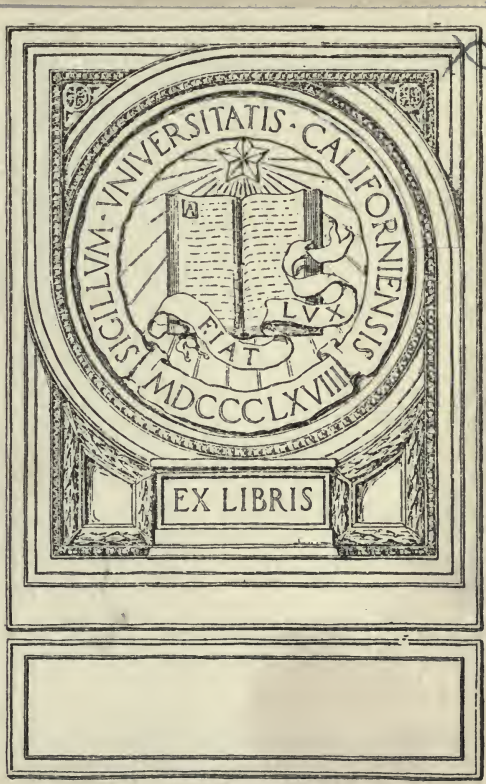
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ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT

BY

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OXFORD

B. H. BLACKWELL, BROAD STREET

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ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT

CHAPTER I

THE NON-SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

THE nature, meaning, and origin of government are subjects which have engaged the attention of some of the most celebrated writers in the history of the world. Yet all early treatises on government, though they attest the importance and fascination of a subject which concerns the whole human race, are vitiated as political investigations by defects which are inseparable from premature speculation upon intricate social problems. All thinkers since the time of Comte are aware that there is a certain order in which the various departments of human knowledge must be taken if the results obtained are to possess a really scientific value. If this order is inverted, and a subject which properly comes last in the hierarchy of science is of such intense human interest as to tempt the enquiring mind to undertake its study out of due course, before the discovery of other important truths has duly prepared the way, the accuracy and reliability of the conclusion is sure to be correspondingly impaired. Certain sciences can, in fact, be built up only on the basis of conclusions which other sciences have incidentally supplied. Social science, which includes the problem

of the origin of government, comes last of all, and cannot be properly attempted until the foundations upon which it must rest, shaped by previous labours in other regions of thought, have been well and truly laid. It is of the greatest importance, therefore, that those who inaugurate a new science should accurately identify the preliminary department of knowledge, since the conclusions which it has established must form the starting-point and suggest the principles upon which their own enquiry is to be conducted. We shall see in the succeeding chapter how vital these previous researches are, and how the investigation of the origin of government has been confused and retarded by a mistake as to the nature of the study which must immediately precede the inauguration of social science.

Though the works of Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau on the subject of government and its origin have a world-wide celebrity, they cannot be taken seriously from the scientific point of view. They are merely of the nature of political speculations, which are without permanent value except as an indication of the eternal interest aroused by the problem of government in the mind of man. But to such considerations their authors were supremely indifferent, because their object was not the discovery of scientific truth, but the enforcement of a moral or constitutional principle, to which the facts were deliberately made subservient.

An examination of the nature of the political speculations of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries

on the origin of government will serve to show that under the guise of a pretended investigation into the earliest political conditions, writers like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau in reality endeavour to find material in support of their preconceived notions of what government ought to be. The political requirements of the hour, or a supposed necessity of defending the liberties of the human race, and not the true spirit of scientific investigation, have inspired these attempts. Indeed, when the social contract theory of the origin of government was first started, the true spirit of scientific research cannot be said to have existed at all outside the physical sciences. Hobbes, it is true, made desperate efforts to keep his view of the social contract in conformity with the actual facts of history, or of what we should now call the evolution of government. But in the hands of Locke and Rousseau this theory is, in fact, nothing more than a piece of imaginary history, supported by the most transparent special pleading, and designed to justify by supposed inductive proofs opinions already regarded as deductively certain. The various forms which the theory assumed agree in the view that government was supposed to be the outcome of a contract between ruler and people, under which the ruler was granted certain privileges on condition of enforcing justice and order, and securing the general well-being of the community. According to the somewhat nebulous views of these political philosophers, the appointment of a political authority took place as the result of a desire on the part of human

beings to secure ordered social relations, and thus to terminate the primitive discord of savage life, or, as it is quaintly called, "the war of each against all"; and men were actually supposed to have met together in a forest or on a plain for this purpose, and to have instituted government by universal agreement.

It is clear, then, that the social contract theory does not belong to the region of science, where nevertheless it has been sometimes placed, but to the sphere of political reform. What its authors really aimed at was the establishment of the principle of government by consent, which they proposed to fortify by the pretended discovery of proofs that a transaction with this object in view had at one time actually taken place. A proper appreciation of the requirements of scientific procedure is not to be expected from those who are bent merely upon constitutional improvement, and whose chief object is not scientific discovery, but the removal of political injustice. Such a bias, however, is not peculiar to the authors of the social contract. Over-eagerness to prove a useful conclusion is the besetting sin of social enquirers, and, as we shall have occasion to notice more than once, prevents even at the present day a recognition of the real significance of certain prominent facts of history and of anthropology.

All theory with regard to the origin of government, of society, or of civilization, must, as a matter of fact, start completely afresh with Darwin and the struggle for existence. Reference has already been made to the fact that the soundness and usefulness of any new

science is dependent upon some previous and allied discovery. The satisfactory constitution of social science is impossible without an approximately true account of the descent of man. A proper comprehension of the origin and nature of man is indispensable for a comprehension of the origin and nature of society. No views formed upon such subjects, and especially on the subject of the origin of government, are of any value which do not take into account so tremendous an alteration in our ancient outlook upon life as was caused by the demonstration of the law of the struggle for existence. In the present instance, what we want to know before there can be a prospect of successfully inaugurating a science of history is the actual facts and tendencies of the primitive nature of man. The way in which government originated must have the closest relation to that primitive nature and to its elemental principles, and opinions on this subject formed in the completest ignorance of man's kinship with the lower animals can have very little relation to the actual process by which a political control was originally established, and must be an unsound guide as to the course taken by his social and political development. It might, therefore, have been expected that the promulgation of the Darwinian hypothesis would presently react upon kindred studies, and would have supplied material and suggested methods for the more accurate investigation of the early political and social beginnings of man. In particular it might have seemed antecedently certain that interest in the important question of the

origin of government would have been largely increased. Under ordinary circumstances such a result would no doubt have followed. It so happens, however, that the exact reverse has taken place, and that in consequence of a certain misapplication and misreading of the Darwinian theory, interest in the origin of government has not increased, but has actually diminished. By a remarkable turn of events the interpretation given to the Darwinian theory by its most popular exponent, instead of arousing to renewed vigour investigations on the origin of government, has, on the contrary, had the effect of depriving this question of much of the importance which it possessed for philosophers of a previous generation.

One of the first subjects to arouse the interest of a thoughtful mind at the earliest period at which such speculations are possible is the process by which savagery has been converted into civilization. Until the advent of the Darwinian theory no improvement in human conditions was regarded as possible except in connection with some sort of governmental agency. Even the Golden Age was considered to be largely or mainly due to the judicial and administrative efficiency of Saturn. The very idea of progress was unknown to our ancestors, and government being until quite recent times the only conceivable means by which the transition from savagery to civilization could have been effected, the interest in the origin of government was correspondingly intense. But the Darwinian theory, not in the hands of its author but in those of one of his contemporaries, led to the assumption that the

rise of civilization and the development of higher moral relations may take place, and has, in fact, actually taken place, quite independently of any adventitious aid from government. In the theory of the struggle for existence it was believed that a principle had been discovered capable of accounting satisfactorily for the upward progress of man, and for the appearance of those improved intellectual, social, and moral conditions which we distinguish by the name of civilization. Effects which were formerly inconceivable, except on the hypothesis that they had been produced or at least materially assisted by government, could now be attributed to another cause —the universal competition of human beings, which resulted in the suppression and disappearance of unworthy specimens of mankind, and in the perpetuation of those who had shown themselves superior in the unceasing rivalry with each other.

According to the fascinating formula of the "survival of the fittest," each successive generation necessarily comes into existence better equipped than its predecessors with all the characteristics necessary for the work of progressive civilization. Obviously, therefore, there is here no room for interest in the subject of government. When changed conditions can be satisfactorily explained by one cause, there is no need to postulate another. The theory of the survival of the fittest, in the form which it assumed in the hands of Herbert Spencer, seems to render the transition from savagery to civilization entirely intelligible without the aid of any extraneous facts,

and the hypothesis of governmental assistance becomes at once superfluous, unnecessary, and therefore unscientific. If by the simple process of the struggle for existence a type of man fitted to inaugurate a higher civilization is supposed automatically to emerge, then it is plain that government need no longer be regarded as a feature of supreme and overwhelming importance in the history of the human race. As a matter of fact, from that time government ceased to be so regarded, and the question of its origin was consequently removed from the number of what may be called first-class investigations and relegated to an entirely subordinate place among subjects of scientific interest. As a consequence the solution of the problem of the origin of government is not sought where it should be sought, among the grand, permanent, dominating principles of the human mind, but among motives which are secondary and conditions which are ephemeral; and one of the most important facts in all human existence and one of the most important developments in all human evolution has thus become a matter of merely antiquarian interest, which may fittingly occupy the attention of those who are curious about the customs of the distant past, but which cannot be expected to absorb the interest of any who are engaged upon really great and modern scientific problems. If, however, it is true that the formula of the "survival of the fittest" possesses no such magic powers as are attributed to it, but is merely the outcome of a somewhat facile talent for high-sounding generalization; if it is found

that we can in no way rely on this unaided process to account for human emergence from barbarism—then we are once more thrown back upon government as the only agency capable of producing or rendering possible the momentous change from savagery to civilization. Once more the problem of the origin of government becomes invested with the intense significance that properly belongs to it, and the phenomenon of government itself assumes the majesty and even solemnity which must attach to what is, beyond all doubt, the central feature in human evolution.

Besides its inherent difficulty, social science as compared with other sciences has this additional disadvantage, that it cannot be dispassionately studied. In the first place, the conclusions at which the enquirer arrives are liable to perturbation from the influence of his own emotions. In the second place, the reception which is accorded to them depends as much upon the prejudice of those to whom they are addressed as upon the cogency of the reasoning with which those conclusions are enforced. In physics or chemistry it does not much matter to an investigator what kind of principle investigation or experiment may disclose. His attitude is one of strict impartiality. He registers the result which inductive observation reveals, and has no bias in favour of any particular interpretation of phenomena. He can view his data without emotion. But the social enquirer is a man dealing with men, and this circumstance undoubtedly tends to influence both him and his hearers in an unscientific manner.

They are inclined to demand a certain type of answer, and he is perhaps unconsciously influenced to give them the kind of answer that they want. One of the first effects of this emotional perturbation is the production of a tendency to a somewhat hasty optimism with regard to the moral character of man and the methods by which improvement in human relations has taken place. From the first beginnings of speculation man has been inclined to invest his presence upon earth with a significance which science, at least up to the present day, has been entirely unable to justify. Our knowledge of the origin of the race and of the facts of human evolution does nothing to foster the belief in the spiritual significance of human life, or to encourage the profound suggestion of Plato, that we are engaged as valued allies and coadjutors of the gods in some great scheme of transcendent moral importance. Yet these are convictions to which most men cling in the secret recesses of their hearts, regarding with instinctive antipathy all evidence which seems to point in a contrary direction. Whenever, therefore, a discovery is announced which seems to impair this confidence in the sublime significance of human destinies, all the resources of religion and philosophy are consciously or unconsciously called into play to protect, as it were, the self-respect of man, and to maintain unimpaired a devotion and energy which can only be properly evoked by high and noble hopes. Not until irrefragable evidence is produced of the falsity of these supra-rational hopes will the human race relinquish a belief without which all

dignity and grandeur must depart both from the conduct and the contemplation of existence.

Perhaps the greatest blow ever inflicted upon the religious or philosophic optimism of mankind was the publication of the *Origin of Species*. After having been accustomed to regard himself as only a little lower than the angels, man was compelled, scientifically speaking, to admit that he was but a little higher than the beasts; and higher only in consequence of performances, which, however great, could not obliterate the traces of his lowly origin; since from this point of view intensity of conviction cannot be regarded as of any value in the absence of scientific demonstration. The world fought and still fights desperately to avoid a blow so deadly to its vanity or self-respect, and the difficulties in the way of social science from which other sciences are entirely free may be measured by this one instance of the force of the hostility shown to the Darwinian theory. Curiously enough, this hostile attitude was shared by many of the bitterest opponents of religious dogma. The antipathy of theologians to the Darwinian theory is indeed perfectly comprehensible. The whole mental atmosphere generated by ecclesiastical tradition rendered their attitude inevitable. What is more worthy of remark from the present point of view is that philosophers, who were not precluded by theological prejudice from accepting the discovery, were somewhat startled by the apparent ethical implications of the new theory. The picture of a world in which progress depended upon the conflict of organism against organism through millions of

years, did not seem to offer much encouragement to those higher ethical considerations upon which all belief in the essential dignity and value of human existence must ultimately be based. From the first, therefore, those who were more especially interested in the moral progress of man began to look round for a means of escape from the painful interpretation which they seemed forced to place upon the methods by which the evolution of the human species had been conducted. It was thus that the ineradicable optimism of human nature predisposed philosophers to rush to somewhat hasty conclusions in their endeavour to avoid a profoundly unacceptable and pessimistic view of the whole cosmic process. It was this perfectly comprehensible but completely unscientific attitude of the human mind which facilitated the acceptance of a theory that has prejudicially affected social and anthropological investigations, from the days of the publication of *Origin of Species* until now.

Under the influence of some such bias which impelled him to give a brighter aspect to the evolutional history of man, encouraged also by erroneous biological theories which will be subsequently investigated, Herbert Spencer endeavoured to sum up the results of the evolutional process as far as it affected man in the popular and world-famous phrase, "survival of the fittest." Experience, in Coleridge's mournful phrase, is like the stern light of a ship, illuminating only what has gone behind. This generalization is true even of philosophers and trained thinkers, since they are found deliberately to repeat the errors they

condemn in others. Bentham, for instance, eloquently denounces the use of "impostor terms," as he called them, and then proceeds to indulge in this identical offence of begging the question, much to the mingled indignation and amusement of Spencer. Yet Spencer himself will one day be largely remembered as the author of an impostor phrase almost more misleading than any that can be discovered in the whole history of science. For the widespread popularity of this new catchword there was one main reason, and that reason was not scientific. It had a reassuring influence upon those philosophers who were startled by the moral aspect of the Darwinian theory, and who wished, if possible, to reconcile the course of nature with the instincts and intuitions of the higher understanding. There is a fascinating but delusive air of philosophy about the assumption that success is its own justification, and it is a pleasantly simple solution of much in life which offends our sense of justice to assume that the fittest must, in the natural process of things, always tend to survive, and to produce a still fitter progeny. The fallacy inherent in this method of reasoning, though well known to the leading thinkers of to-day, will be systematically exposed in the present chapter for the sake of the ensuing argument, and it will be explained how that which is little more than a mere trick of speech has been regarded as the apt expression of an important and far-reaching truth. It will then appear under what circumstances this generalization is, with regard to the individual struggle for existence in early times,

entirely false, and under what conditions and with what reservations it may be regarded in later times as approximately true.

This attempt to justify the cosmic process in the eyes of man can only be rendered plausible by ignoring a most disastrous weakness in the argument. If the theory of survival of the fittest is to be of any use as an explanation of human progress, it must be because it is directly productive of moral and intellectual results, a thing impossible in early times. The struggle for existence between individuals at the present day may perhaps be conducive to the survival of the fittest. But the argument that it must therefore have contributed to their survival in savage times also is entirely fallacious, and leaves out of sight a circumstance which is of the most profound and far-reaching importance. If the survival of the fittest is approximately true at the present day, this is in consequence of an added factor which at a certain period of evolution dramatically intervenes on the situation, a factor which was not present from the beginning, but, on the contrary, sharply differentiates the old kind of survival from the new, silently but effectively altering the whole character of human relations, and with them possibly the whole meaning of human existence.

The following considerations will serve to make this clear. To the delusive and untrustworthy phrase "survival of the fittest" different interpretations can be given, and a reasoner in the course of his argument may pass unconsciously from one to another of these,

thus entirely vitiating his apparently satisfactory conclusions. In the first place, the formula is capable of an interpretation which makes it merely tautologous, contributing no more to the real explanation of a subject than the juggling phrases which are at once so popular and so misleading in political controversy. According to this interpretation, certain individuals survive because they are the fittest, and they are the fittest because they survive. In the second and only permissible sense, the fittest survive because they are the best adapted to the conditions in which they are found—because, in other words, they best meet the requirements under which the struggle takes place: a perfectly sound and accurate statement so long as the attention is steadily fixed upon the conditions in question. The third interpretation, however, is the most habitual, and since it contains a more subtle fallacy than the first, and has most contributed to confuse the issues of an already difficult subject, it deserves especial notice. According to this view, the fittest who emerge victorious from any given phase of the human struggle for existence are assumed to be the characters most necessary for the production of a higher civilization; they are regarded as individuals who exhibit in the greatest perfection those qualities which best conduce to the progress of humanity. This assumption, which the sweeping generalization of Herbert Spencer consciously or unconsciously popularized, is absolutely without justification. The victors in any struggle are, as we have said, in reality only fittest according to the conditions of the struggle,

and the conditions of the struggle for existence among the aboriginal specimens of the human race can never have been such as to conduce to the survival of those who were morally most desirable.

The situation, in appearance new, is in reality old. We find ourselves once more in the presence of a well-known philosophic juggle by which many false hopes have been buoyed up, and which consists in using the same word in one sense in the premises of an argument and in another sense in the conclusion. By a careful manipulation of this process, as many readers will know, almost any logical effect may be produced, and the most ludicrously inappropriate causes may be made answerable for a desired result. Gorgeous philosophic Utopias may be made to rise almost in a single phrase, and in the present instance fitness for the treacherous conduct of neolithic warfare is supposed by the aid of some abstruse hereditary process to generate the moral excellences of a later age, with the result that the savage who in the premises excelled only in murderous dexterity becomes in the conclusion the producer of the highest forms of a developed civilization.

These several objections must now be examined in greater detail. We will begin with an imaginary but typical illustration of the way in which the phrase is popularly used, under the impression that it gives us a succinct account of the causes of success in a physical struggle, while in reality it gives us no explanation at all. Such a formula is obviously of no use unless it either tells us something new or sums up concisely

and accurately the most important features of the phenomenon to which it refers. Unless it tells us something new it is tautologous. Unless it tells us something important it is a waste of time.

In the vast majority of cases it tells us nothing new at all. Let us suppose, for instance, that the denizens of the Zoological Gardens were all simultaneously released one night by an earthquake within the area of their grounds, and proceeded to utilize their unexpected liberty by settling conclusions among themselves upon Darwinian principles. Let us suppose, also, that in the morning the general public had been apprised of the occurrence and rushed to witness the result. In some corner of the battlefield no doubt they would see the lion sedately licking his whiskers amid a scene of triumphant carnage, and by his general demeanour indicating that he felt himself master of the situation. It is fairly certain that under these circumstances some embryo philosopher, wishing to show that he was abreast of modern knowledge, would exclaim, "Look at the lion: the fittest has survived." And if he were pressed to state why he knew that the lion was the fittest, he would reply, "Why, obviously because he has survived."

But perhaps the reader will say this is somewhat unfair. Surely our Spencerian philosopher would point out that the lion had survived because of his superior teeth and claws, and strength, and agility, and indomitable courage; that, in fact, he had shown himself the fittest to cope with his adversaries under the conditions of the dreadful struggle. If he

were something more than the man who uncomprehendingly repeats the catchwords of science, he would undoubtedly add an explanation to this effect. And this brings out exactly the point which it is necessary to emphasize if a clear comprehension is to be gained of the limitations which must attend the use of this formula in an argument designed to explain the evolution of the higher qualities of humanity. The mere fact of success is in itself, and from our present point of view, meaningless. The circumstances which conduce to the triumph of the victor are the important considerations, not the struggle itself. By explaining that the victor's "fitness" is not absolute but entirely relative to the conditions, in the present instance a matter of teeth and claws, we give the statement a scientific precision which it did not have before. But in proportion as we render the phrase accurate by introducing the explanation that the lion, for instance, has survived because of his ferocious qualities, we limit the usefulness of the given "fitness" in such a way as to restrict it to similar scenes of carnage, and we thereby render it entirely inapplicable to moral or civilized fitness if the conditions are those of a merely physical struggle. This, of course, is of no consequence if we are merely discussing animals. But it is of the utmost consequence if we are dealing with the savages who were the ancestors of the present members of the human race, and whose "fitness" in early times is supposed according to the argument to have produced by some kind of transmission the very different "fitness" of later times.

The qualities which gave the earliest types of savage existence their predominance over other types are absolutely opposed to the moral qualities demanded at a later date, and could in no way have conduced to their development. We may go further and say that the qualifications for success in savage life are not merely such as do not assist, but such as actually tend to negative, the process of civilization. The qualities which demonstrate the fitness of a human being under savage conditions of existence are qualities which, if continuously exercised without interruption, would necessarily keep humanity for ever at the same low state of civilization, and the survival idea is therefore inherently incapable of throwing any light whatever on the process by which civilized humanity has developed its essential characteristics.

Our examination of the first meaning of the phrase "survival of the fittest" has brought us to the second and only legitimate sense in which it can be used. The conditions under which the struggle takes place, rather than the struggle itself, constitute the determining factor, especially in human evolution. This was Darwin's sole method of regarding the struggle for existence. Never for a moment did he allow his attention to be diverted from a close and accurate study of the conditions under his eyes. Knowing that the phenomena of organic life with which he was best acquainted were immensely modified by the conditions under which civilized humanity lives, he gave no countenance to reckless statements which

asserted that the survival of the humanly fittest was the necessary consequence of the original struggle for existence; and by adopting this attitude he clearly showed his great scientific superiority to Spencer, who allowed himself to be misled by the subtle fallacies inherent in the impostor term which he himself invented.

We are now, therefore, prepared for the third method in which this phrase is used, and which consists, as already pointed out, in passing from one to another meaning of the word "fittest" during the actual course of the argument. As a simple illustration of the extraordinary tenacity with which able men will sometimes cling to the belief that the struggle for existence, even under brutal conditions, must necessarily produce results desirable in the interests of a higher civilization, a conversation may perhaps be related which took place in the author's hearing upon the social conditions of California in the early days. To a cultivated American who was present it seemed as though there could be no more splendid nursery for human excellence than that which these conditions provided. What most particularly seemed to arouse his admiration was a marked tendency which characterized these pioneers of a higher morality to use the revolver instantly upon little or no provocation. This habit of shooting at sight under a real or imaginary affront seemed to him a happy illustration of the Darwinian law as interpreted by Spencer. The man who was left alive, after the indiscriminate indulgence in revolver practice which occasionally took place,

was to him a clear instance of the survival of the fittest, and apparently of the method by which evolution from lower to higher human conditions takes place. That anyone should come through such an ordeal successfully was a proof of the superlative nature of the qualities with which he was endowed, and the prospects of civilization were the richer for his survival and for the elimination of his weaker adversaries. When diverted from the tautological argument that the case proved itself (fallacy number one) and brought down to details, this devoted follower of Spencer referred to the quickness of the eye, the readiness of hand, and capacity for prompt action, which such a general encounter entailed, and insisted upon the immense value of these qualities to civilization. It did not apparently occur to him that all these forms of excellence were compatible with a perfect villainy, and with a complete contempt for all those various considerations upon which moral improvement and social intercourse depend. He declined to entertain the point of view that clever treachery, when coupled with homicidal inclinations, though it greatly increases the chance of personal survival, yet cannot be recommended for the furtherance of the highest interests of society. The final argument, that if his view was correct the best thing to do would be to abolish such enervating amenities as assizes and trials for murder, and to allow evolution to do its own work, assisted only by the most perfected type of firearms, left him unmoved in his preference of Californian methods to those of a more

decadent civilization. He was, in fact, hypnotized by the impostor term "survival of the fittest," and could not get beyond it. Nor can this example be dismissed as an isolated instance of exceptional perversity; the type of reasoning involved, unsound as it appears when analyzed, is, on the contrary, still to a certain extent prevalent, and is not confined only to inferior intellects. One writer of considerable ability, a purveyor of popular science, classes Spencer above Darwin, because Spencer by his celebrated phrase enabled the world to understand the evolutional philosophy at a glance, while Darwin was all the time unable to see the real bearings of his own theory.

So important is this point to the whole of the subsequent argument, that the reader will perhaps pardon a further illustration of the same kind of error. In the previous instance the fallacy was capable of the easiest detection. But in the region of more abstruse thought it is frequently in the highest degree specious and misleading, and is well known to have lured some of the most able reasoners to their philosophic destruction. By a process of intellectual sleight of hand the meaning of the word "fittest" is, as we have said, altered in the course of the argument, and a result is thus produced as entirely inconsequential as when a conjurer puts a billiard ball up his sleeve and converts it into a live rabbit in his waistcoat. The billiard ball in the first case and the term "fittest" in the second "go in" one thing and "come out" another. In the first portion of the syllogism the

term is taken to mean triumph under the given conditions, which may be, as in the Californian case, and indeed usually are, conditions befitting a savage and ferocious existence. In the second portion of the syllogism the meaning of the term "fittest" is changed, and is then understood to imply conformity to the most ideal requirements of civilization. There is thus produced the idea that conformity to the first set of conditions produces a result which is entirely agreeable to the second. The law of the struggle for existence as formulated by Darwin is supposed to set in motion the law of the survival of the fittest as imagined by Spencer. Darwin well knew that out of a given struggle you would get no more than you put into it, and that if it was waged by individuals characterized by cruelty, ferocity, and endurance, the outcome of similar qualities would be the result. Spencer would lead us to believe that a struggle which put a premium on brutality and cruelty is at the same time productive of, or conducive to, generosity, truth, honour, and all the virtues that are necessary to humanity. The struggle for existence may do much for the physical qualities of a savage race, but it cannot cause one kind of character to turn into another better suited to the requirements of a distant generation. It can only emphasize the qualities useful to the period in which the struggle takes place, not those which are necessary to a future and entirely different standard of existence. It cannot replace a lower civilization by a higher. It cannot do in real life what it is made to do in the argument—namely,

bring about those important and vital changes in which the progress of the world consists.

Those who are acquainted with the history of philosophy will remember an almost identical instance of fallacy in the logical manipulation of the term "nature," which in the hands of certain moralists appears as a simple idea in the premises of the argument, and emerges all covered with rich moral associations in the conclusion. Since the days of the Stoics the term "nature" has been frequently used in the study of moral philosophy, apparently under the idea that we thereby gain a superhuman, or, as we should now say, an evolutional sanction, for the existence of ethical ideas. But the term "natural," like the term "fittest," is capable of being used in several different senses. It may be, and is, applied to—(1) The lower instincts; (2) that which is in accordance with rational anticipation; (3) that which is usual or customary; (4) that which is in accordance with the highest ideals of the human mind. The last of these meanings, apparently preferred by the Stoics themselves, implies a contradiction of fact and a perversion of language sufficiently astounding, one would have thought, to make even a philosopher hesitate. Yet in their discussions on "natural law" or on "life according to nature," designed to rest the sanctions of moral conduct upon a sure foundation, the Stoics and their successors passed from one to another of these four meanings with a dexterity which completely deceived the mental eye of their contemporaries, and in some cases even imposed upon

successive generations. "Life according to nature" may mean life occupied in the pursuit of the highest ethical ideals, or life in pursuit of the lowest sensual gratifications, according to the necessities of the argument, or the personal bias of the reasoner. In a precisely similar manner the "survival of the fittest" may mean either the triumphant emergence of some low and brutal type or the successful preservation of the character that conforms to the highest human ideals, and there are men at the present day who imagine that the results produced by the second process are in some confused way attributable to the operation of the first.

Such are the methods of those who attempt to explain progress by deducing it from the crude law of the struggle for existence. There was one philosopher, however, who had no such delusions about any possible harmony or connection between the principles of morality and the principles of the original struggle for existence. He was a thinker who did not, like Huxley, shrink appalled from the clearness of his own vision, and unscientifically affirm the necessity of a breach in the continuity of human evolution, but one who calmly recognized the true meaning of "survival of the fittest," and accepted the verdict with all its brutal consequences. The truth is that the application of the Darwinian theory to human relations would produce, not civilized society as we see it around us, with its altruistic tendencies and humanitarian ideals, but the terrible and pitiléss order of beings imagined by Nietzsche. Those who accept the theory of the

survival of the fittest according to the unmodified doctrine of struggle are, in fact, logically compelled to follow Nietzsche "behind good and evil," to a region where wrong is practically right, and must in consequence be prepared to welcome the appalling scheme of existence which he relentlessly outlined. The strength of any system of morals founded on Darwinism consists in the fact that such a system has for its sanction certain scientifically demonstrable laws of nature, which operate quite independently of the volition of the creatures whom they affect. These laws sanction certain lines of conduct—that is, inflict penalties upon the non-observance of certain conditions. Darwinian conditions prescribe individual self-assertion as the aim of existence, and the penalty of the non-observance of such an aim is individual or racial failure and extinction. Nietzsche asserted that by departing from the scheme of life so evidently sanctioned by natural laws, and by introducing considerations of mercy, gentleness, and pity, man has abandoned the rational and intelligible end of physical perfection and intensity of existence, and has entered upon a course which leads to degeneration and misery. From the strict Darwinian point of view such a pretension is unanswerable. It is perfectly idle to assert in reply to such reasoners that in departing from the original course of nature man is following a higher law. Their immediate rejoinder is, Why higher? What has higher got to do with the matter? Can you prove the existence of your law, not by some abstruse process of intuitive conviction,

but in the same way as we prove the Darwinian law, by an appeal to the demonstrable tendencies of natural phenomena? Unless you can do this, it is open for us to assert that your so-called higher law is merely an exhibition of weakness and a symptom of degeneracy—in fact, a morality for slaves. And to this there is no reply. The contradiction between the morality of nature or of the cosmic process and the morality of civilized man, upon which Huxley and Nietzsche and Sir Ray Lankester and many others insist, is rendered the more startling because the first is supported by the outside authority of natural law, while the second is sanctioned, so far as that sanction is demonstrable, only by the authority of man, and this authority, according to Nietzsche, is valueless because it is the authority of innumerable combined weaklings over sane and healthy specimens of manhood.

Now, the opponents of Nietzsche may be right. There may be, as our hearts tell us there is, a higher law, which has superseded the original dispensation of nature. But until those who hold this view can find support for their opinion in the unconscious tendencies of evolution—until they can show that the abrogation of Darwinian principles takes place in accordance with natural law, and independently of the conscious volition or interested promptings of man—their statement of their case is at a hopeless disadvantage as compared with that of the Darwinian moralist. The one can appeal to the visible and demonstrable laws and tendencies of the original

cosmic process, and the other can not. The consequence is that Nietzsche has never been answered, not even by the recent horrors in Europe which are undoubtedly in part to be attributed to his teaching. The miseries attending the destruction of half humanity would not in any way constitute a refutation of his arguments, provided that physical excellence and intensity of existence were thereby increased for the survivors and their descendants. Those altruistic tendencies which the moralist regards as the highest instincts of the human heart, Nietzsche, following Darwinian theory, has an equal right to regard as a cunning device of the feeble for the purpose of escaping the operation of an unpleasant law of nature. Nor is indignant denunciation of any use. To denounce a philosopher and to turn in horror from his conclusions is not by any means to answer him. To ignore is not to confute, though, strangely enough, it is frequently regarded as equally efficacious. A philosophy which is ignored but not confuted has a habit of raising its head again from time to time and asking the most inconvenient questions. All attempts to bring the moral qualities of civilization into any sort of harmony with the Darwinian law of the struggle for existence are at once rendered futile by the satanic reasonableness of Nietzsche's logic. They constitute a revolt against the original course and apparent purpose of nature and are therefore doomed to failure.

There is one way and one way only in which this argument can be answered. Nietzsche must be met

on his own ground. If it can be proved that the great revolt against the cosmic process has behind it the authority of the cosmic process itself, then and not otherwise can the force of his reasoning be impaired. The case for the higher morality is dangerously weakened unless some natural sanction can be found for so momentous a departure from the ancient order of things; and until nature can be implicated as an accomplice in the conspiracy against her own original methods, that conspiracy may at any time be condemned by the relentless logic of the pure Darwinian as an illegitimate attempt of self-interested humanity to defeat the normal course of evolution.

The logical fallacies of those who believe that the struggle for existence can produce the fittest in any moral sense have been already exposed. We have also seen that the only possible conclusions which can be drawn from pure Darwinian premises are those of Nietzsche. It will now be shown that Nietzsche's conclusions are equally untenable, but for a different reason. He argued correctly from his premises, but his premises have no real connection with those conditions to which he insisted on applying them. This mistake is the predisposing cause which has created all the confusion. The source of the whole trouble lies in the fact that Darwin's law was based upon the observation of animal life, and was formulated to explain the phenomena of selection and survival in the animal world alone, but was never meant to be directly applied to human and social conditions, though it is sometimes assumed without any definite warrant that

Darwin himself authorized such an application. There is in all Darwin's works no real ground for such an assumption. Towards the end of the *Origin of Species* he expresses in general terms his belief that the great law which he has discovered would be valuable in helping to explain the course of human development. But nowhere does his reasoning lend assistance to question-begging theories about the operation of the struggle for existence in human relations. In the *Descent of Man*, again he speaks of the subject with a caution which suggests that he knew that his law could not be made applicable to social conditions without considerable modifications. His reserve, indeed, proves his perception of the fact that the same law could not serve as a guide of equal value in the explanation of both animal and social phenomena, nor account in an equal degree for both physical and moral excellence. Much has been made of the fact that it was the investigation of a social subject, Malthus' "law of population," that gave him an illuminating suggestion. This circumstance, however, has very little bearing upon the point at issue, and affords no proof whatever that the evolution of the animal and of the human world proceeds on identical lines. An enquirer may borrow a hint, and even a profoundly important hint, from one department of science, and apply it to another, without establishing anything more than an analogy between them. We may be sure that Darwin was convinced that his discovery had some kind of bearing upon the phenomena of history and the evolution of society; but there, with

due scientific caution, he paused. His scientific insight warned him that there were indications of the presence of a new and unrecognized factor which subtly influenced the phenomena under consideration, altering the character and modifying the results of the original struggle for existence; and being ignorant of what that factor was, he wisely refrained from any pronouncement on the subject. Nor, so far as the present writer is aware, has anyone since his day definitely stated what that factor is, or explained what modification of the original law must take place before the struggle for existence can conduce to the real progress of the human race.

A new factor, however, there unquestionably is, which alters without altogether abrogating the Darwinian law, softening its more brutal features, and rendering possible a transition from the backward conditions of savage existence to the advanced morality of a later civilization. It will be proved in the following pages that this new and profoundly important influence accompanies all the various stages of civilization through which human beings have been known to pass up to the present day, modifying in the interests of the community the social phenomena upon which it operates, being itself modified in turn by them. And if it can also be shown that this important factor actually arises from the law of deadly individual struggle which previously implied the negation of any real progress, and which, as we have seen, is absolutely incapable of securing the survival of the morally "fittest" in the way imagined

by Herbert Spencer, then the requirements of harmonious evolutional development will have been satisfied, and the contradiction between the cosmic process and the moral process, believed by Huxley to be irreconcilable, will have been in a measure resolved.

It is generally recognized by thinkers that the attention of the world has been somewhat unduly attracted by that feature in the Darwinian theory which has the most dramatic interest for human beings—the struggle for existence, to the exclusion of the second, but equally essential, element of the problem—the conditions of the struggle. In the present investigation it is more than ever necessary to emphasize the well-known but much neglected truth that it is not the struggle for existence alone which determines the character of the survival, but the struggle for existence under the conditions produced by the environment. To alter the environment is to alter everything, and yet one of the greatest of all such changes, the change in the human environment, which entirely differentiates the struggle of a later day from the struggle for existence as it was in primitive times, and which has profoundly influenced the whole course of human evolution, has never been adequately recognized. The contrast between the more obvious physical characteristics of the fauna and flora of the colder regions and of the tropics is attributable to the different conditions climatically imposed, which necessarily favoured a different kind of excellence or fitness. If similar reasoning is applied in the case of human beings, it will in all

probability serve to explain the cause of the variation from the savage to the civilized type of man. The struggle for existence has in one form or another been in operation from the earliest to the latest times. If, then, it produces very different results in the present day from those which it produced in the past, this must surely be due to some remarkable change in the conditions under which the struggle now takes place. The existence of higher animal types than those of the earliest geological period has been rendered possible only by a change in the climate of the physical world. What, then, is the change in the human climate which has rendered possible the survival of a higher moral type? If we wish to discover how the moral qualities have been encouraged in the struggle for existence, we must pay rather less attention to the sensational features of the game itself, and rather more to the rules under which it is conducted. The general impression is that these rules have been much the same from the very beginning. As a matter of fact, they have been altered, and altered in a most decisive manner.

The problem before us is not single but double. In the first place, we have to discover the agency by which a change in the conditions has been effected. In the second place, we are equally bound to state the origin of the agency which facilitates amid brutal surroundings the production of a more moral and civilized kind of human being. That type of character which we call moral cannot possibly emerge from the unrestricted struggle for existence, because

such an unrestricted struggle would ruthlessly stamp it out. Pre-eminence in a brutal contest means pre-eminence in brutal qualities. In this case the survival of the fittest is merely another name for individual success, and under savage conditions moral qualities are a positive hindrance to individual success. They are simply inconvenient restrictions upon the kind of action which is most conducive to self-preservation. Where strength and ferocity are almost the sole qualifications for the contest, the gentler qualities do not conduce to the survival of their possessors, but, on the contrary, lead to their elimination. We are by hypothesis in the midst of savagery. It is obvious, therefore, that if a moral type of individual has been enabled to survive, the savage character of the struggle must have been modified. If under the original conditions the survival of the fittest means the survival of the most savage, as it obviously does, it follows that before any moral progress could be made something must have happened which altered those conditions in such a way as to penalize the ferocious and help the more gentle.

To change the analogy, morality is a delicate plant of tender growth, which can never flourish unaided in the primitive wilds and forests of existence. Efficient protection is required to create a medium in which it can exist, a sheltered area in which it may be enabled to thrive. Unless certain qualities disadvantageous or even fatal to their possessors at this stage of evolution could be preserved, the future of mankind was doomed : to preserve these qualities and

to prevent them from being fatal to their possessors a change of environment was imperatively needed, and, as a matter of fact, a change does take place which alters the whole moral outlook of humanity. Under the influence of these new conditions murderous violence is discountenanced, and that fragile and precious variation in conduct which we call morality has a chance to permeate the social relations which are now for the first time rendered possible. The germ of altruism exists in family life: upon its successful development and extension the future of the world depends. A change must take place which will so alter the conditions of the struggle for existence as to prevent these germs of a higher morality from being shrivelled up in the fierce conflict of savage life. There is only one power capable of repressing the struggle for existence with sufficient vigour to permit a survival and perpetuation of the gentler virtues, and that is the power of government.

The influence of government, even at the present day, is one of those things which is taken for granted in the social world, just as the light of the sun is taken for granted in the physical world; and because it is thus taken for granted, its significance and importance is in a certain sense absolutely overlooked. Like the air we breathe, it is chiefly appreciated in consequence of the discomforts entailed by deprivation. Moral philosophers, so far from attributing to government the influence which it really exerts, are, in fact, under a sort of tacit agreement to depreciate its merits, in order to increase the self-reliance of

individual human nature and to enhance the value of man's personal efforts to do right. Morality produced by the influence of external aids they regard as no morality at all. From their own point of view they may be right, but the fact remains that, with regard to the community as a whole, government is as indispensable as air is to life. But, unlike the air, government was not there from the beginning. It made its appearance at a definite stage of evolution, and thereafter all was changed. It is the importance of the change so introduced which has failed properly to impress the imagination and arouse the interest of observers. In this respect they are like children who are so habituated to the protecting care of parents that they regard their kindly home as part of their existence which can be assumed, but need not be explained. What their life would be without such protecting care is a matter which never enters their calculations. Similarly the vital difference introduced into human relations by the appearance of the phenomenon of government is almost completely ignored. Moralists resent the suggestion that ordered social relations are only rendered possible by the artificial aid of government; but, after all, from the present point of view, this only implies that the higher specimens of humanity must be protected against the lower. Even those philosophers who protest against the impropriety of identifying morality with government would hardly be able to deny the practical connection between the two, if they were to attempt to remain in some large metropolis after all municipal protection

had been withdrawn. Without government high principles are merely a source of weakness to combatants engaged in the struggle for existence. Even in civilized society at the present day there are men who rejoice when they see that their adversary is under the influence of moral scruples from which they themselves are free, who quickly recognize that he is thereby delivered into their hands, and who utilize to the full the advantage so given. If, then, this happens after centuries of elaborate protection, how must it have been when there was no protection at all against the fatal consequences of altruism! If moral principles are of such doubtful assistance to the individual even under the modified form assumed by the struggle for existence at the present day, when the world has had the advantage of thousands of years of moral training and governmental care, how could they be otherwise than disastrous to anyone who attempted to practise them before all such protection was by hypothesis non-existent. Accordingly, if that exponent of a higher morality whom we call the conscientious man must still be regarded even at the present day as imperfectly equipped for the struggle of life, it is quite impossible to believe that the survival of the morally fittest could ever systematically have taken place under original and primitive conditions.

If, then, a vital change has taken place in the original conditions of the struggle for existence without which the progress of civilization and the transmission of higher intellectual and moral qualities

would never have taken place: and if this momentous change has been brought about by government: it follows that government is a phenomenon of transcendent importance, and the question of its origin becomes the greatest question of all. And there can be no doubt that government has been necessary to secure the conditions under which the higher moral qualities have been enabled to develop and survive. Whatever view we may hold as to the origin of the moral faculties, this does not affect the truth that without an alteration in the conditions of the struggle for existence the seeds, whether of religion or of morality, would have been powerless to fructify and germinate. To whatever source we may ascribe the first ideas of a higher life, their realization in early social relations is inconceivable without the aid of some strong protecting principle. If, then, there is a power in nature which secures a fair field, as it were, for the development of a higher standard of life, which brings about those altered conditions, those changes in the environment, upon which the moral future of the human race depends, that power is the greatest evolutional principle in the whole history of mankind, and the problem of its origin one of the greatest problems upon which investigation can be engaged. If the changed environment, which itself changes the whole meaning of sentient existence, is produced by the phenomenon of government, then the interest which centres round the origin of government should transcend in importance the interest of any other feature in the history of humanity. It will be the object of the

ensuing pages to show that this protecting principle which so marvellously springs up in the midst of the struggle for existence, and which radically alters the conditions in favour of a higher morality, is itself the outcome of the struggle for existence on its intellectual side.

CHAPTER II

ORIGIN OF GOVERNMENT

GOVERNMENT originates in that phase of the struggle for existence which is generally known as the struggle for supremacy: in other words, it originates in the tendency of the stronger and more ambitious individuals to impose their dominating personality on others, and to assume control of those around them. This desire to establish a personal superiority is a phenomenon almost as universal and perhaps more far-reaching than the merely physical competition of organisms against one another. It is generally assumed that the struggle for existence among animals has been replaced among men by a struggle for the means of subsistence. Where animals compete with one another for food, men are supposed to compete with one another for money, which is another form of food. There has, however, existed from the beginning among human beings another struggle, which may be considered as a refined and idealized phase of the struggle for existence, and of which the consequences, though little noticed, are of equal or even of greater importance. This is the passion for that species of victory which is gained by the powers of mind rather than the powers of body. It is a rivalry in which those individuals who have their intellectual

faculties more highly developed engage for the purpose of enforcing the acknowledgment of superior strength of character rather than of gaining a merely material triumph.

The existence of this psychological principle under the form of a love of power is very generally admitted, but the vital influence which it exercises upon the destinies of mankind has never received that systematic attention to which it is unquestionably entitled. Though the fact is not generally recognized, symptoms of this principle can be discerned in operation among both birds and beasts. The rivalry of animals, no less than the rivalry of man, is frequently inspired, not with a desire to kill, but merely with a desire to dominate. It may at first sight seem fantastic to attribute a motive so very human to an unreflecting and uncalculating order of beings, but a day's observation would in all probability serve to convince the reader of the truth of this reflection. Two thrushes in search of worms encounter one another on a lawn, the second as a trespasser on the chosen "pitch" of the earlier bird. A battle ensues so fierce as to suggest a fatal termination; but presently from fighting they subside to mere demonstration: the newcomer discovers that the worms are not worth fighting about, and suddenly departs, a beaten bird. The struggle has ended in supremacy, not in death, because it was in reality of a moral rather than of a physical nature from the first. The battle was not waged for the possession of an insufficient food-supply, though it seemed to wear that aspect; it was a contest of per-

sonalities. The survival prospects of the beaten bird are in no way impaired by his defeat, because there are worms enough and to spare for all good thrushes. The battle has for its result the simple fact that one bird must for the future recognize the other as "the better thrush."

Pause for a moment in a chicken run. The same peculiarity already observed presents itself, that a duel may take place which is not a matter of life or death, but merely an affair of honour, a conclusion confirmed by the fact that the encounter is conducted with a punctilious decorum not unworthy of a Spanish duellist in the grand old days. The combatants begin by mutual consent, they pause and call "time" by mutual consent, and recommence after what is apparently a courteous warning to the adversary to place himself on guard. It would certainly seem to be an understood thing between them that the question involved is merely one of mastery. Presently one of them retires with the utmost signs of discomfiture, while the other remains on the field of battle, to be recognized in the future by the whole hen yard as a bird of superior distinction. The same phenomenon may be observed in a deer park. There the fight seems to have a more definite meaning, for it is generally believed that the object of the encounter is understood by the combatants to be the supremacy of the herd. Even if the motive is sexual in some of these cases, this does not alter the real and ultimate significance of the phenomenon, which consists in the establishment of a moral mastery over many by

means of a physical victory over one. The triumph is either a triumph of mind or so closely connected with the mental triumph as to be indistinguishable in character. The leader masters the rest of the herd without fighting them, because they recognize that a triumph over others is a triumph over them. The psychological influence of a single victory achieves as much as could have been effected by a whole series of encounters, and even more, since it might not have been physically possible to conduct them all to a successful conclusion.

We may assume, then, that the struggle for existence, at all events among human beings, has two aspects. Under one of these aspects the existence of one individual is incompatible with that of another, or at least is so inimical to it that the rivalry can only end in death or disablement. But besides these occasions on which the struggle is for life or death, in addition also to the universal competition for the means of subsistence, there is another kind of rivalry which need not end in the death of one of the combatants or even in their physical or economic disablement, but merely in the submission of the vanquished, followed by the establishment on the part of the victor of a species of terrorism or exaggerated respect, which prevents the necessity of repeated conflicts to maintain his position. Exactly the same result can take place, and does indeed continually take place, without the need of an actual physical encounter. It has been said that two people cannot be in one another's presence for an hour without one establishing a

superiority over the other. If this be something of an exaggeration, it is certain that no considerable body of men can associate together for any length of time without an individual superiority or leadership of some sort being tacitly or definitely acknowledged. The contest for psychological mastery, conscious or unconscious, is the habitual accompaniment of all associations among men. It is the object of the succeeding pages to show that this love of power is an evolutionary force which, though originating in the humble manner described, eventually rises to magnificent proportions, undergoing a marvellous development in the successive ages of social evolution, and accomplishing a work of surpassing importance in the drama of human history.

To appreciate the vital nature of the function which it performs, we must glance once more at the conclusions reached in the previous chapter. We have seen that the "survival of the fittest" is an idle phrase if it is designed to offer an explanation of the actual process of evolution, and that the struggle for existence in itself cannot possibly have been the cause which raised mankind above the moral standard of primitive savagery. To make the problem clearer, it may perhaps be stated in another way. A tendency to physical violence is a corollary of the law of the struggle for existence. All disputes in savage times are settled by physical violence, and even long after the reasoning powers have been very highly developed such a method is still incessant. Assuming, then, a tendency to physical violence as a necessary feature

of early society, we are confronted with the difficulty of finding in such times a principle capable of altering this tendency and so rendering possible the very rudiments of civilization. Such a principle must arise naturally and spontaneously, born of the very circumstances in which we assume it to have arisen. The social contract theory, in spite of all the ridicule that has been heaped upon it, has at least this advantage over the theory of progress by the survival of the fittest, that its authors clearly perceived the institution of government to be an essential pre-condition of social advance. But it had the fatal defect of demanding more from the mental equipment of the savage than he could possibly supply. It postulated a capacity for the building of constitutions and the framing of laws, which legitimately moves the laughter of the modern critic. The motives which led to the institution of early government must have been of the very simplest kind. All utilitarian considerations, all desire of future benefit, all philanthropic perception of the good of the community, must by the very necessities of the case be excluded from sharing in the inauguration of this essential factor in human evolution. The help of government—rudimentary, perhaps, but relatively efficient—is needed long ages before its usefulness is capable of being appreciated by the untutored savage with sufficient clearness to suggest the advisability of its inauguration. Long before the religion of magic, the terrors of superstition, or the reverence for parental power, had begun to mould the savage nature and to assist in the sub-

ordination of mankind, some principle of coercion must have been at work, repressing the tendency to violence, protecting individuals from the otherwise fatal effects of altruism, and thus affording some hope for the perpetuation of variations favourable to the future civilization of the world. The principle of the struggle for supremacy is sufficiently simple and universal in its operation to satisfy these conditions. The origin of government, according to the present theory, is therefore to be found in that contest for power which, by placing a dominant character in control of the community, imposes upon the struggle for existence modifications which entirely alter its original character, and converts it from a socially destructive agency into a means of promoting the welfare of the community.

Perhaps it may be objected that to look for the origin of government in the struggle for supremacy among individuals is to revive the old and fallacious theory that society, as we now know it, was preceded by a "state of nature," in which all human beings were at war with each other; and that every argument based upon such an assumption is bound to share the grave defects of its predecessors. But the investigations of Darwin and the direction thus given to modern research has thrown an altogether new light upon this subject in the last fifty years. The law of struggle and antagonism is now admitted to be universally operative throughout the animal world, and there is not the slightest reason to suppose that the earliest human ancestors of man differed from their immediate

predecessors in this respect. Hobbes' "war of each against all," though it long shared the discredit which overtook the social contract theory, has been practically established as a scientific fact. Those who believe that the antagonism and violence of the Darwinian struggle for existence did not also to a large extent characterize the relations of the earliest primitive men, are themselves under the necessity of showing reason why the progenitors of the human race were exempted from the operation of this universal law. Before the truth of the Darwinian theory had been established and its bearing upon the early history of human development had been grasped, it might have been permissible to imagine a peaceful origin of early society. Now, however, much stronger proof than has yet been supplied is needed to show that Hobbes' state of nature was not at one time practically realized. Yet when we say that government originates in the struggle for supremacy, this does not imply a belief in an early society composed of isolated misanthropes, each living in their hut or hole in the ground, and occasionally meeting on some primeval battlefield, to contend for individual mastery and so to inaugurate government. No such fantastic and imaginary picture is in any way necessary to the argument. All that we need to assume is that the individuals forming the groups from which modern civilization has descended were characterized by qualities of self-assertion common to all leading organic types. As will presently be shown, the belief that the "hunting pack" is the earliest form of social union, and that society

has therefore emerged from the savagery of the Darwinian struggle without the aid of government, is absolutely incapable of proof. It is, however, with the patriarchal theory that we must first deal.

The belief that the family is to be regarded as the unit of early society implies the further belief in the patriarchal theory of the origin of government. This hypothesis, which at one time entirely dominated current thought on the subject, has already lost its former popularity. According to this view, government originated merely in the gradual extension of the power of the head of the family, by a process which gradually converted the paterfamilias into the sceptred King. The speculation has lost ground because, though it is a proper generalization from observed fact, yet the area of observed fact is not sufficiently wide to warrant universality of application. It is a theory based upon an insufficient study of social phenomena in general. Presupposing a peaceful and placid temperament in the individuals composing early society, this hypothesis is weakened in proportion as the evidence accumulates to prove that such an assumption is unwarranted. It is a legitimate inference from the conclusions reached in the previous chapter that the patriarchal condition of society is itself the result of long racial training under some form of control, and that it is the child rather than the parent of the phenomenon of government. As we shall see later, the patriarchal theory is quite inadequate to meet all the conditions under which government takes its rise. The patriarchal phase occupies

but a relatively small period in the evolution of early society as a whole, and soon disappears under the stress of that law of conflict, which may perhaps lie dormant for a time, but which has been the normal condition of humanity up to the present day. "The historical researches of the nineteenth century," says Leacock, "have rendered it impossible to accept the patriarchal theory as offering a universal or a final solution of the problem of the origin of government. The critics of this theory have conclusively shown, in the first place, that the patriarchal régime has not everywhere appeared as the foundation of later institutions, and, in the second place, it has not of necessity been the oldest form of social regulation which may be traced in prehistoric times."[1] The strength of the present theory lies in the fact that it is independent of the form assumed by early societies, since it is based on a motive universally present in human nature wherever men congregate together, and therefore capable of accounting for the origin of government under any social conditions whatsoever.

The great defect of existing theories of the origin of government is that all interest in them ceases when we leave the circumstances in which government is supposed to have originated. In other words, the origin of the most important factor in human progress is attributed to a motive which thereafter disappears from human life. But the general continuity which is to be observed in the methods of evolution is such as to justify the conclusion that the theory which satis-

[1] Leacock's *Elements of Political Science*, p. 43.

factorily accounts for the origin of government must be capable of wide and universal extension throughout the whole range of human existence. It would seem in the highest degree probable that a phenomenon as universal as that of government must have behind it as a sustaining force a motive equally universal, and one that permits of application to the most advanced stage of modern civilization as well as to the savage chaos of primitive barbarism. Any theory on this subject which is to be in keeping with what we know of the general principles of human evolution must, in fact, be adequate to explain or to help in explaining, not merely the origin, but also the perpetuation and continued development of government. This, as will eventually be shown, the present theory does, while, except for some unimportant antiquarian survivals, all trace of the patriarchal principle disappears as the turbulent evolution of humanity proceeds.

In the next place, it may be pointed out that any theory which would satisfactorily account for the origin of government must necessarily form an essential feature of the explanation of the origin of nations, and must be capable of adaptation to all the circumstances which attend the expansion of families or clans into a larger homogeneous body. The origin of government cannot, in fact, be dissociated from the origin of nations. Just as it is an entirely insufficient account of the origin of government to say that it is an extension of patriarchal power, so it is an entirely insufficient account of the origin of nations to say that they arise from the expansion of the family. The

origin of the nation is to be found not in the peaceful expansion of the family, but in war, and those thinkers are accordingly right who are of opinion that government owes its active development to war. No nation exists, or ever has existed, which is the lineally descended result of the expansion of a family or of any sort of primitive community without reinforcement from outside. Nations come of a forcible fusion formed by the process of war, which restores to the exceptional individual that importance which he may at a certain stage of social evolution temporarily have lost. Granting that the personality of the individual may be for a time submerged in the family or some other form of social group, the value of individual influence and individual strength of character is instantly reaffirmed by the advent of war, where leadership is the decisive consideration. Granting, again, that societies can be discovered in history which at a certain period are merely expanded families, and that some governments during a certain phase of their development are merely an extension of patriarchal power, neither of these forms of society on the one hand, or of government on the other, is permanently retained. The family organization of society disappears in the clash of contending arms. The patriarchal chief is swept away in the triumphal progress of the conquering King.

When we are assured that the origin of the nation is in the family, we are naturally led to suppose that the area occupied by any given nation has been filled by the process of peaceful multiplication of the original

members. There is no considerable nation in history that has ever been formed in this way, certainly none that has ever left its impress on the course of civilization. The belief in peaceful expansion can only be maintained by shutting the eyes to the significance of certain vital facts in the process of nation-building. Desperate conflict and not peaceful expansion has been the normal and habitual means by which a community has attained a size and importance sufficient to enable it to hold its own in the international struggle for existence. The most rudimentary acquaintance with history is sufficient to inform us that the English nation, for instance, did not arise from the gradual enlargement of a single family, clan, or tribe. It was the result of a fusion formed after a desperate struggle for supremacy among various hostile kingdoms, who for centuries conducted an irreconcilable warfare over the geographical area known as England. One of these kingdoms reduced the others to submission, and the King of the victors asserted his supremacy over the whole of the communities subsequently described as one nation. "The host-leader," says Jenks, "after firmly establishing his position as ruler of his own tribe, extends his authority over neighbouring tribes. . . . This is what seems to have happened in the England of the ninth century. . . . The same movement showed itself in the neighbouring country of Scandinavia, where the innumerable tribes became gradually consolidated, as the result of hard fighting, into the three historic kingdoms of Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. . . . Much the same appears also to

have been done in the gradual consolidation of the Celtic tribes of Scotland under the line of Malcolm Canmore, and of the tribes of Wales under the hereditary Princes who were found to be ruling the country at the Norman Conquest."[1] . . . What we now know as the French nation was equally the outcome of a desperate struggle for supremacy between a series of ambitious men supported by their followers. "Modern France was formed by the victory of the Kings at Paris in a struggle, long and profound, with the rulers of the neighbouring fiefs—Burgundy, Champagne, Blois, Aquitaine, Gascony, Toulouse, Brittany, etc."[2] . . . The history of the Romans and of all the other considerable nations of the ancient or modern world is precisely similar. We are here dealing, not with isolated occurrences, but with an habitual process or tendency. Where the process has not been duly completed, or not at the right time, as in the case of ancient Greece and modern Germany, a community politically united does not come into being. Such a people fails to realize the full possibilities of national existence because the individuals who compose it, though identical in race, are divided into antagonistic bodies. As a consequence, they are weak and inefficient from the national point of view because they are politically disunited. The strength which they might have exerted in common is frittered away in endless contests between the various sections into which the nation is broken up, as hap-

[1] *Short History of Politics*, by E. Jenks, pp. 74 and 147.
[2] *Ibid.*

pened in the case of ancient Greece and medieval Italy. Similarly it has been the misfortune of the Germans that the process of consolidation, which in England and France was completed at an early age, did not take place in Germany until 1871, and from being so long delayed did not attain a full measure of success. Yet even then, as we know to our cost, it was formidable enough, because Bismarck, whether by instinct or from knowledge, was carrying out the method of nature. Forcible fusion of smaller communities to form a larger nation is the method of nature, and this fusion can only be effected under the leadership of a dominant individuality. It is true that the elements of future cohesion antecedently exist in such separate communities. Similar ideals, similar hopes—in a word, the germs of future human brotherhood—are there awaiting development. But this can only take place after the forcible amalgamation of these separate communities under the strong hand of a victorious leader. Even religion can only exert a really binding influence under the direction and by the permission of some strong ruler, after and not before cohesion has been secured by other means.

Yet the significance of this process, though recognized by the author just quoted, is almost habitually overlooked. The following quotation taken at random from a library may be regarded as a typical instance of the way in which such phenomena may be duly recorded, while at the same time their real meaning is ignored. For reasons to be presently examined, the attention of the world is in this way

diverted from the perception of the truth that the struggle for supremacy has been the actual originating cause of the existence of the more considerable nations, as well as of the existence of their government, at the period when they were commencing their active historical career. "Two years later Kenneth McAlpine obtained the small kingdom of the Scots in Argyle; and in 844 he mounted the throne of the Picts at Scone. This was the natural result of the long struggle of the various tribes, as the accumulating force of circumstances and a common religion tended to a greater concentration of power under some one of the chief tribes."[1] The fact that Kenneth McAlpine established his rule by successful violence is delicately overlooked, and as much stress as possible is laid upon the "force of circumstances" and "a common religion." Yet in this record of struggle by which the beginnings of the Scottish nation were built up, and in the incessant repetition of this phenomenon at the birth of every great community, we are witnessing the operation of the same forces as those in which government originated, and by which, as will be subsequently shown, its vitality is continually reinforced. Sometimes the action of the struggle for supremacy as the originator of government and the builder of nations is recognized, as in Macaulay's account of India, while the possibility that such discreditable proceedings should have any deeper significance never for a moment occurs:

[1] McKintosh's *Scotland* ("Story of the Nations Series"), p. 10.

"The energy, ferocity, and cunning of the Mahrattas soon made them the most conspicuous of the new powers which were generated by the corruption of the decaying monarchy. At first they were only robbers. They soon rose to the dignity of conquerors. Half the provinces in the empire were turned into Mahratta principalities. Freebooters, sprung from low castes and accustomed to menial employments, became mighty Rajahs. The Boaslas . . . occupied the vast region of Berai. The Guicwar, which is, being interpreted, the Herdsman, founded that dynasty which still reigns in Guzerat. The houses of Scindia and Hollkar waxed great in Malwa. One adventurous captain made his nest on the impregnable rock of Gooti. Another became lord . . . of Tangore. . . . The Mussulman Nabobs . . . had become sovereign princes."

When it is remembered that these single instances could, if necessary, be indefinitely multiplied from history, the strength of the induction upon which the present theory is based may perhaps be understood.

For this blindness to the importance of conflict in the process of constructing a nation there are two main reasons. The first is the pardonable disinclination of philosophers to admit that blood and iron have played so important a part in the evolution of societies. No historian, still less an enthusiast in social science, can escape being in part a moralist, and he is thus led to accept or reject theories of social evolution under the influence of a moral bias, a method of procedure which, however intelligible from the humanitarian point of view, is wholly out of place in what should be a scientific treatise. It is character-

istic of the writer who wishes, unconsciously perhaps, to make history serve a moral purpose that he should believe national growth to be the result of peaceful development alone, and should ignore the forcible fusion which is the more essential feature of the process. He is from the outset inclined to estimate the probability of a theory, not, as he is scientifically bound to do, from the amount of evidence that can be produced in its favour, but from its conformity to moral law. His evidence is gathered in accordance with this mental predisposition, and the rectitude of his scientific procedure proportionately suffers.

But there is a second and more important reason to account for this extraordinary neglect of plain issues even by eminent thinkers. A false appreciation of the relative value of phenomena is due in a large number of cases to the antecedent obsession of the mind by a false theory. In the present case most, if not all, of those thinkers who have framed their theories as if the phenomenon of incessant conflict did not exist, or were a mere deplorable incident rather than a permanent feature of social evolution, have been led to adopt this unscientific attitude under the influence of an unsound sociological hypothesis. It was pointed out at the beginning of the first chapter that the initial correctness of a science depended on its affiliation to some preceding study with which it was naturally and inevitably connected. The founders of the study of sociology committed the vital error of deriving the principles which were to guide their procedure, not from an investigation of the facts belong-

ing to their own domain, the domain of anthropology and of history, but from an investigation of the facts belonging to another department of science, that of biology. It is true that sociology, the scientific study of human evolution, could not have arisen unless it had been preceded by, and even to a certain extent based upon, the study of biology. It is not true that the process of the development of the human body is reproduced in the development of the social body. It is not true that the theories which are to explain the evolution of societies are to be derived from a study of biology rather than of history. It is surely a strange perversion of scientific method to attempt an explanation of one set of phenomena by studying another, and to assert by implication that this is the only proper method of procedure. Yet this is what the sociologists do when, on the strength of certain analogies between biological and social phenomena, they insist that the process of social evolution repeats the process of peaceful biological adjustment, and that history should be studied in the light of theories which have been derived from the examination, not of historical but of biological facts. It is as certain that the facts which most concern the development of society are to be found in a study of history as it is that the facts which concern the development of the human body are to be discovered by a study of biology. Sociologists, however, are entirely averse from accepting conclusions which do not affirm the practical identity of social and biological evolution. It was perhaps natural that Comte, in his first

enthusiasm, should fall a victim to that moral bias which is the besetting sin of sociological enquirers, and that in the hands of his followers the study of sociology, having begun as a scientific investigation, should be speedily converted into an active, proselytizing, militant creed, with Comte for its high priest, and Humanity for its God. Under these circumstances there is little wonder that the attention of these pseudo-scientists was exclusively directed to those phenomena which seemed best calculated to heighten admiration for the conduct of humanity, and to confer glory on the progress of the suffering human race. From this time, indeed, among this school of thinkers, there was formed a conspiracy of silence with regard to those unpleasant features in the history of mankind which made Huxley declare that he would as soon fall down to worship a wilderness of apes, as bow the knee in the temple of Humanity.

But if we can understand the perversion caused by the generous enthusiasms of Comte, Congreve, and Frederic Harrison, it is less easy to forgive Herbert Spencer for having allowed his cold, unemotional, and formal intellect to lapse into similarly unscientific procedure. Yet so determined are the biological preconceptions with which he proceeds to the study of history, that when the data show themselves refractory, he solemnly proceeds to rail against them as unworthy of assimilation in any reputable theory. The whole of his best-known and most accessible works, books which have had enormous influence on two generations, are vitiated by this defect in method.

His attitude towards the phenomenon of social conflict is typical of the spirit in which he pursued the whole of his researches. He seemed unable to study war as a fact of enormous sociological importance, or as a phenomenon which by the invariability of its occurrence throughout history is proved to be intimately connected with the laws of social evolution. He could only regard it as an aberration of human nature so dangerous as to demand the denunciation of the preacher rather than the investigation of the scientist. If it merited any attention at all, it was only in order that earnest reasoning should be directed to effecting its cure rather than to ascertaining its causes or estimating its influence. He continually treated the subject of war in the spirit, not of a philosophic observer, but of a horrified humanitarian. The phenomenon had conflicted with his biological anticipations and his theory of harmonious adjustment, and had to be punished accordingly. This imperfection of scientific temperament was well known to his contemporaries. It was Huxley who said that if he were to write a tragedy, it would have Spencer for a hero, confronted with facts in the fifth act. Spencer, of course, was compelled to admit the reality of conflict in social evolution, but he entirely missed its real significance. The parts of the human body grow up by simple expansion and development. On this analogy it was fatally easy to assume that a similar process must be the rule of social evolution, and that the investigator was legitimately entitled to regard as abnormal and antisocial any departure from a truth

apparently so obvious. Unfortunately for this point of view, it happens to be contradicted by certainly one-half of the leading phenomena of history. Alongside of the tendency to association and mutual help is an equally conspicuous tendency to conflict, and civilization is plainly the result of the interaction of these two forces, and not of the one alone. It is for this reason that Spencer's biological theories of social development render his views on government untrustworthy, as will be clearly shown a few pages farther on.

The theory of the origin of government which, however, is most widely held at the present day is that of J. G. Fraser. The same objections which apply to the patriarchal theory apply in a general way to the theory of the magical or priestly character of early kingship. Undoubtedly true of certain peculiar conditions under which it is found, it is of little or no use beyond those conditions. Nor is it at all irreconcilable with the view that government is the result of a personally established supremacy. Whether such a supremacy is imposed by force, or intellect, or trickery, or magic, is entirely immaterial so long as it is imposed. If it is proved that at a certain stage of evolution some individual is able to convince his fellows that he is in alliance with the powers of nature, and thereby to establish a supremacy over them, this phenomenon may perhaps be claimed as a particular instance of the general law of the struggle for supremacy. "The magician ceases to be a merely private practitioner and becomes to some extent a public functionary. The magician becomes a personage

of much influence and repute, and may readily acquire the rank and authority of a chief or King. The profession accordingly draws into its ranks some of the ablest and most ambitious men of the tribe because it holds out to them a prospect of honour, wealth, and power such as hardly any other career could offer. These men, in virtue of their superior ability, will generally come to the top and win for themselves positions of the highest dignity and the most commanding authority. The general result is that at this stage of social evolution the supreme power tends to fall into the hands of men of the keenest intelligence and the most unscrupulous character—Magic tended to place the control of affairs in the hands of the ablest man. For the rise of monarchy appears to be an essential condition of the emergence of mankind from savagery."[1]

Reasons, however, will be adduced later for the belief that the magical or religious phenomena connected with early kingship which Mr. Fraser[2] has so fully examined, while intimately associated with the growth and development of a social control, are in all probability connected, not with those forces of nature which originate government, but with those which strengthen it and tend to make it permanent. It is

[1] Fraser's *Early Kingship*, pp. 82-84.

[2] It is not altogether devoid of significance that if the King or priest of Nemi was the outcome of religion or superstition, he was equally the resultant of a kind of struggle for supremacy:

> "The priest who slew the slayer,
> And shall himself be slain."

indeed a very striking fact that even at a highly advanced stage of civilization kingship remains in some minds unalterably associated with religious feeling. In the absence of other evidence this would be a strong confirmation of the correctness of the priestly view of the origin of government. When, however, all the facts of history, later as well as earlier, which bear upon this subject are reviewed, it seems more and more probable that though religion undoubtedly increases the authority and solemnity of a controlling power, and must from this point of view be regarded as part of the government-producing forces of nature, it is not the principle which accounts for its actual origination.

Finally, it may be pointed out that when Mr. Fraser seeks to defend his opinion on the ground that "the ablest and most ambitious men of the tribe" become priests or magicians because this profession affords "a prospect of honour, wealth, and power such as hardly any other career could offer," he is in reality attributing the origin of government, as the present theory does, to a contest for power, religion being merely the special means by which in these cases a personal ascendancy is achieved.

Both the patriarchal and priestly theories of the origin of kingship, then, may be adequate explanations of the way in which a political control is maintained at certain periods of social evolution. They are inadequate when offered as a general explanation of the origin of government. They have not the wide applicability which should characterize any principle com-

petent to afford a satisfactory solution of the problem. What is needed for this purpose, as already pointed out, is a motive sufficiently universal to afford an explanation of the origin of government at any and every epoch of the history of mankind, at periods so barbarous that the authority of the head of the family may have been non-existent, as well as at times when the intellect was not even sufficiently advanced to be afraid of the spirits of the dead or of the unseen forces of nature. And if these theories are insufficient to account for the origin of government, generally speaking, they are also specially inadequate as an explanation of the only type of government which is permanently useful in barbarous times—a government, namely, which would stand the incessant test of war. Principles of authority which are alien to war and are obliterated by it cannot be regarded as a likely cause of the origin of government, though they may at times assist in its maintenance. Only that form of government which conduces to success in the internecine rivalry of tribe against tribe has a chance of permanence. The survival of any community under conditions of continual warfare implies a leadership of which the distinctive features are neither patriarchal nor priestly. Even during the period of village communities such warfare is incessant. "Each fierce little community is perpetually at war with its neighbour, tribe with tribe, village with village. The never-ceasing attacks of the strong on the weak end in the manner expressed by the monotonous formula which so often recurs in the pages of Thucydides, they

put the men to the sword, the women and children they sold into slavery."[1] In such a state of society those communities which encouraged the supremacy of the ablest leader irrespective of patriarchal or priestly considerations, and thus facilitated the effective military leadership and discipline of the tribe, would obviously have the advantage over those with whom patriarchal authority or a supposed mastery over the powers of nature were the qualifications for supreme control. Nor does it matter much whether this rivalry is one of individuals or of families; the strong man is sure sooner or later to emerge. "Some dominant family occasionally claims a superiority over the whole brotherhood and even over a number of separate villages, especially when the villages form part of a large aggregate tribe or clan."[2] In the dominant family there is sure to rise sooner or later a dominant man.

That government originated from the necessity of having able leadership in time of war seems to be the view of Herbert Spencer, so far as he had any consistent view at all. This, however, is doubtful, since his opinions as gathered from various portions of his works involve statements which are contradictory and a conclusion which is unscientific. "Be it or be it not true that man is shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin, it is unquestionably true that government is begotten of aggression. . . . At first recognized but temporarily during leadership in war, the authority of

[1] Maine's *Village Communities*, p. 226.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

a chief is permanently established by continuity of war."[1] As, however, his biological conceptions force him to regard war as an abnormal state, even for a creature who has risen slowly from a bestial condition, he assumes that at the earliest, and therefore the most savage, period of social evolution government did not exist, because man had not yet sunk so low as to deserve it. Only when he had degraded himself by taking to war did he incur this tragic retribution. That this was a fixed belief is shown from his frequent use of phrases such as "Before permanent government exists,"[2] "Before government arises."[3] Nevertheless, his conviction that government is at the same time a social necessity is apparently complete. "During long stages of social evolution there needs, for the management of all matters but the simplest, a governmental power great in degree and wide in range."[4] We must therefore suppose that he was prepared to contemplate the existence of a sort of Saturnian age, when idyllic conditions prevailed, at least as regards human brotherhood, and when war and government were unknown. The utter improbability of this hypothesis, and the impossibility of reconciling it with the fact of the origin of man from an animal condition and with the universality of the law of conflict throughout organic evolution, is nowhere recognized. "In small, undeveloped societies where for ages complete peace has continued,

[1] *Man* v. *State*, p. 44.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 98.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

there exists nothing like what we call government."[1] His contention throughout apparently is that if mankind had only been "good," as they might and ought to have been, the Saturnian age would have continued, and we would then have been spared two great and unnecessary evils, war and government. The truth seems to be that Spencer resented the existence of government, just as he resented the existence of war, and for the same reason. Both were annoying facts which conflicted with his biological assumptions as to the development of society. To a philosopher who believed that social progress resulted from the unassisted "survival of the fittest," government was at best a mere accessory. To Spencer in his most characteristic mood it was a pernicious growth, a violent upstart in evolution, the accomplice of man in the iniquitous pastime of war. It was "begotten of aggression by aggression and established by continuity of war." He therefore lays undue emphasis on the fact that certain invertebrate rudimentary societies have been found without a political head. But then again he is compelled to admit that the attainment of civilization has been dependent on government, and on government of a severe kind. "If we contemplate those simple settled groups which have but nominal heads we are shown . . . that the advance is but small. If, on the other hand, we glance at those ancient societies in which considerable heights of civilization were first reached, we see them under autocratic rule. . . . Only among modern

[1] *Man* v. *State*, p. 44.

people whose ancestors passed through the discipline given under this social form, and who have inherited its effects, is civilization being dissociated from subjection to the individual will."[1]

This last conclusion, it will be said, is merely speculation. True; but then it is speculation of a highly probable and reasonable kind. In the absence of any exact knowledge as to the method by which our semi-bestial ancestors were converted into the relatively advanced types which we find at the earliest known stages of human development, we are compelled to fall back upon inference. This inference, however, has a very sound and reliable basis—namely, our actual experience of the methods by which savage animals are tamed and brutal natures corrected at the present day; and this experience teaches us that such a change of habit and temperament is impossible without authority and coercion. This universal experience, however, is ignored by a certain class of thinkers, who, on the strength of evidence gathered from a relatively small epoch of primitive history, assert that the principle which keeps early society in order is not authority, but custom. It is custom, they say, not the command of a superior which induces individuals to obey such rules as bind primitive societies together. Such a solution entirely ignores the real point at issue, and leaves completely unanswered the main problem with which we are concerned. That problem is, How do natures originally savage and un-

[1] *Man* v. *State*, p. 110.

tamed acquire a temperament which inclines them to recognize the authority of custom? In discussing the origin of semi-civilization the whole point is, What brought about the change from utter savagery? It is sufficiently obvious, one would think, that custom cannot bring about change. The only principle which we know to be capable of imparting the necessary discipline to savage natures is the exercise of a stern and even brutal authority over several generations, and we are accordingly forced to the conclusion that coercion was the chief influence in the production of a human disposition sufficiently advanced to be amenable to the more civilized habits which eventually became tribal custom. It is too easily taken for granted at the present day that such conditions, for instance, as those which characterize the "hunting packs" of Australia are also the conditions under which the whole human race, as we now know it, has originated. The existence of such packs is no proof whatever that the ancestors of these groups, who were more like beasts than human beings, learned to associate together without the aid of government. Union without government is practically unknown throughout the history of the human race, except in such solitary instances, and to assume that coercion has been less needed the farther we go back into savage times is to reverse the most ordinary probabilities. On this point the judgment of Spencer in his saner moods may be taken as correct. Where there are any early groups to be found displaying cohesion without a visible head, the existence of such organizations is

probably to be explained on the assumption that they have profited during a long but possibly remote past from the discipline imposed by a controlling power which has since disappeared. Finally, if such organizations do exist, they cannot last in the inter-tribal struggle for existence. "Headship of a conquering chief has been a normal accompaniment of that political integration without which any high degree of social evolution would probably have been impossible."[1] In spite of all the contradictions and inconsistencies in which he involved himself, Spencer, in associating government with war, had got hold of a truth which might have led him to the most important results, but which he was unable to utilize because of his bondage to the *a priori* principles which he had derived from Comte.

So far as the argument has at present proceeded, it has been directed to show that the institution of government is the central feature of human evolution, and that it originates in the struggle for supremacy. Yet in seeking to prove the creation of a great natural agency, which alters the whole tenor of existence and stamps a new character upon human evolution, it is not sufficient to adduce evidence in support of the fact that government originated in a certain definite way and had certain definite effects. An argument of this kind on an alleged change in the methods of nature is not complete unless cause is also shown why such a change should have taken place at all. The advent of government and the difference which it imparts to

[1] *Principles of Sociology*, vol. ii., pp. 361, 362.

the individual struggle for existence must be due to some powerful underlying cause, and until this is explained the demands of scientific procedure are not entirely satisfied.

Perhaps it will be said that an all-sufficient reason for the origin of government may be found in the development of civilization and the protection of a growing morality. This, however, is to credit material forces with the power of providing for the moral requirements of the future, an assumption to which even the generous principles of the new evolutional philosophy would hardly extend. Until a larger knowledge may justify bolder assertions as to the method of evolution in general, it is safer to follow those who are of opinion that nature provides for circumstances only as they arise, and who hesitate to believe, without further proof, that organic changes take place in preparation for unseen contingencies. To which we may add that nature is under the necessity of producing her results with the aid of such materials only as she has already in hand and as the general situation permits. Even though it may some day be shown that a co-ordinating power exists distinct from that which is manifested in the forces of the material world, and that in any final explanation of things this co-ordinating power must be taken into account, yet in the meantime we cannot be wrong in following the provisional rule that nature acts only under the impulse of an immediate necessity, and that every new departure takes place in close and inseparable connection with what has gone before. Accordingly,

the reason of the origin of government must be sought, not in any ideal requirements of the future, but in the actual conditions of the time when it may be supposed to have come into existence. If government originates in the struggle for supremacy, why does it so originate? What need engendered by surrounding circumstances has sprung up which may serve to explain the appearance of this new and astounding phenomenon in organic life? Is government merely the result of the irresponsible action of the individual love of power, without further meaning, or are we witnessing one of those wonderful adaptations by which nature utilizes a prevailing instinct or tendency for some pressing and special requirement?

To answer this question attention must be drawn to a striking event which took place about this time in the history of the world. Shortly before the origin of government there was an important addition to the number of beings who had hitherto fought with one another over the surface of the habitable globe. Between the epoch of the Darwinian struggle for existence and semi-civilized times the social organism was born, and the outlook of the whole of the human portion of the world was in consequence radically changed. With the appearance of the social organism the former status of the human individual and his relation to other members of the same species underwent a definite alteration. He no longer enjoyed the unregulated individual existence which had been the lot of his predecessors throughout the whole of the previous course of organic evolution. He now became

a member of a larger body, and this new relationship brought with it new and far-reaching consequences. Up to this period each individual animal organism had lived at its own free will, accountable to nothing and nobody for its actions, killing its rivals as opportunity offered, and at liberty to adopt the most ferocious methods in order to secure success in the struggle for existence. Now, however, all is altered. The individual has lost his self-determined status. It is not merely that on becoming the member of a social organism he has been compelled to pay regard to the actions and desires of other individuals which run counter to his own. That is the usual account of the matter, but it is quite insufficient. A much more serious change than this has taken place. In addition to the fact that he must now take other individuals into account, he has incurred new and onerous obligations on behalf of society as an organism; and, what is more serious still, these obligations take the precedence of his former obligations on his own behalf. He has, in fact, entered into an involuntary partnership with a being stronger than himself. The social organism which has annexed him, so to speak, besides being a series of persons whose rights he must respect, has a corporate existence of its own, to which the existence of the individual becomes almost entirely subordinate. And the obligations which he has incurred are the more onerous from the fact that the nature of the social organism is in many ways different from that of the individuals who compose it, while its interests in one important respect are distinct and even irreconcilable,

for the following reason. The social organism has throughout history been engaged in perpetual warfare with others of its kind, and its safety demands the ruthless sacrifice of the individual whenever necessary. Such a situation implies an almost complete reversal of instincts implanted by nature in each individual organism, and carefully fostered through hundreds of thousands of years by the individual struggle for existence. It is accordingly incumbent upon the individual, if he is to fulfil the new obligations so strangely thrust upon him, to acquire habits and sentiments for which the whole previous course of evolution, saving only the brief interval of family relations, has unfitted him; he must henceforth learn to adopt a self-denying course of action which in his own isolated interests he would never have pursued. The desire of the individual to do exactly as he likes is still sufficiently strong in modern times, after thousands of years of governmental training, to cause a complete paralysis of the capacity for national defence unless stern measures are taken. It must have been still stronger in the breast of untamed man. Granting, which some deny, the superior readiness of the savage to fight, yet a quarrelsome disposition is one thing, while the readiness to subordinate that disposition to social needs and social discipline is quite another. The required revolution in human nature could hardly have been accomplished without some special means. The force which thus deflects the individual from the path of unvarying self-interest, and compels him to follow an entirely new orbit, must

be a force of a very remarkable kind. That force is the power of government.

Throughout the whole history of their evolution the relation of organic beings to one another has been of such a nature as to place them under the obligation of looking after themselves alone. The concentration of the whole energies of the individual organism upon itself and upon its own needs is a necessary consequence of the universal struggle for existence. With the sole exception of the relations temporarily prevailing in family life, individual organisms have been under the necessity of looking after themselves alone, and not by any means the less even if they belong to the same species. Now, however, something happens which renders necessary on the part of the human individual an alteration of this point of view. The social organism comes into existence, and soon the world's surface becomes covered with active specimens of this new creation. As soon as these organisms become really self-conscious, they become self-assertive, and as soon as they become self-assertive, in accordance with nature's established principle, they begin to fight. In spite of the fact that they are composed of individuals who as individuals suffer grievously in this new quarrel, they commence a murderous competition with other similar organisms. Like their predecessors in evolution, they have become involved in the struggle for existence. The annals of the human race, from the first beginnings of history until the present day, continuously bear witness to the fact that social

organisms, in spite of all the striking differences in structure and composition, are subject to the same universal law of antagonism which has characterized the relation of all other organisms, and subject to that law in its most primitive form, that of physical conflict. This is a generalization so universally true of historical and progressive times that its force is in no way impaired by the few instances that have been discovered of more or less amicable relations between social groups at a certain unprogressive stage of social development. Up to this point the most decisive feature of animal life from the point of view which we are now considering has been the struggle for existence among individuals. Now, however, the importance of the struggle of individual organisms, which in the Darwinian stage was clearly paramount, is relegated to a secondary position, and becomes subordinated so far as human beings are concerned, to that which takes place among social organisms. Whatever may happen in the future, the social organism in the past and up to the present day has had a position assigned to it in the world of nature in no way different from that of a wild animal, which can live and thrive only on the condition of constant ability and readiness to defend itself against the attacks of dangerous enemies. Such is the situation to which the once independent individual must now conform; it is with an organism of this character that the fortunes of the individual are bound up.

The reader will now perceive how this peculiarity affects the question of the origin of government. The

government-making tendency or potentiality which, as we have seen, universally exists is called into full activity by the necessities of war. The ability of a social organism to defend itself is largely—perhaps, if considered over a sufficiently long period, entirely—a matter of government. The community which enjoys a relatively efficient government has an infinitely better chance of success than one which does not. Just as the development of his reasoning powers gave to savage man a decisive advantage, first over the wild beasts by whom he was surrounded and then over human rivals, so the rise of government in any particular community gave it a decisive advantage over others of its kind. We know that nature in the case of plants and animals has the power of developing protective arrangements to meet the dangers to which they are exposed, and the same thing happens with the social organism. Government according to the present view may be regarded as a device of nature for the protection of the social organism, a superior kind of equipment developed for the purpose of meeting certain special needs in the struggle for existence. What these needs are will be plain from considerations already urged. When we remember that the social organism is composed of individuals whose ancestors during the whole course of their evolutional history have lived in selfish isolation, and who are consequently without any predisposition to act together, or are even hereditarily inclined to an actually opposite course, it would seem obvious that the first requisite for success in the intertribal or inter-

national struggle is a government strong enough to overcome all selfish individual tendencies, and with sufficient authority to ensure the necessary social cohesion. Before the supreme necessity of union all other considerations must give way. The concentration of the individual organism upon itself and upon its own needs must somehow be corrected. Nature is equal to the emergency. Government in early and troubled times is marked by a quality well calculated to provide an antidote to individual selfishness—namely, a tyrannical or even brutal strength. And though the control which springs up may be of the more rudimentary kind, yet, so long as it supplies an organization relatively superior to that of the enemy, the survival value which it thus confers is decisive.

Again, next to a capacity for producing union, intelligent leadership is of the greatest value. A rude practical intelligence or even cunning which can appreciate the essential needs of the situation and direct the efforts of the community to the best advantage is of supreme importance. The social organism requires union and intelligent leadership to improve its chances of success in the incessant struggle for existence. Nature is ready to meet this want through the agency of the struggle for supremacy. Working with the material at her disposal, in this case the individual love of power, she supplies the kind of government required. The rivalry of individuals in uncivilized times is of a character well calculated to bring to the head of the community the kind of intelligence demanded by the conditions of uncivilized warfare.

Double Function of Government

It is now necessary to return to those considerations which formed the culminating feature of the argument of the opening chapter. It may perhaps seem to the reader that there has been a considerable change of front, and that a certain inconsistency is revealed between the duties assigned to government now and the virtues with which it was previously accredited. The origin of government is now attributed to reasons which are inconsistent, it will be said, with the belief in its usefulness as an agent in the production of morality, and the present position can only be established at the expense of much that has been maintained in the previous pages. Great stress was laid in the preceding chapter upon the fact that the influence of government was essentially humanizing, because it alone rendered possible the growth of morality and the advancement of civilization, by imposing new conditions on the struggle for existence. The impression was undoubtedly left that the importance of this institution lay in the opportunity which it afforded for the development of the gentler and nobler qualities of human nature. How, it will be asked, can such an attitude be reconciled with the contention now put forward that the original function of government is to increase the warlike efficiency of the social organism? If government at the outset is found taking the wrong side, so to speak, if it comes into existence to encourage the warlike rather than the peaceful propensities of man, what other result can this have than to retard rather than hasten the morality of the world, by accentuating the fierceness of

intertribal rivalry and by adding the conflict of armed communities to the individual struggle already raging? If government aids and abets the barbaric practice of war, how can it then be regarded as the ally of morality and the champion of the acts of peace? Surely it is impossible to hold that government moderates the struggle for existence in one direction while intensifying it in another!

Yet this is precisely what happens. It is absolutely true that the type of individual who is characterized in savage times by higher moral qualities could never have survived in an age of low moral development to transmit these qualities except under the protection of government. It is also true that government is initially concerned, not with making the individual more civilized, but with making the social organism more formidable. These two functions of government are not mutually exclusive, as they appear, but supplementary. Strange as it may at first sight seem, it is nevertheless true that to increase the power of the community for armed resistance to external foes is at the same time to promote better internal relations among the individuals of which it is composed. The reconciliation of these apparently contradictory qualifications is found in the fact that the first steps necessary for rendering the social organism more efficient for the prosecution of war are also steps which conduce in a very remarkable degree to the promotion of individual virtues, such as firm mutual trust, unswerving loyalty, unhesitating self-sacrifice, all of them qualities upon which the higher life depends. The require-

ments of national efficiency and of individual morality are up to a certain point astonishingly similar—in fact, almost identical. The measures which government must take to ensure success in war are likewise the only measures capable in savage times of securing the conditions under which individual morality can develop. While performing its original duties, government at the same time promotes conditions under which humanity is enabled to progress. It is merely uttering a commonplace of juvenile instruction to point out that the first requirement of national success is unity. Unity is strength, division is weakness. The more of the common energy that is wasted in the effort of each individual to over-reach or destroy another, the less is left with which to confront the common foe. Accordingly, if the social organism is to have the smallest chance of survival, the rule of "each for himself" which is the essence of the original struggle for existence must be peremptorily brought to an end. But the interdiction of regardless individual self-seeking and the encouragement of greater individual harmony is likewise the first and most important step in the direction of a higher morality. The individual characteristics most suited for civilization are thus developed under a government designed for war. When early government organizes a society for war, it urges each member so far as regards his fellow-members in the direction of peace; and while it secures the unity which is strength, it also lays the foundations of that other unity which is commended by religion and by ethics.

The same contradiction also appears between the motives of the ruler and the results which he produces. Rulers in early times, being for the most part unscrupulous, may enforce subordination and so produce harmony from no higher motive than the desire of securing their own power or that of the social organism with which they are identified. Yet a reformer intent upon raising the moral tone of a barbarous community, and having no other end in view, would pursue exactly the same plan. The first uncertain elements of human discipline may be merely the consequence of terrorism, yet the interests of a rudimentary progress are at the same time served, since the suppression of the passions and antisocial inclinations of the individual, which is required to flatter the ruler's pride or increase the chances of national success, is also conducive to the interests of a higher civilization. And the conclusion accordingly is that though government does not come into existence for the purpose of bringing about the beneficial consequences which actually follow from its institution, it is equally true that moral progress could never have taken place without it. The protection which it affords for the development of a relatively higher standard of conduct on the part of the individual is not the less useful because the influence of government was primarily exerted in the defensive interests of the social organism.

The assertion, then, made in the previous chapter that government is the necessary precondition of the elevation of humanity need not be modified in any way at all. It is necessary, however, to make some

abatement of the claim that government is the sole agency which has made possible the development of moral relations. The same circumstance which laid a premium upon government—namely, the rivalry of social organisms—may be considered to have assisted the development of morality in another way also. Though government was an indispensable agent for moderating the Darwinian struggle for existence, the mere fact of the hostility of social organisms tends to have a similar though less pronounced effect. It is well known that in all periods of history and in all circumstances of life animosity towards some common object tends to lessen the enmity of individuals to one another. This truth has an especial relevance at the commencement of civilization. The murderous or predatory instincts which may be assumed to have characterized early man are less likely to disturb the harmony of primitive social life if they find an outlet in the warfare of societies. The hostility of rival groups is sufficient in itself to predispose the members of those groups to closer union. This principle is still applicable even to modern times, and has received a special illustration in the fearful trials through which the country has recently passed. The loyal comradeship between both sexes and all ranks of society that developed during the war is a matter of common remark. If, as was generally acknowledged, increased sympathy and union between classes and individuals was a marked feature of the terrible struggle in which the nation was engaged, it is not difficult to perceive the value of social conflict as a moralizing

agency in savage times. The rivalry and warfare of social organisms seems to be the necessary precondition of civilization and progress. It is more than possible that in the inscrutable methods of nature, national hostility, which excites the horror of the world to-day, and is plainly in most respects an obstacle to the further progress of humanity, was at one time an important agency in promoting the brotherhood of individuals.

It is plain, however, that this tendency alone would carry us but a very short way in the desired direction. Granting that conflict between two societies tends to promote harmony between the members of which each is composed, yet the binding influence of a common danger is fully effective only during the extremity and urgency of that danger, and tends rapidly to disappear as soon as the condition of tension is relaxed. There must be some other agency to sustain and render permanent a feeling necessarily evanescent, and that agency can be none other than government. The formation of the social organism provides a beginning or a basis for the new conditions which modify the individual struggle for existence, but that is all. The authority of government is needed to prevent the struggle for existence from resuming its normal course, and to moderate the hostile attitude of one individual to another which is the prevalent condition of life, though it may be temporarily suspended by the enthusiasm of a common effort. Thus, though the value of union may first be suggested and emphasized by the necessity of social self-protection

in the rivalry of family groups, these improved individual relations can only be perpetuated by the action of government. The human nature with which we are dealing in these early times is a nature which has been moulded by countless ages of the Darwinian struggle for existence, and which is therefore imbued with instincts and tendencies which may for a time be suspended in the excitement of social conflict, but which need the strong hand of authority for their permanent repression.

Those who estimate the correctness of an opinion by its correspondence with the highest moral aims, and who fail to make the necessary distinction between the ideal objects of political endeavour and the actual course of political evolution, will doubtless be disinclined to accept this view that the original function of government is the protection of the social organism. It is precisely, they will say, because the Germans adopted this theory that Europe has been deluged with blood. But pernicious consequences may follow from the excessive insistence on a theory without proving it incorrect. Because the Germans gave an extravagant and almost insane extension to a certain principle of government, this does not show that the principle itself has not been a necessary condition of development in the past, or will not, with modifications, still be necessary in the future. In the second place, if we are to judge the action of a government by the care it takes of its own subjects and the provision it makes against the dangers that threaten them, which is indisputably the final object for which

a government exists, the guilt of German rulers who have ruined their empire by recklessly sacrificing the individual to the State is not so very much greater than that of English political leaders who have just failed of ruining their own empire through the adoption of principles which recklessly sacrificed the safety of the State to the selfish ideals of the individualists. Again, the view that the original duty of government is the care of the social organism need not by any means preclude the belief that its final object is the care of the individual. Admitting that the amelioration of the conditions of existence or even the elevation of the moral and intellectual standards of the individual may be the proper function of government in an ideal world, it is the contention of the present work that the scheme upon which the development of humanity is being conducted has rendered impossible the initial adoption of this aim. An arrangement may be useful at the beginning which is out of place in the final plan. Whatever the future destiny of the individual may be, he exists at present only by and through the social organism. The result is that the government of a community must fight to protect its individuals, or, in other words, it must compel them to fight in order to protect themselves, and as a consequence it is seen throughout history to be largely engaged in making war. Granting that the highest aim of government is the care of the individual, yet if we take the world and international relations as they are, a government to fulfil this aim must make the safety of the social organism

its chief consideration, and begin by subordinating the welfare of the individual to the welfare of the State.

Whatever may be the final condition to which the world is tending, all that is here asserted is that, so far as political evolution has at present proceeded, the attitude of societies to one another has been so ordained by nature that the care of the social organism necessarily takes the precedence of the care of the individual. Much that is otherwise unintelligible in history, especially the astounding inefficiency of governments from the philanthropic and individual point of view which aroused the solemn indignation of Gibbon, is made clear when we understand that their original function was not philanthropy, but war. To condemn governments for not habitually devoting themselves to the internal welfare of their subjects is to condemn them for the non-performance of a task which is no original part of the method of nature, which they are at first evolutionally unfitted to perform, but which comes gradually into greater and greater prominence as the development of humanity proceeds. It is a well-known principle of evolution that organs developed for one purpose are in the economy of nature gradually adapted to another. Even if government does originate in the interest of the social organism, that is no reason why under pressure of changing conditions it should not gradually be adapted to serve a higher end. The final purpose of government, like that of many other things, is hidden from our eyes; but to those who cannot

rid themselves of the idea of a co-ordinating power behind the forces of nature, the fact that the same measures which in early times render the social organism more formidable in war are also measures which facilitate the growth of higher individual relations in peace suggests a principle capable of almost indefinite extension.

Government, then, according to the contention of the present and of the preceding chapter, was the essential precondition of rudimentary civilization, and originated in the struggle for supremacy. And though the facts and arguments so far adduced seem to the writer to have no little weight, it must be admitted that had there been no other considerations pointing to the same conclusion the present work would never have been written. There remains, however, a whole mass of evidence in reserve which has never yet been utilized by previous writers on the origin of government. Since their researches have been restricted to a primitive condition of society, the only facts they have been able to press into their service have either been taken from a remote and obscure past or are at least confined to an early stage of human development. But the present theory has this advantage over any previous speculations on the subject, that it can call in evidence not merely the first rudimentary traces of government, but the entire course of the political history of mankind. As already pointed out, other theories ascribe the origin of government to motives

which take no further part in political evolution, thus necessitating a breach in the continuity of development which is foreign to the methods of nature. According to the ordinary view, the forces by which government is perpetuated have no connection with those in which it takes its rise. But from what we know of the methods of nature in other departments of life, it is in the highest degree probable that the principle in which government originated will also be found engaged in promoting its subsequent development.

According to the present theory, the motive which originated government also supplies the sustaining force which has given it vitality throughout the history of the world. When this sustaining force is present government thrives; where it is absent government languishes. Whatever incidental complexities and improvements government may assume, the central principle of all efficient government remains the same. That which supplies the most valuable element of the most highly developed administration is a force closely akin to that which inspires the relative efficiency of the most primitive political control. In a word, the anticipation of a previous chapter, that any principle adequate to account for the origin of government must also be a principle intimately concerned with its subsequent vitality and efficiency, will be found amply confirmed in the succeeding pages. It will be shown that the institution of a political control by means of the struggle for

supremacy is the dominating principle of governmental evolution, that it has been present in the history of all the successful nations of the world, and that it is a permanent and apparently indispensable feature of the political development of mankind.

CHAPTER III

THE REORIGINATION OF GOVERNMENT

It is a commonplace of history that periods of political disorder, when the bonds of social discipline are relaxed, and society is resolved into something like its primitive elements, are wont to terminate in the rise to political predominance of some strong, overmastering personality who utilizes the prevailing anarchy to secure his own elevation to power. Such an occurrence, in the opinion of the ordinary observer, hardly rises to the rank of a serious historical phenomenon. To him it seems merely to afford evidence of the unregenerate moral nature of the individual who prefers his own aggrandizement to the real welfare of the community. To the philosopher who regards it from the political point of view it emphasizes the dangers of ambition, a quality which is wisely and carefully restrained in settled periods of history, but which in times of unrest finds its opportunity to break out of bounds. Were it not for the remarkable frequency of such occurrences and for the significant fact that some of the world's greatest men have in this way risen to prominence, and have in consequence beneficially affected the history of mankind, such proceedings would be universally condemned as discreditable episodes in the life of

humanity. Since, however, they are both frequent and important, historians are bound to give them a place in their narrative; but they do so with obvious reluctance, and with not a little bewilderment as well. Regret is aroused by the lawless conduct of the self-imposed ruler, bewilderment by the undoubted fact that such conduct is frequently productive of results politically beneficial. An individual is forbidden by the moral law to do evil that good may come. It is awkward, then, to have to admit that nature as revealed in history is apparently troubled by no such scruples. Accordingly, it has been judged wise to pass over all such acts of illegal violence with as little comment as possible, ignoring all unpleasant features, and emphasizing to the utmost any considerations which may be calculated to give a semblance of constitutional necessity or dramatic justice to the situation.

It is possible, however, that this phenomenon may have a significance very different from that usually attributed to it, and may be deserving of more than the mere feeling of perplexity or disapprobation with which it is generally regarded.

If the reasonable assumption be granted that in periods of social and political disorder, when the powerful restraints of law and government are removed, primitive instincts and primitive methods are likely to reappear, then that which happens at such times in the region of politics is calculated to throw an important light upon the primeval methods of nature in the evolution of government. It is here

suggested that this incessantly repeated procedure, which historians unreservedly condemn if unsuccessful or disastrous, and cautiously and discreetly commend if it contributes to the welfare of the community, is one of the most remarkable and important phenomena in all human history, being, in fact, nothing else than the renewed activity of the primitive principle which first originated government. Evidence will be accumulated in the following pages tending to show that the phenomenon of usurpation is the reappearance during times of social disorder of the government-making instinct in its crudest, most natural, and most original form, such as it might be expected to assume when released from the restraints of civilization by which it had been previously held back.

Those who believe in the possibility of a science of history, and are asked to explain how it is that no interpretation of a really scientific character has been achieved in the last fifty years, are usually accustomed to reply that the proper moment has not yet arrived, because the collection of historical data is not yet complete. But when we contemplate the enormous proportions assumed by the mass of already accumulated facts, it would seem that the true explanation of this failure must be of a different nature. As the author has elsewhere suggested, the only hope of progress lies in taking an altogether new direction, and endeavouring to discover if some feature apparently commonplace, but in reality of the greatest importance, has not been overlooked.

In accordance with this belief in the possibility of a new significance in certain apparently trivial occurrences of history, and in the conviction that only in some such way can the dry bones of history be galvanized into life, it is here maintained that the phenomenon of usurpation has a meaning in the evolution of politics far transcending the ordinary uninteresting interpretation usually placed upon it. If this theory be correct, all the usurpers of history, great and small, all so-called tyrants, all who in times of social disturbance have won a dominant political position, with the single exception of a certain class to be specified in a succeeding chapter, are so many instances of the method by which nature incessantly works to renew the political subordination of a community which has fallen into temporary disorder. It is frequently to be observed in cases such as that of the French Revolution that a usurper will succeed in producing orderly government when the more elaborate attempts of reformers and political philosophers have ended only in mutual recrimination and murder. All such occurrences are here regarded as evidence that when political assemblies and parliaments have failed in the task of artificially reconstructing government, nature has in reserve another method of achieving the same result—namely, the self-imposition of the strong man acting under the influence of the love of power.

It is custom and moral prejudice alone which blind us to certain remarkable features of usurpation. If we had not history to guide us, surely the most

natural supposition would be that unless order could be restored by legal or moral authority it would not be restored at all, and that anarchy, once commenced, would continue until the ordinary constitutional restraints were once more reimposed. When properly considered, it is one of the most extraordinary facts in history, that one individual's love of power should triumph over the general love of lawless self-indulgence, and should thus be the means of arresting social dissolution. Nor is our interest in this phenomenon lessened when we perceive that this love of individual domination does not merely put an end to anarchy when it exists, but frequently tends to prevent the nascent symptoms of anarchy from producing actual political disturbance. It is not awakened into life only by definite political disorder: it can also be aroused at the first symptoms of failure on the part of the controlling power, and, by infusing new strength into the government, it prevents the commencement of what might have been serious and long-continued revolutionary disturbance. In the love of power we have a natural government-making instinct, so certain in its operation as to act almost automatically on the first suggestion of danger to the body politic through the weakness of the existing administration. A curative process is at once commenced which has as its consequence the repair of that most vital feature of all communities, the controlling power of the body politic. The *vis medicatrix naturæ*, of which we hear so much with regard to the human body, is, as we might expect, not less con-

cerned in fighting disorder in the social organism. The first act of a successful tyrant is to terminate that condition of social unrest which facilitated his own rise to power. It is his obvious course to permit the use of force to no one but himself, and to suppress all symptoms of disorder, not in the interests of morality, but because they threaten his undisturbed possession of power. Nevertheless, the rudiments of order are established, since in securing his own personal ends he also secures the good of the community. Strong government is the medicine prescribed in such emergencies by the *vis medicatrix naturæ*.

We have already had grounds for the conclusion that government is not in the first instance an instrument for procuring the domestic happiness of the people, as many philosophers would have us believe, but an organ developed for the protection of the community in the international struggle for existence. This anticipation is confirmed when we find that nature not merely provides that no collection of men, at least in historic times, should ever be left for long without a political control, but also takes care that the power, when provided, should sooner or later be characterized by the strength requisite for making that control efficient. Order is the chief element of efficiency in early times, and order can only be produced in such periods by the aid of a strong governing power. Internal dissension in the face of possible enemies is one of the greatest evils to which the social organism is liable; the international dangers which threaten a State are such that the nation is never for

a moment safe until political subordination has once more been re-established. Nature accordingly provides a remedy. The frequency of the appearance of the usurper and of the tyrant at a certain stage of civilization proves, according to the present theory, the existence of a tendency on the part of nature to impart to the governing power of a community the quality most necessary to ensure its survival—namely, strength.

To the demonstration of these principles the greater portion of the succeeding pages will be devoted, and we may commence by reopening a well-known controversy in ancient Greek history. By his question-begging phrase "the age of the despots" Grote has endeavoured to imply that the tendency to establish political supremacy by force belongs to one period, and to one period alone, in the history of the Greeks. Despotism and the possibility of despotism belong to no particular epoch in Greek or any other history, but recur automatically whenever certain political conditions repeat themselves. "This form of government," says Mahaffy, "was a permanent feature in the Greek world. When the tyrants were expelled from Athens and from the Peloponnesus, they still flourished in Sicily, Italy, the Black Sea Coast, and Cyprus, till they reappeared again in Greece. There was no moment in the old Greek history when there were not scores of such despots. The closing period, after the death of Alexander, shows us most of the Greek states under their control . . . we may add to the list most of the so-called kings who close the

history of independent Greece."[1] If the ordinary historian were not prepossessed with the idea that no forces can be recognized as contributing to political developments except those which are intelligent, orderly, and constitutional, it would be evident that we are here dealing with a phenomenon which must be taken into account in any theory of progressive political evolution. Some such idea does, indeed, occur to Mahaffy, for he speaks of the tyrant as "at one time a necessity" in Greek history. "This war of factions was as old as real Greek history, and the earliest solution of this terrible problem was the tyrant who made peace by coercing both sides to his will, and punishing with death and exile those that were refractory. In the shocking condition of cities like Athens before Peisistratus or the Megara of Theognis we may even go so far as to say that without an interval during which both parties were taught simply to obey no reasonable political life was possible. I make bold to say that the constitution of Cleisthenes would not have succeeded had not the people received the training in peace and obedience given them by the Peisistratus family."[2]

Abbott, in his history of Greece, comes to a similar conclusion: "In spite of the worst that can be said against them, the tyrants hold a legitimate place in the progress of Greek constitutional history. . . . It is impossible to deny that the tyrants, though their rule involved the suspension of civic life, were often

[1] Mahaffy's *Problems in Greek History*, p. 79.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 84.

men of great capacity, who played an important part in the history of Hellenism, and that the cities which they governed enjoyed great prosperity and power."[1] From the deliberate verdict of these two historians it is but a step, though an important step, to recognize the operation of a principle of political evolution in accordance with which the factious conditions produced by excessive liberty are brought to a summary conclusion, and weak government is replaced by strong. The case of the Greek tyrant is a particular instance of the general law that a condition of political unrest tends to produce its own cure. As we shall see in a subsequent chapter, the history of the Italian Republics two thousand years later reproduces with a curious similarity the general conditions which gave rise to the Greek tyrant. The political liberty which both Greeks and Italians demanded and occasionally secured merely afforded an opportunity for the outburst of factious discord. The political constitutions which they delighted to devise implied for their successful administration a self-restraint which they did not possess, and the resulting disorder was followed by the rise of some great man to reimpose that strong political control which in early times is the first essential of political and social welfare.

The ordinary opinion of usurpation that, so far from being a manifestation of the forces of nature at work upon the reconstruction of government, it is, on the contrary, an interruption of orderly political development, is based upon an assumption which we

[1] Abbott's *Greece*, vol. i., p. 368.

have already seen to be untenable. This assumption is that the method of nature in the development of human relations is pre-eminently a peaceful method, and that any apparent exceptions to this rule are merely due to the survival of barbarous instincts which are entirely out of date, and which grievously hamper the real work of progress. Such a view is entirely devoid of any satisfactory basis of observed fact, and has in truth been formed in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Violence is as much the rule as the exception in the process of human development, and in the course of the succeeding chapters instance will be heaped upon instance, all tending to show that barbarous as well as civilized instincts and methods are indiscriminately employed in the evolution of government. Those philosophers who are unwilling to admit the usefulness of any other agencies than those which are developed by peaceful association entirely leave out of sight the truth that the very possibility of peaceful association depends upon the preliminary use of coercive power. The government of a State is, indeed, largely built up as the result of the adoption of successive constitutional inventions, devised by the ingenuity of its counsellors. Yet this process of quiet constitutional growth is one which cannot take place unaided. If we look to the facts of history and examine what actually does take place, without allowing ourselves to be unduly influenced by the opinions of those who tell us the way in which it ought to take place, we shall find that there is no government in the world

that has ever been evolved by the sole method of peaceful development, no nation which has not at some time or other derived unquestionable benefit from the illegal and unconstitutional usurpation of some timely and daring upstart. At some of the greatest crises of the world's history the ruin of civilization would have been assured for indefinite periods had not the natural and original method of establishing an indispensable political control come into operation once more. It is plausible at first sight to regard usurpation as interrupting a natural development, because the ordinary human mind, instinctively inclining to the more attractive theory, readily assumes that a State grows, as the human body grows, entirely by peaceful adjustment. Yet a closer examination reveals the fact that the association of individuals which we call a nation is so agitated internally by the struggle for existence in its various forms, so torn by class hatred and dissension and individual rivalry and ambition, that, if it is to continue to exist at all as an association, it must be held together by some coercive authority. The peaceful development of a State, especially in early times, is a peaceful development on one condition only, the continued presence of some controlling authority. If this controlling and guiding force is permanently weakened, the ruin of the community as an association is assured. Accordingly, the reimposition of a strong control is the resumption, not the interruption, of the normal development of the State. Simultaneously with the appearance of weakness in the controlling authority,

other factors come into play which facilitate the triumph of the strong usurper who effects the necessary cure. Such an occurrence is not an interruption of the normal development of the State, because the interruption of the development of the State dates from the first appearance of incapacity in the previous administration. It is not the usurpation which causes the political instability, but the political instability which causes the usurpation. Usurpation is the recuperative process by which nature seeks to counteract the growth of disease in the protective organ of the nation, and provides an antidote against the insidious poison of incipient anarchy in the body politic. At a certain stage of political evolution, whenever the title of the holder of the crown becomes weakened through serious deficiencies of character or administration, or through the discovery of a flaw in the hereditary succession, a struggle for supreme power begins. It is not necessary to show that political benefit results in all cases from the ambition of the selfish adventurer who pursues his own ends without consideration for the interest of the community. What the phenomenon does prove is that, in the absence of any other method of decision, the title to the headship of the community is the prize of the strongest. There are, of course, influences which promote orderly hereditary succession and restrict the headship of the nation to a single family, and these will be discussed in a succeeding chapter. When, however, the cogency of these restrictions is for various reasons sufficiently impaired, the coveted

honour of sovereignty becomes at once the object of some other member of the royal family or of some strong noble who seems to have the best chances for success. That the competitors in a disputed monarchial succession are generally few in number does not affect the argument. In such circumstances the qualifications necessary to ensure victory are so exacting that perhaps only two rivals for the throne may appear. Yet the necessary limitation of the numbers engaged in a dynastic struggle does not alter the character of the contest; and if, as already pointed out, the invariability of a phenomenon had its proper weight in history, the ceaseless recurrence of these episodes would be at once recognized as warranting special investigation. The truth which they illustrate is this, that until we have reached that stage of political development when constitutional custom or the popular will has become sufficiently strong to nominate the ruling Sovereign, not merely in theory but in fact, a too powerful subject is always a prospective King.

A struggle familiar to all readers of history—namely, the Wars of the Roses—will serve as a good initial illustration of a principle which will be found incessantly exemplified in the succeeding chapters. Many motives combined to intensify the bitterness of this contest, many subsidiary quarrels were settled during its course by adherents on one side or the other, who were glad to seize this opportunity of settling old scores. But the main inspiring principle is unmistakable. It is a war of succession, or, in other words, a struggle for supremacy. The usurpa-

tion of Henry IV., by interrupting the strict hereditary succession, was the initial cause of the Wars of the Roses. The same measure which Henry IV. meted out to Richard II. was in turn meted out to his own descendants, when their weakness became sufficiently apparent to arouse the ambition of those to whom hereditary claims or overgrown power offered a reasonable chance of success. There is no necessity at this point of the argument to multiply similar instances of the successful acquisition of a throne. They take up a large portion of history, and prove that the struggle for supremacy immediately becomes active when the influences which protect the throne are undermined, and when the glitter and glory of supreme power is seen to be within the reach of the strongest aspirant.

But before developing any further this side of the argument, it is necessary to meet the apparently formidable objections presented by the study of what is known as "constitutional history." The endeavour to take new views in history, and to trace in human events the operation of some general law, appears to many minds as something almost indecent. Such an attempt involves not merely the difficulties common to all original investigation, but others altogether peculiar to a subject which closely affects the welfare of all individuals, and in which their personal interest is so great that philosophic calm becomes impossible. The troubles of the enquirer in other branches of science are for the most part summed up in the difficulty of procuring evidence. Given a little scientific

imagination to enable a new point of view to be taken, that point of view can generally be proved by the mere accumulation of facts. At least, no one thinks of disputing the right of an investigator to use the facts when found. But the disturbance of settled beliefs in the domain of history brings with it serious trouble unknown in any other department of science. To the initial difficulty of collecting facts is added the denial of the right to use them when collected. According to a certain influential class of historians, such a thing as usurpation does not exist in English history. The English constitutional historians conduct their supposed investigations with the almost open and avowed determination of proving, not merely that conquest confers no moral right to government, but that the thing itself does not exist, and they deliberately endeavour to force the facts into conformity with this amazing conclusion. This *a priori* determination to find in history only what they want to find is the result of a conviction that it would be beneath the dignity or even fatal to the interests of English constitutional government to admit that a political control has ever been forced upon the English people, or that such a thing as a successful struggle for supremacy has ever taken place. The conclusion which they thus wish at all costs to establish is that Parliament has been the decisive factor in all cases of disputed monarchial succession. In this procedure they cannot be acquitted of the charge of deliberately tampering with their data, and thereby committing the gravest possible offence against the principles of

true scientific method. But to bring the accusation in this form against the constitutional historians is perhaps to pay them a compliment they do not deserve. They are certainly not scientific enquirers, and perhaps make no pretence to scientific methods. They are, in fact, nothing more than advocates, whose intellectual subtlety and forensic powers are brought into court, not to ascertain the truth, but to secure a verdict for their client. And their client in this case is the English people, who wishes it to be made legally and historically clear that the political succession of free self-government in the State, like the Apostolic Succession of Divine government in the Church, has never been interrupted since the beginning of the nation's history. In other words, the duty of the constitutional historian is to render legally impossible the establishment of a dangerous constitutional precedent. To admit that the crown had ever become the prize of the strongest would, in the opinion of the English people and their legal champions, be to impair seriously those constitutional truths which are the foundation of law and order, and upon which the "liberties" of the people depend. The dread of a selfish tyranny, a justifiable fear at one time in English history, has driven these historical lawyers to refuse any admissions which might seem to strengthen the royal prerogative, and has caused them to deny the existence of plain facts, if those facts seem to contradict the desired conclusion that the people is the ultimate source of all law and all authority. Judged by this standpoint, Rousseau, with his Social Con-

tract, was one of the greatest of constitutional historians. Of this theory it has been said that, though it does not correctly represent facts, it represents certain tendencies and aspirations of the human mind. Rousseau managed to find his aspirations embodied in history, just as the constitutional historians find theirs. It is politically inexpedient, in their opinion, to believe that the head of the State has ever at any time been anything except the nominee of Parliament, and therefore history must be so written as to support this desirable conclusion. Constitutional historians may be less daring in their mendacity than the author of the Social Contract theory, but their objects and methods are precisely the same. They belong to that class of moralists who falsify their facts for the purpose of enforcing what is in their opinion a righteous and necessary conclusion.

No confirmation, then, of the present theory can be expected from historians engaged in demonstrating that all English monarchs without exception have derived their authority solely from Parliament and people. But, it will be asked, if the facts are what they are, how have they been so manipulated as to delude an intelligent public? Demonstration is an easy task when the public wishes to be deceived. Under the assumption that the mere existence of Parliament, coupled with its servile consent, however obtained, converts an obvious usurpation into a legal and constitutional succession, these writers are enabled to present an interpretation of history which satisfies the popular demand. Yet no enquirer who honestly

endeavours to assign their proper relative value to the forces which renew government can be deceived by a procedure so futile. Could there, for instance, to the unbiassed mind, be a clearer case of usurpation, a clearer instance where a bold adventurer wins a crown and permanently influences the fortunes of a country, than is shown in the history of William the Conqueror? Yet few historians admit as much. They object to the very surname of Conqueror, and some of them are so sensitive on the subject as to explain carefully that the word "Conqueror" does not mean what it says, or imply what it seems to imply, but something quite different and harmless. In pursuance of the same idea, that the existence of so shocking a thing as the forcible seizure of a throne must on no account be admitted, they are, with regard to the action of Parliament, reduced to arguments which may satisfy the legal aspect of the case, but which as a contribution to scientific history are an insult to the human intelligence. Because William was clever statesman enough to go through the form of obtaining, after his triumphant entry into London, the consent of an abject and cowering Parliament, the legal proprieties are abundantly satisfied, and the successful usurper must henceforth be recognized as a constitutionally appointed King. This may be good law, but it is very bad science. The clever and hypocritical observance of empty forms, though it may serve to satisfy constitutional requirements, cannot really alter the relative value of the forces at work. All that it really proves is that Parliament has gained

sufficient influence to make it wise and politic for the conqueror to obtain its enforced consent, after the actual usurpation has been consummated, and this admission may be made without invalidating the present argument in the slightest degree.

In all similar cases of usurpation or disputed succession a like method is adopted. The bias in the actual reasoning is so palpable that merely to point it out might seem sufficient to carry confutation. But an error in reasoning is frequently the result, not of mere intellectual confusion, but of the existence of some deep-seated instinct, which men feel compelled to protect and support with whatever logical weapons come readiest to hand. The instinct in the present case is a profound disinclination to admit that force can ever sanction a political control. To expose the fallacy of reasoning directed to this end is not, therefore, to settle the controversy. To do this effectively it is necessary to satisfy the heart as well as the intellect by the demonstration that the important practical considerations or the moral or political principles which men believe to be in danger are not really assailed. To admit that a political authority can be self-appointed is, in the opinion of moralists and constitutional historians, to threaten a truth upon which the happiness of mankind is fundamentally dependent—namely, that the sanction of a political control proceeds from the people alone. But when they endeavour to prove that no political authority can exist or has existed which has not been sanctioned by the authority of the people, such reasoners are assum-

ing that the sanction of a political control must proceed from the same source as that in which it originated. But this is not necessarily the case. We may be quite indifferent as to the origin of government provided that we disclaim all intention to dispute the truth that the good of the nation is its only ultimate justification. It is, in fact, possible to show that this conversion of an originally selfish governing power into an agency for the welfare of the whole community is the normal process of governmental evolution. Modern government is constitutional; it is administered in the interests of the people, and is regarded as being appointed and supported entirely by them. The constitutional historians try to persuade themselves and others that government always has been that which it does actually become. Real history is against them. When we take a wide survey of the early governments of the world, not merely confining our attention to States such as those of Greece and Rome, which even on their first appearance in history are in a relatively advanced stage of political evolution, but studying Asiatic tyrannies and other politically undeveloped communities, we find that there is one prominent feature which they exhibit in common. In spite of all attempts to exaggerate the importance of any constitutional features which they may possess, their most prominent feature, with regard to the internal welfare of the country, is a callous and in some cases a brutal irresponsibility. We find just what the present theory would lead us to expect—namely, that early government does indeed perform with more

or less efficiency those warlike duties which were primarily the reason of its existence, because to neglect them would be dangerous. The safety of the ruler and his retention of power are both dependent on the safety of the community. Government unhesitatingly devotes both its own energies and the resources of the country to the prosecution of any military enterprise which promises advantage. But so far as the rights or happiness of the people are concerned, its attitude is one of almost complete indifference. It exists merely in its own interests and for its own selfish purposes. That it has duties towards its subjects is an idea entirely foreign to its whole mental atmosphere, while so far are the people from exercising any real control over the sovereign power that they are, on the contrary, regarded as being under an obligation to minister to the pleasure and welfare of their lord and master. The problem for the evolutionist is to trace the process by which irresponsible autocracy is converted into good constitutional government, and a governing organ, originally designed merely for the conduct of war, into an instrument for securing the internal welfare of the nation.

The process by which this conversion is effected affords a remarkable instance of an important law which will again occupy our attention in the succeeding and in the final chapter. It is sufficient here to state that in the sphere of government, as in other departments of the moral and intellectual life of a nation, a solution is reached by the direct conflict of

antagonistic and mutually opposing forces. These forces are in the present case represented by the autocratic and irresponsible power of the King on the one hand, and the rudimentary influence of the will of the people on the other. The contest commences at the very first moment when the community, or any portion of them, feels strong enough to bring matters to an issue, and it is waged with varying fortune throughout the different countries and the different ages of the world. The relative position of the antagonists is generally as follows: We find a King in his own right and a people existing merely at first on sufferance, but subsequently, in favourable instances, gaining power and self-reliance in the person of their nobility. The battle which then begins is a battle over the question whether the people exist for the sake of the government or the government for the sake of the people. Both parties have weighty and quite irreconcilable arguments with which to enforce their opposing claims. On the one side is a prescriptive hereditary right to royal power, venerable, perhaps, with age-long traditions, most naturally expecting the continuation of that obedience which has hitherto been accorded almost without question. On the other side we have the body of the people gradually gaining in self-conscious strength, who imagine, or pretend to imagine, that they have been cruelly defrauded of that which in reality they never possessed, the right to manage their own affairs. Gradually this growing perception that the welfare of the community is at stake develops into a fixed deter-

mination that, however the King may have gained his power, he cannot and shall not retain that power except on the admission that he holds it in trust for the people. Even in English history, where the continuous enforcement of their rights by the people has been strenuously attempted from the first, monarchs have been much inclined to regard the constitutional limitation of their powers as neither justified by past history nor inherent in the nature of kingship. Charles I. was plainly supported by a sincere conviction that, in yielding to the popular outcry, he would be permitting an interference with the providential order of the world, and weakly surrendering a trust reposed in his care by God. Such a frame of mind, even in the case of a King like Charles I., is not hypocrisy, but the perfectly natural outcome of the historical antecedents of kingship. Any circumstance, however, which tends to justify the attitude of Kings in this great political struggle is habitually overlooked, while the minutest incidents which can by any possibility be regarded as giving support to the constitutional theory are unduly emphasized. When such constitutional claims, however righteous in themselves, are fortified by denouncing the guilty opposition of the King, it is necessary to protest, not so much against the injustice done to the royal motives as against the injustice done to the cause of scientific research. This reckless ascription of moral perversity prevents a proper appreciation of the logical and historical strength of the case for absolute power. On the question of the origin of government

the attitude of such a monarch as the detested Charles I. has unquestionably a certain evidential value, and deserves careful analysis.

Such in the briefest outline is the course taken by the normal evolution of a political control. In spite of certain apparent exceptions, it may be broadly stated that political power is a commodity originally found in the unquestioned possession of the King or of some prominent member of the governing class. In this arrangement the people at first humbly acquiesce as in something natural and even Divinely ordered. Passing through a period where they dimly feel that the government ought really to be theirs, but has somehow found its way into the wrong hands, they finally assert that they have always from the first been the real repositories of political power, and that those who think otherwise are traitors to the community. It will thus be seen that the sanction of a political control has a validity quite independent of its origin. It is possible to establish a control over government, and to insist that the sanction of political measures must at a certain period of national development belong to the people alone, without undertaking the futile task of proving that this right has always been either actually or implicitly in their hands. The method of the origin of government is one thing and the uses to which it is eventually put are another. Government, so far as the individual is concerned, originates with a selfish purpose, and by the pressure of the influence of the community is converted into an instrument of the national welfare. If

we disclaim any disposition to dispute the fact that national good is the final object of government, we may admit that conquest has not unfrequently conferred a title to political control, without thereby undermining the foundations of morality and good government. And since this fear is groundless, historians, even constitutional historians, need no longer consider themselves under any obligation to prove, in defiance of the facts of history, that Parliament has always been as successful in the practical assertion of its authority as the unquestioned strength of its moral right would warrant.

As a matter of fact, this moral authority has been ignored or swept aside like a cobweb whenever circumstances have favoured the reappearance of the primitive instinct of the struggle for power. If we honestly face the facts which accompanied the usurpations in English history, we perceive that the functions of Parliament as a government-making organ were entirely suspended at the very moment when they were most wanted, and when according to constitutional theory they should have been most active. If Parliament in reality played that dominant and all-important part in the control of national affairs which the historians would have us believe, a disputed succession is the very occasion on which it might be expected, by the display of its paramount authority, to come to the assistance of a nation in grave political difficulty. Orderly substitution by the will of the people of one ruler for another, in accordance with utilitarian considerations, is the arrange-

ment that would most naturally be expected. But that which we are led by the theory of the constitution to expect would take place, as a matter of fact, does not take place. Though a Parliament or council does exist, and though its most important function is to regulate the succession and to provide against contingencies of precisely the kind which have been discussed, yet when a real emergency arises it almost invariably finds itself impotent. The older and more powerful tendency of the struggle for supremacy as a method of originating or reoriginating government entirely supersedes the governmental devices of a more civilized time. Instead of finding, as one might expect, the matter settled by an orderly meeting of the council of the nation, in which the rival claims might be gravely discussed, and a new head of the State chosen, those rival claims are, on the contrary, decided by the primitive method of conflict and violence, the country is filled with the clash of arms, and a successful usurper, who is very far from being the calm and reasoned choice of the nation, seats himself upon the throne.

From these considerations it is plain that the study of history, which might at first sight seem to be a plain investigation of plain facts, in which the larger movements and the interpretation to be placed upon them could hardly afford matter for dispute, is in reality closely beset with moral prejudices and political prejudgments. The circumstances just enumerated place it beyond dispute that, strange as such a statement may appear, historians frequently refuse to

receive facts for what they really are, ignoring the existence of some and exaggerating the value of others, in accordance with the bias caused by some constitutional ideal. Sydney Smith used to say that he would not admit that two and two made four until he knew what use the adversary was going to make of the admission. The procedure of most historians is somewhat similar. They endeavour to ignore the existence of certain phenomena if they conflict with their moral beliefs, their political convictions, or their antecedent notions of the dignity of history, or seem in any way likely to lessen the value of the truths which they feel bound to extract from the teaching of the past. They go to history, not to learn what the facts tell them, but to find confirmation for moral and political preconceptions.

As an illustration of this curious disposition we may turn once more to the case of the Greek despots. These despots trouble the radical historian of Greece as much as the usurpers in English history trouble the constitutional historians; and the attitude of Grote towards the Greek tyrants reproduces, with certain necessary differences, the attitude of the constitutional historian towards irregularities in the succession to the English crown. The case of the despots is, in fact, very annoying, because their interposition in the scene of history cannot even be decently legalized by constitutional fictions. There is therefore only one other course left in the interests of humanity, and that is to depict their character and their doings in colours as gloomy as possible. The

determination to accept as normal those phenomena which favour a conclusion supposed to be morally or politically desirable, and to reject as aberrations those which have a different tendency, could not, indeed, be better illustrated than in the typical case of Grote. The particular bias which led him astray will be fully examined in the succeeding chapter. His blind adhesion to the democratic theory rendered it inconceivable that a tyrant could by any possibility be regarded as an instrument of human welfare; while to admit that self-imposed authority or usurpation was a normal phenomenon under certain incessantly recurring conditions would have appeared as a monstrous blasphemy against the spirit of liberty and the political ideals of the human race.

A rather different method of evading the plain significance of facts is to be found in the attitude of most historians with regard to William the Conqueror. Grote tried to solve the problem of the Greek usurper by denying the very possibility of his influence for good. English historians explain away the difficulties in the case of Norman William by attributing to him virtues and intentions far in excess of the moral capabilities of his disposition. To avoid the dilemma of admitting that a self-imposed tyrant may yet be the instrument of national welfare, those who cannot deny the beneficent results of certain obvious tyrannies such as that of Cæsar and William I. are driven to attribute to the usurper motives nobler and more far-reaching than are consistent with other marked traits of his character. Reserving the case

of Cæsar until a succeeding chapter, it will now be shown that the usurpation of William I. affords a striking example of this tendency to ascribe to a mere imperial adventurer a conscious political aim and a deliberate moral purpose, entirely out of keeping with the historical conditions by which he was created and surrounded. If we refuse to allow our judgment to be influenced by the beneficial results of his exploit, is it not obvious that he was a callous and brutal conqueror, who invented a ridiculous claim to the English throne to excuse his lust of power, and who deluged with blood a country with which he had not the shadow of a righteous quarrel? If his unjustifiable invasion had been the cause of inflicting permanent ruin on the country, and without a fortunate conjunction of circumstances this might very well have been the result, historians would have been outspoken on the inevitably disastrous consequences of unbridled ambition. Yet because, for a variety of unforeseen reasons, his actions produced immense benefits for the future of England, because it set going a train of happy influences which advantageously affected the development of the constitution for the next five hundred years, some historians try to persuade themselves and their readers that these consequences, and the intention to produce them, were actively present in the mind of the Conqueror. We may freely grant, indeed, that he was more clever and even more of a statesman than the average freebooter, a type to which in some respects he unquestionably belongs. But in what did that statesmanship con-

sist? Certainly not in devising the outlines of a policy which he knew would be beneficial hundreds of years later. His cleverness consisted in grasping the comparatively elementary principle of statecraft that even for a successful conqueror there are limits to the indulgence of brutal passion, and that the interests of a ruler are up to a certain point coincident with those of his subjects. His conduct fulfils the requirements and manifests the qualities already mentioned as characteristic of all early initiations of government. It has been already stated that early government is always liable to betray the sources of its origin in the attitude of the ruling power to the community. It is characterized by a brutal repression, which, though imposed entirely in the interests of the ruler, yet promotes the social purposes of law and order. The conduct of William seems to tally exactly with this description. His measures from first to last were measures necessitated by the single aim of establishing an unquestioned individual supremacy. Where he seems to be lenient he is merely politic, because his statesmanship was sufficient to teach him that in certain rare cases a conciliatory policy is best adapted to strengthen the hand of a ruler. Upon the country as a whole he imposed discipline by methods which have sent a shudder through succeeding ages—methods which we only refrain from calling fiendish because we know that the horror of them affected only one generation, while the advantageous discipline affected many. Those consequences of the Norman invasion which historians prize so much

came about, not because William was wise and good, but because he was strong, cunning, and even brutal. By an exertion of mingled strength and policy he crushed those adversaries upon whose temporary annihilation the future progress of England depended —namely, the Barons. It was the weakening of this class that gave England those constitutional opportunities the improvement of which has made her the political leader of the whole world. But he did not crush the Barons in the interest of the future constitutional development of England. He crushed them to gratify his own sense of power, and to ensure his own personal sense of security. For similar reasons he ensured, by a horrible devastation, the unity of England, not because he conceived unity as a high political aim, but because the master of a broken and bleeding but united kingdom is a more considerable personage than the ruler of a disunited and rebellious people.

If we honestly face the facts it is impossible to regard William, after the manner of some historians, as a sort of constitutional lawyer in a coat of mail, carefully directing his efforts for the benefit of future generations. Generations yet unborn were unquestionably benefited, but as the result of the evolutionary law which rewards strong government, not as a result of the intentions of William. His only concern was to put down with a ruthless hand all resistance to his authority. In this connection it is significant to remark that the part of his policy which seems to manifest the modern spirit of clemency and

compromise turned out badly for the country. He wisely recognized the strength of the Church—wisely, that is, for the attainment of his own personal object, peace with security—and determined to enlist the ecclesiastics as his allies. As a direct consequence of this policy the dangerous privileges which he felt compelled to leave to the Church were a constant source of trouble and disorder to the realm for centuries to come.

Finally, that his policy finds its justification, not in his intention, but in its subsequent results, is shown by what ensued when the strong hand was withdrawn. The horrors of anarchy in the reign of Stephen were so great that it was openly asserted that Christ and His angels were asleep. In spite of his ferocious policy, nothing so pathetically eloquent was ever said of the cruelties of William, because almost any brutality on the part of a ruler, so long as it has the order of the kingdom for its object, is preferable to the horrors of anarchy, "the war of each against all," which at such times instantly reappears when the stern restraining hand is withdrawn.

In the idea that government has a natural origin there is, of course, nothing new; but that after its inception nature is continually assisting its development and working for the good of the community independently of individual volition is not usually believed. It is clearly unscientific, however, to ascribe its origin to nature, and to leave the whole of its subsequent development to the conscious ingenuity of man. It is not a sort of accidental phenomenon

originally almost without meaning, of which the individual cleverly makes use for securing his own advantage. When nature takes the trouble to renew as well as to originate government, there is evidence of the working of a cosmic force much more important than that of mere individual self-interest. If the present theory is correct, an important extension must be given to the active interest displayed by nature in the fortunes, not in this case of the individual, but of the social organism. In addition to those evolutional instincts and tendencies which are concerned with the individual organism, and which provide for the sustenance of life, the protection of the individual, and the continuation of the species, the facts adduced seem to suggest that provision has been made, not merely for the origin of government, but for its reorigination in times of threatened weakness or disorder by the automatic operation of a crude but effective principle of human nature. According to this view the continued maintenance of government is something more than an intellectual device of man for securing his own greater comfort, such as the invention of clothing, the use of fire, or the construction of a comfortable house. It is due to a motive of which the results, though of the most far-reaching importance, were not intended by the individual, and it produces benefits which, however acceptable they may be to suffering humanity, were born independently of conscious human initiative. It also follows that the startling changes introduced into the methods of nature by the appearance of the phenomenon of

government are not a departure from the course of nature, as some scientific men believe, but a fulfilment of an inherent tendency of the evolutional process. Sir E. Ray Lankester, for instance, from a study of the contrast between the original method of nature and the softening and palliating devices with which man has succeeded in mitigating the rigour of her initial discipline, feels justified in describing man as "nature's rebel" and "nature's insurgent son." Civilized man, he says, has produced for himself such a special state of things by his rebellion against natural selection and his defiance of nature's prehuman dispositions that he must either get control of the conditions or perish miserably.[1] Certainly, the firmer the control we get of the conditions, the better it will be for the human race. Nor, again, is it possible to deny that there are certain apparent discrepancies between the methods of nature and the aims and principles of man which the evolutional philosophy is unable to explain away. But if the present theory of the origin of government is correct, it is evident that man's defiance of nature's prehuman dispositions, which Sir E. Ray Lankester regards as perhaps the initial step in a fatal downward course, has been forced upon him by nature's own decree. Not only by the origination of government, as was shown in the initial chapter, but by its reorigination when necessary, does nature manifest a definite tendency to alter the conditions of the original struggle for existence. And though this merely means that

[1] Sir E. Ray Lankester's *Kingdom of Man*, p. 31.

one struggle is suspended in order that another struggle—that of the social organism itself—may be more efficiently carried on, yet it shows that the movement is not rebellion, but an authorized feature of an evolutionary process which has improved the moral and material lot of the individual, and which may have still greater changes in store for the benefit of all humanity.

But before proceeding to submit further evidence in support of the theory of the reorigination of government, it is first necessary to deal with a very popular *a priori* argument, sufficient in the opinion of many people to dispose successfully of the largest possible accumulation of conflicting facts. There is one particular prejudice, amounting in many cases to a positive obsession, which must first be removed before the present theory of political evolution can obtain a fair hearing. This is the all-pervading belief in the magical virtues of a certain quality or condition known as "liberty." The conviction that political advance consists entirely in the acquisition of this undefined and apparently undefinable quality of liberty, and that the value of a political system can be accurately measured according to the greater or less amount of this quality which it enshrines, is perhaps the greatest obstacle of all to the just appreciation of the phenomenon of government. We have all been duly taught to ridicule the opening sentence of Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, "Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains." Yet historians and politicians daily commit themselves to expressions of equal absurdity,

when they claim freedom as the chief thing needful in a political constitution. As every change of rulers which is unauthorized, and which does not take place in accordance with the strict rules of the constitutional procedure, is condemned forthwith on this principle as involving a loss of liberty, it is obvious that the view taken of usurpation in this work will not be accepted unless the objections on the score of the infringement of liberty can be first answered. Granting that there is a certain desirable political condition conventionally but improperly known by the term "liberty," it remains true that at certain incessantly recurring periods of the world's history the attainment of liberty, even in this extremely restricted sense, cannot be reconciled with the maintenance of order. And if it is conceded, as it must be conceded, that without order progress is also impossible, the absurdity in which the reckless use of this term lands the historian should be perfectly plain if only this antecedent prejudice could be removed. An examination of the idea of liberty, in strict connection with historical facts and social requirements, is therefore unavoidable before progress can be made with a further development of the argument.

CHAPTER IV

LIBERTY

In the history of politics there is probably no idea which has been better able to elicit the enthusiasm and stimulate the energies of mankind than the idea of liberty. It is a belief almost universally asserted that the influence which has given English political methods their superiority over those of all other countries is the love of freedom, and an examination of the manner in which the political development of the English people has been achieved would seem to offer striking confirmation of this opinion. At all the important epochs of our constitutional history, at all those periods when we have made a definite forward movement in the direction of improved government and improved political relations, we have at the same time, according to the general opinion, made a forward movement in the direction of liberty. Conversely, when we have lost ground, when our political progress has been arrested, or when actual retrogression has set in, this misfortune has been duly ascribed to a temporary eclipse of the ideas of liberty. Those metaphors which describe liberty as the very life-breath of a nation have in them a certain truth. The intellectual or emotional part of a man's nature seems

as incapable of exhilaration and of healthy life without some degree of liberty as the lungs are incapable of expansion and the body of healthy growth without pure air. Or we may say that liberty is to the soul what sunshine is to the body. Deprive the most highly developed organisms of light, and they sooner or later pine or die. Deprive the human mind of all those subtle aspirations which are connoted by the idea of liberty, and it is in time rendered slavish and ignoble, and reduced to the level of those mean creatures which inhabit the dark places of the earth, and by long adaptation have come to prefer a gloomy and sunless to a bright and invigorating condition of existence.

We may admit, then, that the world in general has come to a sound conclusion in placing something called liberty among the essentials of a healthy political existence. Those who are engaged in the moral education of the human race supply mankind by their incessant praise of liberty with a potent inducement to energy. Poets who wish to enlist the highest emotions of their readers in the great cause of human progress, rhetoricians who wish to animate anew the efforts of the unprivileged classes to obtain their share of the powers and enjoyments of life, patriots who wish to nerve their countrymen to maintain the ancient reputation of their fatherland, or to achieve fresh national success, regard the adoration of liberty as the most necessary of all religions. But it yet remains profoundly open to question whether this agreement as to the general value of something called

liberty is sufficiently illuminative to be of practical use in an investigation of the essential features of good government, or sufficiently precise to satisfy the enquirer who wishes to discover with more or less exactitude the part which is played by the different factors in the evolution of a political control. If we wish to know the precise nature of the contribution which the idea of liberty makes to the cause of human progress, we must first get a clearer notion of the meaning of liberty than is generally to be found even in comparatively advanced political textbooks.

The word "liberty" is, in fact, used when referring to constitutional development with a want of precision which renders it almost wholly useless to the sociologist. From the loose expressions which pervade ordinary histories it may be gathered that if States have been conspicuous for "free institutions," or for a development of "the spirit of liberty," they are considered to have contributed a valuable impulse to civilization and to political progress, though the exact method by which this impulse produces its results is left largely to the imagination. If, on the contrary, they have submitted to the tyranny of a King or of an oligarchy, they cannot be reckoned among those peoples whose history throws any light upon the most important problems of government. From the time when the "deathless deeds" of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were embalmed in patriotic song, down to the days of Rousseau with his Social Contract, and Rouget de L'Isle with his "Marseillaise," political literature is pervaded from end to end with the conviction that

there is one great evil which threatens the happiness of mankind—namely, tyranny—and one great remedy for human ills—namely, liberty. History, accordingly, from this fervid if vague point of view, presents the appearance of a mighty struggle between a principle of darkness and a principle of light, the principle of darkness being the spirit of tyranny and the principle of light being whatever contributes to the freedom of the human race. All this is the merest rhetoric, but yet at the same time there must be something behind it. Such a struggle undoubtedly takes place, though whether it has the meaning or is predestined to end in the manner popularly believed is another question. It is the duty of the sociologist and of the scientific historian to discover what is the real nature of this conflict. Some condition there certainly is which answers to the name of liberty, and that condition is essential to the progressive development of the human race. But up to the present day that notion has never been so defined as to give a clue to the real nature of the evolutionary forces at work.

Few people, indeed, have any conception of the astounding vagueness of the word "liberty" until they have attempted to analyze some of the different senses in which it is used. Intelligible sentences might be constructed in which the word connotes almost contradictory ideas. The man who is put in prison and is then set free is said to regain his liberty; liberty, therefore, in this sense is the opposite of durance vile. Yet we find a poem very beautifully conceived and

expressed which turns upon the idea that a man can be in prison and yet be free.

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage."

The word "liberty" is therefore used here paradoxically but beautifully in a sense exactly contrary to that in which it would be used by a prisoner of the ordinary type. Again, the man who retires from all civilized control whatever, and leads the life of a nomad, a hermit, or a backwoodsman, frequently expatiates upon the beauties of liberty, while, on the other hand, the philosopher who submits to the restraints necessarily imposed by complex conditions of society is frequently said to enjoy liberty under a free government. Birds, beasts, and fishes are regarded as the possessors of a liberty denied to man. The happiness of the denizens of that forest which "with its thousand tongues shouted of liberty" is sharply contrasted by Longfellow with the miseries of the hunted slave, while, again, "fishes that wanton in the deep" are considered to enjoy a liberty less enviable than that of an imprisoned Cavalier with a highly powerful imagination.

If we were to take the poets and orators and philosophic enthusiasts at their word, and were literally to believe all that they imply by this reiterated cry for freedom, we should gain an entirely false impression of the manner in which political developments has taken place in the past. We should gather from the assertions of patriotic poets and humani-

tarian philosophers that the most appalling danger that has threatened humanity from the beginning of history has proceeded from a monstrous race called tyrants, inspired solely with hatred for their fellow-men. Fortunately for civilization and the hopes of mankind, however, another type of human beings has always existed called patriots, or reformers, or friends of liberty, and they love their fellow-creatures as much as the other class hate them. They instinctively recognize Kings, aristocracies, later even governing classes, as the born enemies of mankind, and they nobly sacrifice their lives in the attempt to rid the earth of so pernicious a stock. Not until mankind have shaken themselves free from those who attempt in manifold ways to oppose the attainment of "Liberty" will real progress be possible. All that is needed to secure the essential conditions of human happiness is to get rid of the tyrant business in its various forms and make men free.

It might at first sight seem absurd to suppose that rational beings could hold or countenance the belief that the ills of life are amenable to cure by so simple a formula. Yet, ridiculous and extravagant as these views may seem, they are nevertheless to a large extent openly asserted, and are always implicitly contained in the language actually used about liberty, and what is more, the world in general manifests an invincible repugnance to be disillusioned on the subject. If it is suggested that to make everybody free is to give everybody leave to do exactly what they like, and is therefore ridiculous as a proposition or fatal as an

experiment, the answer is usually an uncomprehending stare, or an impatient protest that "of course it doesn't mean that." There is no "of course" about the matter. The words employed do mean that; and no one, least of all responsible politicians and philosophers, have a right to use words the sanity of which depends upon a suppressed stipulation which radically alters their meaning. Yet the habit is so inveterate that to refuse to accept the term "liberty" in the unwarrantable conventional sense is actually regarded as indicating a dishonest or equivocating type of mind. The misuse of the word has, in fact, been so long sanctioned, first by high authority and then by popular usage, that odium is incurred by those who would expose the deception rather than by those who employ it.

If the majority of people were guided by logic and acted up to the full import of the words and phrases which they repeat, all government would have been rendered impossible by this unpardonable extravagance of language, this craze for advertising and extolling as a universal panacea the principle of liberty, which in its natural form has the maddening toxic influence of a deadly drug, and which when substantially diluted and administered with the utmost caution contains only one portion of the secret of human progress. An indefinite amount of evil has, indeed, been thus brought about at various periods in the history of the world, though it is perversely attributed to other causes. Most audiences, however, have been sensible enough to receive the preachings of the

enthusiasts of liberty with the necessary amount of reservation. They have acted on the unacknowledged assumption that though the word "liberty" is used, something else in reality is meant, as will presently be shown, and have instinctively perceived that, however excellently liberty and freedom might serve as battle-cries and as inspiriting suggestions to be embroidered on the banner of progress, it was impossible out of these ideas alone to form a practical theory on which to conduct the business of the State. The idea of liberty is a good tonic, but a bad working diet. In certain doses it gives an excellent stimulus to a political constitution, but to administer it wholesale as daily nourishment would bring about the speedy dissolution of the body politic. It is not every historic audience, however, which has received the panegyrics about freedom with the necessary qualifications. The horrors of the French Revolution are unquestionably to be regarded to a certain extent as the retribution which occasionally follows the reckless use of undefined terms; it was beyond all doubt the thoughtless reiteration of the usual formulas about freedom which led the people from one extravagance to another, and which brought about, amid scenes of carnage, the temporary ruin of the French nation. When Rousseau wrote that "man was born free and everywhere he is in chains," his readers believed what he said; and Rousseau's *Contrat Social* was the spiritual guide of the blood-stained Robespierre. The hideous extravagances of the Russian Revolution are equally an example of the horrors which follow all

undue relaxation of governmental control, and are directly attributable to the fantastic views of the intellectuals, who for the last fifty years have ceaselessly preached that, since much evil existed under the autocratic government of the Czar, all that was needed to secure the millennium was the abolition of the Czardom; a procedure which in all such cases is adopted on the futile assumption that it will release for action the instincts of good and the principles of sound statesmanship, which have hitherto been forcibly prevented from effecting the salvation of an oppressed people.

Every nation can, however, find within its own gates a conspicuous instance of the unhappy consequences which may follow from a too literal interpretation of the dogmas of the romantic school in politics. We have amongst us at the present day, and, we are told, in ever-increasing numbers, a sect who have taken for the literal truth all the extravagances of poets and orators about the beauty and necessity of freedom. That sect is the sect of the anarchists. The origin of the anarchist is generally traced to a reaction against the arbitrary methods of government in force in some countries on the Continent, and though there is no doubt truth in this view, it is not the whole truth. Such an explanation is sufficient to account for their negative sentiments of revolt, but not for their positive principles of action, nor for their theory of the proper aims of political existence, which distinguishes them from any sect that has ever gone before. Lord Rosebery, knowing that all such formidable movements have definite causes, and feeling that there is some-

thing still unexplained about the doctrines of anarchy, once cautiously referred to the anarchists as "that strange sect about which we know so little." Yet the underlying theory of anarchy seems plain when the movement is studied in the light of what has already been said about the intemperate language which reformers throughout history have used. The principles of the anarchists have, as a matter of fact, been deduced from the utterances of the too ardent advocates of liberty, utterances which abound from beginning to end of the literature of political speculation. The anarchists are men who have taken the political rhetoricians at their word. They hear in a thousand different ways and read in a thousand different quarters that liberty is the one great essential of existence; they believe that such assertions cannot have passed current for so many hundreds of years without having been inspired by the vitality of truth itself; and they proceed to act on a belief which is embalmed in some of the finest literature, and which inspires some of the noblest appeals ever made in the history of the world. From these utterances the careless or ignorant reader would vaguely gather that government is an iniquitous pastime of the upper classes, who delight in the oppression of their fellow-creatures, and that, if some have been less iniquitous than others, there have never been any that have been altogether free from wickedness, while the vast majority have committed acts of greater or less atrocity. How can we logically condemn the conduct of the anarchist when we remember that all the fiery, coruscating,

attractive genius of the political world has been occupied for thousands of years in the praise of liberty, while the praise of government has been left to the sober, the practical, the unemotional, or, worse still, to those who are supposed to be criminally interested in its continuation? No poet finds it worth while to celebrate in impassioned terms the value of government or police, while there is probably not one in the world who has not an ode or at least a line to liberty. It is impossible, therefore, to blame a class of men who choose to believe that the destruction of government and the institution of perfect irresponsibility in its place is the best method of realizing the aspirations of those poets, statesmen, and philosophers who have asserted liberty to be the end and aim of political existence. Yet, however deplorable in itself, the extravagance of the anarchist has at least had the effect of showing the logical outcome of the doctrine of liberty in practical politics, and of warning men that under conditions of civilized existence the permissible amount of liberty is in many ways a diminishing rather than an increasing quantity in modern life.

On a close analysis the demand for liberty is in itself not only unrealizable from the political point of view, but full of contradictions even from the philosophical point of view. Why, then, it will be asked, is it made with such extraordinary persistency? The truth would seem to be that it is an echo of a feeling which once held undisputed sway in the dim recesses of a bygone epoch. It is to a large extent an atavistic

longing for the delights of the untrammelled individual existence, spoken of in a previous chapter, which was enjoyed by our human ancestors, and to even fuller extent by their ancestors for countless ages, but which is now no longer possible. It is a mere impulsive and unreflecting cry of revolt against the onerous conditions in which the individual became inexorably involved when the social organism came into existence, and is therefore symptomatic rather of what physicians call "arrested development" than of a superior standard of life and thought. It has already been stated that one of the chief uses of early government has been, broadly speaking, to tame the inherently savage and mutinous nature of man, to impose in a rough way the conditions of civilization and of self-restraint. Yet after the lapse of ages the lesson of subordination has still been imperfectly learnt. Scratch the skin of the disciplined man, and you will find the untamed beast beneath. Place him in circumstances like those of the French or of the Russian Revolution, where governmental protection is removed, and human nature is at once resolved into its primordial elements, leaving scarcely a trace of that advanced morality which we might confidently have looked for as the result of the long years of political subordination. The lowest instincts of manhood seem to reappear in all their primitive and repulsive savagery, and then it requires not merely government, but government of the strongest and even the most ruthless kind to restore the elements of decency. But the benefits of strong rule are

hardly ever recognized as such. To bless the rod of rough though chastening discipline is not one of the readiest instincts of humanity. Though individual subordination is absolutely imperative in the interests of the social organism, yet the necessity of obedience is long felt by a certain portion of even an advanced community as an intolerable restraint. In this fierce resentment of control which pervades all uncivilized, and, indeed, much of civilized human nature, and which resounds throughout the ages, we may discern the persistence of an instinct once necessary for self-preservation, but which is now no longer required in its full strength by the individual in his new circumstances as a member of a social organism. It is to a large extent simply a sort of mental "survival" from a condition of life which has long passed away, the plaintive utterance of the still undisciplined part of human nature. It is a sentimental reversion of the mind to the joys of a savage existence, the resurgence of ancient longing in the human heart, which civilization and government must repress, but which they must not altogether subdue.

Now, though the principles of liberty are doubtless capable of defence from a high metaphysical point of view, such a line of argument belongs to that class of reasoning which suggests improvements in the principles upon which the universe itself is conducted; and though a perfectly defensible course, it leaves the present contention exactly where it was before. A system of liberty might be the best possible condition in a world differently constituted, but according to the

theory here maintained it is out of the question in this world of ours. The philosopher who adopts this standpoint divorces himself at once and entirely from all relation to practical and especially to political life. What possible place in ordinary everyday existence can be found for a philosophy which regards the coercion of the individual as something almost if not quite immoral, and which attempts to ignore the continual necessity of this expedient if social and political life are to go on at all? "The claim to obey only oneself is a claim essential to humanity," says the metaphysician. Such a precept may be true in the high, pure regions of abstract thought, but is worse than useless when applied to the actual, concrete problems of government in history. The proposition that the individual should obey no commands except those which are self-imposed belongs emphatically to the region of metaphysics and not to that of politics; and to prosecute historical studies, as did the late Lord Acton, in the endeavour to prove that "Liberty is not a means to a higher political end, but is in itself the highest political end," is to confuse these two distinct departments of knowledge. As might be expected in an attempt to apply to the study of history principles so ludicrously inappropriate, Lord Acton is unable to maintain even the semblance of consistency, and in a certain passage concedes the very utmost that is required by the present argument: "To bring order out of chaotic ruin, to rear a new civilization and blend hostile and unequal races into a nation, the thing wanted was not liberty, but force,

and for centuries all progress is attached to the action of men like Clovis, Charlemagne, and William the Norman."[1] Thus, with a total absence both of logic and humour, the careful historian Acton, in a vain attempt to escape from the absurdities inherent in the position he has initially assumed, takes refuge in the same astounding conclusion as that which, in a similar predicament, commended itself to the loose and reckless theorist Rousseau, "on le forcera d'être libre."

Even the more sober views of moral philosophy on this subject will be found on examination full of exaggeration and inconsistency. Most thinkers, indeed, believe that even if the attitude adopted by metaphysics is vague, nebulous, and devoid of any practical relation to the needs of actual political life, yet moral philosophy supports the conclusion that liberty is a definite, ascertainable, and necessary human condition. It will be shown, on the contrary, that the language used by moral philosophers upon the general subject of liberty reveals a half-consciousness that there is something wrong in the treatment of this question. Words, phrases, and even ideas, have been remodelled in the attempt to save an impossible situation, and to prove that men can be members of a community and yet be "free." We are told, for instance, that "the liberty of one man leaves off where that of another begins." In other words, the liberty of each man as regards his fellow-citizens is not liberty at all; or may be compared to a permission given to the occupants of a thickly crowded room to move simul-

[1] *History of Freedom*, p. 33.

taneously in what direction and with what velocity they please, provided only that they do not come into contact with one another.

Again, there is another and more elaborate way of avoiding the difficulty. By this method mankind is practically and sensibly told that if it cannot get what it likes, it must endeavour to like what it gets. If it cannot enjoy the liberty it wants, it must persuade itself that what it does get is a superior kind of liberty. In order to achieve this object we are told that what is ordinarily called liberty is not worth having, and by a bold and cleverly fallacious method of reasoning we are asked to believe that therefore it is not liberty at all. A distinction is set up between liberty in the ordinary sense and what the philosopher is pleased to term "real liberty." In moral philosophy it is customary to say that the man who is really free is not the man who is at liberty to gratify all his passions, but the man who has no passions to gratify, or who at least is able to resist them. In political philosophy it is affirmed that real freedom consists in voluntary subjection to the will of the State in those matters which are for the good of the community. In other words, your freedom amounts to a freedom of choice whether you will put the chains on yourself or have them put on by the community, a piece of logical legerdemain which can only be pardoned in consideration of the desperate exigences to which those who use it are reduced. Even John Stuart Mill's famous *Essay on Liberty* is merely an inspiriting address which lays down no coherent system of political action.

Like his predecessor Rousseau, he inspires a certain readiness to resist unjustifiable interference, he infuses into our minds a determination never to let ourselves be made the sport of irresponsible authority. But with this exhortation to defiance, and with an insistence upon the right to say or publish what one thinks fit (a right so subject to every kind of limitation that it cannot possibly be called freedom), the matter ends. Nor is he even consistent. Public opinion, the moral pressure of the community upon the individual, he condemns as tyrannous in one place, while he recommends its use or even regards it as indispensable in another. His work, like other dissertations upon liberty, must be classed among valuable moral and political exhortations, which evoke a useful spirit in the human breast, but which do not add to our scientific knowledge of the subject of government.

From these considerations it would seem evident that those who employ the word "liberty" to describe a desirable political condition are using an "impostor term," which begs the whole question by mentally reserving the enjoyment of freedom for those alone who have reached the requisite standard of perfection. To assert in actual words that freedom is the rightful privilege of the whole of the individuals of a State, when the real meaning is that it should be carefully withheld from all but an intelligent and self-controlled minority, is a gross misuse of language. Nor, unfortunately, does the mischief end here, since when verbal dishonesty is encouraged with reference to matters of the deepest human interest, a terrible

reckoning may some day be exacted. The logical quibble which is so clever and so popular in the region of political fancy becomes a deadly snare in the region of political fact. As might have been foreseen, this mental reservation which excludes from the enjoyment of liberty undesirable specimens of humanity does not take effect in real life. Those who are wholly unfit for freedom demand and obtain this privilege together with the rest, and that which in words perhaps amounts to a mere confusion of thought becomes, when translated into practice, a tragedy of wickedness and crime.

Accordingly, a certain alternative is presented to politicians and to political philosophers. Either they must give up talking in a vague way about the immeasurable value of liberty to the human race in the past, present, or future, and must define their meaning with greater accuracy, or they must enter the ranks of the anarchists and Bolsheviks. Throughout history they have helped to unbalance the political judgment of mankind by encouraging the belief that the magic of liberty can create a new heaven and a new earth, and they ought in common honesty to join the poor dupes who have taken them at their word, and whom they have so grossly deceived. If they refuse this alternative, they are logically and morally bound to adopt the other, and to explain that on every occasion in past history when political enthusiasts have passionately called for liberty, unless they have been referring to actual slaves or prisoners, they have either been making a pernicious demand, or have been

using language which is dangerously misleading, and which has ever since tended to obscure the true functions of government. From the point of view of the actual political life of the individual, liberty—that is, freedom from control—means nothing whatever; it is incapable of realization, and is, besides, practically unknown in the whole course of human evolution from the time when the Darwinian form of the struggle for existence was finally terminated by the appearance of government.

The conclusion, then, to which the previous considerations lead is as follows: There is an exaggerated cry for liberty resounding through history, a demand so utterly in excess of what is possible that its fulfilment would at any time have implied the ruin of the human race. This incessant reiteration of an inadmissible request is in part due to the impatience of human nature at the imposition of a control which, though old enough in history, is a comparatively recent feature in the evolution of organic beings. This explanation, however, though true as far as it goes, does not go far enough. Something more is needed to account for this continual conflict between the demand for liberty on the one hand and the necessity of strong control on the other; some further explanation is necessary of this perpetual antithesis between a government which is continually liable to exceed its rights and a community which continually exaggerates its demands. The opposition between those who seek to impose a rule, more or less autocratic, and those who demand, at least in words, freedom from all

restraint, continues perpetually throughout history. Accordingly, an interesting problem at once presents itself for solution. If government is, as stated in a previous chapter, a device of nature necessary in the interests of the social organism, why is there such a determined movement in favour of liberty? and why, if something known by the name of liberty is essential to progress, does nature permit or encourage this deliberate opposition on the part of government?

When we are confronted with this dilemma the answer is that this apparent contradiction is typical of one of the methods by which nature seems to work in the sphere of human evolution. We seem here to be witnessing the operation of two great laws in evolution, the one tending to ensure a political control, and the other tending to prevent that control from becoming too autocratic. And though these laws present the spectacle of a ceaseless conflict, this antagonism nevertheless results in the attainment of moderate and constitutional government. Notwithtanding that the cry for liberty is unmeaning and pernicious in itself, yet when modified by opposition and subjected to strict limitations it has exercised a beneficial effect upon the evolution of government. The craving for liberty is, in fact, useful only on condition that it is kept in check by another and an opposite tendency which establishes a strong governing power. It thus in turn becomes an influence which serves as a wholesome corrective to the overbearing pretensions of early autocracy. Inductive observation in other cases besides the one under discussion proves that it is

the method of evolution to use conflicting tendencies in order to produce a given result, and to arrive at a certain mean by the opposition of two extremes. Strong government unopposed means tyranny, while liberty unrestrained means anarchy. If, however, these two tendencies are confronted with one another, and a sort of reconciliation or working agreement is effected between the opposing principles, the result is an orderly and progressive polity. It is then possible to produce a race of men who may be curbed without being cowed, and to develop a type of individual who is obedient to political control without at the same time being servile. Since the history of all but a few successful nations shows us how very possible it is for human nature to be so crushed by cruel governmental methods as to be deprived of the energy necessary for subsequent progress, the usefulness under these circumstances of even an exaggerated demand for liberty will easily be perceived. It serves at one and the same time to lower the extravagant pretensions of the monarchy or of the ruling classes, and to foster that activity, originality, and fearless courage which are the necessary ingredients of an energetic national disposition. According to the view here maintained, therefore, the value of liberty is strictly conditional, and its fruitfulness has resulted only from combination with its opposite.

Such seems to be the evolutional history of the cry for liberty. What the improvement in political life falsely called liberty in reality is has still to be considered. It was admitted at the beginning of the

present chapter that something called liberty has been productive of beneficial consequences in English political history. If we are to discover the real nature of this new constitutional arrangement, it is plain that the method of investigation must be changed. The futility of attempting to discover the truth by an examination of the way in which philosophers and politicians use the term has already been demonstrated. It will now be shown that the more hopeful method of obtaining light on the problem is by an appeal to the actual facts of history. The people demand liberty, and there are occasions in history when we are told that the demand is realized. This we know to be untrue: they do not and never can get liberty. But what is it that they do get? In what does the political improvement which goes by the name of liberty really consist? For, after all, the chief question in an inductive enquiry like the present is not what statesmen, reformers, or the body of the people may think they mean by "liberty," but what really happens as a result of the agitation for "liberty." The practical political consequences of what is called the struggle for liberty are obviously of much greater importance in the history of the evolution of government than the most ingenious speculations as to the possible meaning of the term. If the study of the question is undertaken from the inductive rather than the deductive point of view, and with the object of discovering the actual everyday results, all the mystery at once disappears. If this merely common-sense method is pursued, it will be found that when

liberty is realized nothing more philosophical or metaphysical happens than that government is more systematically directed in the interests of the people as a whole.

It was shown in the previous chapter that at a certain period of a nation's history the question arises whether the government exists for the sake of the people or the people for the sake of the government. If we look to history to discover what kind of political condition follows a so-called realization of "liberty," we find merely a stricter enforcement of the view that government exists for the sake of the people. Yet so enamoured are historians and philosophers of the idea of freedom that they are determined to place to its credit all advantageous political change, and they do so by means of a most audacious *petitio principii*, which enables them to assume that all efforts to improve government are efforts in the direction of liberty. If, however, we describe revolutions which substitute good government for bad as having contributed to the freedom of the nation, we are making use of a merely conventional expression which bears little or no relation to the actual facts. If we meant exactly what we said when affirming that reformers who effect beneficial political changes give the people freedom, we ought to imply that they abolish all governmental control, and give the people complete liberty of action. But the actual condition of things which this much misused phrase is somehow supposed to describe is something entirely different. What really happens is that any interference with the life of the individual,

instead of being the result of some royal caprice or of a vicious inclination for self-indulgence, is now only permitted on the ground that it tends to secure the greater prosperity of the nation. But the actual interference does not cease. The controlling power of government is not abolished: it is merely replaced by another controlling power, presumably better. Nor can we escape from the difficulty by asserting that, even if the word is used somewhat loosely, the outcome of the work of reforming patriots is to impose fewer restrictions on the individual than before, and therefore to give him more liberty. No such proposition could for a moment be supported from the facts of later history, though it may have a certain truth with regard to the abolition of a mere savage or brutal tyranny in earlier times. There is indeed a difference in the character of the measures which are enacted by a wise reforming government, a difference which, as we shall see, is very important; but the attainment of actual freedom, or even of a relatively greater freedom, is no necessary consequence of reform. The pressure of government is not necessarily lightened except in the cases where a merely murderous or vicious miscreant is dethroned. The change which takes place ensures by legal enactment, not that there shall be no political restraints, or even fewer, but only that they shall be duly authorized because they are demonstrably necessary in the highest interests of the community. To prosecute a successful demand for liberty is, when judged by actual political results, nothing else than to enforce a more effective control

over the general character of the government, and to secure the reasonable condition that commands or burdens imposed upon the subject shall not be the outcome of a merely arbitrary love of power, but shall be necessitated by reasons of public order and safety.

In all this, however, there is no attainment of liberty in any accurate sense. The removal of all restrictions except those which have the public interest in view does not make the individual free; nor is it freedom if restraints previously imposed by an autocratic monarch like Charles I. are now imposed by a popularly elected Parliament. A change in the authority by whom commands are issued cannot lessen their actual weight, though it may alter their meaning, nor is a restraint less of a restraint because it is now known to be imposed in the real interests of the community, whereas formerly it was enforced by the arbitrary authority of the King. The difference between the burdens laid upon the individual by a self-opinionated autocrat and those imposed by a wise representative Parliament is not a question of greater or less liberty, but is seen to depend entirely on the motive which inspires the restrictions in either case. Coming from the King, the same burdens may be bitterly resented; coming from a popularly elected Parliament, they may be borne with the utmost cheerfulness; but liberty has clearly nothing to do with the matter, for in both cases it is equally infringed. The ship-money which Charles I. exacted with the honest intention of securing the safety of the nation, a proceeding which has, foolishly enough, been seized upon

as a typical instance of English tyranny, was identical to all intents and purposes with the ship-money which Parliament now exacts for precisely the same purpose. Charles, however, seemed to lay more stress on his personal right to demand this money than on the public necessity for so doing, and it is better in the interests of good government that the necessary taxes should be exacted by an elected Parliament on the authority of the people rather than by an autocratic King on his own authority. Once again, however, it must be pointed out that there is here no question of liberty, but only of better government. However willingly an imposition may be endured in the interests of the community, that does not make it freedom, except in the eyes of those who are bent on reading into the facts of history a conclusion in conformity with their *a priori* assumptions.

The essence of all similar transactions, whenever they occur in history, at the time of Magna Charta, at the Revolution of 1688, or at the various crises in the political evolution of the Greeks and Romans, is precisely the same. The real object of political control is brought into greater relief; its true meaning is made more clear; it is modified so as to produce better results. The consequence is that the prospect of political welfare is increased, but not the amount of individual liberty, except in one particular to be presently mentioned, which as a matter of fact has never yet received recognition from the professed admirers of liberty. The conclusion, therefore, as gathered from an inductive study of history, is as

follows: Whatever it is that people think they want when they seek to win political liberty, what they actually get is merely better government—unless, indeed, they happen to secure a considerable measure of what they rhetorically demand, and in that case liberty proves their ruin.

To go a little deeper, the problem of liberty, so far as it has any practical political meaning, is the problem of the interaction between the will of the people and the phenomenon of government. Though the will of the people is not concerned in the actual origin of government, in a rudimentary form it can be traced almost from the beginning. The cruellest tyrant who ever existed does not depend for his power upon himself alone. His authority and influence is largely derived from the fact that he has, though merely by terrorism, wrung from his subjects their consent, and in consequence absorbs into his own personality, as it were, the powers of the whole community. The first rudimentary traces of the fact that even the most autocratic government does not exist entirely in its own right or rely entirely on its own power is to be found in the necessity under which a tyrant is placed of carrying the people along with him, whether by their leave or without it. Where the tyranny is more benevolent and the consent of the people to the exercise of autocratic authority is more willing, the proportion which they contribute to the sum total of kingly power is greater still. The fact that the consent of the governed is indispensable to the Sovereign, even though it is enforced and un-

willing, is a proof that the alliance between the government and the people, even in cases where such an idea would be scornfully rejected by the ruler, is nevertheless founded in the essential nature of things. Ruler and subject are always actually or virtually, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, allies. The national achievement of the leader, however much his own powers of mind may have brought about, is a composite product, to which the community also has contributed an essential part. Sooner or later the community becomes conscious of this truth, and insists that any contributions it may make to the increase of the royal power, or any service and homage it may render to the royal person, are given only on the implied understanding that they are necessary for the common welfare. According to the strange convention which is the subject of the present chapter, any infringement of this actual or implied contract is called an offence against liberty. To utilize the powers of the community for some purpose not justified by the interests of the community is the essence of the great political injustice popularly described as an infringement of the liberties of the people.

If we abandon the profitless enquiry into the meaning of the term "liberty," or the equally profitless attempt to show that the idea itself either has been or can be realized, and restrict ourselves to an inductive examination of the political results which have actually taken place as the outcome of the so-called struggle for liberty, we find that if it succeeds it brings about certain changes in the relation between government and

the individual which contribute to the greater strength and prosperity of the State. These may be stated as follows:

1. That no restriction shall be imposed or policy undertaken by government which is not in the final interests of the nation as a whole.

2. That no authority shall be wielded by a class or an individual merely in the interests of that class or individual, but only in the interests of the nation as a whole.

3. That the powers of the nation shall not be utilized except for the national good.

4. To these may be added an incidental consequence which comes into operation of its own accord when all arbitrary powers of government have been abolished, and which, though hitherto unrecognized, is perhaps the most important of all the elements of "political freedom." This is the instant gravitation of the ablest men to the ranks of government, and the consequent improvement in the political prospects of the nation. Put in the form of a stipulation, this vital condition of governmental success may be stated as follows: "Political ability shall be as far as possible the sole qualification for office." Into the magnificent results which follow the unimpeded right of talent to direct the policy of the State it is unnecessary to enter in the present place, since they have been fully described elsewhere.[1] Just as in moral philosophy liberty seems to mean, not what it says,

[1] See the author's *Government by Natural Selection.*

but the production of an atmosphere in which the growth of good is possible, so in politics it is equivalent to the production of conditions which favour improved government and which permit the genius and energies of gifted individuals to be devoted to the service of the State.

If, then, these requirements are carried out, it would seem that "the liberties of the people are secured." That this, however, is a merely conventional formula is shown by the fact that, even where these conditions are realized, man can enjoy only so much actual liberty as is left after the subordination has been effected of the interests of the individual to the just and necessary claims of the State.

There is one important point, however, that still remains to be determined. In what do the just and necessary claims of the State consist? The answer to this question has already been suggested in a previous chapter, where the growth of social organisms and their subjection to the universal law of antagonism was discussed. When it was ordained that man could live only as a member of a community which was engaged in fierce rivalry with other communities; when he became attached, so to speak, to a larger body upon which the most onerous obligations of self-defence were laid, from that moment onward the demand for individual freedom, as conceived by the metaphysicians and Lord Acton, was rendered completely impossible. When the State is in danger the obligation of the individual to assist in the defence of his country is paramount over all private rights, and

it is the duty of government to enforce that obligation. We have, indeed, been long and carefully educated in the belief that the safety of a nation is best assured by this very principle of liberty which brutal governments seek to infringe, and that there is no military efficiency like that which is provided by the free inclination of a brave people. Yet the abject surrender of free Russia in 1918 and the utter failure of the voluntary system in England in 1916 afford a sufficient commentary on the assertion that the real strength of a nation is in proportion to the liberty given to the individuals.

Again, the real point at issue in this question is frequently obscured by the assumption that if the coercive measures of a government are offensive to a majority of individuals, such measures stand condemned by this very fact. But the inclinations of the individual are not the proper measure of the authority of government. If the original function and the initial duty of government is, as the present theory holds, the protection of the community, then the first step which government is bound to take for this purpose is to disregard, if necessary, the wishes of the individual, and to suppress those individual longings and tendencies which would render national cohesion impossible. Accordingly, the just and necessary claims of the State include whatever measures may be required to secure national cohesion and increase national strength in the face of actual or possible danger. Granting that the right of the individual to self-development exists, granting even that it may be

the ideal end of existence, it is a right which, according to the present arrangements of nature, must stop at the point where it begins to render the individual indisposed for the performance of his duties to the State. Because States, at least up to the present day, have been inexorably involved in a system of physical international rivalry, the interests of the State must, in the eyes of clear-sighted, honest, and courageous rulers, inevitably take the precedence of the wishes of the individual, and even, if necessary, of his desire for self-development. Those statesmen or political philosophers who incessantly assert that the development of the individual is the ideal end of political existence, and who by their praise of liberty urge the individual in the pursuit of this ideal, do so in defiance of the inexorable necessities with which the social organism is confronted. They encourage a tone of thought and a habit of life which leads the individual, under the plea of liberty, to deny his obligations to the State even when involved in the gravest danger. The prolongation of the life of the community (which carries with it the welfare and happiness of the individuals of which it is composed) can only be secured by the suppression of all antisocial individual tendencies; and the desire for liberty, in the minds of a majority of individuals, is the most antisocial tendency of all. Nor is the general validity of this argument in the least impaired by the fact that some governments have pursued the subordination of the individual to a point where such a policy has defeated its proper object, and where the

strength of the nation has been lessened rather than increased through the resulting loss of individual initiative. Governmental control should be and can be so conducted that the self-reliance of the individual is not diminished, while at the same time his devotion to the State is increased. Those governments are ignorant of their duties, or have cravenly omitted to fulfil them, who have failed to convince those committed to their care that the liberty of the individual ceases at the point where it endangers the safety of the community.

That injustice is involved for the individual need not be denied: not man, however, as the advanced political theorists would have us believe, but some higher power, is answerable for that injustice. The difficulty may perhaps be modified in the distant future either by the disappearance of the phenomenon of the State, or by the evolution of a type of citizens so perfect that they willingly impose upon themselves the restrictions and self-sacrifice necessitated by the requirements of the situation. But the first contingency would only bring the delusive liberty of free movement in a thickly crowded space, since the world would still be full of rival personalities. In the second contingency the condition realized would not be liberty at all, but resignation.

If, then, we bring down this notion of liberty from its lofty *a priori* dwelling in the clouds, and subject it to the sound and reasonable test of its practical possibility and usefulness, we find that not liberty but some negation of liberty has been, and is still, the

condition of the advancement of the human race. And this is proved by three considerations.

In the first place, as was shown in the initial chapter, the growth of the gentler virtues at the earliest stages of human evolution would have been impossible except under the protection of a government which denies liberty to the more brutal characters. If we cease to palter with the meaning of words, liberty under the present conditions of human nature never can secure what it is supposed to secure, the triumph of good. The central feature of evolution from the moral point of view is the fact that the original impulses of man's lower nature are stronger than the later impulses of his higher nature, which are able to thrive only when the conditions are forcibly changed in their favour. The most original impulse of organic beings is to secure self-advantage at any cost. Where there is no controlling and contradicting power, or where this power is removed, this original impulse is predominant. Behind all questions of morality there is the question of survival and self-preservation. Government alone ensures the survival of the individual while he is inaugurating a code of conduct which would otherwise involve his own destruction. Liberty, therefore, which is popularly supposed to secure the triumph of good, would in its literal and proper acceptation secure the triumph of evil. The philosophical casuistry which tries to prove the contrary by fallaciously restricting the scope of the application of liberty is brutally exposed by the terrible revelations of actual experi-

ment. Liberty in practice is chaos, bloodshed, and ruin. To attempt to obscure the issue and hide the truth by the assertion that such a state of things is not liberty, but anarchy or Bolshevism, is a piece of sophistry which does not avail to alter the inexorable realities of the situation.

In the second place the advantages of what is conventionally but inaccurately known as political liberty can only be realized by a people capable of exercising a certain amount of self-restraint, and this capacity for self-restraint, as will be abundantly shown in the course of the present work, is solely and entirely the result of strong, though possibly judicious, government in the past. The popular superstition that such a capacity for self-restraint is best created by the concession of liberty, and that the backward condition of a State like Russia is due to the repression by an unsympathetic government of noble instincts which need only to be set free in order to ensure the permanent welfare of the community, is gravely inaccurate. Fitness to enjoy liberty, as the cant expression goes, is not the result of the concession of liberty, but of a careful combination of freedom with restriction, in which restriction still predominates. Granting that there comes a time when the restraints of autocratic governments should be removed, yet, unless even this is done with excessive care, the condition of the country is rendered worse than before. If, however, the change of the constitution is effected with intelligence and deliberation, the individual profits by an increased self-respect and the State by the accession

of the ablest men to the ranks of government. But that this cautious recognition and adoption of improved methods of government should be termed "the realization of liberty" is an absurdity which would long ago have been exposed had not the phrase in the course of successive generations acquired an hypnotic influence with which the public is unable to dispense, and which statesmen now find it dangerous to dispute. Meanwhile the fact remains that even where real liberty does not end in bloodshed and indiscriminate slaughter, as in the French and Russian Revolutions, it means permission to pursue individual inclinations and tendencies which are by nature antisocial, and which lead to the ruin of the State.

In the third place, the liberty of the individual cannot be profitably or even intelligibly discussed unless we take into account the relation of communities to one another. We have to deal with an individual whose existence depends upon the safety of the larger body to which he is attached, and in whose quarrelsome peculiarities he is inexorably involved. When due weight has been accorded to the fact that throughout the whole of history the relation of States has been one of incessant conflict, and that a community has no means of self-defence except by calling upon its individual members, it is clear that the necessity laid upon the social organism of providing for its own safety forbids the concession of freedom to the individual. The only liberty which the individual can claim is so much as is left after complete provision has been made for the well-being of the community.

With these conclusions we may now return to the interrupted argument of the previous chapter. The part there attributed to the phenomenon of usurpation in the evolution of a political control cannot be regarded as inadmissible merely on the ground that it contradicts an idea so elusive in the region of political thought, and so impossible in the region of political practice, as the idea of liberty. All government is an offence against "liberty," and the earlier the government the greater the offence. It has been shown that in its practical consequences liberty is equivalent to good government. The successful assertion of a claim to liberty means nothing else in practice than a successful realization of the conditions of good or better government. The present theory, therefore, can from this point of view only be discredited if it is shown that usurpation habitually introduces worse government. This volume, however, is largely composed of instances which prove that usurpation actually introduces better government because it introduces stronger government, strength being the first great requisite in savage times or during periods of political turbulence; and it introduces stronger government because, if it is the result of a real contest for power, only a strong man can emerge as winner.

It may, however, be urged that even if this point is conceded, yet usurpation is a phenomenon so accidental, so arbitrary, and so uncertain as to merit no attention from the sociological enquirer.

With regard to this objection history shows that

the reorigination of government by the struggle for supremacy, under ordinary conditions of political unrest, when the course of events is not disturbed from outside, or the natural result prevented by armed foreign intervention, is so habitual, so automatic, even so inevitable, that it is worthy to be regarded as a phenomenon of the first importance and to take its place among the undoubted laws of nature.

CHAPTER V

THE REORIGINATION OF GOVERNMENT IN THE ROMAN REPUBLIC AND EMPIRE

To a mind which could approach the subject unbiased by the preconceptions which have been discussed in the last two chapters, the history of the Roman nation from the time of Sulla would be found rich with evidence in favour of the theory which forms the subject of the present work. We can there observe, invested with a grandeur inseparable even from the discords and disasters of this great people, the most effective examples known to history of the reorigination of government, and of the working of that natural law which by restoring political subordination preserves unimpaired the first requisite of human progress, automatically achieving, where philosophers and statesmen have failed, the rehabilitation of a ruined State. This, however, is not the lesson which the change from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire conveys to a certain class of minds. Since it cannot be denied that the suppression of a misgoverning and insubordinate oligarchy, and the conversion of the ravaged colonial dominions into a well-governed and contented empire, was attended with a change in the status of the Roman citizen which is usually deplored as a loss of liberty, the world has frequently

been taught to regard one of the most instructive and significant episodes in all political evolution as merely a disheartening backward step in the history of the Roman people. Those to whom liberty is the aim and end of political endeavour regard the blow which was thus supposed to have been dealt to the sacred cause of freedom as very far from being compensated by the subordination of the lawless members of the senatorial oligarchy to an efficient imperial control. There have, however, always been thinkers who were prepared to assert that the usurpation of Cæsar and Octavian was at once inevitable and salutary. "Under the oligarchy the provinces were reduced to a condition of hopeless misery which it seems impossible for any government ever to surpass: outrages, rapes, murders with or without the form of law, were of daily occurrence."[1] The Senate was a "picture of faithlessness towards its own as well as the opposite party, of inward inconsistency, of the most pitiful impotence, of the meanest selfishness—an unsurpassed ideal of misrule."[2] Under the Empire, as we know, all this was happily changed. The provinces were no longer subject to the caprice of a ceaseless succession of irresponsible senatorial tyrants. For the first time in history the Roman Empire as a whole enjoyed the blessings of respectable government. The aristocrats of Rome, it is true, living as they did in the immediate vicinity of the Emperors, sorely felt the loss of that licence to misgovern and freedom to oppress which they called their liberty.

[1] Mommsen, Abridged, p. 510. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

Occasionally, too, the horrors which they or their predecessors in senatorial misrule had inflicted on the nations submitted to their care were now inflicted on them. Such reflections make it clear that the institution of the Empire, coming when it did, has a claim to the consideration of those who decline to admit that questions of justice and good government are entirely negligible factors as compared with the shadowy *a priori* requirements of liberty and freedom.

The rule of the Empire brought greater happiness and order to the civilized world in general, and to as many of the barbarians as were amenable to Roman discipline. The constitutional arrangements of the oligarchy had irretrievably broken down in the face of the problems of extended government with which they were now confronted, and the alternatives were the institution of an imperial government such as that which actually arose, or the continuance of an anarchy more desperate than any that had been seen in the civilized world for centuries. If we are to believe that nothing could compensate for the loss by the senators of their individual freedom of action, then we must also believe that the agonized cry of the oppressed provincials was a necessary and grateful offering on the altar of the goddess of liberty. Granting that something was lost in the transition from rule by oligarchy to rule by a single personal will, something which is of value in political evolution, and of which the nature will be fully discussed in this and the succeeding chapter, yet the gain both to generations then existing and to those for centuries to come

immeasurably outweighed the loss. While the advent of the Empire was thus one of the most beneficial changes ever introduced at a particular period of history, according to the present view the circumstances attending its introduction have an even more important application. They afford in addition one of the most signal instances of the method by which a dangerous anarchy, which has broken all moral bounds and defies all constitutional restraints, is brought to an end by a control which is established in obedience to the same primitive instinct which originally instituted government.

The two great requisites of national success under fixed government are a sufficient supply of talented individuals for the chief offices of State, and an efficient political assembly to supervise their activities and to provide that the benefits of government shall be justly distributed to all. Furnished with a never-ending succession of great men—because the type of the constitution was such as to encourage in a marvellously successful way their entry into political life—the Republic nevertheless failed through the grave deficiencies of the senatorial assembly, which acted in the interests, not of the whole nation, but of its own class alone. The Romans under the Republic enjoyed in full measure one of the conditions of national success: their supply of great men was continuous and inexhaustible. But the secondary condition, that of an honest and efficient Senate, was wanting; and this caused the ruin of the government and almost of the nation, because—as the present author has elsewhere

pointed out—the most commanding talent cannot be trusted to secure the permanent welfare of the community unless the assembly prevents the individual from utilizing his powers and opportunities for a purely selfish purpose, and secures the subordination of his ambition to the widest interests of the State. But this was exactly what the Senate failed to do, and as the general discontent increased, ambitious individuals began to take affairs into their own hands; or, to state the matter in terms of the present theory, the struggle for supremacy recommenced, and continued intermittently until the triumph of Julius Cæsar, and later of Augustus, showed what were the new conditions under which alone the continuance of the great world-State was possible.

The failure of the Gracchi in their measures of reform had left things even worse than before, and had, in consequence, facilitated the domination of Sulla. Sulla, however, in spite of his boldness, was not statesman enough in reality to grapple successfully with the immense difficulties of his task. In the first rank as a General, he was politically incapable of devising a constitution which, like that of Augustus, would stand the test of time. In any case he did not make the experiment, but as a convinced aristocrat merely aimed at placing things as near as he could to the point at which they stood before the Gracchan revolution. "His task was to restore, not to create," and was therefore doomed to failure. As a consequence anarchy resumed its course. "The material benefits which a State exists to confer: security of

frontier, undisturbed peaceful intercourse, legal protection and regulated administration, began all of them to vanish for the whole of the nations united in the Roman State."[1] Many earnest conservatives, however, still cling to the conviction that the mischief was not beyond repair. It was hard indeed for Romans to believe that the constitution which had given to their country unrivalled greatness was now hopelessly inadequate to deal with the changed circumstances with which it found itself confronted, and there were reputable statesmen, besides the generality of the selfish oligarchy, who manifested a desperate adhesion to constitutional forms which the expansion of the State had rendered valueless or pernicious. Cato and Cicero and Brutus were hopeful, as long as hope was possible, loyally and pathetically convinced that union could be brought about between irreconcilable factions, and that the ancient vigour of the glorious Republic could once more be renewed. *Dis aliter visum.* The evil was beyond the cure of deliberate constitutional contrivance. Under such circumstances as those which followed the breakdown of senatorial administration a rivalry for power begins among the leading men and continues until one of them has achieved a definite mastery. Nature recommences at the beginning, and through the medium of a strong if selfish ruler secures the first requisite of national safety—namely, political subordination.

In dealing with this portion of Roman history we are dealing with a human drama in which events take

[1] Mommsen, Abridged, p. 352.

place on a scale of almost majestic grandeur. A feeling as of the fateful decision of tremendous destinies, which tragedians such as Shakespeare produce by an effort of art, is here produced by the mere power of the primitive forces and human instincts which are at work. There begins a struggle for supremacy, the greatest ever known in the history of humanity, corresponding in its intensity with the individual genius of the intellectual giants that are engaged, and the magnitude of the interests that are at stake. The prize of this contest was the empire of the world, and none dare aspire but those who felt in themselves a genius commensurate with the world-wide obligations which victory would entail. The qualities needed to retain supremacy were greater even than those required to achieve it. Characteristics rarely combined in a single human being were necessary on the one hand to conciliate honest malcontents and to lull the vain longings of loyal and passionate hearts; on the other, to teach both proletariat and oligarchy alike that they who once were masters of the world had now a master of their own. Nevertheless, the far-reaching powers necessary for the performance of this almost superhuman task were found to be forthcoming in the genius of Cæsar and of Augustus. But while laying due stress upon the personality of the exceptional men who now came to the front, we need not fall into the error already criticized of ascribing impossibly exalted motives to the actors in this drama of human rivalry, or of believing that the beneficial consequences of their achievement were present in the

form of motives which inspired their enterprise. The antecedents of Cæsar and Augustus, but especially of Cæsar, seem clearly to show that, though both may have subsequently exhibited governing qualities fully commensurate with their task, love of power and the desire for personal supremacy was in either case the primary motive. The point is that in pursuing their own personal aims they were also pursuing the course which was calculated to restore as great a degree of health as was possible for a State whose vitality was already seriously impaired. Thus, in accordance with principles to which reference has already been made, it was the first concern of Augustus and his successors to terminate the unsettled condition of things which had facilitated their own rise to power; and this project, which was dictated by the most obvious considerations of self-interest, at the same time conferred a benefit on humanity by putting an end to the orgy of political and military licence which threatened the peace of the world.

But more was needed for the attainment of this end than the mere restoration of law and order. To restore law and order is frequently merely to repress symptoms, while leaving untouched the fundamental causes of unrest. From the point of view of practical statecraft the main thing was to prevent the recurrence of a fresh struggle for power. The causes which had produced the recent outbreak must, if possible, be removed before a newly made Emperor could feel himself safe upon the throne, or the future prosperity of the Empire be to any extent assured. And since the

measures which were taken with this object are precisely those which have brought most obloquy on the Empire, and which render it difficult to believe that it was under the circumstances a forward and not a backward step in the history of world government, it becomes necessary to examine them.

If our only test of the value of a constitution is the amount of "liberty" which it permits, we are naturally unable to see any advantage at all in the advent of the Empire. It is a painful episode in the history of mankind, during which the only tolerable ideals of life and government suffer dethronement and eclipse. To those, however, who have grasped the fact that the essential requirement at certain periods of history is not the culture of "the frail plant liberty," but the restoration of order as the only condition on which a certain measure of vitality and efficiency can be restored to the body politic, the action of the Emperors and the constitution of the Empire will present itself in a very different light. All those changes which seem to contrast so unfavourably with the original constitution of the Republic, and which seem to the enthusiast of liberty to brand the Empire as a mere instrument for inflicting degradation, were in reality measures absolutely necessary to reimpose order, to remove the causes of the previous anarchy, and to prevent a renewal of the struggle for supremacy.

The first of these causes which had undermined the stability of the Republic was, as we have seen, the partisan feeling and class bias of the Senate, which by arousing universal discontent among the non-sena-

torial orders had undermined respect for supreme power, and had thus opened the way for the struggle for supremacy. The Senate was incapable of acting in the interests of the Empire, and was, indeed, literally unfit to be entrusted with the duties which nominally fell to its care. The first business of a wise and just as well as of a cautious Emperor was to reduce the powers and pretensions of an ancient and once noble body that had now become notoriously corrupt. No step could in reality have been more thoroughly justified, yet none has been more bitterly resented.

It is, however, the next two causes of unrest and the steps that were taken to prevent their renewal which most concern us here. All early republics, as we shall see later, perhaps also even those of the present day, have this inherent cause of weakness, that only a kind of self-denying ordinance prevents the most powerful citizens from attempting to usurp the supreme power. There is in every republic a topmost seat, as it were, which remains unoccupied by consent; but so remains only as long as the self-denying ordinance is observed. There is no greatest citizen whom all acknowledge as such. The president of a republic is by hypothesis only *primus inter pares;* he inspires no personal awe, and is invested with no hereditary prestige to warn the usurper aside; and this is dangerous if anything should occur to make the self-denying ordinance no longer seem binding. Therefore, in a republic grave political discontent almost always leads to an attempt upon the supreme power. Under these circumstances

it was incumbent on the Emperor to endeavour to invest the seat of government with a majesty and reverence which would render it as far as possible safe from assault. The dignity of constituted authority must be in some way strengthened in order to remove the temptation which is inspired by a glorious possession weakly held. Consequently, it was the justifiable policy of the new rulers to foster the idea that the imperial throne was a permanent and indeed a Divine institution, far removed beyond the reach of the ambition of mortal man. The payment of Divine honours to the holder of imperial power was encouraged by Emperors as clear-sighted as Augustus and Tiberius, not from a contemptible craving for human adulation, but as a means of furthering the social and political welfare of the people by ensuring the stability of government. Having hedged about the throne with a Divinity intended to defy assault, they did not disdain other methods of securing the imperial position. "The system of imperial government, as it was instituted by Augustus and maintained by those Princes who understood their own interest and that of the people, may be defined as an absolute monarchy disguised by the forms of a commonwealth. The masters of the Roman world surrounded their throne with darkness, concealed their irresistible strength, and humbly professed themselves the accountable Ministers of the Senate, whose supreme decrees they dictated and obeyed."[1] The Emperors also knew well how to

[1] Gibbon, chapter iii., p. 90.

fortify their position by popularizing the ideas of hereditary succession, and failing that, by successfully claiming the right of nomination to the imperial power. They "invested their designed successor with so large a share of present power as should enable him, after their decease, to assume the remainder without suffering the Empire to perceive the change of masters. Thus, Augustus . . . rested his last hopes on Tiberius, and dictated a law by which the future Prince was invested with an authority equal to his own over the provinces and the armies."[1]

The third cause of the fall of the Republic was the fact that amid the perpetually recurring discords there appeared from time to time an individual of military genius so pre-eminent, of powers of mind and body so dominating and of ambition so far-reaching, that almost as a matter of course he took advantage of the unsettled condition of affairs to occupy the vacant throne of the Republic. Under the Empire the seat of power was no longer vacant: that temptation had been as far as possible removed. But the danger still remained that some private citizen of transcendant powers of mind and body might attain a position so exalted as to threaten the supreme power. In addition, therefore, to endeavouring to render unassailable the majesty of the imperial office, the new rulers were also unfortunately but unavoidably driven to adopt, in the interests of settled government, an expedient which is generally regarded as carrying with it its own condemnation, and as forming an

[1] Gibbon, chapter iii., p. 98.

unanswerable indictment against the Empire. "The military fame of a subject was considered as an insolent invasion of the imperial prerogative,"[1] says Gibbon; and we may, indeed, go much further, and assert that the existence of all great individual ability of a kind which was in any way likely to be dangerous was systematically discouraged. Only when settled government has become a tradition firmly established in the community, only when the throne has been definitely removed above the reach of individual ambition, can administrative or military merit, or, indeed, pre-eminent personal distinction of any but the most harmless kind, receive with safety a full measure of recognition. As the author has elsewhere shown, the ideal political constitution is that in which the greatest individual talents are freely and generously employed in the service of the State. There are, however, other important political conditions which must be satisfied before this ideal end can be attained, and after the long period of anarchy from which Rome had just emerged this was unfortunately impossible. The problem of early political evolution with which the Roman Emperors were now confronted was how to profit by individual ambition while restraining it within constitutional limits, and so preventing a continual struggle for supreme power. It is a problem which is sometimes insoluble, and so the Roman Emperors found it, since they did not dare to encourage the greatest energies of the greatest of their subjects. The fault was not so much theirs as the inevitable

[1] Gibbon, chapter i., p. 3.

result of contemporary conditions. There are periods when civilization must mark time, or, in other words, when "liberty" must be ignored, and when order secured at all costs is the only possible progress. The imperial policy, which Tacitus and Gibbon represent as the outcome of depraved human nature, was in its general outlines a policy clearly adapted to the highest interests of the Roman community, and forced upon the Emperors by the stern necessities of the case.

We see, then, that though the government of the Roman world was reoriginated in a form which was in many respects superior to that which it replaced, and which conferred substantial advantages on Italy and the provinces, yet in other respects it is clear that the process was attended with a certain loss of power. The State was indeed restored, but not in its full and pristine vigour. As a medium for dispensing justice it was unquestionably improved, but as a source of what we may call political man-power it was impaired. Nor should this be any matter for astonishment. As there are bodily disorders from which perfect recovery is unknown, so there are political disorders where the only possible cure leaves the health and vigour of the State permanently enfeebled. The disease, not the cure, is to blame. Usurpation is a remedy, but frequently a desperate remedy, which proves the presence of a grave disorder. The life of the Roman community could only be saved at the cost of an operation which left it deprived of some of its most glorious possibilities. The continued existence of the State was guaranteed, but only on condition

that indulgence in the greatest stimulus to human endeavour, political and military ambition, could no longer be permitted. Thus, though the form which the State assumed was the best that could be looked for under the circumstances, and gave the best promise of happiness to the provinces, yet the life of the Roman Empire was on a lower level of political existence henceforth than had been the life of the Republic.

For nearly two hundred years, except for an interval of anarchy following the death of Nero, the principles of an absolute and hereditary monarchy maintained a relatively efficient system of government. After the death of Commodus, however, A.D. 192, political conditions became dangerously unstable, for two reasons. In the first place, the motives which had inspired respect for the central authority were undermined, since with all their efforts the Emperors had not been able permanently to invest the throne with the sanctity that defies assault; while, in the second place, administrative efficiency was never for any length of time sufficiently assured to obviate any excuse for a change of government. So great, indeed, was the disorder introduced into the political relations of the Empire after the death of Commodus by the frequent disturbance of the controlling power that this phenomenon presents a special difficulty which must now be examined. The truth is that for many of the usurpations which took place from this time forward no beneficial influence at all can be claimed. They frankly and obviously contributed to the detriment of the Empire, which they weakened rather than

strengthened. The difficulty with which we are now confronted is the undeniable fact that unworthy and degenerate miscreants as well as energetic and statesmanlike rulers assume the throne by conquest, and leave a baneful impress on the history of the Empire. Some of those who acquired the purple without the shadow of a legal claim are among the bearers of the greatest names in the history of the world; while others, apparently of the same unconstitutional class, revealed no glimpse of political talent or of any quality that might justify or palliate their forcible elevation to supreme power, but have become, on the contrary, throughout the ages a by-word of vicious inefficiency. If, then, it will be argued, the struggle for supremacy is responsible for the elevation to supreme power of Otho and Vitellius and similar persons, whose mental and moral qualifications were those of degenerates and not of conquerors, it cannot consistently be regarded as a progressive force in the evolution of government. Many of those upon whom the supreme prize of ambition was conferred were undoubtedly not the men of resolute enterprise and activity which the present theory demands, but weaklings and degraded characters who merely utilized their position to pursue a course of vicious self-indulgence. Unless we can explain this apparent failure of the instinct of ambition and rivalry to perform the part that has here been assigned to it and to contribute to the strengthening of the State, the present theory will be seriously impaired. But if, on the other hand, it can be shown that those self-made Princes who are found to display

the indisputable characteristics of the true ruler are men who have won their position in accordance with the requirements of the present theory, while the vicious usurpers owe their uncertain tenure of power to something quite different from success in the real struggle for supremacy, the main argument of this work will not be in any way invalidated.

The essence of the present theory of the reorigination of government is that the new ruler should be a victor in the struggle for supremacy. All political supremacy, however, is not the result of personal superiority. Emperors, like other people, may have greatness thrust upon them which they are unequal to support, and the discredit of their failure falls in the last analysis upon those who nominated them for their high position. It is, in fact, evident that under the general heading of usurpation are classed two methods of procedure which are in reality perfectly distinct. Two Emperors may be alike in having neither an hereditary nor a strictly constitutional claim to the position which they occupy, but may nevertheless owe their elevation to causes which have hardly anything in common. The distinction between them is vital, and turns upon the question whether they owe their position to their own exertions or merely to the caprice of those who are in a position for the time being to dispense imperial patronage. It will be found that those Emperors who have sullied the fame of the Roman Empire did not owe their position to a real struggle for supremacy, but were merely the nominees of a dissolute electorate, and belong in consequence

to a class entirely different from that of the self-appointed rulers of the Empire who have won their place among the world's most famous men. The worst of the Emperors did not place themselves in power by their own ability and resources, but accepted their supreme position in the Empire as the merest gift, and, what is worse, an interested gift, from the hands of others. They owed the apparent greatness of their achievement, not to their own individual strength or initiative, but to the power of the Prætorians, which, as it were, impelled them from behind; and since this action of the soldiers in placing puppet Emperors upon the throne is regarded by Gibbon as having been perhaps the chief cause of the decline of the Roman Empire, it becomes of real importance to the present theory to discover the true nature of the malady which, in the opinion of our greatest historian, had an effect so fatal, and to show in what respects it differs from that kind of unconstitutional appointment which is the result of the struggle for supremacy.

Of the two kinds of usurpation, then, to which reference has been made, one takes place when the motive power is that of the individual himself; another where it is supplied by agents from outside. In the first case, the successful aspirants for imperial honours are real leaders of mankind, like Cæsar and Augustus; in the second, their individuality is entirely negligible, and, like Vitellius and Heliogabalus, they are the merest figureheads in a triumphal procession which they themselves did nothing either to merit or

to organize. The supremacy achieved by such men as Cæsar, Augustus, Vespasian, Constantine, perhaps as inadmissible as the Prætorian revolutions from the strictly constitutional point of view, is as distinct in origin from the baser kind of usurpation as it is infinitely more beneficial in the character of its effects. The Prætorian nominees are in the position of men who do not achieve greatness in the manner which the present theory requires, but have greatness thrust upon them, as it may occasionally be thrust upon the meanest of mankind. They are not the outcome of individual rivalry for power, but the representatives of military licence. It is therefore necessary to subject to analysis the part played by a body like the Prætorian Guard on occasions such as these, and to decide what relation its activity bears to the theory of the present work.

Two kinds of political greatness, in outer seeming identical, may be the result either of a personal and well-merited supremacy or of interested motives of dishonest electors which will not bear examination. One of nature's great men may enforce the subjection or compel the admiration of the community who are dominated by his strength of will, and who eventually sanction by their acquiescence the position he has already won; or the supreme power may be conferred as the result of a corrupt bargain between some mere nominee and those who for the time being are masters of the political situation; and in this case it is obvious that the reason for the triumph of the nominated Emperor is not his own real merit, but his usefulness

to those who have a glittering position to confer. The determining factor in the situation is thus not any striking qualities of the ruler, but the perverted will of the community, which, being vicious and debased, causes the result to be vicious and debased also. Under such circumstances there can be no question of a real struggle for supremacy, and if the outcome is an inefficient or worse than inefficient ruler that struggle cannot be blamed, but rather the perverted choice of the community or of those who have taken upon themselves to represent it. When electors misuse their power for the purpose of placing on the throne an individual whose only title is his prospective usefulness to those by whom he is dishonestly nominated, it is not hard to see in what quarter the fault lies. In the present instance it is to the debased character of the Roman military electorate that the disastrous cases of usurpation are due; and in a final analysis of the nature of the disease deplored by Gibbon the truth is unquestionably made plain that it was the misuse of the principle of election and not the struggle for power which so grievously impaired the strength of the Roman Empire. The usurpations in which the Prætorian Guards were concerned are not instances of the real struggle for power, but an example of democratic tyranny or mob-rule triumphing over and suppressing for the time all other methods of instituting government. The action of the military in placing their private favourites on the throne and in occasionally putting the Empire up for sale is a startling example of the perversion to which

a democratic power of election may be put, and the character of the Emperors elected is thus merely a reflection upon the dishonesty of the Prætorians in a matter which concerned the safety of the Empire. As a consequence the struggle for supremacy may be acquitted of any part in the appointment of the worst of the Emperors, or of any implication in that conduct of the Prætorians which, according to Gibbon, so materially accelerated the decline and fall of the greatest of world-States.

It is necessary, however, to examine into the meaning of this phenomenon a little more closely. When a State is in a disturbed condition, the principle of election, always uncertain in its action, can be more easily than ever diverted from its true purpose, since there are always to be found a number of persons who are ready to sell for profit elective rights which should be used for the good of the State alone. When any powerful and selfish body of men grasp the personal bearing of the fact that no ruler of a kingdom or empire can be installed without their assistance or consent, they immediately proceed to draw the logical consequences of the proposition from their point of view—namely, that they in reality are sole masters, and mean to profit by the situation. To recognize this truth, and to act upon it in their own way, was the contribution to the ruin of the Empire made by the Prætorian Guard. If it be asked, How can such a proceeding be classified as a misuse of democratic influence, and how can the Prætorians be rationally regarded as representing the Roman people? the

answer is not difficult. They were the community, in the sense that they were the only portion of it capable of exerting any influence on the choice of the ruler, or of actively interfering in the direction of the affairs of state. In the election of a monarch, says Gibbon, "The army is the only order of men sufficiently united to concur in the same sentiments, and powerful enough to impose them on the rest of their fellow-citizens."[1] They were the only portion of the community who knew exactly what they wanted, and who realized the possibilities of organized power. They were accordingly the only elective body in the sense that they were the only power which could exert a decisive influence during the crisis of a disputed succession.

The Prætorians realized two of the most necessary conditions of success: they "concurred in the sentiment" that the gratification of their own selfish desires was the proper object to be pursued, and they were powerful enough to impose their view of things upon their fellow-citizens. The debauched or nerveless monarchs who from time to time held sway would never have been able to reach a position of sufficient prominence to do any widespread harm had it not been for the action of this degraded military electorate. As the author has elsewhere shown, the true purpose of election is the recognition of political superiority. The soldiers used their power of election, not as it should be used, for the purpose of placing an efficient ruler on the throne, but for the purpose of driving a corrupt bargain with a worthless accom-

[1] Gibbon, chapter vii., p. 215.

plice, who was under an open contract to give them fresh privileges and concessions in return for the honour of wearing the imperial purple. Government thus instituted by a mere armed crowd for the purpose of selfish individual gain is nothing else than a species of debased democracy. The puppet Emperors whom the Prætorians placed upon the throne, and who worked such mischief in the Roman world, are clearly to be distinguished from those strong, self-reliant, and resourceful rulers who, though they also were indebted to the assistance of the soldiers, were still more indebted to their own force of character. No aspirant for supreme power can, as a rule, dispense with the services of devoted military adherents. However great his strength of mind, he is largely dependent on armed assistance. But this military assistance assumes one form with those who are masters of their own destiny, and quite a different form with those who are carried to high position under conditions which they did not originate. In the one case the great men use the soldiers as the instruments of their policy, usually making of them faithful and devoted adherents who yield a willing obedience to the hero they are proud to follow. In the other case it is the soldiers who give the orders rather than obey them: they are the masters of the situation sufficiently to derive profit from it, or even to shape it entirely to their wishes; and they elect an Emperor, not to serve the interests of the Empire, but to be their gilded slave.

The name of Heliogabalus is in itself sufficient to

convey an idea of the colossal inefficiency which the elective principle may occasionally consecrate, and to prove that its misuse works infinitely greater mischief than any that could result from an honest struggle for power. There is, however, an instance where history actually seems to call attention to the difference between the results which follow from what we may call Prætorian democracy on the one hand, and on the other from the usurpation of a strong man acting on his own initiative; a case where the system of military election and of the individual struggle for supremacy are found in actual opposition; and we are thus enabled in a measure to judge of the comparative value of these two methods of founding a government. Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian might, to the unobservant mind, seem all of them to have the same title to the throne, that of military violence. They are none of them appointed in a constitutional way, but owe their success to the fighting capacity of different portions of the Roman army who assisted them. They all met in conflict, and Vespasian was eventually triumphant. The part, however, that the soldiers played in the case of the three first is clearly different from the nature of their performance under Vespasian. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius are as certainly the nominees of a licentious soldiery as Vespasian is the master of his loyal and disciplined legions. The impulse which prompted the usurpation of the first three of these Emperors proceeds from the military themselves, and is inspired merely by a hope of higher pay and increased opportunities for pillage. The

animating spirit which pervaded Vespasian's legionaries was the animating spirit of their great leader himself. The same supreme insistent genius which placed Cæsar and Octavian on the throne urged Vespasian to a similar enterprise, with similar advantage to the fortunes of the Roman world. It is a fact of no little significance that, of these four, the Emperor who was finally successful, and who by the character of his administration has left an honoured name in history, was, like Cæsar, a true champion in the struggle for supremacy: while Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, with their brief parade of unreal power, were the inefficient and unstatesmanlike nominees of a military body which pretended to speak with the voice of the whole Roman people. So far as the Roman Empire was ruined in consequence of military violence claiming a voice in appointments to the imperial throne, it was ruined, not by individual usurpation but by misuse of the elective principle.

It was the original design of the present chapter to follow the fortunes of the Empire up to the fifteenth century, with the object of showing in detail that, when other motives fail, the struggle for power invariably reinitiates government. But brevity is essential in a work of this kind, if the theory is to obtain any very general hearing; and as enough has been said to make the author's contention clear, a few general remarks on the condition of the Empire, and a few particular instances of beneficial usurpation, will perhaps be sufficient to conclude this portion of the argument. For it is hardly too much to say that

during the next thousand years such political well-being as the Empire was enabled to enjoy was almost entirely dependent upon the presence of some over-mastering personality, strong enough to save the world from the horrors of anarchy and of the deadly freaks of military election.

The comparative quietude of the hundred years which followed the success of Vespasian was at length disturbed by the murder of Pertinax by the Prætorians, and after the sale of the Empire to Didius Julianus, order was once more restored by the appearance of the strong ruler in the person of Severus, A.D. 193. After his death in 211 the precarious headship of the Empire became the gift of the Prætorians. Presently, however, A.D. 253, Valerian won the throne "with a degree of innocence singular in that age of revolutions. If mankind had been left at liberty to choose a master, their choice would most assuredly have fallen on Valerian."[1] Yet it is the strong ruler rather than the noble ruler which such a period demands, and the very merits which evoke Gibbon's praise were such as to unfit Valerian for his task. His whole reign "was one uninterrupted series of confusion and calamity." A rule of less virtue and greater strength would have better suited the requirements of the time. Once more the power fell into the hands of the soldiers, who by accident finally seem to have elected a General of some merit in the person of the Emperor Claudius (A.D. 268), and he in turn nominated Aurelian (A.D. 270), whose conspicu-

[1] Student's Gibbon, pp. 55, 56.

ous abilities had attracted his attention, and who, if he did not win the throne by his actual and personal efforts directed to that object, was "a soldier of fortune who disdained to hold his power by any other title than of the sword, and governed by right of conquest an empire which he had saved and subdued."[1] The same may be said of Diocletian (A.D. 285), that he raised himself by arts, which Gibbon compares with those of Augustus, from the lowest position to the imperial throne. He was, indeed, at the same time the choice of the soldiers. But even a brutal and mercenary army may occasionally vary for the better an almost unbroken record of unworthy choice.

Once again a period of anarchy was terminated by one whom we may term a self-imposed ruler who entirely fulfils the requirements of the present theory, the famous Constantine (A.D. 324); for though starting with certain hereditary advantages of birth and position, he was unquestionably the architect of his own fortunes. His final triumph over his various rivals was the termination of an undisguised struggle for supremacy in which all the combatants sought to make use of the available sources of the Empire for their purpose. In the case of Constantine the help of the legions, indispensable to all these pretenders, was clearly the prerogative of his personal ascendancy, and not a stipulated service for which, as in other cases, the army claimed and exacted the fullest payment. A study of his character and exploits, both before and after elevation to supreme power, proves beyond a

[1] Gibbon, chapter x., p. 346.

doubt that the reunion of the Empire was the work of a man whom effective desire for supremacy—for he had "a mind engrossed by ambition"—had placed in a position to achieve this magnificent result.

Julian also (A.D. 360), the next Emperor of any mark, may be fairly claimed as one of those whom success in the rivalry for power has made benefactors of their country. Chance and opportunity, it is true, seemed to have had a share in shaping his career, and that defiance of fate and circumstances which is the mark of a truly dominant character was never altogether his. Still, though according to one view his election as Emperor was forced upon him, he defended his title with astonishing vigour, and his famous march from Basel to Sirmium shows the spirit of the true conqueror. By this display of military efficiency he dispossessed, or was on the point of dispossessing, another rival whose administration of the Empire was undeniably less efficient. In the "hero whose inexperienced youth had vanquished the barbarians of Germany, and who had now traversed, in a successful career, the whole continent of Europe, from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Bosphorus,"[1] we are surely justified in discerning one of nature's rulers. And there was one blessing conferred by Julian on the Empire which alone is sufficient to assign him a place among strong rulers and great benefactors, the suppression of the eunuchs, who had practically succeeded in getting the supreme power, or the nomination to the supreme power, into their hands.

[1] Gibbon, chapter xxii., p. 502.

With the advent of the barbarians, the struggle for supremacy changed in character and became intensified. Of the beginning of the fifth century Gibbon writes: "At a time when it was universally confessed that almost every man in the Empire was superior in personal merit to the Princes whom the accident of birth had seated on the throne, a rapid succession of usurpers, regardless of the fate of their predecessors, still continued to arise."[1] To Gibbon, of course, such a phenomenon would merely afford food for despairing reflection on the incurable perversity of the political nature of man, or on the hopeless prospects of a time when the throne was the prize of the strongest, and when the desire to occupy the seat of government was itself a continual incentive to disorder. Nevertheless, it is here once more submitted that if its proper weight were given to practical invariability of occurrence, there could not be a clearer testimony to the existence of a law of nature which incessantly tends, with reservations and modifications which will be made in the succeeding chapter, to rectify weakness in government, and to place power over the community in the hands of the most powerful.

Amid the incessant turmoil resulting from this condition of things it is hardly to be expected that all cases of usurpation should afford instances of successful government, nor does the present theory require it. In this as in other departments of evolution nature produces a general result at the cost of greater or less failure. Naturalists have remarked that in the

[1] Vol. III., chapter xxxi., p. 502.

struggle for existence the waste of life necessitated by the destruction of unsatisfactory animal types is on a scale of appalling prodigality. The evolution of government by means of the struggle for supremacy is likewise a costly process. Certain and immediate benefit is not always the result of this principle, and the historian is occasionally compelled to repeat the famous verdict, *Omnium opinione capax imperii, nisi imperasset.* But, generally speaking, there can be no doubt that the type of authority which emerges is well suited to rule in the circumstances and under the social conditions of the time at which the struggle for power takes place. With the advent of the brutal but energetic barbarians the decisive qualification for supremacy and efficiency was a barbaric decision of character irrespective of any higher moral qualities. Barbaric rulers deposed the degenerate Romans and usurped their place of power. The struggle was also no longer conducted between the individuals of one nation, but between individuals of many. It began to assume an intertribal or international aspect, such as that which characterizes an early period of civilization, a period preparatory to the founding of a new nation. The history of the early Frankish, Visigothic, and Lombard dominions is the history of a desperate struggle among the members of the various royal families, and of a supremacy won first over each other and then over neighbouring States. It was in this way that the struggle for supremacy brought first Odoacer (476) and then Theodoric (490) to the front; and it was the struggle for supremacy in its crudest

form. The names of Genseric (or Gaiseric) the Vandal (429), of Euric the Visigoth (466), of Chlodovech (Clovis) the Frank (481), have only to be mentioned to raise in the mind of the student of history the picture of a succession of victorious rulers who owed their position to brutal conquest and the ruthless destruction of their adversaries. These Kings were men without honour or pity or scruple, yet the subordination enforced by their brutal superiority ensured the growth of the elementary virtues with sufficient success to enable the foundations of subsequent European civilization to be laid.

The history of the Visigoths in Spain is the same. When no one had any prescriptive hereditary right to the succession on the reigning King's death, the temptation to make away with him by violence and to seize his heritage was irresistible. Hence it came to pass that "of the twenty-three Visigothic Kings of Spain—from Theudis to Roderic—no less than nine were deposed, and of these seven were murdered by their successors."[1] This is the struggle for supremacy with a vengeance!

The history of the Lombards in Italy is the same, with minor variations. After the invasion and death of Alboin, the fair prospect of easy conquest and the weakness of the unhappy Italians obviated the necessity of cohesion on the part of the invaders. Each tribe went forth to plunder under a leader of its own, to be finally united once more under the influence of danger from outside caused by the growing power of

[1] Oman's *Dark Ages*, p. 129.

the Franks. The struggle for supremacy which had for a time been suspended among these Lombard duchies, apparently because there was power and plunder enough for all, broke out subsequently in the form of competition for the throne when they had decided to resume the regal form of government. "The Lombard monarchs, like their Visigothic contemporaries in Spain, only held their crown, when once they had been elected, by the right of the sword. In a short history of two hundred years the Lombard kingdom saw nine successive races of Kings mount the throne; all represented old ducal families: the rulers of Turin, Brescia, Benevento, Fruili, and Ischia, all, at one time or another, wore the royal crown, besides two or three Kings who were not even Lombards by birth but strangers from the neighbouring land of Bavaria."[1]

It would be merely tedious to take the reader through the incessant contentions of these dreadful years, or to follow in detail the rivalries of these fierce and bloodthirsty men, who yet initiated the political control from which modern European government is descended. As Oman has pointed out, the character of kingship deteriorated, or rather, as the present author would venture to put it, was assimilated to the conditions from which it sprang. "As the permanent war-chief, in a time when war was incessant, the King had gradually extended his power from supreme command in the field to supreme command in all things. . . . Their (the Kings') worst danger was always

[1] Oman's *Dark Ages*, p. 188.

from their ambitious relatives, not from their people."[1]

We may therefore pass to the history of the Merovingians (500), and their deposition by the famous Mayors of the Palace a century later. The Merovingians, having raised themselves to power by qualities relatively in advance of those displayed by the rulers whom they succeeded, were in their turn deposed by a stronger regal line when their power began to fail. The rise of the Mayors of the Palace should not be regarded as a sordid tale of political cunning and intrigue, but one more illustration of the inevitable tendency of strength to banish inefficiency from the governmental sphere. It is usual for historians to approach this episode with a somewhat apologetic air, as if there were something unworthy of the dignity of history in the fact that certain palace officials not only usurped the power of the King, but eventually displaced him. We are sometimes encouraged to regard the incident with the same misgivings which we might experience if it were whispered that the revered squire of our parish had fallen under the influence of his butler. Such considerations are entirely out of place. The deposition of the Merovingians is exactly similar to other celebrated usurpations, and is in strict accordance with the requirements of the present theory. It also proves another point of equal importance, that we have now once more arrived at a stage of political evolution where the aspirant for kingship must take account of

[1] Oman's *Dark Ages*, p. 122.

the wishes of the people. The Merovingians in their desperate internecine family rivalry had lost sight of the truth that it is only in the most primitive condition of society that the struggle for supremacy can be conducted with a total disregard for the interests of the community. Savage and barbarous as the Franks undoubtedly were, they had long passed the stage where a people submits in silence to the tyranny, or even the total neglect, of those who are theoretically supposed to look after their political welfare. Absorbed in their desperate and murderous blood-feuds, the Merovingians too palpably assumed that their subjects merely existed to supply them with the means of indulging their ferocious passions. The supreme power, therefore, tended to fall into the hands of these Prime Ministers who, though neither more scrupulous nor less selfish, were clever enough to fortify the initial advantage of a strong governmental position by trading on the obvious grievances of the people, and enlisting their support by the promise of better government. Two long minorities assisted in weakening the Merovingian influence, but in any case their end was a foregone conclusion. Nor need we be deceived by the outward form in which this transference of power was effected. The peculiar exigences of the case compelled the descendants of Arnulph and Pippin to allow a titled shadow to occupy the nominal headship. The reality of power, or, in other words, the triumph of supremacy, was theirs from the first. When Grinwald proclaimed himself heir to his father's office (A.D. 639), and made good his

claim after a desperate war, he had in fact replaced the Merovingian dynasty by his own.

The fame of the Carolingians is so great that those who have no exact knowledge of the real facts might be inclined to infer that they did not actually usurp power, but were invested with authority in consequence of higher moral and intellectual qualities. There is nothing in their early history to bear out this view. The truth is that the glory of Charles Martel and Charles the Great gives a retrospective value to the infinitely lesser merit of the founders of their dynasty. They had superior qualities, but these did not characterize the methods by which they won predominance. Their supremacy was achieved in the approved fashion by calculated trickery or brutal force: of moral feelings in the modern sense they show no trace, and the only intellectual quality they displayed in the actual struggle was the rudimentary prudence which forbids a man to lose sight entirely of his own interests in the passion for revenge. The instalment of the Carolingians differs in form, but not in real substance and quality, from any other triumph in the rivalry for power.

When in the course of time the descendants of the great Carolingian Emperor became weak and contemptible, through their own deficiencies and through their inability to defend their dominions from the Danes, the old symptoms which attend the weakening of authority reappeared. The rivalry of the various new pretenders to supreme power was frequently disguised under the appearance of election, but, as we

shall presently see, this need not deceive us. The simple truth is that nobles or "great fiefs" of the period, perceiving that the titular head of the Frankish Empire was in reality no stronger than themselves, proceeded to get themselves "elected"; in other words, with the help of their followers, they challenged the position of their chief. The principle of election appears merely as a new and useful move in the old game of the struggle for supremacy. The wishes of the free and independent electors are not really of the slightest interest to the candidate for imperial honours, except in so far as they increase his chances of success. In a word, they do not elect him; it is rather he who enrols them as his followers and condescends to make use of their assistance. Of these various contestants, Odo seems to have been the most worthy of the position he won. He at least was able to defeat the Danes and save Paris, and he became a King "whose title to the crown lay in his strong hand and his good sword, and not in any hereditary right." Yet "he was but one among a dozen personages of equal position, each of whom believed himself to be his new master's equal. It was a fatal weakness in a King to owe his power to the old Teutonic right of election alone. . . . We find once more the utter confusion that ensues from the elective system when the nobility is too strong, and the royal name has been lowered by a series of weak or incapable rulers."[1] Knowing as we do that this system of election is merely the struggle for supremacy in another form, such confusion is pre-

[1] Oman's *Dark Ages*, p. 496.

cisely what was to be expected according to the principles of the present theory. Nor is the confusion so great as it seems. At such times it is socially expedient to submit to the original dispensation of nature, under which the strong ruler first appoints himself and secures the support or consent of the people afterwards. Such a method is the least costly, since it is the only arrangement calculated to secure even a moderate amount of permanence. On the other hand, any attempt to make election a reality in the modern sense, and to substitute the will of the people for the personal power and influence of the King, is doomed to failure, since respect for the wishes of the community is by comparison a feeble motive, and constituted authority does not yet inspire sufficient awe to restrain the ambition of too powerful subjects. All such premature attempts at self-government, as we shall see later, end in a disorder which necessitates a reversion to the original principles of nature. At such periods of history a King who is strong only through the votes of the people has little or no chance against a rival who is strong in himself. Election has no valid meaning even in civilized times except as the recognition of political superiority. In primitive times this rule is more stringent still: election is then merely an idle and pernicious ceremony unless it formally certifies an already existing individual superiority, and endues with the supremacy of a King one who is already in character supreme. Neither law nor custom in the Middle Ages were strong enough to combat the primitive and natural instinct of domin-

ation. Under such circumstances, when the attempt is made by the elective method to consecrate inefficiency under legal forms, nature is apt to take the law into her own hands, and to reinstitute the rule of the ablest. In the times of which we are now speaking, unless the elective title was justified by real and undeniable force of character, it proved the merest figment, to be brushed aside by the stronger claimant. In the case of such a man as Odo election meant practically nothing if he failed subsequently to make good by his own abilities and character the title to power which had been, as it were, provisionally conferred upon him. Where the primitive impulse of nature has not yet been subdued by long years of hereditary authority, of constitutional habit, and of civilized restrictions, neither law nor election can avail to save a King from the natural consequences of his own weakness.

In all early and turbulent societies government is unstable unless the strongest personality has the greatest political power.

All the civil wars of the Frankish period are clearly to be classed as wars originated by the struggle for power. They culminated in the rivalry of the Carolingians and the Robertians, which finally gave the headship to Rudolf of Burgundy. Rudolf was succeeded by Hugh the Great, who treated the Carolingians in much the same way as they had treated their royal predecessors. By right of superior governing ability he took the supreme power into their hands without at first the supreme title. The situation developed until Hugh Capet "had no longer any

motive for avoiding the semblance of power of which he had long enjoyed the reality." The election which followed (987) merely ratified an already achieved supremacy. Government at all such periods is by nature's decree the appanage of the strongest.

Enough, perhaps, has now been said to show that during the most terrible periods of the Dark Ages, when the passions of ruthless men seemed to have shattered the last remnants of the political fabric of Rome, those same passions were nevertheless engaged in laying the foundations of a new political order amid the wreckage of the older civilization. "Nature," says an able writer, "uses evil as the raw material of good"; and with the necessary scientific reservations this description certainly seems to apply to the evolution of government. We are, indeed, forbidden by the rules of philosophical procedure to ascribe design to nature. It is here, however, submitted that the evidence of the preceding pages amounts to inductive proof that there are forces in nature which in times of disorder or crisis tend to secure the welfare of the social organism by means of the reorigination of government, a conclusion which carries with it the further consequence that the interests of civilization are furthered by the action of non-moral forces. If the terrible struggles for supremacy which have here been described are evidence of the deplorable condition of the Middle Ages, they may, on the present hypothesis, also be regarded as evidence of the operation of a natural law, engaged in supplying the government with the qualifications necessary to deal success-

fully with the savage dispositions of a lawless period. The use of brutal agents and brutal methods in the strengthening or reconstruction of government, though deplorable when judged by absolute moral standards, was a necessity of the surrounding situation. Under the conditions of the time society was governed by the strong and ruthless or not at all. The occasional reimposition of a political control by "methods of barbarism" was likewise the only means of national self-preservation. The idea that the improved political methods which are possible now have always been possible even in such a state of society will be shown in the immediately succeeding pages to be unfounded. The apparent alternative of good constitutional government does not exist for natures of low moral development, and is real only to the imagination of fanciful political theorists.

We may now, perhaps, leave this particular form of the struggle for supremacy to make a short survey of the Italian republics of the Middle Ages, and to point out how remarkable is the confirmation which their history affords of the principles enunciated when discussing the case of the Greek tyrants in a previous chapter.

To those thinkers who regard the acquisition of liberty for the individual and of independence for the State as the one true outcome of political evolution, and the one great object of political endeavour, Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries must present a picture at once encouraging and depressing. They have before them the exhilarating spec-

tacle of a country which had made itself intellectually the foremost in Europe, and which displayed in its various States a brilliance in literature, in art, and even in political science, which had only once been surpassed in the history of the world. They see also a nation in the political condition they most admire —composed, that is, of a series of independent communities, each, according to the rules of its constitution, conducting its own affairs and prosecuting its own enterprises, without political interference from outside, and developing in freedom the individual powers of mind and body to the utmost possible extent. When it is added as an additional cause for satisfaction that most of these States were republics, it is plain that from the point of view of the thinkers in question the ideal possibilities of this unique political situation could hardly be surpassed. Yet on completing the perusal of the history of these times their satisfaction must surely be replaced by an infinitely more sombre feeling; they must perforce admit that the brilliance which they so much admire was but the brilliance of a day. Italy presently sank into a political impotence which obliterated all but the memory of these intellectual and artistic achievements, the victim of some fatal imperfection which for centuries rendered her incapable of any further contribution to the intellectual progress of the world.

Those who are not bound by abstract theories of liberty and independence may clearly discern the reason for this failure. In the first place the political constitution of these republics presupposed in the

Italians moral qualities which did not exist, but which were nevertheless essential for the successful conduct of the form of government which they had adopted. In the second place the external position of these States, each confronting the other with irreconcilable animosity, was equally unsound and precarious. The whole of these elaborate political structures were without solid moral foundation; they were as houses built upon sand, and the floods of human passion against which they had not provided came and swept them away. The social conceptions by which the architects had been guided were formed in defiance of the truth that ambition and not love of his fellow-creatures or of equality is the master principle of the political animal called man. It was not possible to frame a constitution under which the men of those times would have been content to live in peace and harmony and fraternity with one another. Least of all were republican institutions fitted for the cultured savages of that period, overflowing with the spirit of sheer animalism. Licence and disorder were the inevitable consequence of such attempts, with the equally inevitable sequel that the most powerful individual in the community seeks his appointed goal, the supremacy of the State. And just as the internal condition of each State was one of perpetually unstable equilibrium, so also was their external relation to one another. To have a country like Italy parcelled out into separate communities in perpetually irritating contact, and then to expect them to keep the peace, was the wildest of delusions. None but a

theorist who substitutes the adoration of his own intellectual ideal for the observation of the facts of life could suppose it possible for active, ambitious rival States to confront one another unaffected by that instinct of antagonism which has urged communities into conflict since the beginning of recorded history.

As a matter of fact, both these tendencies began from the first to disturb the internal as well as the external peace of these Italian States. With regard to their internal relations, the republics continually tended to fall under the sway of ambitious individuals desirous, to use the popular phraseology, of destroying the liberties of their fellow-subjects. With regard to their external relations, the rivalry of these separate communities was never limited, as all philosophers would have advised and many would have expected, to the desire to outshine one another in the creation of noble works of art or in the pursuit of commercial greatness by merely peaceful means. With remarkable unanimity, they each and all embarked upon political enterprises of a reprehensible nature, and each and all endeavoured to subjugate one another and to destroy one another's liberties whenever the occasion offered. The condition of Italy, so full of promise to political theorists, was in reality an abnormal and unnatural condition. The internal constitution of the republics was abnormal, because constructed in defiance of those laws of nature which demand individual subordination as a condition which must precede any attempt at constitutional subtleties and refinements. The external relation of

the States was unnatural, because the strong States were incessantly tempted, and did as a matter of fact incessantly endeavour, to extend their dominion over their weaker rivals. Neither the internal nor the external conditions were therefore destined to endure.

The social as well as the political condition of Italy was at this time, indeed, remarkable. With some variation in the manner of its accomplishment, a state of things had come about which may not infrequently be noticed as a symptom of political decomposition. In spite of the remarkable brilliance displayed by individuals, in spite of the high general level of mental attainment which characterized the Italians as a whole, those moral qualities of the individual which form the indispensable basis upon which alone enduring political greatness can be established were entirely wanting. Republican institutions may or may not be the best for a people who, through long political training and apprenticeship, have become endowed with a capacity for self-subordination and self-restraint. For a people in the condition of the Italians a republic was the worst possible institution, for they were the merest savages in the garb of civilization. And the reason for this was that the dissolution of the Empire, as already explained, had reduced society to a condition which old-fashioned writers would have called "a state of nature," in which a continual outbreak of savage passions and vices demonstrated the existence of the real barbarism which underlay the glittering externals of culture.

It will doubtless be urged that such a view of the

condition of Italy is contradicted by the fact that the constitutions of Florence or Venice were elaborate political creations, such as no people in a savage or semi-barbarous condition could possibly have originated. Certainly, the constitutions of Florence and of Venice were sufficiently elaborate to imply a high standard of intellectual development in those who framed them. But it is equally certain that a study of the pages of Sismondi and Machiavelli reveals a moral depravity characteristic of an exceedingly low type of social development. It was but necessary to scratch the political theorist or the polished statesman and the brutal savage was revealed beneath. Nor was the failure of the Italian republics merely an illustration of the truth that a constitution which looks well on paper is not always capable of being even approximately realized in practice. The profoundly unsatisfactory results of Italian experimentation in advanced political theory were due to a deeper cause, and showed a much more serious divergence than can be explained by any mere discrepancy between theory and practice. The type of constitution under which they proposed to live was framed in defiance, perhaps of the actual laws of human nature, certainly in defiance of the nature of Italians of that period. That ratio between intellectual and moral attainments which is as necessary for the welfare of the State as it is for that of the individual did not exist in the case of the Italians. Their intellects were good, while their hearts were bad, because the unbounded concession of liberty which theorists com-

mend, and which the Italian republics enjoyed, had developed, as it always does, even in the most modern States, the intellectual at the expense of the moral side of their nature. They could devise clever political constitutions, but they could not live up to them, because the moral self-control which was a condition of the successful working of such constitutions was literally non-existent. Their gracefully conceived political conceptions, when translated into action, demanded moral capabilities far higher than those with which they were endowed, capabilities which cannot exist except as the result of continuous governmental discipline in the past. In politics the mind to conceive must keep in close touch, either with the will of the individual citizen to execute or the power of the State to enforce. These alternatives are imperative, because individual subordination is an indispensable condition of success. If the suppression of demands incompatible with the welfare of the State is not assured by the internal qualities of the individual, it must be imposed by the external action of government. No one would deny the preferability of securing political harmony by voluntary methods, if possible; but the realization of this aim belongs to the region of political idealism even at the present day. The individual subordination necessary for effective and united national action could in the case of a people like the Italians only be secured by administrative pressure. To expect from them political virtues which are scarcely beginning to be realized even in the twentieth century was in the last degree absurd.

Premature Republicanism

When the political institutions of a people are far in advance of the capabilities of their moral nature, those institutions begin to fall to pieces because of the anti-social tendencies of unrestricted individualism, and there is but one alternative, strong government or ruin. Premature republicanism, as we may call the concession of a political liberty which the individual is unfitted to enjoy, is a political error comparable to that of a father who emancipates his son too soon. Nature's cure in the case of the misguided social organism is the same as that adopted by the father in the case of the misguided son, the reimposition of control. Strong personal government reappears under the conditions already sufficiently described. Thus the rise of Napoleon from the chaos of the French schemes of liberty, equality, and fraternity was continuously anticipated on a smaller scale throughout the cities of Italy.

If we turn to such a work as Lodge's *Close of the Middle Ages*, almost every page will be found to offer confirmation of these views: "In the fifteenth century Italy originated the art of writing history as distinguished from the compilation of medieval chronicles, and finally Italy instructed Europe in politics as well as in letters and art. . . . Political science, which had made no progress since the days of Aristotle, was revived by the writings of Machiavelli and Guicciardini. Yet Italy profited less than any other State from the lessons which she taught. France, England, and Spain, all of them the pupils of Italy, became strong, united, and wealthy States, while Italy herself, in the very middle of an intellectual and artistic

activity which has remained the wonder of the world, subsided into political insignificance, and only finds a place in subsequent history as the stage on which other nations fight out their quarrels."[1]

The explanation of this strange anomaly has been suggested above. Republicanism, remarkable for the production of brilliant but ephemeral intellectual results, is quite unable to create those moral qualities on which permanent political cohesion and unity depend, and in the absence of these qualities the State is doomed to certain extinction. A glance at the internal history of Italy, and especially at the internal history of Milan and Florence, will serve to make these principles clear. Their elaborate political devices for securing liberty led to no satisfactory results, because the necessary preconditions were wanting : their liberty became disorder, and, in accordance with nature's stern and invariable decree, was in consequence abolished. In Milan, for instance, Martius della Torra "headed the citizens in a successful struggle against the Ghibelline nobles, and took advantage of his victory to assume the lordship of the city." He was, however, deprived of the supremacy by Matteo Visconti, whose grandson established the Visconti dynasty. Gian Gabrazzo Visconti, after unscrupulously disposing of his uncle, nearly succeeded in founding a Northern Italian kingdom. The death of Gian was followed by anarchy and a return to primitive conditions. "In nearly every city of Lombardy the lordship was seized by some adventurer, who

[1] *Close of the Middle Ages*, p. 2.

sought to make himself independent."[1] Filippo Maria Visconti, however, forced them all to submission, and in addition compelled even Genoa to acknowledge his power. On his decease the citizens of Milan attempted to restore their republic, but found a master once more in the person of Francesco Sforza, whose dynasty was only ended by the advent of the French King Louis in 1478.

The history of Milan during these two centuries is the same history of the continual supersession of republican devices, utterly unsuited to the real needs of the community, by a political control more in keeping with the character of the people from among whom it arises. The proof of this proposition would involve a mere recapitulation of such incidents as those already detailed, as the reader will find by turning to the pages of any standard history of Italy. The history of Naples in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries "turns for the most part upon dynastic rivalry,"[2] and accordingly affords a further illustration of the method by which government is instituted as the result of a struggle for power; but since it belongs to that class of cases already mentioned in which the pretenders to the throne do not belong to the community over which they propose to rule, it need not be further considered here.

The constitution of Venice, for reasons which it is not necessary to examine in the present place, was in advance of those of the rest of Italy, the government having assumed a form sufficiently stable to repress

[1] *Close of the Middle Ages*, p. 243. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 152.

any attempts upon the supreme power. Its internal development had, in fact, reached a condition relatively so advanced that it ceases to afford any illustration of the point of view under discussion, because the Venetian constitution, loosely and inaccurately spoken of as a republic, was in reality something quite different. Disregarding certain unimportant differences, it presents from the point of view of the present investigation features which practically identify it with a constitutional monarchy. To all intents and purposes, the Doge fulfilled the functions of an English constitutional monarch, while the Venetian aristocracy occupied a position not so very different from that of the Whig oligarchy in 1700. The Doge, in fact, reigned, but did not govern. Like the constitutional monarchy, his function was to intimate that the theoretical source of authority and law had been placed once for all beyond the reach of competition. The institution of constitutional monarchy means, as will be shown in the succeeding chapter, that the struggle for supreme power is at an end. The history of Venice, therefore, though of great interest, belongs to another phase of the story of political evolution, and one which the author has especially dealt with elsewhere.

The history of Florence, on the other hand, is an almost continuous illustration of the method by which the decay of the State, rendered imminent by the indulgence of wild democratic theories, may be arrested by the assertion of the recuperative forces of nature at work in the social organism. The constitution of Florence was a masterpiece of intellectual ingenuity,

but its history affords one more proof of the disorder which results from the attempt to impose high political ideas upon a community of low moral development, and one more illustration of the method by which nature corrects extravagant republicanism by the reimposition of strong individual government. "The history of Florence in the fourteenth century is filled with a continual struggle of classes and families for political ascendancy. Though the details of the struggle are complicated and wearisome, it is necessary to pay some attention to its general character in order to understand the conditions under which the later authority of the Medici grew up."[1] The original democracy became an oligarchy, and the oligarchy itself became narrower and narrower. Finally, certain members "obtained such complete ascendancy that the government almost ceased to be a republic, and thus the way was prepared for the absolutism of the Medici."[2] The Altizzi, in fact, and especially Maso degli Altizzi, ruled as autocrats under oligarchical forms. This tendency to despotism is the more instructive since we read that "the strongest political sentiment among the Florentines was the love of equality," which they carried so far as to fill offices by lot. The wealth of Giovanni de' Medici laid the basis of the success of his son Cosimo. Though carefully disguised under the appearance of mildness and legality, his methods were those of the pure autocrat. Nevertheless, the superiority of his rule to that of the original republican administration is undeniable. With the

[1] *Close of the Middle Ages*, p. 162. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

accession of Lorenzo the disguise was thrown off. "The Medici were undistinguished by any title, but they were as obviously the rulers of Florence as if they called themselves Dukes or Counts."[1] In 1480 Lorenzo established his complete supremacy by enacting revolutionary decrees in his own favour without the aid of Parliament. Though he destroyed "freedom," there cannot be a reasonable doubt that the rule of Lorenzo de' Medici was better for the Florentines and for the world than that which he displaced. "Notwithstanding all the accusations of despotism made against Lorenzo, it is impossible not to notice that at no other time in Florence's history was she not only so respected abroad, but also peaceful, prosperous, and contented at home. Which clearly shows that the form of government established by him was that which ensured the maximum of happiness to the greatest number."[2] The picture of Florence when the rule of the Medici was withdrawn is a picture of the condition to which a people are reduced when they get the government they demand, but for which they may be utterly unsuited. "Unceasing turmoils between rival factions, an administration utterly corrupt, a total decline in political influence abroad, and anarchy, injustice, and misery at home, are the prevailing features of this period. Nothing could better have vindicated the rule which the Medici had exercised than the state of things which supervened when it was withdrawn. . . . It was simply the reversion to those conditions that

[1] *Close of the Middle Ages*, p. 302.

[2] Young's *Medici*, vol. i., pp 263, 264.

had obtained before the Medici arose, and which reappeared upon the removal of the only power that had ever been able to keep Florence free from such conflicts."[1] In the triumph of Lorenzo de' Medici we see the triumph of the government-making forces of nature over premature and inefficient republican schemes.

It would be easy to multiply almost indefinitely instances from Roman or any other history all pointing to the same conclusion as that which has been emphasized in the preceding pages. But perhaps enough has been said to enforce the contention of the present chapter, that the reorigination of government is a phenomenon of such persistent, unvarying recurrence as to take rank as a natural law. It is, in fact, here suggested that the evidence already set forth is of sufficient strength to warrant the conclusion that the struggle for supremacy is an essential feature of political evolution. Certainly there can be no question as to the facts. The only question is as to what the facts mean. Is this story of reckless political ambition which is incessantly repeated on almost every page of history merely a proof of the desperate depravity of men, or is it indicative of the presence of some great law presiding over the development of humanity? In the opinion of the present writer, we are witnessing the operation of an evolutional principle which ensures the protection of the social organism by placing government in the hands of the strongest; while from another and even more impor-

[1] Young's *Medici*, vol. i., p. 343.

tant point of view it plainly supersedes the original cosmic process, replacing the primitive struggle for existence between individuals by a system under which the growth of the higher moral virtues is for the first time rendered possible. All such examples as those which have been enumerated may perhaps be conveniently summed up under the formula of "government by natural selection." There is here no intention of attributing to nature philanthropic designs or a power of intelligent prevision equally incapable of proof. The term is used in the strictest Darwinian sense. A ruler is "selected," not because nature thinks him fitted to undertake the moral improvement of his fellow-creatures, but merely because his natural qualities give him an advantage in the struggle for supremacy. Just as among the lower animals the organism which proves superior in the original struggle for existence survives and lives, so among human beings the individual who proves superior in the contest for power conquers and governs. At the same time, the relative efficiency of government is, as a matter of fact, secured, since the conditions of the struggle for supremacy generally produce a ruler adapted to the nature of the community in which his triumph has taken place. Those qualities which bring a man to the head of a barbarous society or to the head of a society which through disorganization has returned to a barbarous condition—namely, strength, courage, and determination—happen also to be the qualities best fitted for its government under the existing circumstances. The mental characteristics which

give him precedence in a somewhat brutal struggle are also the characteristics which enable and entitle him to rule. And in the ensuing chapter we shall see that when the struggle is of a more intellectual kind, because it takes place under more civilized conditions, the victor in this higher kind of struggle is of a correspondingly higher type, and therefore better adapted to exercise a political supremacy over a more civilized community.

It is, however, the usefulness of the strong, self-imposed ruler which most concerns us here: a usefulness which, for reasons given in the previous chapter, has never been adequately realized. The incessant cry of the individuals of the human race has been not for the government they need, but for a liberty which, whenever it has been allowed to the extent demanded, has been fatal to the strength or stability of the nation to which they belong. Nature, on the other hand, preferring the interests of the social organism as a whole to those of its isolated units, pursues a different method, and counteracts the disintegrating tendencies of selfish individualism by means of the strong man's love of power. Those, however, who feel increasingly unable to explain the moral evolution of humanity, except on the hypothesis of a co-ordinating power which supplements the forces of nature, may read a further meaning into this perpetually recurring spectacle of the re-establishment of social order. From this point of view it is at least conceivable that the final aim of the evolutionary process may be the perfection of the moral and intellectual nature of man-

kind, and that in the painful progress of humanity the strong ruler has all unwittingly been our schoolmaster to bring us to higher things, by laying the foundations and inculcating the elementary principles of that discipline upon which the subsequent development of all human civilization depends.

CHAPTER VI

FIXED GOVERNMENT

THE argument of the preceding pages has been directed to show that the origin of government is to be found in the struggle for supremacy, which tends to give a political ascendancy to one of the most powerful characters in the nation. Furthermore, if during the earlier stages of civilization the political control should pass into the hands of an incapable ruler, then the degenerate possessor of the kingship is sooner or later replaced by some enterprising pretender more qualified under the existing circumstances to wield supreme power. This, however, is a process which cannot be indefinitely repeated if the nation is to attain that condition of political stability which is necessary for steady and ordered progress. No real advance in civilization can be achieved if the continuity of political control is liable to perpetual interruption, since even the reinvigoration of effete government by the advent of a strong ruler is too dearly purchased at the price of incessant political turmoil. It follows that at a certain stage of social evolution the submission of even the most powerful individuals to an indisputable political superior is a necessary condition of advancing civilization, and this implies that the termination of the struggle for supremacy in its original form is

an imperative requirement of healthy national growth. If, however, the struggle for supremacy is thus brought to an end, this fact seems to be irreconcilable with an announcement which was made at the beginning of the present work. It was laid down in the two first chapters that no principle could be regarded as affording an acceptable explanation of the origin of government which was not also to be found subsequently engaged in its further evolution and development. It has, however, just been admitted that a continual struggle for absolute political supremacy is incompatible with the requirements of national progress: it must, in fact, be brought to an end by some process which tends to establish fixed government and prevent attacks upon the supreme power. It would seem, accordingly, that the motive force here chosen to account for the origination of government fails to fulfil the required conditions, since its disappearance at a certain stage of political evolution is absolutely necessary for any further advance.

The explanation of this difficulty lies in the fact that the motive force which originates government is modified, not abolished, by the advent of a fixed political control; it still performs its essential work, though its character and the method of its operation is changed. Nor does the transformation lessen its influence upon political evolution; progress, indeed, seems to depend on its assistance even more than before. Under fixed government the struggle for supremacy is replaced by the struggle for distinction, and the work which it performs in this capacity was

found to be so important as to necessitate treatment in a separate volume. The objection just raised, therefore, has been answered by anticipation in a work entitled *Government by Natural Selection.* It was there shown that rivalry among the great men of a State, leading to a valuable process of political selection, is in full activity after fixed government has been established. The truth is that if the progress of civilization depends upon the disappearance of the struggle for political supremacy in one form, it is equally dependent upon its reappearance in another. Though its crude manifestations are modified or repressed by the establishment of a fixed political control, individual ambition is still the motive which gives to a community its greatest statesman, and still remains as an ineradicable feature of every really progressive and efficient political system. Under constitutional government it assumes a new character, inspiring a struggle not so much for supremacy as for distinction, and the vigour and competence of an administration depends upon the ability of the political leaders who rise to power in obedience to this almost universal impulse. Thus, this irrepressible instinct, which, if it persisted in its original form, would threaten the stability of a civilized people, has a new character impressed upon it, and becomes a means of placing the highest intellect of the nation at the service of the State.

Under absolute government attempts upon the supreme power are repressed: that is the first step. In the next place, if absolute monarchy can be success-

fully converted into constitutional monarchy, then the impulse which previously urged ambitious men to aim at complete political predominance becomes so modified as to be content with the more intellectual and less personal forms of political power. The vitality of a principle which initiated political control is thus once more restored, but without that disturbance of social and political conditions which was inseparable from the struggle for supremacy in its original form. The struggle for power, indeed, is no longer instrumental in supplying a selected occupant for the throne itself; yet by leading to the rise of able statesmen who control the actual conduct of affairs it remains the most potent cause of the intelligence and efficiency of government. It is, in fact, one of the most remarkable features of all political evolution that when the struggle for supremacy has ceased to be a factor in the appointment of a King who does not govern, it becomes under favourable circumstances a determining influence in the selection of a Minister who does.

From this point forward the success of a nation depends upon the possibility of keeping government stable, while at the same time offering every facility for the political ascendancy of talented individuals; upon discouraging dangerous antisocial ambitions, while encouraging patriotic manifestations of political ability. To this aspect of the subject, which is the culminating feature of the present theory, a return will be made at the end of the chapter. But before a State arrives at the desirable condition where the energies of great men can be devoted to the political service

of the nation without either the open or unavowed intention of aiming at supreme power, it is threatened by alternative evils which only great skill or great good-fortune can avert. In the first place, inordinate ambition must be suppressed, and this presents a task of infinite difficulty, in which too great success is attended by dangers almost as great as those which result from utter failure. With the agency by which the work of discipline is commenced — namely, tyranny—the reader has already been made familiar in the previous pages. And though absolute monarchy in its initial stage was there defended against the almost universal condemnation of political thinkers, because of the valuable work which it performs for civilization, it must now be admitted that in its later aspect it goes far to justify the reputation it has earned as the enemy of all political progress. The apparent paradox by which the same political institution which at first proves of the greatest beneficence to the human race eventually assumes a character which is fatal to political evolution will now be examined.

According to the present point of view, absolute monarchy at first familiarizes the community with the necessity of political subordination, and by performing this function appears as one of the most important instruments of political progress. The establishment of a political authority which shall be above question and beyond the reach of assault is an indispensable feature of government, and the worst evils of absolute monarchy are in a measure palliated if it be true that

without some such agency no satisfactory political system could ever have been evolved. It is impossible, therefore, from the evolutional point of view to visit such an institution with unrestricted condemnation. The absolutism, for instance, associated with the name of Louis XIV. is generally denounced as an unmixed evil, and the obstacles which it placed in the way of the employment of the highest political talent constituted, as the author has elsewhere shown, the chief cause of the political ruin of France. Nevertheless, this absolutism was an error of degree rather than of kind: it was merely the excess of a quality which is valuable in moderation; it was the over-emphasis of a process indispensable for the political training of all communities at a certain stage of their existence, and especially indispensable for the France of that period. Since political evolution is progressive, it follows that a theory of government useful and even necessary at one period may be actually pernicious at another, and so it happened in France. Nothing less than some such system as that adopted by Richelieu could have quelled the insubordination of the nobles. The real mistake lay, not in the establishment of a powerful monarchy, which, as we have already seen, is the sole means of meeting such an emergency, but in the failure to devise a method by which its power might at the proper time be diminished, and provision might be made for the political employment of the talented nobility of France when once their subordination had been duly secured. The absolutism of Louis XIV. was merely the belated and therefore unwise retention

of a political institution designed to meet a real danger at a time when the country had not yet emerged from the feudal state; for where vassals were sometimes more powerful than their lord, the renewal of the struggle for supremacy was always a possible contingency. As in the case of the Roman Emperors, and with the same justification, it was a wise policy to attempt, by an exaggerated insistence upon the dignity and grandeur of the kingly power, to secure the inviolability of the supreme political control. The famous pronouncement "L'état c'est moi" is not altogether the irrational outburst of petulant vanity which it is generally represented to be. It can also be regarded as a terse and almost philosophic statement of the method by which stability of political control is brought about by a necessary centralization of power in the hands of an absolute and inviolable monarch. An exaggerated reverence for the person and office of the King is, from the evolutional point of view, a sentiment of infinite value for establishing settled order. Against the evils of absolute monarchy must be weighed the fact that it secures national unity through the spirit of self-subordination which loyalty engenders. However grave may be the errors that are laid to the charge of Louis, we should at the same time remember that he was carrying out, though with infinitely less intelligence, a policy which the wise Richelieu found necessary for the pacification of France.

But we must now examine the reverse side of the picture. The measures which Louis took to save the

country from one set of dangers unfortunately led to evils of an equally disastrous description. "Politics were especially a forbidden subject. The monarchy had had a hard struggle for power with the great nobles. It had triumphed in the end, and Louis XIV. had placed its authority beyond dispute. But he was haunted by the memory of past danger, and the system which he elaborated was based on the exclusion of the great families from all posts of political importance."[1] The exclusion of the nobles from any participation in the work of government, and the fatal impoverishment of the intellectual resources of the higher political "command," is thus seen to be the direct consequence of the measures taken by Louis to preserve the State from anarchy. Clearly, some further explanation is needed before the existence of absolute monarchy as a necessary part of political evolution can be scientifically defended.

We are, in fact, here confronted with a dilemma of an apparently formidable kind. Granting that we have in absolute monarchy a necessary restriction upon the disturbing influence of individual ambition, it must at the same time be admitted that the remedy is frequently as bad as the disease. The exaggerated reverence for the supreme head of the State which is necessary to secure political subordination brings in its train evils as great as those which it is supposed to control. No sooner is civilization freed from the dangers of political instability by the firm establishment of an hereditary King than it finds itself con-

[1] Bradley's *Versailles*, pp. 29, 30.

fronted with the equally fatal consequences of the destruction of the very spirit upon which political progress depends. The devoted loyalty which is so valuable a factor in producing national unity and individual self-abnegation is at the same time a feeling which is capable of a dangerous perversion. The self-sacrifice of the citizen tends to degenerate into the self-abasement of the subject, while the character of monarchy itself deteriorates in the presence of a submissive and cringing commonalty. Such homage tends eventually to bless neither him that gives nor him that receives; the citizen begins to lose individuality, while in the mind of the King himself is formed the conviction that he is the Divinely appointed master of a nation whose duty it is to receive in a spirit of grateful humility whatever benefits he is pleased to bestow. More than one nation in history has been brought up in careful obedience to the theory that it must find its utmost happiness and good-fortune in accepting without criticism the scheme of government designed by royal omniscience for the furtherance of the general welfare. Such a demand, however, if too long and too insistently maintained, is not only subversive of the essential principles of individual self-respect, but at the same time defrauds the nation of the talented guidance of its ablest citizens. It was this exaggerated devotion to monarchy which induced the peoples of France and Spain, almost from a sense of religious duty, to acquiesce in royal pretensions which robbed them of all the benefits of wise statesmanship. If, however, the advantages of national

discipline can only be secured at the cost of over-attachment to monarchy, those advantages may be purchased at too heavy a price: since, as the present author believes and has maintained in a previous work, the success of nations has been proportioned to the intellectual ability of their government, while the ability of government has been determined by the freedom with which great men have been permitted to seek distinction in the service of the State. So fatal, indeed, is the loss of individual political talent consequent upon a too great subservience to the royal will that political progress, at a certain stage of evolution, seems to depend upon the exclusion of the hereditary monarch from his former predominant influence upon national policy, because the autocratic attitude of the King interferes with the instinctive tendency of great men to undertake the most important political duties. If, however, there is such a natural tendency in favour of government by ability, and one so important as to constitute the decisive factor in political progress, how is it possible to explain the simultaneous existence of another evolutional tendency which seems to work in a diametrically opposite direction?

The solution of this problem lies in the very contradiction and contrast which at first sight seems to constitute the whole difficulty. As already pointed out in a previous chapter, nature in social evolution frequently proceeds by the method of contraries, and in certain cases results are produced, not by harmonious co-operation of similar forces, but by the opposition of two extremes. And thus it is in the domain of

government; in government two principles may be mutually destructive, and yet both may be imperatively demanded; so that progress in political matters is the result, not of a single law nor even of the interaction of two mutually assisting laws, but of their conflict.

As a first illustration of this evolutional principle we may take the curious phenomenon which was discussed in the chapter on liberty. It was there seen that for the healthy development of a State sufficient coercion is required to ensure order and sufficient liberty to evoke individual initiative. Yet, though we have here a situation, if ever there was one, which demands mutual recognition and harmonious adjustment between two indispensable principles, the drama of history, nevertheless, reveals them battling against one another in an apparently irreconcilable antagonism. We have on the one side the subject loudly and irrationally demanding an impossible measure of liberty, and on the other side an autocratic government almost habitually insisting upon more complete submission than it has the shadow of a right to enforce. The conflict between these incompatible claims continues persistently throughout history, and results, not in the complete triumph of either side, but in a compromise which is practically an evasion of the point at issue. Yet, though as a matter of theory the controversy remains almost precisely where it was before, we find on examination that it has had a practically beneficial influence in producing better government. If we were to estimate the success of the

whole movement by the amount of freedom actually obtained as a result of the struggle, it is evident that we should have to acknowledge the almost total defeat of humanity, since the historic and loud-sounding contest, even where liberty claims the victory, has in reality come to a most lame and impotent conclusion. But if we assume that such perennial and undetermined conflicts form part of the scheme of nature, and recognize the fact that the victory of either side would mean ruin, while a compromise means progress, then this strange unending antagonism wears a very different aspect. Throughout their political evolution States are continually threatened by a two-fold danger, according as they over-incline to the theory of individual liberty or of governmental compulsion, and foster to excess one or other of these two opposing tendencies whose just balance is necessary for harmonious political progress. Absolutism is the too decisive victory of an evolutional principle which is useful only in conflict with its opposite, just as the anarchy of premature republicanism is the result of the too emphatic vindication of "liberty." Apart from the other each of these principles spells disaster: taken together in a sort of illogical compound, they form the secret of national health and vigour. A drawn battle between them is a victory for the cause of humanity.

Another instance of the apparently unnecessary opposition between two principles both of which are necessary for the proper conduct of life is to be found in the conflict between religion and science. Neither

the teachings of pure religion nor those of pure reason can be pursued to their logical conclusion, because each in isolation contains a principle which strikes at the very root of progress. A literal acceptance of the tenets of religion would cause the ruin of civilization through a total neglect of the merely temporal welfare of the human race, since no mere earthly considerations could for an instant weigh in the balance against the colossal predominance of the interests of an eternal future. Again, if the intellect is the only guide and death ends all, then as certainly we must hold that wise self-interest or even mere self-gratification is the ideal object of existence. The only escape is found, as most people find it, in an illogical compromise between the worldly and otherworldly points of view, the child of eternity not disdaining the interests of this deceitful and transitory life, and the worshipper of pure intellect supplementing his barren principles by the unrecognized moral influence of a faith which he has long discarded.

Another simple and obvious instance of this conflict of principles is to be found in the old opposition between conservatism and radicalism, which in one form or another has been common to every political community in the world. All but the most bigoted are aware nowadays that either complete retention of old institutions or the wholesale adoption of new would be destructive of the welfare of the State, and that what is really needed is a judicious combination of both. Yet this conclusion is only reached after the community has for centuries been distracted by the

desperate conflicts of the uncompromising supporters of either theory, who were quite unable to perceive, on the one hand, that original methods of government must be modified in accordance with the changing nature of human conditions; on the other, that, however entrancing the theory of a perfectly fresh start in government may be, yet in all effective political institutions the old must still be accepted as the basis of the new.

It was possibly to this peculiarity in the methods of nature that Aristotle referred when he laid down the well-known principle that virtue was a mean between two extremes.

At the stage of political development of which we are now speaking the two great necessities of civilization are fixed government and administrative intelligence. Bearing in mind, then, that it is the method of nature to balance excess in one direction by excess in another, we are enabled to arrive at an explanation of the difficulty that has just been enunciated. Monarchy, according to the present theory, is a phenomenon which familiarizes the world with the idea of the fixity of government, and the exaggerated reverence which it inspires becomes an effective means of subordinating the personal ambitions of the individual to the wider interests of the State. If, then, absolute monarchy is presently found to prevent the utilization of the services of great men, this does not prove that it is in its essence an antisocial institution, but merely that the time has come to moderate its activities and to allow greater freedom to the opposing principle.

It merely means that the requisite balance between them has not been secured, and that the regulating power has for the time being overmastered the driving power of the State. Only by such a compromise can unquestioned stability of political control be secured, and individual genius encouraged to make its contribution to the welfare of the community.

Accordingly, though at a later period of development absolute monarchy is a hindrance to the further progress of the State, nevertheless, at an earlier period it has been a factor of infinite value in securing fixity of political control. The opportuneness of the aid which it furnishes in this respect is the more remarkable since it supplies a quality in government absolutely indispensable for the national welfare, yet one which could not be procured from any other source. Calculated considerations of expediency are not among the motives which can be regarded as contributing to this result at an early stage of social evolution. The desire of the community for settled conditions of life which exercises a powerful influence in producing fixity of government at the present day is practically inoperative at such periods as those at present under consideration. It is not until much later that the people develop sufficient power and unanimity, even if they have sufficient political insight, to enforce their preference for fixed government in the face of the influences which encourage political disturbance. The stormy political and personal passions to which an immature community is subject are inimical to the growth of any such united

action. Fixed government is needed long before the people have developed sufficient intelligence to acquire it by any conscious effort. Acquiescence in government already imposed, rather than a desire to retain it for reasons of social utility, is the chief characteristic of the early stages of political development. Government first becomes fixed, not from an intelligent appreciation of its value, but in consequence of motives of personal submission which have no direct relation with the welfare of the community.

In producing this result the mysterious and almost inexplicable phenomenon of monarchy has exercised the chief influence, and accordingly possesses for the philosopher a deep significance which custom and familiarity have hidden from the world in general. A blind and submissive devotion, irrationally transferred from father to son with little or no calculation of political advantage, is the motive which has played the greatest part in securing continuity of administration. So little, indeed, is this feeling explicable upon merely rational grounds that it has all the appearance of a motive which has been superinduced by nature for this especial purpose, and which acts upon the individual independently of his own volition. The subservience to royalty which has so often aroused the indignation of the uncompromising democrat as a motive unworthy of self-respecting humanity has in reality been a useful and even indispensable feature of political evolution, preparing the way for that voluntary subordination which is the ideal of a more advanced civilization. Obedience to law in the early

history whether of the race or of the individual cannot be dissociated from fear of some imposing personality. Unless an exaggerated reverence for the powers of dominant individuals had been a characteristic feature of barbarous communities, respect for the legitimate authority of an orderly political control would in all probability never have been attained.

In this work of securing fixity of government absolute monarchy has enjoyed the active support of an ally so effective that in the opinion of many it takes rank, not as a subordinate cause of the permanence of a political control, but as a principal agent in the origin of government itself. The close relation between government and religion during the early stages of the growth of a society has attracted considerable attention in recent times, and, as pointed out in an earlier chapter, has been deemed of sufficient importance to warrant the conclusion that government has a religious origin. Yet, granting that investigation has shown the existence of an intimate connection between religion and kingship, this does not by any means prove that the priest is the parent of the King. On the contrary, the facts are no less consistent with the view that the frequent identification of priest and King points to the conclusion, not that the King has developed out of the priest, but merely that certain instincts of the human mind tend to invest established government with a religious character. All the evidence that has been collected in favour of the priestly origin of kingship will equally serve to prove that the function of religion in this matter is not that of

originating government, but of strengthening it, and of confirming a political authority which has come into existence through another agency. This belief gains force from what we know of the relation between kingship and religion in civilized times. For it should be remembered that the association between government and religion is not confined to primitive epochs. It is not merely in the twilight of history that religious feeling may be observed extending the protection of its authority over kingship. Such a partnership is equally significant of a highly developed community, and in civilized times at least it is certain that religion is the subordinate and not the predominant partner. Had the supporters of the priestly theory extended their observation to cultured as well as barbarous periods, to such conditions, for instance, as those which characterized the beginning of the Roman Empire, they would have found that the effect of religious feeling with regard to government is secondary, and consists in strengthening the structure and securing its permanence rather than in laying the first foundations.

So obvious in modern history is the position of religion as the coadjutor rather than the originator of governmental authority that there is the very strongest presumption that these have been their relative positions from the first. The close alliance of "Church and State" has been the subject of general remark, yet the real significance of this phenomenon has escaped observation, owing, apparently, to the antipathy with which strong government and all connected with it

has been regarded by "advanced" historians. Generally speaking, the tendency of the Church to throw its authority on the side of strong government has been so pronounced that this disposition to enter into an alliance with tyranny has been frequently condemned as a conspiracy against the true principles of progress. Yet, according to the present point of view, there is more in this association than the mere desire of either party to secure their own power. The real explanation of this phenomenon would seem to be that it is the recurrence in modern times, and under a slightly different form, of an instinct as old as the history of mankind, the instinct which originally united King and priest. The government-making tendencies of religion, so conspicuous in early times, are ready to resume their ancient activity whenever occasion offers, and to assist in the maintenance of order by assuring stability of control. In one of the most famous communities of the world, and at one of its most famous periods, religion may thus be observed strengthening a newly constituted authority, not merely by inculcating the duty of obedience from a religious point of view, but by creating a belief in the actual divinity of the King. In the full blaze of civilization it may be seen casting its spell on the intellects of a highly cultivated and intensely practical nation. The ready subservience with which in the early days of the Empire Roman citizens, previously distinguished for a world-renowned independence of spirit, hastened to pay divine honours to the usurping Emperors has generally been regarded as evidence of a moral

degeneracy resulting from the degradation of the closing days of the Republic. It is more probably a modern instance of the primitive readiness of religious instinct to take service with the promoters of political order, and to lend a hand in the permanent establishment of civilized relations. To a deeply religious community such as the Roman proletariat it seemed that the man who terminated a political struggle so fearful that it shook the moral foundations of the world, and made of the kindly hearted poet Lucretius the darkest and most despairing of atheists, could not have triumphantly achieved his individual ascendancy without the manifest assistance of the gods. The success of Augustus was the result of divine intervention; nay, more, tranquillity had been restored to the Roman people by the personal activity of one of the gods. The ease with which this transition was effected from a belief in an Emperor who was god-assisted to the belief in an Emperor who had something god-like, some touch of divinity in himself, is not a symptom of national degeneracy, but of the working of government-sustaining forces as old as the earliest rudiments of human civilization.

With regard to the whole of this subject it may, in short, be stated that a prosaic analysis of the merely human attributes of kingship discloses nothing that would serve to explain the extraordinary power which throughout history it has exercised upon mankind; and this fact strengthens the belief that we are here dealing, not with some irrational and ignoble vagary of the human mind, but with one of the deeper

mysteries of social evolution. Except in rare instances, the achievements of monarchs have never been sufficient to account for the adoration and reverence with which they have almost habitually been regarded. Accordingly, a phenomenon which exerts an influence so utterly beyond its intrinsic merits is invested with a significance great in proportion to the discrepancy between its apparent value and its actual achievements. "The divinity which doth hedge a king" has its foundations deep in the evolutional principles which from the beginning have presided over the political education of humanity in its toilsome emergence from barbarism.

Such are the grounds upon which it is claimed that absolute monarchy has been a necessary feature of political evolution, such are the methods by which government becomes fixed. Two movements are, in fact, to be observed throughout history, one of which continually tends to place government in the hands of the strongest, while the other favours stability of supreme control without regard to other characteristics. As already explained, these tendencies, though both indispensable, are yet found in opposition. Incessantly throughout history at a certain stage of political evolution is to be observed the operation of this double principle of government in the State. Repeatedly do we find a titular head or Sovereign representing the principle of order, and a subordinate chief or Minister who represents the principle of active and intelligent administration. Nor is this division of political labour a constitutional device which owes its

origin to the ingenuity of modern statecraft, but one which also occurs in the mere infancy of political intelligence, since this is the true meaning of the German custom described by Tacitus, where a Prince was chosen for birth and dignity, and a Duke for valour. We have much talk in constitutional history of the necessity of the separation of powers, legislative, judicial, administrative, and so forth. It would have been more to the purpose had it been definitely recognized that the most important and necessary separation was between the principle which represents fixed government and the principle which represents active and enterprising statesmanship. All long-continued attempts to combine them in the same person are disastrous. Unfortunately, monarchs of the type of Louis XIV. have been supported by their subjects in the assumption that because God has placed them at the head of the national government He has also given them sufficient intelligence to conduct it successfully. The consequence is that such monarchs have undertaken work for which they were intellectually unfitted, and the ruin of the nation has followed. The most important of all the instances of the separation of these powers took place in 1688, when arrangements were concluded of which the gradual effect was to make the English monarchy merely representative of order, loyalty, and union, while the actual direction of policy began to fall into the hands of the politically ablest. Again, the most recent example of the pernicious results which follow when this course is not adopted may be found in the history of Germany.

Had the Germans adhered to the ancient custom already mentioned, had they insisted upon a royal self-denying ordinance whereby the Kaiser would have been restricted to the function of inspiring loyalty and ensuring union, while the direction of policy was left to their ablest statesmen, how different would have been their fate! If we had no other records at all, the history of the Germans, the Spanish, and the French, would be sufficient to show that the greatest political difficulty of the human race, greater even than the difficulty of preventing the exploitation of the people by the ruling power, has been the difficulty of combining fixed government with government by ability.

The supersession of instinct by reason in the life of the individual has its analogy in the life of the social organism; and just as the individual reason does many things which formerly fell within the province of instinct, and does them better, so in the course of evolution the political intelligence of man improves upon the crude forms of governmental arrangement which were originally bestowed by nature. According to the present view, whereas the origin of government took place as the result of unconscious natural tendencies, subsequent improvements are largely effected by the conscious efforts of the community. The early autocrat does not too closely concern himself with the private interests of his subjects, who are subjected to a control which is personal, not political. But the community upon whom this control is forcibly imposed not only ends by accepting it, but in time makes it a better instru-

ment of the common welfare than it originally was. Though man requires government, he is morally and intellectually incapable of inventing it for himself. Nature invents it for him, and then, when the social and intellectual side of his disposition has been sufficiently developed, leaves him to improve upon the makeshift arrangements with which he was originally equipped. One of these makeshift arrangements is absolute monarchy; it is a type of government which, provided by nature in the first instance, is presently in need of modifications which the community proceed to apply. The conversion of absolute into constitutional monarchy is one of the most conspicuous instances of the method by which in the political world improvements may be made upon the original dispensation of nature.

So important is this change that, as we have seen, in every community at a certain period of its evolution all hope of any further political and national progress is absolutely dependent upon the conversion of absolute into constitutional monarchy. Accordingly, the agency by which so momentous an advance is effected necessarily assumes a significance commensurate with its influence upon the destinies of the human race. That agency is the political assembly. So difficult a modification of the political structure cannot be effected without the aid of a strong and self-assertive Parliament. If the contribution of the political assembly to the sum of human happiness has not been very conspicuous in earlier times, at this crisis of the political fortunes of mankind, when the

limitation of absolute power is an imperative necessity of good government, its influence has been of literally incalculable value. At this point of political development the welfare of the nation is dependent on the power of Parliament to control, in the sole interests of the community, the active governing forces of the State, and the importance with which this institution is invested throughout the history of the world is from this point of view entirely justified. If, as the present theory holds, government originates in its own interests, and is primarily concerned with its own importance rather than with that of the people, this tends to produce in the ruling power a tone of mind which is not merely opposed to the view that the ultimate source of all political authority is in the nation, but which is further disinclined to admit the absolute right of men of genius to direct the administration of the State. Any escape from this dilemma depends upon the power of the political assembly to impress upon the kingly mind the truth that a monarch is important only because the welfare of the nation is important, and that accountability to the assembly which represents the national interests is from this time forward an indispensable condition of the continued existence of a King. When this has been done the way is open to individual ambition, and government by ability is rendered systematically possible.

From an early period of English history Parliament has, for the most part, manfully endeavoured to teach monarchy its true relation to the people, and to enforce the view that a right to rule can be conferred

only by the highest national interests. And in this task it has had an ally to whom an apology may now be safely made. The accusation of falsifying history which in an earlier chapter was directed against constitutional historians from the scientific point of view can now no longer be sustained if we regard them in the light of prophets of constitutional reform. When they appear in the character, not of accurate historians, but of political philosophers engaged in assisting the political assembly to render government a proper guardian of social welfare, on this ground they are entitled to the gratitude of the nation. If hypocrisy is the tribute which vice pays to virtue, constitutional historians may plead that their distortions are the homage which the crude facts of history must be made to yield to an enlightened theory of government. Without such special pleading Parliament, indeed, might never have succeeded in establishing the principle that force must pay its tribute to legality and disguise itself under the forms of constitutional procedure. It is at least a step in the right direction when the naked realities of usurpation are hidden away under the apparent sanction of the will of the community. And though, taking English history as a whole, the interference of Parliament has at first been merely tolerated by pretenders to the throne, yet it has ended by exercising a predominant influence. During the actual period of a disputed succession we have seen the council of the nation, though rudely pushed aside or contemptuously ignored by the rival aspirants, still consistently endeavouring to maintain the theory that

its formal sanction is necessary to legalize the possession of what the adventurer has won. We have seen it finally extracting the implied admission that Parliament is the rightful arbiter of the governmental destinies of the nation. We now see the value of adherence to constitutional forms even at the expense of literal truth. By disputing the moral and legal validity of a jurisdiction based upon successful violence rather than on general consent, and later by withstanding, however feebly, the pretensions of the King to absolute power, Parliament kept alive a belief in a theory of government which, though impossible of realization at the time, was yet consistent with the principles of justice, and might for that reason at some future period become the acknowledged law of the land.

It is thus that we arrive at what, according to the present theory, is the final stage of political evolution—stability of supreme control combined with constitutional arrangements which favour government by the ablest. Parliament, by the mere act of limiting the power of the Crown, throws open to the general talent and ambition of the nation the supremely important duties which have been relinquished by the King. When the direction of the affairs of State is no longer regarded as the hereditary monopoly of a single man, political genius, which previously had no scope, is attracted to the service of the community. Thus a species of government by natural selection is recommenced, exactly similar to the principle discussed in the previous pages, but differing

in outward form in consequence of the presence of an irremovable head of the State. The ambition of the individual, which in its original form was satisfied with nothing less than complete personal supremacy, assumes under Parliamentary control a more civilized aspect, and its ascendancy is permitted only so far as is consistent with the highest interests of the State. When by common consent the supreme power is placed beyond the reach of the individual, the strength of the incentive to great action does not seem to be lessened, as we might have expected, in proportion to the lesser value of the prize. Deprived of the possibility of reaching the highest and most dominant position in the State, political ambition restricts itself to the pursuit of such honour and power as is still attainable, and the man who under the old conditions of unstable political control might perhaps have constituted himself the sole arbiter of the lives and fortunes of his fellow-citizens, under fixed government is content with the distinction which any statesman in a self-governing community may gain by the successful direction of national affairs. The governmental dignity and honour which formerly belonged to the King are now within reach of the ablest and most energetic of his subjects, who are urged to the successful prosecution of their task by motives differing in degree only from those which actuated the Cæsars, the Bolingbrokes, and the Napoleons of history.

Political progress at this stage depends upon a limitation of the power of the Crown sufficient to give the fullest scope to legitimate individual ambition.

Unless this transference of administrative power from King to Minister is effected, the nation will remain in a condition of arrested development, like that of Spain, or, like France, will escape this fate only by a convulsion so grave as to leave the country permanently enfeebled. It was a compromise of this nature between the power of the Crown and the initiative of leading statesmen which was effected in England in 1688. In consequence of the conditions imposed on William III. at his accession, a form of government was assured under which the right of ability to conduct the administration of the country, though not at first formally conceded, has ever since been practically admitted. The King remains as the living emblem of fixed political authority, a revered symbol of loyalty and unity, a rallying centre for national devotion; but he is at the same time excluded from any active participation in the actual direction of the policy of the State, a task which is thus left open to the talents of all the most active and ambitious members of the community. And though it may be admitted that under these conditions the best man will not always and inevitably come to the front, yet history shows the generalization to be substantially correct and just, while so long as even the tendency is shown to exist, the requirements of the argument are satisfied, however numerous the disturbing causes may be.

According to the theory propounded by the present author in this and in a previous work, the evolution of government is the result of a species of natural

selection, which is distinguished by two chief phases at two different periods, before and after the institution of fixed government. During the first stage government originates from a struggle for supremacy which tends to place a strong man at the head of affairs. It is also from time to time reoriginated and reinvigorated by the same process. While this phase lasts, however, the community is necessarily in an unsettled condition because supreme power when weakly held is an object of ambition to the most adventurous members of the community. So long as this liability continues, orderly social progress over a period sufficiently long to produce a permanently beneficial effect is impossible. This condition of affairs is cured by the growth of an exaggerated respect for monarchy. But absolute monarchy, though a valuable means of teaching unselfishness and subordination, is apt to overdo its part, and being in other respects unsuited for political progress must in its turn give place to another arrangement. After a dangerous interval during which, as in the case of France and Spain, national development may be entirely arrested, we arrive by the aid of Parliament at the second phase of government by natural selection. The struggle of Parliament with the King, in addition to the well-known results which need not be here recapitulated, has another consequence which is of equal importance. Its work is not ended when it secures the "liberties" of the individual. The "liberties" of the individual may be adequately secured against arbitrary interference, his property

may be safe, his person unmolested, and yet the King may be left in a position gravely prejudicial to the welfare of the community, if he is allowed to monopolize duties which require the highest available intelligence for their adequate performance. Autocracy, in addition to denying the right of the people to take an active interest in their own political condition, inflicts incalculable additional injury on the State by preventing superior intellect from guiding the national fortunes to the best political advantage. Therefore, from this period onward the political progress of the people depends upon their ability to enforce, not one but two conclusions, closely connected but distinct, the first openly and consciously, the second unconsciously and as it were by implication. The first is to the effect that it is not for the moral good of the nation that the King should exercise sole jurisdiction over the lives and fortunes of his subjects. The second conclusion is equally a corollary, though an unconscious one, of self-government—namely, that it is not for the material welfare of the nation that any supposed rights of the King should have the effect of excluding his ablest subjects from the direction of the national policy. The full reward of the victory of Parliament has, in fact, not been achieved until in addition to securing control over judicature, finance, and kindred matters, the Commons have, by their restrictions over the royal power, rendered possible the systematic rise of able statesmen, and have thus once more opened the way for the renewed activity of the principle in which government originated, and by

which, if it is to be efficient, its vigour must be continually renovated.

The advent of democracy is usually supposed to have altered the whole theory of government. Yet, however great the power of democracy may be, it cannot affect the truth that the best national policy is one which only wisdom can discover, and that therefore the prosperity of a nation is in the long run dependent on the wisdom of its rulers. In the days when Ministers were inclined to regard the poorer members of the community as beneath political consideration there may have been some reason for judging statesmen according to the general nature of their opinions rather than the strength of their intellect, and for preferring "correct" views to commanding talent. Now there is no such necessity. The principle that the humblest member of the community has as much right to the attention of government as the highest is universally conceded. Government, however, remains as difficult a task as ever, and the indifference of electors to the mental qualifications of those whom they elect is bringing and has brought its inevitable punishment. It is a law of nature and a principle of common sense that a difficult task is well or ill performed in proportion to the competence of those who undertake it. A law of nature, however, cannot be altered by a political faith, however fervent; nor can the most essential of all the principles of sound government be abolished by a decree of the people, however unanimous. National success depends, as before, upon government by ability, and neither elo-

quent speeches nor colossal majorities can avert the doom which follows upon a persistent disregard of the truth that the proper qualifications for a ruler are not the idle Parliamentary accomplishments so valuable in party warfare, but a clear-sighted estimate of the nature of the actual world in which we live and a correct appreciation of the essential requirements of the State.

The chief value of democracy is popularly supposed to consist in its capacity for regenerating society by the ennobling moral influence which self-government exercises upon the character of the individual. Yet the utmost democracy can effect in this way does not enable a community to dispense with the necessity of talented guidance. The moral qualities which are supposed in a final analysis to constitute the real strength of a nation, indispensable as they are for permanent greatness, are unable to supply government with the characteristics necessary to deal successfully with a perplexing international crisis, nor are they adequate to devise even a plausible solution of the complex problems of modern political and economic existence. Whatever may be the amount of self-reliance and individual initiative which a democratic training may confer upon the generality of the nation, it is deprived of more than half its value in the absence of national leaders who possess the ability to put those qualifications to their proper use.

If, however, the true theory of good government has not been altered by the advent of democracy, the difficulty of its realization has certainly been in-

creased. The highest political talent of the nation can now only be utilized after it has commended itself to the elector, a process apt to eliminate the qualities of real statesmanship. The selection of those to whom the fate of the nation is entrusted frequently takes place under the influence of entirely irrelevant considerations, nor is the fatal nature of such procedure perceived, since in some countries democracy has been so flattered that it seems to believe itself supreme, not merely over Kings and nobles, but over the laws of the universe itself. So long as "the will of the people" is carried into effect, nothing, it would seem, can be politically amiss. There are, however, certain principles of government, as there are principles in other domains of nature, which cannot be defied with impunity, and upon these principles, in spite of all democratic enactments, do the fortunes of a nation still depend. Democracy has altered much, but it cannot alter the eternal relation between political causes and political effects. The success of a State will depend in the future, as in the past, not merely on the increased harmony between government and governed, and most certainly not on the speedy and accurate realization of the wishes of the people, but upon the definite fact whether or no those wishes are in accordance with the laws of social growth and the principles of international evolution. And this, again, is a question which in its final aspect can be decided, not by a plebiscite of the people, but by the intelligence of their natural leaders. The consent of the people may be a necessary condition of good

government in modern times, but such an admission does not authorize the further conclusion that therefore the consent of the people constitutes and sums up all the qualities of good government, or that their opposition must necessarily prove any measure to be bad. It may be wise for a statesman to carry the people with him, yet the fact remains that measures are either in the highest interests of the community or they are not, whatever the people may think or vote about them: nor would the universal consent of the strongest, the most unanimous, and the most determined democracy in the world avail to turn an unwise course of political action into a good one. Even if international difficulties are going to be eliminated, as some optimists suppose, intricate problems of modern statesmanship will still remain such as can be solved only by sheer intellectual power, and to talk of the will of the people in this connection as the decisive requirement is meaningless. The success of a nation will therefore depend upon the ability of democracy to detect, and their readiness to employ, whatever true political talent may exist among them. Unless the British democracy can develop sufficient self-control to choose the leaders who are to guide the Imperial destinies solely on the ground of their presumptive fitness for Imperial tasks, unless they are prepared to subordinate the fancy embellishments of rhetoric and other useless political arts to the true requirements of imperial statesmanship, the nation will succumb to dangers similar to those which have for the time been successfully averted.

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