary gods resided. So long as there were any cities whose tutelary gods had not been transferred, there was an independent power remaining, which the Romans, who sought to centralise all power in their own city, could not tolerate. Since it was declared to be the head of the world, it was necessary that all the gods should reside in it. For the nations would look up to that city as their head which they believed to be Asgard, or the home of the gods. Different cities were under the protection of different gods, but Rome was considered to be under the protection of them all. While he was living in the midst of barbarism, therefore, Ovid described the city from which he had been banished and to which he wished to be restored, as not being like other cities which it would have been little loss to leave, “but,” to use his own words, “that which from seven mountains overlooks the whole world; Rome, the seat of empire and the gods:—

Sed quae de septem totum circumspicit orbem
Montibus; imperii Roma deumque locus.”

When they saw all the gods dwelling in the temples they had built for them, the Romans were persuaded, not without reason, that their dominion would be perpetual and their city eternal. But after the overthrow of the natural barriers the earth was cumbered with artificial obstructions, and the gods that had once inhabited it became discredited. The subjugated nations would no longer honour them as their protectors after they had failed to protect them. Whatever power they may have possessed in the cities which were their original seats, they certainly possessed none at all in the imperial city. They would not bear removal from the autonomous communities of which they were the protectors by nature. Greek was the language in which the gods spoke. Whenever they declared their intention, they did not fail to carry it into effect. For there is power in the words that are spoken by the gods. But they would speak only in freedom, and no voice was heard from them after they had been transferred to Rome. "Apollo never spoke in Latin," says Cicero. In early times he had delivered oracles or responses to those who had inquired of him, which were usually expressed in verses of ambiguous meaning, like those of the Sibyl. But

when the Romans obtained the empire of the world, the gods of Greece gave no more manifestations of their power. "In the days of Pyrrhus," Cicero says again, "Apollo had already ceased making verses." They abandoned the localities to which they had formerly been attached, and retired before the felt approach of the darkness known as Ragnarok.

The Romans created nothing themselves, but appropriated the simple things that other peoples had created and constructed from them some new composite thing. After the establishment of the Empire, the city was crowded with the captive gods of the subjugated nations, and *religio* was the word used to denote their worship. But the attention they received in Rome was not the same as that to which they had been accustomed in the cities which were their original seats. The different rites and ceremonies which separate nations had observed could not be celebrated above the surface in the midst of the prevailing cosmopolitanism. The gods themselves had departed, and it was only their figures and forms that were left. When the period of darkness was over, they would come to life again and reassert

their power. In their revival the earth would be renovated, and the cities whose protectors they were would be restored to their former condition. But it was evident that the worn-out cults would have to be abandoned. Since the gods had gone out of their temples, their worship, or religio, could no longer possess any efficacy. They would not manifest their power in the city to which they had been transferred. When the cities of which they were the protectors by nature were captured, and the nations to which they were originally attached subjugated, they themselves also were captive and conquered gods, and could afford no assistance to those who invoked them. Until the cataclysm had passed over and the artificial obstructions with which it was cumbered had disappeared, they would return no more to the earth which they had forsaken.

Those who were identified with the order that existed above the surface seemed to be united, because they were all attracted by the same visible heads. But the union produced by the forces of centralisation is only artificial. The particles that compose a promiscuous aggregation would be plunged into utter confusion if they were not

subjected to an external regulation. But the members of a harmonious association, whose union is a natural reality, can co-operate in freedom. The cataclysm is the test which shows which party has might on its side. As it does not penetrate, it does no injury to those who are within the circle of the commune; but as it sweeps on its irresistible course over the whole surface, it carries away all those who are without. After it has passed over, therefore, the promiscuous aggregation is found to have disappeared; but the harmonious association survives unaffected.

When the gods they had formerly been accustomed to invoke became discredited, the subjugated nations looked to Cæsar for protection and guidance. The majesty of Augustus in this crowning period of consolidation is very impressive. All matters, whether military, civil, or pontifical, were subject to his supervision. As imperator, he was the commander of the army; as princeps, he was the first person in the senate; and as pontifex maximus, he saw to the due celebration of the rites and ceremonies of the Latin religio. So great was the veneration he received that, even in his lifetime, divine honours

were paid to him. "This is the man whom you have so often heard promised to you," says Virgil; "Cæsar Augustus, of divine origin, who shall restore the golden age in Latium throughout those lands over which Saturn reigned in former time, and shall extend the Empire over the Garamantes and Indians."

From the writings of the authors of the golden age it is evident that they all had a presentiment of the coming darkness and desolation. The signs of power and prosperity, with which they were encompassed on every side, did not induce them to suppose that there could be such a thing as perpetual stability. Though the reforms that were introduced by Augustus proved beneficial for a while, it was impossible that the decline should be arrested. The opposite processes, having once begun to operate, would have their way. A reaction must always take place after the climax of development has been reached. As the Romans had already acquired possession of the whole world, their dominion could not increase; and as all things are flowing, it could not remain for ever the same. It was therefore inevitable that it should decrease. When the period of consolidation had drawn to a close, no

more progress was to be expected. If the structure had been raised any higher, the symmetry of the parts already put together would have been marred. The Augustan age was the crown that was placed upon a finished whole.

A certain perplexity as to the future, therefore, now began to oppress the minds of the Romans. His consciousness of coming calamities is the key to the full meaning of such expressions as the familiar "carpe diem," which are so frequently used by Horace. In the works of the historians of the period, also, the same feeling of anxiety is noticeable. "A time in which very great apprehension prevailed has now been reached," says one of them. And he further confesses himself unable to account for "the alarm of the senate, the consternation of the people, and the fear of the world," when Augustus, as he expresses it, "restored to heaven his celestial spirit." "We had dreaded," he adds, "the downfall of the city." It was evident that the Western Empire must first be overwhelmed by the waves of barbarism, before "the sunrise," to use Ibsen's words, could reveal the splendour of the Eastern King-

dom. The order that had been brought into existence must be thrown back into confusion, and the approach of the darkness might already be felt. "Soon will all the straits be ice-bound."

Many passages in which the future fates are disclosed may be cited from the *Æneid*. "Troy is no more and the great glory of the Trojans. . . . All the gods by whom this Empire stood have gone out of their temples. . . . An ancient city falls, the seat of rule for many years." Troy was to Virgil a microcosm of the Rome which existed in his days. The foundation of a new Troy in memory of the old was the end which *Æneas* kept in view throughout the period of his wars and wanderings. The words "*imperium hoc*" have reference to the Empire which was standing at the time they were written, for "this" is said of the present. When the climax of development was reached, and all nations were subjected to their dominion, it was necessary that the Romans also should have their version of the tale of Troy. To the Greeks it had been familiar from the earliest times, and there was no need for it to be narrated to them again. Homer himself had said that there is no pleasure

in a twice-told tale. But out of the old material Virgil constructed a new edifice. From his narration of what had happened in the past, those who were living in the present might know what was destined to happen in the future. The words that had been written long ago came into power again when the circumstances to which they related had arisen.

In the Augustan age the object was accomplished towards which the labours of all the illustrious Romans who had succeeded one another from the time of Romulus had been directed. It was the grand closing scene in the drama of the existing order. When the curtain was about to fall, all the characters that had taken part in it seemed to be present to celebrate the final result which they had contributed in different ways to bring about. The action being over, the audience departs. The splendour of the illuminations is extinguished, and black night involves a desolated world. Nothing is more horrible than the emptiness of such a deserted theatre. The decorations and masks of the actors are thrown aside, and all the complicated machinery of the drama has broken down. The darkness is never

relieved by a gleam of light, nor the silence by the sound of a human voice. When the end is reached, all things revert to their original state, and the primæval Empire of Chaos is restored.

CHAPTER VI

THE RENOVATED EARTH

It was necessary that the yawning chasm should be bridged over before the iron age of imperial rule could be succeeded by the golden age of royal rule. The writings that were forgotten while they were being conveyed across the waters come into remembrance when the dry land is reached. The long period of barbarism and confusion is excluded, and the conditions which existed at the first are found to have been reproduced at the last. Another minority appears as the successor of the earlier, in order that the work which was begun on the one side may be finished on the other. The children inherit immense riches from the fathers. When the whole intervening distance has been traversed and the revolution of the circle is completed, the meanings are liberated from the letters in which they were enclosed while they were being conveyed to their proper destination. The forces

operating within the existing order having spent themselves, a time of dearth succeeds to the time of plenty. The wealth of the commune that is secreted below the surface supplies the needs of its members in the period of decline. The liberated meanings come into power again outside the forms in which they were once revealed, and all things are restored to those to whom they originally belonged. Those who intruded in the intermediate period do not participate in the communal wealth. For it is a well-known law that the middle is excluded when the end is reached. The letters that were sealed throughout the period of their transmission are opened and read by the people on the other side to whom they are addressed. When their contents are made known and given a new expression, it becomes apparent that those who in the meantime claimed to be acquainted with them were entirely ignorant of them. Though an abundance of corn had been stored up against the time of dearth, yet if the miser were entrusted with its distribution, he would keep it back and the people would never get any of it, according to the saying of Sadi: "If the sun lay on his table in the place of bread, no one would see

light until the day of resurrection." Misers who watch over hoarded wealth do not know how to spend it.

"Dull contemplation strives in vain,
The holy symbols to explain,"

says the magician in Goethe's tragedy. So long as it remained in their keeping, the hidden treasure would never be displayed. It was buried deep in the earth, and they would do nothing to bring it to light; as Sadi says again: "The money of the miser comes out of the earth only when the miser himself goes into it." They did not want the contents of the letters to be made known, and tried to hush them up. It displeased them that others should do what they would never do themselves. But it was unreasonable that the contents of all the letters that had been conveyed in the course of time from the one side of the gulf to the other should be suppressed, lest those who were credited with being their interpreters should be shown to have been ignorant of their import. The wealth which they watched over and would never spend is taken away from them at the last, and given to those who know how to apply it to a right use. Since they never enjoyed it while they had it, they might as well

never have had it at all after it has passed into the hands of others. The excluded meanings reassert themselves at the last, and militate against those who are fortified by the forms in which they were expressed at the first. But although the positions they had occupied were untenable, they refused to vacate them; as one of Ibsen's characters says: "Be that as it may, I will never retire! I will never give way to anybody!" When the things it was erected to defend are reproduced outside it, their fortress which was impregnable in the intermediate period can no longer afford them protection. The whole situation is changed, and fortune, which always favoured them before, forsakes them and goes right over to the other side.

When the structure of the existing order was no longer a safe habitation, those who did not wish to be identified with it abandoned it and obtained a refuge elsewhere. After the overthrow of the natural barriers, the independent communities that existed in early times had all disappeared, and distinctions that were once clearly marked had been merged in a monotonous cosmopolitanism. Where there was no harmonious association there could be no safety, but no

autonomous minority could exist side by side with the imperial majority. In the period of decline, therefore, the commune was secreted below the surface, which provided a refuge when the existing order was about to fall back into the confusion out of which it arose. The things that had been slowly excluded from it were suddenly reproduced outside it. The real issue was made clear by the revolution of the cycle of the age to its original starting-point, and the two parties that were formerly indistinguishable became separated by an impassable gulf. The right side was that on which the liberated meanings reasserted themselves, and those who were attached to the forms by which they were once conveyed were found to be on the wrong. The smaller party did not seek to compete with the larger, but to take its place after the cataclysm had passed over. When all intermediate controversies were eliminated the distinction between them was manifest, and the total escape of the one implied the total disappearance of the other.

The forces of centralisation continued to operate until there was no independent power remaining. A head was given to the world when the climax

of development was reached, and the coinage upon which it was impressed was current among the many different nations, within whose territories, before they became tributary, only their own coinage had circulated. The honours which had been paid to the gods in early times were in the period of decline transferred to Cæsar. "*Deorum injurias, dis curæ*," said Tiberius, in dealing with an offence alleged to have been committed against the divinity of Augustus:—"wrongs done to the gods, they would see to themselves." When those that were formerly invoked had become discredited, a greater care was taken to protect the majesty of the emperor from injury. Thus Tacitus mentions the case of a person who was accused of "having done violence to the divinity of Augustus, and shown contempt for the majesty of Tiberius:—*violatum Augusti numen, spretam Tiberii majestatem*." The delator, or informer, was exceedingly active in the age of Tiberius, and accusations of this kind were constantly being made. Those who were identified with the order that existed above the surface grew more sensitive as the decline became more marked. Signs of disintegration began to appear, and they were apprehensive lest they should lose

the reality and retain only the semblance of power.

The ugliness of life was greatly increased in the iron age. When all independent communities have disappeared, and a promiscuous aggregation has arisen in their stead, diversities are obliterated and a rigid uniformity must be maintained. A community of interests is necessary to produce a natural union. Those who were not associated among themselves were obliged to look for direction to some visible head. When Tiberius, therefore, in the middle of his reign, left the city never to enter it again, the citizens felt as if they had been deserted. They waited upon him while he was residing with his minister Sejanus at the island of Capri, and begged to be allowed to see him; but nothing could induce him to return to Rome. "They besought them," says Tacitus, "with reiterated entreaties, that they would grant them an opportunity of seeing them. They however would not come near the city or its vicinity, but considered it enough to leave the island, and show themselves on the opposite shore of Campania." "Astrologers declared," says Tacitus in another place, "that the motions of the stars when

Tiberius left Rome were such as to forbid his return."

When the Romans had obtained universal dominion, they had reached the goal of their ambition. As it was impossible for them to advance any further, therefore, they had no object before them in the future. No independent peoples remained for them to make war upon, and no obstacles confronted them which had to be thrown down. The muniments by which their conquests were protected were impregnable, and tranquillity everywhere prevailed. They styled themselves "the lords of the nations," or "*gentium domini*," and supposed their position to be perfectly secure. But when the original truths which had been excluded from the existing order began to reassert themselves in new movements outside it, the tables were turned on those who were inseparably attached to it. Their fortress was changed into a prison, and their victory into a defeat. By the secession of the minority at the last, they were deprived of all the advantages they had gained in the intermediate period. As the decline became more marked, it became more evident that it was those who seemed to be on the right side who would be exposed to danger,

while those who were ranged on the other would be under shelter. Conscious of power, they waited below the surface until the storm passed over.

The Eastern Kingdom could not be restored in the renovated earth until the Western Empire had been extended over the whole existing cosmos. The cataclysm intervenes at the appointed time and sweeps away all artificial obstructions, in order that the things which were removed and secreted below the surface may be brought to light again. Although, therefore, the servants occupy the seats of the masters when the semblance obscures the reality, the saying of Pope is not discredited: "Whatever is, is right." It is right that those who are in the wrong should be exalted immediately before the cataclysm. There would be nothing to provoke retribution if the natural order were not inverted.

As the renovated earth is distinct from the existing cosmos, so the Eastern Kingdom is distinct from the Western Empire. The one is the antithesis of the other, but there is no antagonism between them. Royal rule is not established in the iron age, nor imperial rule in the golden age. The king and the just ruler are properly synony-

mous terms ; as is indicated when it is said, The king can do no wrong. "When the word king is mentioned," says Cicero, "we think of a king who is also unjust. But we are not speaking of an unjust king when we are inquiring into the real nature of royal rule." To designate the unjust ruler the word tyrant was used, whose character is represented as being the exact opposite of that of a king. Speaking of a city under tyrannical rule as compared with a city under royal rule, Plato says : "They are entirely opposed to each other." Since a complete emancipation is more to be expected when bondage is rigorous than when it is mitigated, the tyrannical form of political constitution is likely to be succeeded by that which is royal rather than by any other. The revolution of time brings all things into juxtaposition with their antitheses. After freedom had been totally excluded from the existing order, it was regained by the minority who seceded and reproduced themselves outside it. The restoration takes place when the circumstances seem least favourable. In narrating a story of one of the Persian kings, Sadi says : "One day while the Shahnameh was being read in the court, the vizier asked the king, with

reference to the decline of the dominion of Zahaak and the establishment of the kingdom of Faridun, how it was that, when the latter had neither treasure nor army at the time, the rule passed into his hands. The king answered, 'I have heard that people rallied round him out of mere partiality, and supported his cause; and thus he obtained the kingdom.'"

Where there are no communes, there can be no such thing as the common welfare. The communal phraseology can no longer be correctly employed after the overthrow of the natural barriers. The customs that were observed by autonomous minorities in early times are forgotten when these have ceased to exist. Within the circle of the commune are found equality, diversity, and harmony; outside it inequality, uniformity, and excrescences. The second is the necessary outcome of the first, and the third of the second. Equality is the basis upon which diversities display themselves. The members of the commune all alike participate in the common stock to which they all in different ways contribute. They suffer no want, therefore, for each supplies the needs of the other. But where there is no harmonious association, utter confusion

would arise if a rigid uniformity were not maintained. The forces of centralisation, by obliterating diversities, produce excrescences. When once their operation has begun it cannot be arrested until all independent communities have disappeared. A promiscuous aggregation then arises in their stead, and a great artificial barrier is erected behind which the particles that compose it take refuge.

The distinction between those who are within the circle of the commune and those who are without is made clear by an inquiry into the nature of the symposium, or banquet. Great care was bestowed in ancient times upon the preparation of banquets and the arrangement of the guests. It was not usual to invite a large number at a time, but just so many that each might himself contribute to the common stock of conversation and also have the opportunity of hearing all the others; as appears from the following passage, from the work entitled *The Deipnosophists*, describing the banquets given by the Persian king: "When the king has a drinking-party, as he does very often, those who drink with him are about twelve in number." Where there is no community of interests there

can be no free communication of thought. Individuality is suppressed, and a rigid uniformity is maintained. If the guests are not associated among themselves, it is not a harmonious symposium at all, but only a dull function. In order that harmony may arise it is necessary that they should individually be possessed of different gifts of mind, and collectively belong to the same circle and have the same interests. "The feast of reason and the flow of soul" are never found where diversities are unable to display themselves in freedom upon the basis of equality.

When those who were invited were assembled together, they reclined in a circle in the different places that were allotted to them. For all the couches did not have the same honour. Those who came without being invited at all were known as parasites. The tables were brought into the banqueting-hall and placed beside the couches, on which cushions and coverings were laid. They were not raised above them; but in ancient times the seats or couches were higher than the tables, or tripods, as they were also called. The expense was not usually borne by one person, but all who were present made some contribution to the feast of which they all alike

partook. Thus Homer speaks of "equal feasts," which were so called because equal portions were distributed to all the guests. Parasites, however, feasted at the expense of others, and contributed nothing themselves, as appears from the following description which is given of the character: "Wherever he sees a well-laid couch and table placed beside it, supplied with every kind of delicacy, he sits down and feasts himself sumptuously, eats and drinks, and then goes home again without having made any contribution."

The proceedings were regulated by the symposiarchos, or ruler of the symposium, who was called *rex convivii* by the Romans. The expression "regna vini" also, which is used by Horace, shows that the symposium is royal in its nature. It was this master of the feast who decided in what proportion the wine should be mixed in the bowl, or crater, from which the drinking-cups were filled by means of vessels called cyathi. Among the Greeks it was the custom for a separate calix, or drinking-cup, to be set before each of the guests, which the cup-bearer would fill again when it was empty; but sometimes the same cup was passed round the whole circle from left to right; as is indicated by

the expressions, "to drink in a circle," and "to drink towards the right." When the deipnon, or dinner, was finished, the tables were removed and water was brought for the guests to wash their hands. Garlands and perfumes were then introduced, and after they had crowned themselves with the garlands and anointed themselves with the perfumes, minstrels and dancers were accustomed to appear. Speaking of songs and dances, therefore, Homer says: "These are the crowns of the feast." The harmonious symposium has always been attractive to the guests, as the dull function, which is its antithesis, has always been repulsive.

When the Persian king gave a banquet, the guests were not allowed to partake of the same wine which he drank. On other occasions, however, this practice was not followed, the master of the feast having the same wine as the rest of the company. The symposium itself did not commence until the deipon was finished and the table had been removed. Those who had the same interests were able to communicate their thoughts to one another in freedom. But the words which were spoken within the circle were not made known to those who were without.

The account which Herodotus gives of the banquet to which the Persian nobles were invited at Thebes, shortly before the decisive battle of the war, illustrates the order of the proceedings. Those who shared in the same cups would share also in the same conversation, and it was a proverb that the words which were spoken over the wine were true. The guests were so arranged that every Persian had a Theban for his neighbour. During the symposium, or, to use the words of Herodotus, "when they had finished dinner and were drinking together," one of the Persians who had a presentiment of their coming defeat communicated it to the Theban who was sharing in the same cups with himself, "Do you see," said he, "these Persians feasting here and the army that we left encamped by the river? Of all these you will see, after a short time has elapsed, only some few surviving."

Drinking-cups were treasures that were much prized by their possessors. When a person wished to display his liberality, therefore, he would give his guests all the drinking-cups that had been set before them at the banquet to carry away with them. But if they drank in a circle, they would not have each a separate cup. No one would

retain the cups that were passed to him, but they would all come back to the point from which they started and be restored to the person to whom they originally belonged. Among the Persians the same cup was passed from one guest to another, but among the Greeks it was not usual for many guests to drink from one calix, or chalice. When Alexander the Great, therefore, visited Darius at Babylon in the guise of an ambassador, and was invited by him to a banquet, he surprised the company by retaining all the cups that were passed to him, so that they did not go round the whole circle, but were intercepted in the middle. The story of the banquet is told in the Syriac version of the famous history of Alexander, in which the following passages occur: "Alexander went on an embassy to Darius as far as Babylon. . . . Then Darius asked Alexander, 'Who are you?' Alexander said, 'I am the ambassador of Alexander.' . . . Darius said to him, . . . 'Do you now, according to the custom of ambassadors, partake of a meal with me, for so did Alexander treat my ambassador.' Then Darius reclined upon his couch, and his nobles and princes sat at meat before him."

1 Including Alexander, there were thirteen at

table, of whom the king was the first. After giving the names of the eleven nobles, the historian adds: "And opposite Darius, in the middle, sat Alexander, who was the ambassador." When the deipnon was finished, the wine was passed round in golden cups. It was drawn from the jar in which it was kept, and mixed with water in the crater, from which it was poured out by the cup-bearer. "When they had eaten," the historian continues, "they called for wine in a jar. Every golden cup which they passed to Alexander, he poured the wine upon the ground and placed the vessel in his bosom. When they saw what he was doing they told Darius, and Darius, when he heard it, rose from his couch and came to Alexander and said to him, . . . 'Why do you act in this way, putting all the drinking-cups in your bosom?' Alexander said, 'When my master Alexander makes a feast for his nobles, he gives all the golden drinking-cups to them, and I thought that you would act in the same way; but now, since you have not a similar custom, behold, the drinking-cups are before you, command and I will restore you your gold.'"

As the banquet proceeded, Alexander was re-

cognised by one of the guests, who informed Darius who he was. But when he saw that he was discovered, he left the banqueting-room and eluded the pursuit of the messengers that Darius sent after him, by crossing the Euphrates. They followed him until they came to the river, but when they found that he had reached the other side, they were obliged to turn back; and from their failure to overtake him Darius perceived what the issue of the war would be; as appears from the words with which the story of the banquet concludes: "When they returned, they came to Darius and informed him of Alexander's escape and of his crossing the river. Darius was in great trouble, and a sign suddenly appeared to him; for the picture of King Xerxes, whom Darius loved, was painted on the wall of the banqueting-room, and suddenly it peeled off from the wall and fell to the ground."

Frequent feasts promoted the harmony on the maintenance of which the communal welfare depended. In some Hellenic cities there were common meals, or *syssitia*, as they were called, of which all the citizens partook. If any one were excluded from the common meal, therefore, it was the same thing as if he had been ex-

communicated, or excluded from the commune itself. In a promiscuous aggregation, however, it is evident that common meals could not take place. Those who were within the circle of the commune would eat and drink at the common table, but those who were without would have no share in it whatever. All who partook of the meal were required to make some contribution to it. But the revel that was kept in the house of Ulysses was not a banquet to which every one brought his share. The suitors contributed nothing themselves, but wasted the wealth that belonged to another. When they were least expecting him, Ulysses himself came and sat down among them, as if he had been, to use Ibsen's words, "the thirteenth at table." Owing to his being disguised as a beggar they did not know who he was, and it was not until he threw aside his rags and began to shoot that they became aware of his return. "Never did any feast have less grace than that banquet," says Homer of the last meal of which the suitors partook in the house of Ulysses. "For the suitors destruction is clearly portended," he says again, "even for all of them; not a single one shall avoid death and doom."

The victory is won by those who are hidden and lying in wait, not by those who occupy the strong positions above the surface. The seceding minority never came into conflict with the intruding majority, but the question was which party would survive the cataclysm. The structure of the existing order seemed most firmly established at the time when it was about to be overthrown. Its imposing exterior concealed the real condition of those who were identified with it. The artificial defences on which they were relying betrayed the absence of latent strength. They were not associated among themselves, but were all attached to the same visible institutions. If these had been carried away, they also would have been plunged into utter confusion. When those on the one side have gone to sleep, those on the other have awakened. The semblance, which was exalted in the period of darkness, is abolished when the dawn breaks and the reality is revealed. There is no safety in cities with wooden horses in them, however strong their walls may be. "In the issue of wars," says Bacon, "the shield of Pallas is more effective than the sword of Mars." When the Western Empire has been extended

over the whole existing cosmos, the yawning chasm is bridged over, and all things of any value are transferred to the other side. The cataclysm carries away the useless accumulations that are left behind, in order that the Eastern Kingdom may be restored in the renovated earth. It does no injury to those who are secreted below the surface, but only prepares a suitable environment into which they emerge victorious after all artificial obstructions have disappeared. The visible forms can afford no protection to those who take refuge behind them when their excluded meanings are reproduced outside them and militate against them. It is those who seemed to be in the wrong in the intermediate period who are found to be in the right at the last. But until the great flood of waters had been crossed, and the dry land on the other side had been reached, the original truths could not militate against the forms in which they were once revealed. It was necessary that they should be totally excluded from them before they could be reproduced outside them. Up to the last moment, therefore, the position of those who were attached to them seemed to be secure. But when the cycle of the age had

completed its revolution, and nature began to reassert her power, the whole situation was changed. The cataclysm fell; and the existing order, together with everything that was identified with it, disappeared from off the face of the earth.

THE END







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