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#NowReading The Law of Civilization and Decay by Brooks Adams (1895)

THE LAW OF
CIVILIZATION AND DECAY

AN ESSAY ON HISTORY



BROOKS ADAMS



Brooks Adams' preface explaining the big picture: economics is arguably the most decisive factor in the fate of human civilizations. He ties this thesis into religion, race, culture, etc. Another unique part of the theory is that an economic age can be understood in the makeup...

PREFACE

In offering to the public a second edition of *The Law of Civilization and Decay* I take the opportunity to say emphatically that such value as the essay may have lies in its freedom from any preconceived bias. All theories contained in the book, whether religious or economic, are the effect, and not the cause, of the way in which the facts unfolded themselves. I have been passive.

The value of history lies not in the multitude of facts collected, but in their relation to each other, and in this respect an author can have no larger responsibility than any other scientific observer. If the sequence of events seems to indicate the existence of a law governing social development, such a law may be suggested, but to approve or disapprove of it would be as futile as to discuss the moral bearings of gravitation.

Some years ago, when writing a sketch of the history of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, I became deeply interested in certain religious aspects of the Reformation, which seemed hardly reconcilable with the theories usually advanced to explain them. After the book had been published, I continued reading theology, and, step by step, was led back, through the schoolmen and the crusades, to the revival of the pilgrimage to Palestine, which followed upon the conversion of the Huns. As ferocious pagans, the Huns had long closed the road to Constantinople; but the change which swept over Europe after the year 1000, when Saint Stephen was crowned, was unmistakable; the West received an impulsion from the East. I thus became convinced that religious enthusiasm, which, by stimulating the pilgrimage, restored communication between the Bosphorus and the Rhine, was the power which produced the accelerated movement culminating in modern centralization.

Meanwhile I thought I had discovered not only that faith, during the eleventh, twelfth, and early thirteenth centuries, spoke by preference through architecture, but also that in France and Syria, at least, a precise relation existed between the ecclesiastical and military systems of building, and that the one could not be understood without the other. In the commercial cities of the same epoch, on the contrary, the religious idea assumed no definite form of artistic expression, for the Gothic never flourished in Venice, Genoa, Pisa, or Florence, nor did any pure school of architecture thrive in the mercantile atmosphere. Furthermore, commerce from the outset seemed antagonistic to the imagination, for a universal decay of architecture set in throughout Europe after the great commercial expansion of the thirteenth century; and the inference I drew from these facts was, that the economic instinct must have chosen some other medium by which to express itself. My observations led me to suppose that the coinage might be such a medium, and I ultimately concluded that, if the development of a mercantile community is to be understood, it must be approached through its money.

Another conviction forced upon my mind, by the examination of long periods of history, was the exceedingly small part played by conscious thought in moulding the fate of men. At the moment of action the human being almost invariably obeys an instinct, like an animal; only after action has ceased does he reflect.

These controlling instincts are involuntary, and divide men into species distinct enough to cause opposite effects under identical conditions. For instance, impelled by fear, one type will rush upon an enemy, and another will run away; while the love of women or of money has stamped certain races as sharply as ferocity or cunning has stamped the lion or the fox.

Like other personal characteristics, the peculiarities of the mind are apparently strongly hereditary, and, if these instincts be transmitted from generation to generation, it is plain that, as the external world changes, those who receive this heritage must rise or fall in the social scale, according as their nervous system is well or ill adapted to the conditions to which they are born. Nothing is commoner, for example, than to find families who have been famous in one century

sinking into obscurity in the next, not because the children have degenerated, but because a certain field of activity which afforded the ancestor full scope, has been closed against his offspring. Particularly has this been true in revolutionary epochs such as the Reformation; and families so situated have very generally become extinct.

viii When this stage had been reached, the Reformation began to wear a new aspect, but several years elapsed before I saw whither my studies led. Only very slowly did a sequence of cause and effect take shape in my mind, a sequence wholly unexpected in character, whose growth resembled the arrangement of the fragments of an inscription, which cannot be read until the stones have been set in a determined order. Finally, as the historical work neared an end, I perceived that the intellectual phenomena under examination fell into a series which seemed to correspond, somewhat closely, with the laws which are supposed to regulate the movements of the material universe.

Theories can be tested only by applying them to facts, and the facts relating to successive phases of human thought, whether conscious or unconscious, constitute history; therefore, if intellectual phenomena are evolved in a regular sequence, history, like matter, must be governed by law. In support of such a conjecture, I venture to offer an hypothesis by which to classify a few of the more interesting intellectual phases through which human society must, apparently, pass, in its oscillations between barbarism and civilization, or, what amounts to the same thing, in its movement from a condition of physical dispersion to one of concentration. The accompanying volume contains the evidence which suggested the hypothesis, although, it seems hardly necessary to add, an essay of this size on so vast a subject can only be regarded as a suggestion.

The theory proposed is based upon the accepted scientific principle that the law of force and energy is of universal application in nature, and that animal life is one of the outlets through which solar energy is dissipated.

Starting from this fundamental proposition, the first deduction is, that, as human societies are forms of animal life, these societies must differ among themselves in energy, in proportion as nature has endowed them, more or less abundantly, with energetic material.

Thought is one of the manifestations of human energy, and among the earlier and simpler phases of thought, two stand conspicuous—Fear and Greed. Fear, which, by stimulating the imagination, creates a belief in an invisible world, and ultimately develops a priesthood; and Greed, which dissipates energy in war and trade.

Probably the velocity of the social movement of any community is proportionate to its energy and mass, and its centralization is proportionate to its velocity; therefore, as human movement is accelerated, societies centralize. In the earlier stages of concentration, fear appears to be the channel through which energy finds the readiest outlet; accordingly, in primitive and scattered communities, the imagination is vivid, and the mental types produced are religious, military, artistic. As consolidation advances, fear yields to greed, and the economic organism tends to supersede the emotional and martial.

Whenever a race is so richly endowed with the energetic material that it does not expend all its energy in the daily struggle for life, the surplus may be stored in the shape of wealth; and this stock of stored energy may be transferred from community to community, either by conquest, or by superiority in economic competition.

However large may be the store of energy accumulated by conquest, a race must, sooner or later, reach the limit of its martial energy, when it must enter on the phase of economic competition. But, as the economic organism radically differs from the emotional and martial, the effect of economic competition has been, perhaps invariably, to dissipate the energy amassed by war.

When surplus energy has accumulated in such bulk as to preponderate over productive energy, it becomes the controlling social force. Thenceforward, capital is autocratic, and energy vents itself through those organisms best fitted to give expression to the power of capital. In this last stage of

consolidation, the economic, and, perhaps, the scientific intellect is propagated, while the imagination fades, and the emotional, the martial, and the artistic types of manhood decay. When a social velocity has been attained at which the waste of energetic material is so great that the martial and imaginative stocks fail to reproduce themselves, intensifying competition appears to generate two extreme economic types,—the usurer in his most formidable aspect, and the peasant whose nervous system is best adapted to thrive on scanty nutriment. At length a point must be reached when pressure can go no further, and then, perhaps, one of two results may follow: A stationary period may supervene, which may last until ended by war, by exhaustion, or by both combined, as seems to have been the case with the Eastern Empire; or, as in the Western, disintegration may set in, the civilized population may perish, and a reversion may take place to a primitive form of organism.

The evidence, however, seems to point to the conclusion that, when a highly centralized society disintegrates, under the pressure of economic competition, it is because the energy of the race has been exhausted. Consequently, the survivors of such a community lack the power necessary for renewed concentration, and must probably remain inert until supplied with fresh energetic material by the infusion of barbarian blood.

BROOKS ADAMS.

Quincy, August 20, 1896.

...of its currency, which will be referenced as a focal point of a society's economics throughout the book.

Different races and peoples have different proclivities and energy. Societies are dynamic in that they are either increasing in energy or decreasing, and centralization/decentralization

correlates accordingly.

Economic competition after consolidation leads to two economic types, the usurer and the peasant. After an economic collapse, the former society cannot reconstitute until new racial blood is infused, and the cycle repeats.

The Romans were not capable of commerce like the Greeks or industry like the Syrians/Hindoos. Their economy was predicated on conquest, which Romans were good at, and financial usury, which their elite class partook in. Roman usury resulted in an early serfdom.

CHAPTER I THE ROMANS

When the Romans first emerged from the mist of fable, they were already a race of land-owners who held their property in severalty, and, as the right of alienation was established, the formation of relatively large estates had begun. The ordinary family, however, held, perhaps, twelve acres, and, as the land was arable, and the staple grain, it supported a dense rural population. The husbandmen who tilled this land were of the martial type, and, probably for that reason, though supremely gifted as administrators and soldiers, were ill-fitted to endure the strain of the unrestricted economic competition of a centralized society. Consequently their conquests had hardly consolidated before decay set in, a decay whose causes may be traced back until they are lost in the dawn of history.

The Latins had little economic versatility; they lacked the instinct of the Greeks for commerce, or of the Syrians and Hindoos for manufactures. They were essentially land-owners, and, when endowed with the acquisitive faculty, usurers. The latter early developed into a distinct species, at once more subtle of intellect and more tenacious of life than the farmers, and on the disparity between these two types of men, the fate of all subsequent civilization has hinged. At a remote antiquity Roman society divided into creditors and debtors; as it consolidated, the power of the former increased, thus intensifying the pressure on the weak, until, when centralization culminated under the Cæsars, reproduction slackened, disintegration set in, and, after some centuries of decline, the Middle Ages began.

The history of the monarchy must probably always remain a matter of conjecture, but it seems reasonably certain that the expulsion of the Tarquins was the victory of an hereditary monied caste, which succeeded in concentrating the functions of government in a practically self-perpetuating body drawn from their own order.¹ Niebuhr has demonstrated, in one of his most striking chapters, that usury was originally a patrician privilege; and some of the fiercest struggles of the early republic seem to have been decided against the oligarchy by wealthy plebeians, who were determined to break down the monopoly in money-lending. At all events, the conditions of life evidently favoured the growth of the instinct which causes its possessor to suck the vitality of the economically weak; and Macaulay, in the preface to *Virginia*, has given so vivid a picture of the dominant class, that one passage at least should be read entire.

“The ruling class in Rome was a monied class; and it made and administered the laws with a view solely to its own interest. Thus the relation between lender and borrower was mixed up with the relation between sovereign and subject. The great men held a large portion of the community in dependence by means of advances at enormous usury. The law of debt, framed by creditors, and for the protection of creditors, was the most horrible that has ever been known among men. The liberty, and even the life, of the insolvent were at the mercy of the patrician money-lenders. Children often became slaves in consequence of the misfortunes of their parents. The debtor was imprisoned, not in a public gaol under the care of impartial public functionaries, but in a private workhouse belonging to the creditor. Frightful stories were told respecting these dungeons.”

But a prisoner is an expense, and the patricians wanted money. Their problem was to exhaust the productive power of the debtor before selling him, and, as slaves have less energy than freemen, a system was devised by which the plebeians were left on their land, and stimulated to labour by the hope of redeeming themselves and their children from servitude. Niebuhr has explained at length how this was done.

¹ *History of Rome*, Mommsen, Dickson's trans., i. 288, 290.

Adams also mentions that the Caesars centralized their realm, economic competition set in, the Roman people were unable to compete, and the empire collapsed due to its own expansion. How poetic.

Financial usurers stripped their citizens of money through tax farming. Also interest rates were very high, with 20% being normal, and failure to pay resulted in imprisonment and eventually indentured servitude.

For money weighed out a person could pledge himself, his family, and all that belonged to him. In this condition he became *nexus*, and remained in possession of his property until breach of condition, when the creditor could proceed by summary process.² Such a contract satisfied the requirements, and the usurers had then only to invent a judgment for debt severe enough to force the debtor to become *nexus* when the alternative was offered him. This presented no difficulty. When an action was begun the defendant had thirty days of grace, and was then arrested and brought before the praetor. If he could neither pay nor find security, he was fettered with irons weighing not less than fifteen pounds, and taken home by the plaintiff. There he was allowed a pound of corn a day, and given sixty days in which to settle. If he failed, he was taken again before the praetor and sentenced. Under this sentence he might be sold or executed, and, where there were several plaintiffs, they might cut him up among them, nor was any individual liable for carving more than his share.³ A man so sentenced involved his descendants, and therefore, rather than submit, the whole debtor class became *nexi*, toiling for ever to fulfil contracts quite beyond their strength, and year by year sinking more hopelessly into debt, for ordinarily the accumulated interest soon raised "the principal to many times its original amount."⁴ Niebuhr has thus summed up the economic situation:—

"To understand the condition of the plebeian debtors, let the reader, if he is a man of business, imagine that the whole of the private debts in a given country were turned into bills at a year, bearing interest at twenty per cent or more; and that the non-payment of them were followed on summary process by imprisonment, and by the transfer of the debtor's whole property to his creditor, even though it exceeded what he owed. We do not need those further circumstances, which are incompatible with our manners, the personal slavery of the debtor and of his children, to form an estimate of the fearful condition of the unfortunate plebeians."⁵

Thus the usurer first exhausted a family and then sold it; and as his class fed on insolvency and controlled legislation, the laws were as ingeniously contrived for creating debt, as for making it profitable when contracted. One characteristic device was the power given the magistrate of fining for "offences against order." Under this head "men might include any accusations they pleased, and by the higher grades in the scale of fines they might accomplish whatever they desired."⁶ As the capitalists owned the courts and administered justice, they had the means at hand of ruining any plebeian whose property was tempting. Nevertheless, the stronghold of usury lay in the fiscal system, which down to the fall of the Empire was an engine for working bankruptcy. Rome's policy was to farm the taxes; that is to say, after assessment, to sell them to a publican, who collected what he could. The business was profitable in proportion as it was extortionate, and the country was subjected to a levy unregulated by law, and conducted to enrich speculators. "Ubi publicanus est," said Livy, quoting the Senate, "ibi aut jus publicum vanum, aut libertatem sociis nullam esse."⁷

Usury was the cream of this business. The custom was to lend to defaulters at such high rates of interest that insolvency was nearly certain to follow; then the people were taken on execution, and slave-hunting formed a regular branch of the revenue service. In Cicero's time whole provinces of Asia Minor were stripped bare by the traffic. The effect upon the Latin society of the fifth century before Christ was singularly destructive. Italy was filled with petty states in chronic war, the troops

² *History of Rome*, Niebuhr, Hare's trans., i. 576. Niebuhr has been followed in the text, although the "nexum" is one of the vexed points of Roman law. (See *Über das altrömische Schuldrecht*, Savigny.) The precise form of the contract is, however, perhaps, not very important for the matter in hand, as most scholars seem agreed that it resembled a mortgage, the breach of whose condition involved not only the loss of the pledge, but the personal liberty of the debtor. See *Gaius*, iv. 21.

³ *History of Rome*, Niebuhr, Hare's trans., ii. 599. But compare *Aulus Gellius*, xx. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 582.

⁵ *History of Rome*, Niebuhr, Hare's trans., i. 583.

⁶ *History of Rome*, Mommsen, Dickson's trans., i. 472.

⁷ *Livy*, xlv. 18.

Having to rebuild the lands which the Romans conquered proved to be a big problem, one that their economy could not handle after a while. The attempt to do so led to an increase on already high taxes of the peasantry

were an unpaid militia, which comprised the whole able-bodied population, and though the farms yielded enough for the family in good times, when the males were with the legions labour was certain to be lacking. The campaigns therefore brought want, and with want came the inability to pay taxes.

As late as the Tunic War, Regulus asked to be relieved from his command, because the death of his slave and the incompetence of his hired man left his fields uncared for; and if a general and a consul were pinched by absence, the case of the men in the ranks can be imagined. Even in victory the lot of the common soldier was hard enough, for, beside the chance of wounds and disease, there was the certain loss of time, for which no compensation was made. Though the plebeians formed the whole infantry of the line, they received no part of the conquered lands, and even the plunder was taken from them, and appropriated by the patricians to their private use.⁸ In defeat, the open country was overrun, the cattle were driven off or slaughtered, the fruit trees cut down, the crops laid waste, and the houses burned. In speaking of the Gallic invasion, Niebuhr has pointed out that the ravaging of the enemy, and the new taxes laid to rebuild the ruined public works, led to general insolvency.⁹

Such conditions fostered the rapid propagation of distinct types of mind, and at a very early period Romans had been bred destitute of the martial instinct, but more crafty and more tenacious of life than the soldier. These were the men who conceived and enforced the usury laws, and who held to personal pledges as the dearest privilege of their order; nor does Livy attempt to disguise the fact "that every patrician house was a gaol for debtors; and that in seasons of great distress, after every sitting of the courts, herds of sentenced slaves were led away in chains to the houses of the nobles."¹⁰

Of this redoubtable type the Claudian family was a famous specimen, and the picture which has been drawn by Macaulay of the great usurer, Appius Claudius, the decemvir, is so brilliant that it cannot be omitted.

"Appius Claudius Crassus ... was descended from a long line of ancestors distinguished by their haughty demeanour, and by the inflexibility with which they had withstood all the demands of the plebeian order. While the political conduct and the deportment of the Claudian nobles drew upon them the fiercest public hatred, they were accused of wanting, if any credit is due to the early history of Rome, a class of qualities which, in a military commonwealth, is sufficient to cover a multitude of offences. The chiefs of the family appear to have been eloquent, versed in civil business, and learned after the fashion of their age; but in war they were not distinguished by skill or valour. Some of them, as if conscious where their weakness lay, had, when filling the highest magistracies, taken internal administration as their department of public business, and left the military command to their colleagues. One of them had been entrusted with an army, and had failed ignominiously. None of them had been honoured with a triumph....

"His grandfather, called, like himself, Appius Claudius, had left a name as much detested as that of Sextus Tarquinius. This elder Appius had been consul more than seventy years before the introduction of the Licinian Laws. By availing himself of a singular crisis in public feeling, he had obtained the consent of the commons to the abolition of the tribuneship, and had been the chief of that Council of Ten to which the whole direction of the State had been committed. In a few months his administration had become universally odious. It had been swept away by an irresistible outbreak of popular fury; and its memory was still held in abhorrence by the whole city. The immediate cause of the downfall of this execrable government was said to have been an attempt made by Appius Claudius upon the chastity of a beautiful young girl of humble birth. The story ran that the Decemvir, unable to succeed by bribes and solicitations, resorted to an outrageous act of tyranny. A vile

⁸ *History of Rome*, Niebuhr, Hare's trans., i. 583.

⁹ *Ibid.*, ii. 603.

¹⁰ *History of Rome*, Niebuhr, Hare's trans., i. 574.

Important to note that the dissolution of the middle class led to the destruction of the empire. Adams says that a standing army, while created by money, was the force to break the oligopoly, echoing Spengler's words that only the power of blood could defeat that of money.

dependant of the Claudian house laid claim to the damsel as his slave. The cause was brought before the tribunal of Appius. The wicked magistrate, in defiance of the clearest proofs, gave judgment for the claimant. But the girl's father, a brave soldier, saved her from servitude and dishonour by stabbing her to the heart in the sight of the whole Forum. That blow was the signal for a general explosion. Camp and city rose at once; the Ten were pulled down; the tribuneship was re-established; and Appius escaped the hands of the executioner only by a voluntary death."¹¹

Virginia was slain in 449 b.c., just in the midst of the long convulsion which began with the secession to the Mons Sacer, and ended with the Licinian Laws. During this century and a quarter, usury drained the Roman vitality low. Niebuhr was doubtless right in his conjecture that the mutinous legions were filled with nexi to whom the continuance of the existing status meant slavery, and Mommsen also pointed out that the convulsions of the third and fourth centuries, in which it seemed as though Roman society must disintegrate, were caused by "the insolvency of the middle class of land-holders."¹²

Had Italy been more tranquil, it is not inconceivable that the small farmers might even then have sunk into the serfdom which awaited them under the Empire, for in peace the patricians might have been able to repress insurrection with their clients; but the accumulation of capital had hardly begun, and several centuries were to elapse before money was to take its ultimate form in a standing army. Meanwhile, troops were needed almost every year to defend the city; and, as the legions were a militia, they were the enemy and not the instrument of wealth. Until the organization of a permanent paid police they were, however, the highest expression of force, and, when opposed to them, the monied oligarchy was helpless, as was proved by the secession to the Mons Sacer. The storm gathered slowly. The rural population was ground down under the usury laws, and in 495 b.c. the farmers refused to respond to the levy. The consul Publius Servilius had to suspend prosecutions for debt and to liberate debtors in prison; but at the end of the campaign the promises he had made in the moment of danger were repudiated by Appius Claudius, who rigorously enforced the usury legislation, and who was, for the time, too strong to be opposed.

That year the men submitted, but the next the legions had again to be embodied; they again returned victorious; their demands were again rejected; and then, instead of disbanding, they marched in martial array into the district of Crustumeria, and occupied the hill which ever after was called the Sacred Mount.¹³ Resistance was not even attempted; and precisely the same surrender was repeated in 449. When Virginius stabbed his daughter he fled to the camp, and his comrades seized the standards and marched for Rome. The Senate yielded at once, decreed the abolition of the Decemvirate, and the triumphant cohorts, drawn up upon the Aventine, chose their tribunes.

Finally, in the last great struggle, when Camillus was made dictator to coerce the people, he found himself impotent. The monied oligarchy collapsed when confronted with an armed force; and Camillus, reduced to act as mediator, vowed a temple to Concord, on the passage of the Licinian Laws.¹⁴ The Licinian Laws provided for a partial liquidation, and also for an increase of the means of the debtor class by redistribution of the public land. This land had been seized in war, and had been monopolized by the patricians without any particular legal right. Licinius obtained a statute by which back payments of interest should be applied to extinguishing the principal of debts, and balances then remaining due should be liquidated in three annual instalments. He also limited the quantity of the public domain which could be held by any individual, and directed that the residue which remained after the reduction of all estates to that standard should be distributed in five-acre lots.

¹¹ Preface to *Virginia*.

¹² *History of Rome*, Mommsen, Dickson's trans., i. 484.

¹³ See *History of Rome*, Mommsen, Dickson's trans., i. 298-9.

¹⁴ See *History of Rome*, Niebuhr, Hare's trans., iii. 22, 30.

When the usurers of the Republic had been crushed, the Roman people reproduced and flourished. When faced with cheap slave labor from conquered eastern provinces, however, the native Italians were outcompeted and starved.

Pyrrhus saw with a soldier's eye that Rome's strength did not lie in her generals, who were frequently his inferiors, but in her farmers, whom he could not crush by defeat, and this was the class which was favoured by the Licinian Laws. They multiplied greatly when the usurers capitulated, and, as Macaulay remarked, the effect of the reform was "singularly happy and glorious." It was indeed no less than the conquest of Italy. Rome, "while the disabilities of the plebeians continued ... was scarcely able to maintain her ground against the Volscians and Hernicans. When those disabilities were removed, she rapidly became more than a match for Carthage and Macedon."¹⁵

But nature's very bounty to the Roman husbandman and soldier proved his ruin. Patient of suffering, enduring of fatigue, wise in council, fierce in war, he routed all who opposed him; and yet the vigorous mind and the robust frame which made him victorious in battle, were his weakness when at peace. He needed costly nutriment, and when brought into free economic competition with Africans and Asiatics, he starved. Such competition resulted directly from foreign conquests, and came rapidly when Italy had consolidated, and the Italians began to extend their power over other races. Nearly five centuries intervened between the foundation of the city and the defeat of Pyrrhus, but within little more than two hundred years from the victory of Beneventum, Rome was mistress of the world.

Indeed, beyond the peninsula, there was not much, save Carthage, to stop the march of the legions. After the death of Alexander, in 323 b.c., Greece fell into decline, and by 200, when Rome attacked Macedon, she was in decrepitude. The population of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt was not martial, and had never been able to cope in battle with the western races; while Spain and Gaul, though inhabited by fierce and hardy tribes, lacked cohesion, and could not withstand the onset of organized and disciplined troops. Distance, therefore, rather than hostile military force, fixed the limit of the ancient centralization, for the Romans were not maritime, and consequently failed to absorb India or discover America. Thus their relatively imperfect movement made the most material difference between the ancient and modern economic system.

By conquest the countries inhabited by races of a low vitality and great tenacity of life were opened both for trade and slaving, and their cheap labour exterminated the husbandmen of Italy. Particularly after the annexation of Asia Minor this labour overran Sicily, and the cultivation of the cereals by the natives became impossible when the island had been parcelled out into great estates stocked by capitalists with eastern slaves who, at Rome, undersold all competitors. During the second century the precious metals poured into Latium in a flood, great fortunes were amassed and invested in land, and the Asiatic provinces of the Empire were swept of their men in order to make these investments pay. No data remain by which to estimate, even approximately, the size of this involuntary migration, but it must have reached enormous numbers, for sixty thousand captives were the common booty of a campaign, and after provinces were annexed they were depopulated by the publicans.

The best field hands came from the regions where poverty had always been extreme, and where, for countless generations, men had been inured to toil on scanty food. Districts like Bithynia and Syria, where slaves could be bought for little or nothing, had always been tilled by races far more tenacious of life than any Europeans. After Lucullus plundered Pontus, a slave brought only four drachmæ, or, perhaps, seventy cents.¹⁶ On the other hand, competition grew sharper among the Italians themselves. As capital accumulated in the hands of the strongest, the poor grew poorer, and pauperism spread. As early as the Marsian War, in 90 b.c., Lucius Marcius Philippus estimated that there were only two thousand wealthy families among the burgesses. In about three hundred years nature had culled a pure plutocracy from what had been originally an essentially martial race.

¹⁵ Preface to *Virginia*, Macaulay.

¹⁶ *Histoire de l'Esclavage*, Wallon, ii. 38.

Roman capitalists brought slaves to Italy who made it impossible for native Italians to have quality food, and therefore their legions became of less quality. Adams also notes that Rome's expansion was limited as it was not a maritime power.

The Roman economy was fine on its own, however through conquest it actually opened itself up to free trade from foreign lands. Free trade within the empire was actually a bad thing, as its conquered lands were not racially Roman. Conquest would be the death of the Romans.

The primitive Roman was a high order of husbandman, who could only when well fed flourish and multiply. He was adapted to that stage of society when the remnants of caste gave a certain fixity of tenure to the farmer, and when prices were maintained by the cost of communication with foreign countries. As the world centralized, through conquest, these barriers were swept away. Economic competition became free, land tended to concentrate in fewer and fewer hands, and this land was worked by eastern slaves, who reduced the wages of labour to the lowest point at which the human being can survive.

The effect was to split society in halves, the basis being servile, and the freemen being separated into a series of classes, according to the economic power of the mind. Wealth formed the title to nobility of the great oligarchy which thus came to constitute the core of the Empire. At the head stood the senators, whose rank was hereditary unless they lost their property, for to be a senator a man had to be rich. Augustus fixed \$48,000 as the minimum of the senatorial fortune, and made up the deficiency to certain favoured families,¹⁷ but Tiberius summarily ejected spendthrifts.¹⁸ All Latin literature is redolent of money. Tacitus, with an opulent connection, never failed to speak with disdain of the base-born, or, in other words, of the less prosperous. "Poppæus Sabinus, a man of humble birth," raised to position by the caprice of two emperors;¹⁹ "Cassius Severus, a man of mean extraction";²⁰ and, in the poetry of antiquity, there are few more famous lines than those in which Juvenal has described the burden of poverty:

"Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat
Res angusta domi."²¹

Perhaps no modern writer has been so imbued with the spirit of the later Empire as Fustel de Coulanges, and on this subject he has been emphatic. Not only were the Romans not democratic, but at no period of her history did Rome love equality. In the Republic rank was determined by wealth. The census was the basis of the social system. Every citizen had to declare his fortune before a magistrate, and his grade was then assigned him. "Poverty and wealth established the legal differences between men."

The first line of demarcation lay between those who owned land and those who did not. The former were *assidui*: householders rooted in the soil. The latter were *proletarians*. The *proletarians* were equal in their poverty; but the *assidui* were unequal in their wealth, and were consequently divided into five classes. Among these categories all was unequal—taxes, military service, and political rights. They did not mix together.

"If one transports oneself to the last century of the Republic ... one finds there an aristocracy as strongly consolidated as the ancient patrician.... At the summit came the senatorial order. To belong to it the first condition was to possess a great fortune.... The Roman mind did not understand that a poor man could belong to the aristocracy, or that a rich man was not part of it."²²

Archaic customs lingered late in Rome, for the city was not a centre of commercial exchanges; and long after the death of Alexander, when Greece passed its meridian, the Republic kept its copper coinage. Regulus farmed his field with a single slave and a hired servant, and there was, in truth, nothing extraordinary in the famous meeting with Cincinnatus at the plough, although such simplicity astonished a contemporary of Augustus. Advancing centralization swept away these ancient customs, a centralization whose march is, perhaps, as sharply marked by the migration of vagrants to the cities, as by any single phenomenon. Vagrant paupers formed the proletariat for whose relief the "Frumentariæ Leges" were framed; and yet, though poor-laws in some form are

¹⁷ Suet. *Aug.*, ii. 41.

¹⁸ Tacitus, *Ann.*, ii. 48.

¹⁹ *Ann.*, vi. 39.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, iv. 21.

²¹ *Sat.*, iii. 164.

²² *L'Invasion Germanique*, Fustel de Coulanges, 146-157.

Competition with the races of lower vitality forced the Roman Senate to provide relief to the farmers and husbandmen.

considered a necessity in modern times, few institutions of antiquity have been more severely criticised than those regulating charity. From the time of Cato downward, the tendency has been to maintain that at Rome demagogues fed the rabble at the cost of the lives of the free-holders.

Probably the exact converse is the truth; the public gifts of food appear to have been the effect of the ruin of agriculture, and not its cause. After the Italian husbandmen had been made insolvent by the competition of races of lower vitality, they flocked starving to the capital, but it was only reluctantly that the great speculators in grain, who controlled the Senate, admitted the necessity of granting State aid to the class whom they had destroyed.

Long before the Punic Wars the Carthaginians had farmed Sicily on capitalistic principles; that is to say, they had stocked domains with slaves, and had traded on the basis of large sales and narrow profits. The Romans when they annexed the island only carried out this system to its logical end. Having all Asia Minor to draw upon for labour, they deliberately starved and overworked their field-hands, since it was cheaper to buy others than to lose command of the market. The familiar story of the outbreak of the Servile War, about 134 b.c., shows how far the contemporaries of the Sicilian speculators believed them capable of going.

Damophilus, an opulent Sicilian landlord, being one day implored by his slaves to have pity on their nakedness and misery, indignantly demanded why they went hungry and cold, with arms in their hands, and the country before them. Then he bound them to stakes and flayed them with the lash.²³

The reduction of Syracuse by Marcellus broke the Carthaginian power in the island, and, after the fall of Agrigentum in 210 b.c., the pacification of the country went on rapidly. Probably from the outset, even in the matter of transportation, the provinces of the mainland were at a disadvantage because of the cheapness of sea freights, but at all events the opening of the Sicilian grain trade had an immediate and disastrous effect on Italy. The migration of vagrants to Rome began forthwith, and within seven years, 203 b.c., a public distribution of wheat took place, probably by the advice of Scipio. Nevertheless the charity was private and not gratuitous. On the contrary, a charge of six sesterces, or twenty-five cents the bushel, was made, apparently near half the market rate, a price pretty regularly maintained on such occasions down to the Empire. This interval comprehended the whole period of the Sicilian supremacy in the corn trade, for in 30 b.c. Egypt was annexed by Augustus.

The distress which followed upon free trade with Egypt finally broke down the resistance of the rich to gratuitous relief for the poor. Previously the opposition to State aid had been so stubborn that until 123 b.c. no legal provision whatever was made for paupers; and yet the account left by Polybius of the condition of Lombardy toward the middle of the second century shows the complete wreck of agriculture.

"The yield of corn in this district is so abundant that wheat is often sold at four obols a Sicilian medimnus [about eight cents by the bushel, or a little less than two sesterces], barley at two, or a metretes of wine for an equal measure of barley.... The cheapness and abundance of all articles of food may also be clearly shown from the fact that travellers in these parts, when stopping at inns, do not bargain for particular articles, but simply ask what the charge is per head for board. And for the most part the innkeepers are content" with half an as (about half a cent) a day.²⁴

These prices indicate a lack of demand so complete, that the debtors among the peasantry must have been ruined, and yet tax-payers remained obdurate. Gratuitous distributions were tried in 58 b.c. by the Lex Clodia, but soon abandoned as costly, and Cæsar applied himself to reducing the outlay on the needy. He hoped to reach his end by cutting down the number of grain-receivers one-half, by providing that no grain should be given away except on presentation of a ticket, and by

²³ Diod. xxxiv. 38. On the subject of the Sicilian slavery, see *Histoire de l'Esclavage*, Wallon, ii. 300 *et seq.*

²⁴ *Polybius*, ii. 15, Shuckburgh's trans.

A lack of Roman manufactories meant there was no stopgap against eastern cheap labor, and so when conquests stopped and there was no more land to be looted, the balance of trade fell further away from the Romans.

ordering that the number of ticket-holders should not be increased. The law of nature prevailed against him, for the absorption of Egypt in the economic system of the Empire, marked, in the words of Mommsen "the end of the old and the beginning of a new epoch."²⁵

Among the races which have survived through ages upon scanty nutriment, none have, perhaps, excelled the Egyptian fellah. Even in the East no peasantry has probably been so continuously overworked, so under-paid, and so taxed.

"If it is the aim of the State to work out the utmost possible amount from its territory, in the Old World the Lagids were absolutely the masters of statecraft. In particular they were in this sphere the instructors and the models of the Caesars."²⁶

In the first century Egypt was, as it still is, preeminently a land of cheap labour; but it was also something more. The valley of the Nile, enriched by the overflow of the river, returned an hundred-fold, without manure; and this wonderful district was administered, not like an ordinary province, but like a private farm belonging to the citizens of Rome. The emperor reserved it to himself. How large a revenue he drew from it is immaterial; it suffices that one-third of all the grain consumed in the capital came from thence. According to Athenæus, some of the grain ships in use were about 420 feet long by 57 broad, or nearly the size of a modern steamer in the Atlantic trade.²⁷ From the beginning of the Christian era, therefore, the wages of the Egyptian fellah regulated the price of the cereals within the limits where trade was made free by Roman consolidation, and it is safe to say that, thenceforward, such of the highly nourished races as were constrained to sustain this competition, were doomed to perish. It is even extremely doubtful whether the distributions of grain by the government materially accelerated the march of the decay. Spain should have been far enough removed from the centre of exchanges to have had a certain local market of her own, and yet Martial, writing about 100 a.d., described the Spanish husbandman eating and drinking the produce he could not sell, and receiving but four sesterces the bushel for his wheat, which was the price paid by paupers in the time of Cicero.²⁸

Thus by economic necessity great estates were formed in the hands of the economically strong. As the value of cereals fell, arable land passed into vineyards or pasture, and, the provinces being unable to sustain their old population, eviction went on with gigantic strides. Had the Romans possessed the versatility to enable them to turn to industry, factories might have afforded a temporary shelter to this surplus labour, but manufactures were monopolized by the East; therefore the beggared peasantry were either enslaved for debt, or wandered as penniless paupers to the cities, where gradually their numbers so increased as to enable them to extort a gratuitous dole. Indeed, during the third century, their condition fell so low that they were unable even to cook the food freely given them, and Aurelian had their bread baked at public ovens.²⁹

As centralization advanced with the acceleration of human movement, force expressed itself more and more exclusively through money, and the channel in which money chose to flow was in investments in land. The social system fostered the growth of large estates. The Romans always had an inordinate respect for the landed magnate, and a contempt for the tradesman. Industry was reputed a servile occupation, and, under the Republic, the citizen who performed manual labour was almost deprived of political rights. Even commerce was thought so unworthy of the aristocracy that it was forbidden to senators. "The soil was always, in this Roman society, the principal source and, above all, the only measure of wealth."

A law of Tiberius obliged capitalists to invest two-thirds of their property in land. Trajan not only exacted of aspirants to office that they should be rich, but that they should place at least one-

²⁵ *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, Mommsen, ii. 233.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, ii. 239.

²⁷ *Deipnosophists*, v. 37.

²⁸ Martial, *Ep.*, xii. 76.

²⁹ Vopiscus, *Aurelianus*, 35.

third of their fortune in Italian real estate; and, down to the end of the Empire, the senatorial class "was at the same time the class of great landed proprietors."³⁰

The more property consolidated, the more resistless the momentum of capital became. Under the Empire small properties grew steadily rarer, and the fewer they were, the greater the disadvantage at which their owners stood. The small farmer could hardly sustain himself in competition with the great landlord. The grand domain of the capitalist was not only provided with a full complement of labourers, vine-dressers, and shepherds, but with the necessary artisans. The poor farmer depended on his rich neighbour even for his tools. "He was what a workman would be to-day who, amidst great factories, worked alone."³¹ He bought dearer and sold cheaper, his margin of profit steadily shrunk; at last he was reduced to a bare subsistence in good years, and the first bad harvest left him bankrupt.

The Roman husbandman and soldier was doomed, for nature had turned against him; the task of history is but to ascertain his fate, and trace the fortunes of his country after he had gone.

Of the evicted, many certainly drifted to the cities and lived upon charity, forming the proletariat, a class alike despised and lost to self-respect: some were sold into slavery, others starved; but when all deductions have been made, a surplus is left to be accounted for, and there is reason to suppose that these stayed on their farms as tenants to the purchasers.

In the first century such tenancies were common. The lessee remained a freeman, under no subjection to his landlord, provided he paid his rent; but in case of default the law was rigorous. Everything upon the land was liable as a pledge, and the tenant himself was held in pawn unless he could give security for what he owed. In case, therefore, of prolonged agricultural depression, all that was left of the ancient rural population could hardly fail to pass into the condition of serfs, bound to the land by debts beyond the possibility of payment.

That such a depression actually occurred, and that it extended through several centuries, is certain. Nor is it possible that its only cause was Egyptian competition, for had it been so, an equilibrium would have been reached when the African exchanges had been adjusted, whereas a continuous decline of prices went on until long after the fall of the Western Empire. The only other possible explanation of the phenomenon is that a contraction of the currency began soon after the death of Augustus, and continued without much interruption down to Charlemagne. Between the fall of Carthage and the birth of Christ, the Romans plundered the richest portions of the world west of the Indus; in the second century, North Africa, Macedon, Spain, and parts of Greece and Asia Minor; in the first, Athens, Cappadocia, Syria, Gaul, and Egypt. These countries yielded an enormous mass of treasure, which was brought to Rome as spoil of war, but which was not fixed there by commercial exchanges, and which continually tended to flow back to the natural centres of trade. Therefore, when conquests ceased, the sources of new bullion dried up, and the quantity held in Italy diminished as the balance of trade grew more and more unfavourable.

Under Augustus the precious metals were plenty and cheap, and the prices of commodities were correspondingly high; but a full generation had hardly passed before a dearth began to be felt, which manifested itself in a debasement of the coinage, the surest sign of an appreciation of the currency.

Speaking generally, the manufactures and the more costly products of antiquity came from countries to the east of the Adriatic, while the West was mainly agricultural; and nothing is better established than that luxuries were dear under the Empire, and food cheap.³² Therefore exchanges were unfavourable to the capital from the outset; the exports did not cover the imports, and each year a deficit had to be made good in specie.

³⁰ *L'Invasion Germanique*, Fustel de Coulanges, 190.

³¹ *Le Colonat Romain: Recherches sur quelques Problèmes d'Histoire*, Fustel de Coulanges, 143.

³² *Organisation Financière chez les Romains*, Marquardt, 65 et seq.

Enter women to make the situation worse, who paid millions of USD (1890's) a year for Arabian and Indian jewelry and vanities. Roman historian Pliny wrote "so dear do pleasures and women cost us".

The Romans perfectly understood the situation, and this adverse balance caused them much uneasiness. Tiberius dwelt upon it in a letter to the Senate as early as 22 a.d. In that year the aediles brought forward proposals for certain sumptuary reforms, and the Senate, probably to rid itself of a delicate question, referred the matter to the executive. Most of the emperor's reply is interesting, but there is one particularly noteworthy paragraph. "If a reform is in truth intended, where must it begin? and how am I to restore the simplicity of ancient times?... How shall we reform the taste for dress?... How are we to deal with the peculiar articles of female vanity, and, in particular, with that rage for jewels and precious trinkets, which drains the Empire of its wealth, and sends, in exchange for bawbles, the money of the Commonwealth to foreign nations, and even to the enemies of Rome?"³³ Half a century later matters were, apparently, worse, for Pliny more than once returned to the subject. In the twelfth book of his *Natural History*, after enumerating the many well-known spices, perfumes, drugs, and gems, which have always made the Eastern trade of such surpassing value, he estimated that at the most moderate computation 100,000,000 sesterces, or about \$4,000,000 in coin, were annually exported to Arabia and India alone; and at a time when silk was worth its weight in gold, the estimate certainly does not seem excessive. He added, "So dear do pleasures and women cost us."³⁴

The drain to Egypt and the Asiatic provinces could hardly have been much less serious. Adrian almost seems to have been jealous of the former, for in his letter to Servianus, after having criticised the people, he remarked that it was also a rich and productive country "in which no one was idle," and in which glass, paper and linen were manufactured.³⁵ The Syrians were both industrial and commercial. Tyre, for example, worked the raw silk of China, dyed and exported it. The glass of Tyre and Sidon was famous; the local aristocracy were merchants and manufacturers, "and, as later the riches acquired in the East flowed to Genoa and Venice, so then the commercial gains of the West flowed back to Tyre and Apamea."³⁶

Within about sixty years from the final consolidation of the Empire under Augustus, this continuous efflux of the precious metals began to cause the currency to contract, and prices to fall; and the first effect of shrinking values appears to have been a financial crisis in 33 a.d. Probably the diminution in the worth of commodities relatively to money, had already made it difficult for debtors to meet their liabilities, for Tacitus has prefaced his story by pointing out that usury had always been a scourge of Rome, and that just previous to the panic an agitation against the money-lenders had begun with a view to enforcing the law regarding interest. As most of the senators were deep in usury they applied for protection to Tiberius, who granted what amounted to a stay of proceedings, and then, as soon as the capitalists felt themselves safe, they proceeded to take their revenge. Loans were called, accommodation refused, and mortgagors were ruthlessly sold out. "There was great scarcity of money ... and, on account of sales on execution, coin accumulated in the imperial, or the public treasury. Upon this the Senate ordered that every one should invest two-thirds of his capital on loan, in Italian real estate; but the creditors called in the whole, nor did public opinion allow debtors to compromise." Meanwhile there was great excitement but no relief, "as the usurers hoarded for the purpose of buying low. The quantity of sales broke the market, and the more liabilities were extended, the harder liquidation became. Many were ruined, and the loss of property endangered social station and reputation."³⁷ The panic finally subsided, but contraction went on and next showed itself, twenty-five years later, in adulterated coinage. From the time of the Punic Wars, about two centuries and a half before Christ, the silver denarius, worth nearly seventeen cents, had been the standard of the Roman currency, and it kept its weight and purity unimpaired until Nero, when it diminished from $\frac{1}{84}$ to $\frac{1}{96}$ of a pound of silver, the pure metal being mixed with $\frac{1}{10}$ of

³³ Tacitus, *Ann.*, Murphy's trans., iii. 53.

³⁴ *Nat. Hist.*, xii. 18.

³⁵ Vopiscus, *Saturninus*, 8

³⁶ *Provinces of the Roman Empire*, Mommsen, ii. 140.

³⁷ *Ann.*, vi. 16, 17.

Again, we see that the east was able to outproduce Rome through its manufacturing base.

A lot going on here but the center of commerce in the world shifted from Rome to Constantinople, which truly spelt the end of the Roman Empire in its current form. Rome had also exhausted the treasures it won in war, and had little else to prop itself up with.

copper.³⁸ Under Trajan, toward 100 a.d., the alloy reached twenty per cent; under Septimius Severus a hundred years later it had mounted to fifty or sixty per cent, and by the time of Elagabalus, 220 a.d., the coin had degenerated into a token of base metal, and was repudiated by the government.

Something similar happened to the gold. The aureus, though it kept its fineness, lost in weight down to Constantine. In the reign of Augustus it equalled one-fortieth of a Roman pound of gold, in that of Nero one forty-fifth, in that of Caracalla but one-fiftieth, in that of Diocletian one-sixtieth, and in that of Constantine one seventy-second, when the coin ceased passing by tale and was taken only by weight.³⁹

The repudiation of the denarius was an act of bankruptcy; nor did the financial position improve while the administration remained at Rome. Therefore the inference is that, toward the middle of the third century, Italy had lost the treasure she had won in war, which had gradually gravitated to the centre of exchanges. This inference is confirmed by history. The movements of Diocletian seem to demonstrate that after 250 a.d. Rome ceased to be either the political or commercial capital of the world.

Unquestionably Diocletian must have lived a life of intense activity at the focus of affairs, to have raised himself from slavery to the purple at thirty-nine; and yet Gibbon thought he did not even visit Rome until he went thither to celebrate his triumph, after he had been twenty years upon the throne. He never seemed anxious about the temper of the city. When proclaimed emperor he ignored Italy and established himself at Nicomedia on the Propontis, where he lived until he abdicated in 305. His personal preferences evidently did not influence him, since his successors imitated his policy; and everything points to the conclusion that he, and those who followed him, only yielded to the same resistless force which fixed the economic capital of the world upon the Bosphorus. In the case of Constantine the operation of this force was conspicuous, for it was not only powerful enough to overcome the habit of a lifetime, but to cause him to undertake the gigantic task of building Constantinople.

Constantine was proclaimed in Britain in 306, when only thirty-two. Six years later he defeated Maxentius, and then governed the West alone until his war with Licinius, whom he captured in 323 and afterward put to death. Thus, at fifty, he returned to the East, after an absence of nearly twenty years, and his first act was to choose Byzantium as his capital, a city nearly opposite Nicomedia.

The sequence of events seems plain. Very soon after the insolvency of the government at Rome, the administration quitted the city and moved toward the boundary between Europe and Asia; there, after some forty years of vacillation, it settled permanently at the true seat of exchanges, for Constantinople remained the economic centre of the earth for more than eight centuries.

Similar conclusions may be drawn from the fluctuations of the currency. At Rome the coin could not be maintained at the standard, because of adverse exchanges; but when the political and economic centres had come to coincide, at a point upon the Bosphorus, depreciation ceased, and the aureus fell no further.

This migration of capital, which caused the rise of Constantinople, was the true opening of the Middle Ages, for it occasioned the gradual decline of the rural population, and thus brought about the disintegration of the West. Victory carried wealth to Rome, and wealth manifested its power in a permanent police; as the attack in war gained upon the defence, and individual resistance became impossible, transportation grew cheap and safe, and human movement was accelerated. Then economic competition began, and intensified as centralization advanced, telling always in favour of the acutest intellect and the cheapest labour. Soon, exchanges became permanently unfavourable, a steady drain of bullion set in to the East, and, as the outflow depleted the treasure amassed at Rome

³⁸ See *Geschichte des Römischen Münzwesens*, Mommsen, 756.

³⁹ *Monnaies Byzantines*, Sabatier, i. 51, 52

Whilst Rome's economy was shrinking, its coinage was become more and more diluted, which is a way to determine for ourselves the general economic situation of societies in the past. Physical coinage diminution correlates to a general economic dysfunction.

by plunder, contraction began, and with contraction came that fall of prices which first ruined, then enslaved, and finally exterminated, the native rural population of Italy.

In the time of Diocletian, the ancient silver currency had long been repudiated, and, in his well-known edict, he spoke of prices as having risen ninefold, when reckoned in the denarii of base metal; the purchasing power of pure gold and silver had, however, risen very considerably in all the western provinces. Nor was this all. It appears to be a natural law that when social development has reached a certain stage, and capital has accumulated sufficiently, the class which has had the capacity to absorb it shall try to enhance the value of their property by legislation. This is done most easily by reducing the quantity of the currency, which is a legal tender for the payment of debts. A currency obviously gains in power as it shrinks in volume, and the usurers of Constantinople intuitively condensed to the utmost that of the Empire. After the insolvency under Elagabalus, payments were exacted in gold by weight, and as it grew scarcer its value rose. Aurelian issued an edict limiting its use in the arts; and while there are abundant reasons for inferring that silver also gained in purchasing power, gold far outstripped it. Although no statistics remain by which to establish, with any exactness, the movement of silver in comparison with commodities, the ratio between the precious metals at different epochs is known, and gold appears to have doubled between Cæsar and Romulus Augustulus.

47 B.C.	gold stood to silver as	1 : 8.9
1 A.D. under Augustus,	" "	" 1 : 9.3
100–200, Trajan to Severus,	" "	" 1 : 9–10
310, Constantine,	" "	" 1 : 12.5
450, Theodosius II.,	" "	" 1 : 18

As gold had become the sole legal tender, this change of ratio represents a diminution, during the existence of the Western Empire, of at least fifty per cent in the value of property in relation to debt, leaving altogether out of view the appreciation of silver itself, which was so considerable that the government was unable to maintain the denarius.⁴⁰

Resistance to the force of centralized wealth was vain. Aurelian's attempt to reform the mints is said to have caused a rebellion, which cost him the lives of seven thousand of his soldiers; and though his policy was continued by Probus, and Diocletian coined both metals again at a ratio, expansion was so antagonistic to the interests of the monied class that, by 360, silver was definitely discarded, and gold was made by law the only legal tender for the payment of debts.⁴¹ Furthermore, the usurers protected themselves against any possible tampering with the mints by providing that the solidus should pass by weight and not by tale; that is to say, they reserved to themselves the right to reject any golden son which contained less than one seventy-second of a pound of standard metal, the weight fixed by Constantine.⁴²

Thus, at a time when the exhaustion of the mines caused a failure in the annual supply of bullion, the old composite currency was split in two, and the half retained made to pass by weight alone, so as to throw the loss by clipping and abrasion upon the debtor. So strong a contraction engendered a steady fall of prices, a fall which tended rather to increase than diminish as time went on. But in prolonged periods of decline in the market value of agricultural products, farmers can with difficulty meet a money rent, because the sale of their crops leaves a greater deficit each year, and finally a time comes when insolvency can no longer be postponed.

⁴⁰ *Monnaies Byzantines*, Sabatier, i. 50.

⁴¹ *Geschichte des Römischen Münzwesens*, Mommsen, 837.

⁴² *Monnaies Byzantines*, Sabatier, i. 51, 52.

The money lenders and slavers had destroyed Italy with their awful economics. Marriages and reproduction became infrequent, barbarians became more of a threat, and more non-Romans were recruited into the Roman army and society. Emperors came increasingly from outside Rome.

In his opening chapter Gibbon described the Empire under the Antonines as enjoying “a happy period of more than fourscore years” of peace and prosperity; and yet nothing is more certain than that this halcyon age was in reality an interval of agricultural ruin. On this point Pliny was explicit, and Pliny was a large land-owner.

He wrote one day to Calvisius about an investment, and went at length into the condition of the property. A large estate adjoining his own was for sale, and he was tempted to buy, “for the land was fertile, rich, and well watered,” the fields produced vines and wood which promised a fair return, and yet this natural fruitfulness was marred by the misery of the husbandmen. He found that the former owner “had often seized the ‘pignora,’ or pledges [that is, all the property the tenants possessed]; and though, by so doing, he had temporarily reduced their arrears, he had left them” without the means of tilling the soil. These tenants were freemen, who had been unable to meet their rent because of falling prices, and who, when they had lost their tools, cattle, and household effects, were left paupers on the farms they could neither cultivate nor abandon. Consequently the property had suffered, the rent had declined, and for these reasons and “the general hardness of the times,” its value had fallen from five million to three million sesterces.⁴³

In another letter he explained that he was detained at home making new arrangements with his tenants, who were apparently insolvent, for “in the last five years, in spite of great concessions, the arrears have increased. For this reason most [tenants] take no trouble to diminish their debt, which they despair of paying. Indeed, they plunder and consume what there is upon the land, since they think they cannot save for themselves.” The remedy he proposed was to make no more money leases, but to farm on shares.⁴⁴

The tone of these letters shows that there was nothing unusual in all this. Pliny nowhere intimated that the tenants were to blame, or that better men were to be had. On the contrary, he said emphatically that in such hard times money could not be collected, and therefore the interest of the landlord was to cultivate his estates on shares, taking the single precaution to place slaves over the tenants as overseers and receivers of the crops.

In the same way the digest referred to such arrears as habitual.⁴⁵ In still another letter to Trajan, Pliny observed, “Continuæ sterilitates cogunt me de remissionibus cogitare.”⁴⁶ Certainly these insolvent farmers could have held no better position when working on shares than before their disasters, for as bankrupts they were wholly in their creditors’ power, and could be hunted like slaves, and brought back in fetters if they fled. They were tied to the property by a debt which never could be paid, and they and their descendants were doomed to stay for ever as *coloni* or serfs, chattels to be devised or sold as part of the realty. In the words of the law, “they were considered slaves of the land.”⁴⁷ The ancient martial husbandman had thus “fallen from point to point, from debt to debt, into an almost perpetual subjection.”⁴⁸ Deliverance was impossible, for payment was out of the question. He was bound to the soil for his life, and his children after him inherited his servitude with his debt.

The customs, according to which the *coloni* held, were infinitely varied; they differed not only between estates, but between the hands on the same estate. On the whole, however, the life must have been hard, for the serfs of the Empire did not multiply, and the scarcity of rural labour became a chronic disease.

⁴³ Pliny's *Letters*, iii. 19.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, ix. 37.

⁴⁵ *Digest*, xix. 2, 15, and xxxiii. 7, 20.

⁴⁶ *Letters*, x. 24. On this whole subject see *Le Colonat Romain: Recherches sur quelques Problèmes d'Histoire*, Fustel de Coulanges, ch. I.

⁴⁷ *Code of Justinian*, xi. 51, 1.

⁴⁸ *Le Colonat Romain*, Fustel de Coulanges, 21.

Yet, relatively, the position of the *colonus* was good, for his wife and children were his own; slavery was the ulcer which ate into the flesh, and the Roman fiscal system, coupled as it was with usury, was calculated to enslave all but the oligarchy who made the laws.

The taxes of the provinces were assessed by the censors and then sold for cash to the publicans, who undertook the collection. Italy was at first exempted, but after her bankruptcy she shared the common fate. Companies were formed to handle these ventures. The knights usually subscribed the capital and divided the profits, which corresponded with the severity of their administration; and, as the Roman conquests extended, these companies grew too powerful to be controlled. The only officials in a position to act were the provincial governors, who were afraid to interfere, and preferred to share in the gains of the traffic, rather than to run the risk of exciting the wrath of so dangerous an enemy.⁴⁹

According to Pliny the collection of a rent in money had become impossible in the reign of Trajan. The reason was that with a contracting currency prices of produce fell, and each year's crop netted less than that of the year before; therefore a rent moderate in one decade was extortionate in the next. But taxes did not fall with the fall in values; on the contrary, the tendency of centralization is always toward a more costly administration. Under Augustus, one emperor with a moderate household sufficed; but in the third century Diocletian found it necessary to reorganize the government under four Cæsars, and everything became specialized in the same proportion.

In this way the people were caught between the upper and the nether millstone. The actual quantity of bullion taken from them was greater, the lower prices of their property fell, and arrears of taxes accumulated precisely as Pliny described the accumulation of arrears of rent. These arrears were carried over from reign to reign, and even from century to century; and Petronius, the father-in-law of Valens, is said to have precipitated the rebellion of Procopius, by exacting the tribute unpaid since the death of Aurelian a hundred years before.

The processes employed in the collection of the revenue were severe. Torture was freely used,⁵⁰ and slavery was the fate of defaulters. Armed with such power, the publicans held debtors at their mercy. Though usury was forbidden, the most lucrative part of the trade was opening accounts with the treasury, assuming debts, and charging interest sometimes as high as fifty per cent. Though, as prices fell, the pressure grew severer, the abuses of the administration were never perhaps worse than toward the end of the Republic. In his oration against Verres, Cicero said the condition of the people had become intolerable: "All the provinces are in mourning, all the nations that are free are complaining; every kingdom is expostulating with us about our covetousness and injustice."⁵¹

The well-known transactions of Brutus are typical of what went on wherever the Romans marched. Brutus lent the Senate of Salamina at forty-eight per cent a year. As the contract was illegal, he obtained two decrees of the Senate at Rome for his protection, and then to enforce payment of his interest, Scaptius, his man of business, borrowed from the governor of Cilicia a detachment of troops. With this he blockaded the Senate so closely that several members starved to death. The Salaminians, wanting at all costs to free themselves from such a load, offered to pay off both interest and capital at once; but to this Brutus would not consent, and to impose his own terms upon the province he demanded from Cicero more troops, "only fifty horse."⁵²

When at last, by such proceedings, the debtors were so exhausted that no torment could wring more from them, they were sold as slaves; Nicodemus, king of Bithynia, on being reproached for not furnishing his contingent of auxiliaries, replied that all his able-bodied subjects had been taken by

⁴⁹ *Organisation Financière chez les Romains*, Marquardt, 240; *Les Manières d'Argent à Rome*, Deloume, 377.

⁵⁰ See *Decline and Fall*, ch. xvii.

⁵¹ In *C. Verrem*, IV. lxxxix.

⁵² *Cicero's Letters*, Ad Att. vi. 2; also Ad Att. v. 21, and vi. 1.

the farmers of the revenue.⁵³ Nor, though the administration doubtless was better regulated under the Empire than under the Republic, did the oppression of the provinces cease. Juvenal, who wrote about 100, implored the young noble taking possession of his government to put some curb upon his avarice, "to pity the poverty of the allies. You see the bones of kings sucked of their very marrow."⁵⁴ And though the testimony of Juvenal may be rejected as savouring too much of poetical licence, Pliny must always be treated with respect. When Maximus was sent to Achaia, Pliny thought it well to write him a long letter of advice, in which he not only declared that to wrest from the Greeks the shadow of liberty left them would be "durum, ferum, barbarumque;" but adjured him to try to remember what each city had been, and not to despise it for what it was.⁵⁵

Most impressive, perhaps, of all, is the statement of Dio Cassius that the revolt led by Boadicea in Britain in 61 a.d., which cost the Romans seventy thousand lives, was provoked by the rapacity of Seneca, who, having forced a loan of ten million drachmas (\$1,670,000) on the people at usurious interest, suddenly withdrew his money, thereby inflicting intense suffering.⁵⁶ As Pliny said with bitterness and truth, "The arts of avarice were those most cultivated at Rome."⁵⁷

The stronger type exterminated the weaker; the money-lender killed out the husbandman; the race of soldiers vanished, and the farms, whereon they had once flourished, were left desolate. To quote the words of Gibbon: "The fertile and happy province of Campania ... extended between the sea and the Apennines from the Tiber to the Silarus. Within sixty years after the death of Constantine, and on the evidence of an actual survey, an exemption was granted in favour of three hundred and thirty thousand English acres of desert and uncultivated land; which amounted to one-eighth of the whole surface of the province."⁵⁸

It is true that Gibbon, in this paragraph, described Italy as she was in the fourth century, just before the barbarian invasions, but a similar fate had overtaken the provinces under the Cæsars. In the reign of Domitian, according to Plutarch, Greece had been almost depopulated.

"She can with much difficulty raise three thousand men, which number the single city of Megara sent heretofore to the battle of Plataea.... For of what use would the oracle be now, which was heretofore at Tegyra or at Ptous? For scarcely shall you meet, in a whole day's time, with so much as a herdsman or shepherd in those parts."⁵⁹

Wallon has observed that Rome, "in the early times of the Republic, was chiefly preoccupied with having a numerous and strong population of freemen. Under the Empire she had but one anxiety—taxes."⁶⁰

To speak with more precision, force changed the channel through which it operated. Native farmers and native soldiers were needless when such material could be bought cheaper in the North or East. With money the cohorts could be filled with Germans; with money, slaves and serfs could be settled upon the Italian fields; and for the last century, before the great inroads began, one chief problem of the imperial administration was the regulation of the inflow of new blood from without, lacking which the social system must have collapsed.

The later campaigns on the Rhine and the Danube were really slave-hunts on a gigantic scale. Probus brought back sixteen thousand men from Germany, "the bravest and most robust of their youth," and distributed them in knots of fifty or sixty among the legions. "Their aid was now become necessary.... The infrequency of marriage, and the ruin of agriculture, affected the principles

⁵³ Diod. xxxvi. 3. See also *Histoire de l'Esclavage*, Wallon, ii. 42, 44.

⁵⁴ *Satire*, viii. 89, 90.

⁵⁵ *Letters*, viii. 24.

⁵⁶ *Dio Cassius*, lxii. 2.

⁵⁷ *Nat. Hist.*, xiv., *Proemium*.

⁵⁸ *Decline and Fall*, ch. xvii.

⁵⁹ *Morals, Trans. of 1718*, 4, 11.

⁶⁰ *Histoire de l'Esclavage*, iii. 268.

of population; and not only destroyed the strength of the present, but intercepted the hope of future generations."⁶¹

His importations of agricultural labour were much more considerable. In a single settlement in Thrace, Probus established one hundred thousand Bastarnæ; Constantius Chlorus is said to have made Gaul flourish by the herds of slaves he distributed among the landlords; in 370, large numbers of Alemanni were planted in the valley of the Po, and on the vast spaces of the public domain there were barbarian villages where the native language and customs were preserved.

Probably none of these Germans came as freemen. Many, of course, were captives sold as slaves, but perhaps the majority were serfs. Frequently a tribe, hard pressed by enemies, asked leave to pass the frontier, and settle as tributaries, that is to say as *coloni*. On one such occasion Constantius II. was nearly murdered. A body of Limigantes, who had made a raid, surrendered, and petitioned to be given lands at any distance, provided they might have protection. The emperor was delighted at the prospect of such a harvest of labourers, to say nothing of recruits, and went among them to receive their submission. Seeing him alone, the barbarians attacked him, and he escaped with difficulty. His troops slaughtered the Germans to the last man.

This unceasing emigration gradually changed the character of the rural population, and a similar alteration took place in the army. As early as the time of Cæsar, Italy was exhausted; his legions were mainly raised in Gaul, and as the native farmers sank into serfdom or slavery, and then at last vanished, recruits were drawn more and more from beyond the limits of the Empire. At first they were taken singly, afterwards in tribes and nations, so that, when Aëtius defeated Attila at Châlons, the battle was fought by the Visigoths under Theodoric, and the equipment of the Romans and Huns was so similar that when drawn up the lines "presented the image of civil war."

This military metamorphosis indicated the extinction of the martial type, and it extended throughout society. Rome not only failed to breed the common soldier, she also failed to produce generals. After the first century, the change was marked. Trajan was a Spaniard, Septimius Severus an African, Aurelian an Illyrian peasant, Diocletian a Dalmatian slave, Constantius Chlorus a Dardanian noble, and the son of Constantius, by a Dacian woman, was the great Constantine.

All these men were a peculiar species of military adventurer, for they combined qualities which made them, not only effective chiefs of police, but acceptable as heads of the civil bureaucracy, which represented capital. Severus was the type, and Severus has never been better described than by Machiavelli, who said he united the ferocity of the lion to the cunning of the fox. This bureaucracy was the core of the consolidated mass called the Empire; it was the embodiment of money, the ultimate expression of force, and it recognized and advanced men who were adapted to its needs. When such men were to be found, the administration was thought good; but when no one precisely adapted for the purple appeared, and an ordinary officer had to be hired to keep the peace, friction was apt to follow, and the soldier, even though of the highest ability, was often removed. Both Stilicho and Aëtius were murdered.

The monied oligarchy which formed this bureaucracy was a growth as characteristic of the high centralization of the age, as a sacred caste is characteristic of decentralization. Perhaps the capitalistic class of the later Empire has been better understood and appreciated by Fustel de Coulanges than by any other historian.

"All the documents which show the spirit of the epoch show that this noblesse was as much honoured by the government as respected by the people.... It was from it that the imperial government chose ordinarily its high functionaries."

These functionaries were not sought among the lower classes. The high offices were not given as a reward of long and faithful service; they belonged by prescriptive right to the great families.

⁶¹ *Decline and Fall*, ch. xii.

50% interest rate btw

Rome experienced its own feminism because "when wealth become force, the female might be as strong as the male". No fault divorces were apparently a thing and the family unit was

weak. Christianity, contrary to what many think, was the answer to Rome's problems. Many such cases!

The Empire made the wealthy, senators, praetors, consuls, and governors; all dignities, except only the military, were practically hereditary in the opulent class.

"This class is rich and the government is poor. This class is mistress of the larger part of the soil; it is in possession of the local dignities, of the administrative and judicial functions. The government has only the appearance of power, and an armed force which is continually diminishing....

"The aristocracy had the land, the wealth, the distinction, the education, ordinarily the morality of existence; it did not know how to fight and to command. It withdrew itself from military service; more than that, it despised it. It was one of the characteristic signs of this society to have always placed the civil functions not on a level with, but much above, the grades of the army. It esteemed much the profession of the doctor, of the professor, of the advocate; it did not esteem that of the officer and the soldier, and left it to men of low estate."⁶²

This supremacy of the economic instinct transformed all the relations of life, the domestic as well as the military. The family ceased to be a unit, the members of which cohered from the necessity of self-defence, and became a business association. Marriage took the form of a contract, dissoluble at the will of either party, and, as it was somewhat costly, it grew rare. As with the drain of their bullion to the East, which crushed their farmers, the Romans were conscious, as Augustus said, that sterility must finally deliver their city into the hand of the barbarians.⁶³ They knew this and they strove to avert their fate, and there is little in history more impressive than the impotence of the ancient civilization in its conflict with nature. About the opening of the Christian era the State addressed itself to the task. Probably in the year 4 a.d., the emperor succeeded in obtaining the first legislation favouring marriage, and this enactment not proving effective, it was supplemented by the famous *Leges Julia* and *Papia Poppæa* of the year 9. In the spring, at the games, the knights demanded the repeal of these laws, and then Augustus, having called them to the Forum, made them the well-known speech, whose violence now seems incredible. Those who were single were the worst of criminals, they were murderers, they were impious, they were destroyers of their race, they resembled brigands or wild beasts. He asked the *equites* if they expected men to start from the ground to replace them, as in the fable; and declared in bitterness that while the government liberated slaves for the sole purpose of keeping up the number of citizens, the children of the *Marci*, of the *Fabii*, of the *Valerii*, and the *Julii*, let their names perish from the earth.⁶⁴

In vain celibacy was made almost criminal. In vain celibates were declared incapable of inheriting, while fathers were offered every bribe, were preferred in appointments to office, were even given the choice seats at games; in the words of Tacitus, "not for that did marriage and children increase, for the advantages of childlessness prevailed."⁶⁵ All that was done was to breed a race of informers, and to stimulate the lawyers to fresh chicanery.⁶⁶

When wealth became force, the female might be as strong as the male; therefore she was emancipated. Through easy divorce she came to stand on an equality with the man in the marriage contract. She controlled her own property, because she could defend it; and as she had power, she exercised political privileges. In the third century *Julia Domna*, *Julia Mamaea*, *Soemias*, and others, sat in the Senate, or conducted the administration.

The evolution of this centralized society was as logical as every other work of nature. When force reached the stage where it expressed itself exclusively through money, the governing class

⁶² *L'Invasion Germanique*, 200, 204, 223.

⁶³ *Dio Cassius*, lvi. 7.

⁶⁴ *Dio Cassius*, lvi. 5-8.

⁶⁵ *Ann.*, iii. 25.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, xxviii. Latin literature is full of references to these famous laws. Tacitus, Pliny, Juvenal, and Martial constantly speak of them. There were also many commentaries on them by Roman jurists.

The Empire, in the end, was inherited and destroyed by barbarians, leading to the Middle Ages. The economic men had destroyed the Roman warriors, and Rome could no longer hold out against the barbarian hordes. Economics was the cause of the fall and which all problems came from.

ceased to be chosen because they were valiant or eloquent, artistic, learned, or devout, and were selected solely because they had the faculty of acquiring and keeping wealth. As long as the weak retained enough vitality to produce something which could be absorbed, this oligarchy was invincible; and for very many years after the native peasantry of Gaul and Italy had perished under the load, new blood injected from more tenacious races kept the dying civilization alive.

The weakness of the monied class lay in their very power, for they not only killed the producer, but in the strength of their acquisitiveness they failed to propagate themselves. The State feigned to regard marriage as a debt, and yet the opulent families died out. In the reign of Augustus all but fifty of the patrician houses had become extinct, and subsequently the emperor seemed destined to remain the universal heir through bequests of the childless.

With the peasantry the case was worse. By the second century barbarian labour had to be imported to till the fields, and even the barbarians lacked the tenacity of life necessary to endure the strain. They ceased to breed, and the population dwindled. Then, somewhat suddenly, the collapse came. With shrinking numbers, the sources of wealth ran dry, the revenue failed to pay the police, and on the efficiency of the police the life of this unwarlike civilization hung.

In early ages every Roman had been a land-owner, and every land-owner had been a soldier, serving without pay. To fight had been as essential a part of life as to plough. But by the fourth century military service had become commercial; the legions were as purely an expression of money as the bureaucracy itself.

From the time of the Servian constitution downward, the change in the army had kept pace with the acceleration of movement which caused the economic competition that centralized the State. Rome owed her triumphs over Hannibal and Pyrrhus to the valour of her infantry, rather than to the genius of her generals; but from Marius the census ceased to be the basis of recruitment, and the rich refused to serve in the ranks.

This was equivalent in itself to a social revolution; for, from the moment when the wealthy succeeded in withdrawing themselves from service, and the poor saw in it a trade, the citizen ceased to be a soldier, and the soldier became a mercenary. From that time the army could be used for "all purposes, provided that they could count on their pay and their booty."⁶⁷

The administration of Augustus organized the permanent police, which replaced the mercenaries of the civil wars, and this machine was the greatest triumph and the crowning glory of capital. Dio Cassius has described how the last vestige of an Italian army passed away. Up to the time of Severus it had been customary to recruit the Prætorians either from Italy itself, from Spain, Macedonia, or other neighbouring countries, whose population had some affinity with that of Latium. Severus, after the treachery of the guard to Pertinax, disbanded it, and reorganized a corps selected from the bravest soldiers of the legions. These men were a horde of barbarians, repulsive to Italians in their habits, and terrible to look upon.⁶⁸ Thus a body of wage-earners, drawn from the ends of the earth, was made cohesive by money. For more than four hundred years this corps of hirelings crushed revolt within the Empire, and regulated the injection of fresh blood from without, with perfect promptitude and precision; nor did it fail in its functions while the money which vitalized it lasted.

But a time came when the suction of the usurers so wasted the life of the community that the stream of bullion ceased to flow from the capital to the frontiers; then, as the sustaining force failed, the line of troops along the Danube and the Rhine was drawn out until it broke, and the barbarians poured in unchecked.

The so-called invasions were not conquests, for they were not necessarily hostile; they were only the logical conclusion of a process which had been going on since Trajan. When the power to control the German emigration decayed, it flowed freely into the provinces.

⁶⁷ *L'Organisation Militaire chez les Romains*, Marquardt, 143.

⁶⁸ *Dio Cassius*, lxxiv. 2.

By the year 400 disintegration was far advanced; the Empire was crumbling, not because it was corrupt or degenerate, but because the most martial and energetic race the world had ever seen had been so thoroughly exterminated by men of the economic type of mind, that petty bands of sorry adventurers might rove whither they would, on what had once been Roman soil, without meeting an enemy capable of facing them, save other adventurers like themselves. Goths, not Romans, defeated Attila at Châlons.

The Vandals, who, in the course of twenty years, wandered from the Elbe to the Atlas, were not a nation, not an army, not even a tribe, but a motley horde of northern barbarians, ruined provincials, and escaped slaves—a rabble whom Cæsar's legions would have scattered like chaff, had they been as many as the sands of the shore; and yet when Genseric routed Boniface and sacked Carthage, in 439, he led barely fifty thousand fighting men.

The successors to the Western Roman Empire were barbarians, and became decentralized and slow. Roman capital had migrated from Rome to Constantinople.

CHAPTER II THE MIDDLE AGE

Probably the appreciation of the Roman monetary standard culminated during the invasion of the Huns toward the middle of the fifth century. In the reign of Valentinian III. gold sold for eighteen times its weight of silver, and Valentinian's final catastrophe was the murder of Aëtius in 454, with whose life the last spark of vitality at the heart of Roman centralization died. The rise of Ricimer and the accession of Odoacer, mark the successive steps by which Italy receded into barbarism, and, in the time of Theoderic the Ostrogoth, she had become a primitive, decentralized community, whose poverty and sluggishness protected her from African and Asiatic competition. The Ostrogoths subdued Italy in 493, and by that date the barbarians had overrun the whole civilized world west of the Adriatic, causing the demand for money to sustain a consolidated society to cease, the volume of trade to shrink, the market for eastern wares to contract, and gold to accumulate at the centre of exchanges. As gold accumulated, its value fell, and during the first years of the sixth century it stood at a ratio to silver of less than fifteen to one, a decline of eighteen per cent.⁶⁹ As prices correspondingly rose, the pressure on the peasantry relaxed, prosperity at Constantinople returned, and the collapse of the Western Empire may have prolonged the life of the European population of the Eastern for above one hundred and fifty years. The city which Constantine planted in 324 on the shore of the Bosphorus, was in reality a horde of Roman capitalists washed to the confines of Asia by the current of foreign exchanges; and these emigrants carried with them, to a land of mixed Greek and barbarian blood, their language and their customs. For many years these monied potentates ruled their new country absolutely. All that legislation could do for them was done. They even annexed rations to their estates, to be supplied at the public cost, to help their children maintain their palaces. As long as prices fell, nothing availed; the aristocracy grew poorer day by day. Their property lay generally in land, and the same stringency which wasted Italy and Gaul operated, though perhaps less acutely, upon the Danubian peasantry also. By the middle of the fifth century the country was exhausted and at the mercy of the Huns.

Wealth is the weapon of a monied society; for, though itself lacking the martial instinct, it can, with money, hire soldiers to defend it. But to raise a revenue from the people, they must retain a certain surplus of income after providing for subsistence, otherwise the government must trench on the supply of daily food, and exhaustion must supervene. Finlay has explained that chronic exhaustion was the normal condition of Byzantium under the Romans.

"The whole surplus profits of society were annually drawn into the coffers of the State, leaving the inhabitants only a bare sufficiency for perpetuating the race of tax-payers. History, indeed, shows that the agricultural classes, from the labourer to the landlord, were unable to retain possession of the savings required to replace that depreciation which time is constantly producing in all vested capital, and that their numbers gradually diminished."⁷⁰

Under Theodosius II., when gold reached its maximum, complete prostration prevailed. The Huns marched whither they would, and one swarm "of barbarians followed another, as long as anything was left to plunder." The government could no longer keep armies in the field. A single example will show how low the community had fallen. In 446, Attila demanded of Theodosius six thousand pounds of gold as a condition of peace, and certainly six thousand pounds of gold, equalling perhaps \$1,370,000, was a small sum, even when measured by the standard of private wealth. The end of the third century was not a prosperous period in Italy, and yet before his election as emperor in 275, the fortune of Tacitus reached 280,000,000 sesterces, or upwards of \$11,000,000.⁷¹ Nevertheless Theodosius was unable to wring this inconsiderable indemnity from the

⁶⁹ *Monnaies Byzantines*, Sabatier, i. 50.

⁷⁰ *History of the Byzantine Empire*, Finlay, 9.

⁷¹ Vopiscus, *Tacitus*, 10.

After Western Rome collapsed, the Byzantines flourished, and under Justinian it reached its peak. Asiatic populations overtook the native Europeans in the Levant, and isolation could not be had because the Empire was the center of the worlds exchanges.

people, and he had to levy a private assessment on the senators, who were themselves so poor that to pay they sold at auction the jewels of their wives and the furniture of their houses.

Almost immediately after the collapse of the Western Empire the tide turned. With the fall in the price of gold the peasantry revived and the Greek provinces flourished. In the reign of Justinian, Belisarius and Narses marched from end to end of Africa and Europe, and Anastasius rolled in wealth.

Anastasius, the contemporary of Theoderic, acceded to the throne in 491. He not only built the famous long wall from the Propontis to the Euxine, and left behind him a treasure of three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of gold, but he remitted to his subjects the most oppressive of their taxes, and the reign of Justinian, who succeeded him at an interval of only ten years, must always rank as the prime of the Byzantine civilization. The observation is not new, it has been made by all students of Byzantine history.

"The increased prosperity ... infused into society soon displayed its effects; and the brilliant exploits of the reign of Justinian must be traced back to the reinvigoration of the body politic of the Roman Empire by Anastasius."⁷²

Justinian inherited the throne from his uncle Justin, a Dardanian peasant, who could neither read nor write. But the barbarian shepherd was a thorough soldier, and the army he left behind him was probably not inferior to the legions of Titus or Trajan. At all events, had Justinian's funds sufficed, there seems reason to suppose he might have restored the boundaries of the Empire. His difficulty lay not in lack of physical force, but in dearth of opulent enemies; in the sixth century conquest had ceased to be profitable. The territory open to invasion had been harried for generations, and hardly a country was to be found rich enough to repay the cost of a campaign by mercenaries. Therefore, the more the emperor extended his dominions, the more they languished; and finally to provide for wars, barbarian subsidies, and building, Justinian had to resort to over-taxation. With renewed want came renewed decay, and perhaps the completion of Saint Sophia, in 558, may be taken as the point whence the race which conceived this masterpiece hastened to its extinction.

In the seventh century Asiatic competition devoured the Europeans in the Levant, as three hundred years before it had devoured the husbandmen of Italy; and this was a disease which isolation alone could cure. But isolation of the centre of exchanges was impossible, for the vital principle of an economic age is competition, and, when the relief afforded by the collapse of Rome had been exhausted, competition did its work with relentless rapidity. Under Heraclius (610–640) the population sank fast, and by 717 the western blood had run so low that an Asiatic dynasty reigned supreme. Everywhere Greeks and Romans vanished before Armenians and Slavs, and for years previous to the accession of Leo the Isaurian the great waste tracts where they once lived were systematically re-peopled by a more enduring race. The colonists of Justinian II. furnished him an auxiliary army. At Justinian's death in 711 the revolution had been completed; the population had been renovated, and Constantinople had become an Asiatic city.⁷³ The new aristocracy was Armenian, as strong an economic type as ever existed in western Asia; while the Slavic peasantry which underlay them were among the most enduring of mankind. There competition ended, for it could go no further; and, apparently, from the accession of Leo in 717, to the rise of Florence and Venice, three hundred and fifty years later, Byzantine society, in fixity, almost resembled the Chinese. Such movement as occurred, like Iconoclasm, came from the friction of the migrating races with the old population. As Texier has observed of architecture: "From the time of Justinian until the end of the Empire we cannot remark a single change in the modes of construction."⁷⁴

⁷² *Greece under the Romans*, George Finlay, 214.

⁷³ *Byzantine Empire*, Finlay, 256.

⁷⁴ *Byzantine Architecture*, Texier, 24.

Later Byzantine civilization became economic, and this is evident in its architecture. Pompous displays of jewels and gold dominated, and Constantinople became indistinguishable from other Asian cities.

Only long after, when the money which sustained it was diverted toward Italy during the crusades, did the social fabric crumble; and Gibbon has declared that the third quarter of the tenth century “forms the most splendid period of the Byzantine annals.”⁷⁵

The later Byzantine was an economic civilization, without aspiration or imagination, and perhaps the most vivid description which has survived of that ostentatious, sordid, cowardly, and stagnant race, is the little sketch of the Jew, Benjamin of Tudela, who travelled to the Levant in 1173.

Benjamin called the inhabitants of Constantinople Greeks, because of their language, and he described the city as a vast commercial metropolis, “common to all the world, without distinction of country or religion.” Merchants from the East and West flocked thither—from Babylon, Mesopotamia, Media, and Persia, as well as from Egypt, Hungary, Russia, Lombardy, and Spain. The rabbi thought the people well educated and social, liking to eat and drink, “every man under his vine and under his fig tree.” They loved gold and jewels, pompous display, and gorgeous ceremonial; and the Jew has dwelt with delight on the palace, with its columns of gold and silver, and the wonderful crown so studded with gems that it lighted the night without a lamp. The Greeks also roused his enthusiasm for the splendour of their clothes and of their horses’ trappings, for when they went abroad they resembled princes; but on the other hand, he remarked with a certain scorn, that they were utterly cowardly, and, like women, had to hire men to protect them.

“The Greeks who inhabit the country are extremely rich and possess great wealth of gold and precious stones. They dress in garments of silk, ornamented by gold and other valuable materials.... Nothing upon earth equals their wealth.”

“The Greeks hire soldiers of all nations whom they call barbarians, for the purpose of carrying on ... wars with ... the Turks.” “They have no martial spirit themselves and like women are unfit for war.”⁷⁶

The movement of races in the Eastern Empire proceeded with automatic regularity. The cheaper organism exterminated the more costly, because energy operated through money strongly enough to cause free economic competition; nor is the evidence upon which this conclusion rests to be drawn from books alone. Coinage and architecture, sculpture and painting, tell the tale with equal precision.

When, in the fourth century, wealth, ebbing on the Tiber, floated to the Bosphorus the core of the Latin aristocracy, it carried with it also the Latin coinage. For several generations this coinage underwent little apparent alteration, but after the final division of the Empire, in 395, between the sons of Theodosius, a subtle change began in the composition of the ruling class; a change reflected from generation to generation in the issues of their mints. Sabatier has described the transformation wrought in eight hundred years with the minuteness of an antiquary.

If a set of Byzantine coins are arranged in chronological order, those of Anastasius, about 500, show at a glance an influence which is not Latin. Strange devices have appeared on the reverse, together with Greek letters. A century later, when the great decline was in progress under Heraclius, the type had become barbarous, and the prevalence of Greek inscriptions proves the steady exhaustion of the Roman blood. Another fifty years, and by 690, under Justinian II., the permanent and conventional phase had been developed. Religious emblems were used; the head of Christ was struck on the golden son, and fixity of form presaged the Asiatic domination. The official costumes, the portraits of the emperors, certain consecrated inscriptions, all were changeless; and in 717, an Armenian dynasty ascended the throne in the person of Leo the Isaurian.⁷⁷ This motionless period lasted for full three hundred and fifty years, as long as the exchanges of the world centred at

⁷⁵ *Decline and Fall*, ch. lii.

⁷⁶ *Itinerary of Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela*, trans. from the Hebrew by Asher, 54.

⁷⁷ *Monnaies Byzantines*, i. 26.

As the center of exchanges turned from Constantinople to Italy, the Empire declined. Its ruling class became materialistic and, therefore, pagan. In Western Europe, the barbarian societies became imaginative and Christian warriors and priests dominated.

discovered by strangers. The later discoverers would become rival medicine men, and battle would be the only test by which the orthodoxy of the competitors could be determined. The victors would almost certainly stigmatize the beings the vanquished served, as devils who tormented men. There is an example of this process in the eighteenth chapter of 1 Kings:—

“And Elijah ... said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.”

Then Elijah proposed that each side should dress a bullock, and lay it on wood, and call upon their spirit; and the one who sent down fire should be God. And all the people answered that it was well spoken. And Jezebel's prophets took their bullock and dressed it, and called on “Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us!” But nothing came of it.

Then Elijah mocked them, “and said, Cry aloud: ... either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.”

And they cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives till “blood gushed out upon them. And ... there was neither voice, nor any to answer.” Then Elijah built his altar, and cut up his bullock and laid him on wood, and poured twelve barrels of water over the whole, and filled a trench with water.

And “the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

“And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God.

“And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there.”

The Germans of the fourth century were a very simple race, who comprehended little of natural laws, and who therefore referred phenomena they did not understand to supernatural intervention. This intervention could only be controlled by priests, and thus the invasions caused a rapid rise in the influence of the sacred class. The power of every ecclesiastical organization has always rested on the miracle, and the clergy have always proved their divine commission as did Elijah. This was eminently the case with the mediæval Church. At the outset Christianity was socialistic, and its spread among the poor was apparently caused by the pressure of competition; for the sect only became of enough importance to be persecuted under Nero, contemporaneously with the first signs of distress which appeared through the debasement of the denarius. But socialism was only a passing phase, and disappeared as the money value of the miracle rose, and brought wealth to the Church. Under the Emperor Decius, about 250, the magistrates thought the Christians opulent enough to use gold and silver vessels in their service, and, by the fourth century, the supernatural so possessed the popular mind, that Constantine not only allowed himself to be converted by a miracle, but used enchantment as an engine of war.

In one of his marches, he encouraged the belief that he saw a luminous cross in the sky, with the words “By this conquer.” The next night Christ appeared to him, and directed him to construct a standard bearing the same design, and, armed with this, to advance with confidence against Maxentius.

The legend, preserved by Eusebius, grew up after the event; but, for that very reason, it reflects the feeling of the age. The imagination of his men had grown so vivid that, whether he believed or not, Constantine found it expedient to use the Labarum as a charm to ensure victory. The standard supported a cross and a mystic monogram; the army believed its guards to be invulnerable, and in his last and most critical campaign against Licinius, the sight of the talisman not only excited his own troops to enthusiasm, but spread dismay through the enemy.

The action of the Milvian Bridge, fought in 312, by which Constantine established himself at Rome, was probably the point whence nature began to discriminate decisively against the monied

type in Western Europe. Capital had already abandoned Italy; Christianity was soon after officially recognized, and during the next century the priest began to rank with the soldier as a force in war.

Meanwhile, as the population sank into exhaustion, it yielded less and less revenue, the police deteriorated, and the guards became unable to protect the frontier. In 376, the Goths, hard pressed by the Huns, came to the Danube and implored to be taken as subjects by the emperor. After mature deliberation, the Council of Valens granted the prayer, and some five hundred thousand Germans were cantoned in Mœsia. The intention of the government was to scatter this multitude through the provinces as coloni, or to draft them into the legions; but the detachment detailed to handle them was too feeble, the Goths mutinied, cut the guard to pieces, and having ravaged Thrace for two years, defeated and killed Valens at Hadrianople. In another generation the disorganization of the Roman army had become complete, and Alaric gave it its deathblow in his campaign of 410.

Alaric was not a Gothic king, but a barbarian deserter, who, in 392, was in the service of Theodosius. Subsequently, he sometimes held imperial commands, and sometimes led bands of marauders on his own account, but was always in difficulty about his pay. Finally, in the revolution in which Stilicho was murdered, a corps of auxiliaries mutinied and chose him their general. Alleging that his arrears were unpaid, Alaric accepted the command, and with this army sacked Rome.

During the campaign the attitude of the Christians was more interesting than the strategy of the soldiers. Alaric was a robber, leading mutineers, and yet the orthodox historians did not condemn him. They did not condemn him because the sacred class instinctively loved the barbarians whom they could overawe, whereas they could make little impression on the materialistic intellect of the old centralized society. Under the Empire the priests, like all other individuals, had to obey the power which paid the police; and as long as a revenue could be drawn from the provinces, the Christian hierarchy were subordinate to the monied bureaucracy who had the means to coerce them.

"It was long since established, as a fundamental maxim of the Roman constitution, that every rank of citizens were alike subject to the laws, and that the care of religion was the right as well as duty of the civil magistrate."⁸¹

Their conversion made little change in the attitude of the emperors, and Constantine and his successors continued to exercise a supreme jurisdiction over the hierarchy. The sixteenth book of the Theodosian Code sufficiently sets forth the plenitude of their authority. In theory, bishops were elected by the clergy and the people, but in practice the emperor could control the patronage if it were valuable; and whether bishops were elected or appointed, as long as they were created and paid by laymen, they were dependent. The priesthood could only become autocratic when fear of the miracle exempted them from arrest; and toward the middle of the fifth century this point was approaching, as appears by the effect of the embassy of Leo the Great to Attila.

In 452 the Huns had crossed the Alps and had sacked Aquileia. The Roman army was demoralized; Aëtius could not make head against the barbarians in the field; while Valentinian was so panic-stricken that he abandoned Ravenna, which was thought impregnable, and retreated to the capital, which was indefensible. At Rome, finding himself helpless in an open city, the emperor conceived the idea of invoking the power of the supernatural. He proposed to Leo to visit Attila and persuade him to spare the town. The pope consented without hesitation, and with perfect intrepidity caused himself to be carried to the Hun's tent, where he met with respect not unalloyed by fear. The legend probably reflects pretty accurately the feeling of the time. As the bishop stood before the king, Peter and Paul appeared on either side, menacing Attila with flaming swords; and though this particular form of apparition may be doubted, Attila seems beyond question to have been oppressed by a belief that he would not long survive the capture of Rome. He therefore readily agreed to accept a ransom and evacuate Italy.

⁸¹ *Decline and Fall*, ch. xx.

Christian priests became vital to warfare, and even convinced Attila the Hun to stave off his conquest of Italy.

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⁸¹ *Decline and Fall*, ch. xx.

The early Christians were devout in their practices, as evidenced by the perpetual intercession of the priestly class on behalf of their people.

But beside these shrines of world-wide reputation, no hamlet was too remote to possess its local fetish, which worked at cheap rates for the peasantry. A curious list of these was sent to the Government by two of Cromwell's visitors in the reign of Henry VIII.

The nuns of Saint Mary, at Derby, had part of the shirt of Saint Thomas, revered by pregnant women; so was the girdle of Saint Francis at Grace Dieu. At Repton, a pilgrimage was made to Saint Guthlac and his bell, which was put on the head for headache. The wimple of Saint Audrede was used for sore breasts, and the rod of Aaron for children with worms. At Bury Saint Edmund's, the shrine of Saint Botolph was carried in procession when rain was needed, "and Kentish men ... carry thence ... wax candles, which they light at the end of the field while the wheat is sown, and hope from this that neither tares nor other weeds will grow in the wheat that year."⁸⁶ Most curious of all, perhaps, at Pontefract, Thomas, Duke of Lancaster's belt and hat were venerated. They were believed to aid women in child-birth, and also to cure headache.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, a great venerator of the eucharist, used it to help him in his lectures. When treating of the dogma of the Supper at the University of Paris, many questions were asked him which he never answered without meditating at the foot of the altar. One day, when preparing an answer to a very difficult question, he placed it on the altar, and cried, "Lord, who really and veritably dwells in the Holy Sacrament, hear my prayer. If what I have written upon your divine eucharist be true, let it be given me to teach and demonstrate it. If I am deceived, stop me from proposing doctrines contrary to the truth of your divine Sacrament." Forthwith the Lord appeared upon the altar, and said to him, "You have written well upon the Sacrament of My body, and you have answered the question which has been proposed to you as well as human intelligence can fathom these mysteries."⁸⁷

Primitive people argue directly from themselves to their divinities, and throughout the Middle Ages men believed that envy, jealousy, and vanity were as rampant in heaven as on earth, and behaved accordingly. The root of the monastic movement was the hope of obtaining advantages by adulation.

"A certain clerk, who had more confidence in the Mother than the Son, continually repeated the Ave Maria as his only prayer. One day, while so engaged, Christ appeared to him and said, 'My mother thanks you very much for your salutations, ... *tamen et me salutare memento.*'"⁸⁸

To insure perpetual intercession it was necessary that the song of praise and the smoke of incense should be perpetual, and therefore monks and nuns worked day and night at their calling. As a twelfth-century bishop of Metz observed, when wakened one freezing morning by the bell of Saint Peter of Bouillon tolling for matins: "Neither the drowsiness of the night nor the bitterness of a glacial winter [kept them] from praising the Creator of the world."⁸⁹

Bequests to convents were in the nature of policies of insurance in favour of the grantor and his heirs, not only against punishment in the next world, but against accident in this. On this point doubt is impossible, for the belief of the donor is set forth in numberless charters. Cedric de Guillac, in a deed to la Grande-Sauve, said that he gave because "as water extinguishes fire, so gifts extinguish sin."⁹⁰ And an anecdote preserved by Dugdale, shows how valuable an investment against accident a convent was thought to be as late as the thirteenth century.

⁸⁶ Cal. x. No. 364. References to the calendar of State papers edited by Messrs. Brewer and Gairdner will be made by this word only.

⁸⁷ *Histoire du Sacrament de l'Eucharistie*, Corblet, i. 474. See also on this subject *Cæsarii Dialogus Miraculorum; De Corpore Christi*.

⁸⁸ *Hist. Lit. de la France*, xxii. 119.

⁸⁹ *Les Moines d'Occident*, Montalembert, vi. 34.

⁹⁰ *Histoire de la Grande-Sauve*, ii. 13.

"Between the sixth and thirteenth centuries, about one third of the soul of Europe passed into the hands of religious corporations". A very clear picture of who dominated the Middle Ages.

When Ralph, Earl of Chester, the founder of the monastery of Diculacres, was returning by sea from the Holy Land, he was overtaken one night by a sudden tempest. "How long is it till midnight?" he asked of the sailors. They answered, "About two hours." He said to them, "Work on till midnight, and I trust in God that you may have help, and that the storm will cease." When it was near midnight the captain said to the earl, "My lord, commend yourself to God, for the tempest increases; we are worn out, and are in mortal peril." Then Earl Ralph came out of his cabin, and began to help with the ropes, and the rest of the ship's tackle; nor was it long before the storm subsided.

The next day, as they were sailing over a tranquil sea, the captain said to the earl, "My lord, tell us, if you please, why you wished us to work till the middle of the night, and then you worked harder than all the rest." To which he replied, "Because at midnight my monks, and others, whom my ancestors and I have endowed in divers places, rise and sing divine service, and then I have faith in their prayers, and I believe that God, because of their prayers and intercessions, gave me more fortitude than I had before, and made the storm cease as I predicted."⁹¹

Philip Augustus, when caught in a gale in the Straits of Messina, showed equal confidence in the matins of Clairvaux, and was also rewarded for his faith by good weather towards morning.

The power of the imagination, when stimulated by the mystery which, in an age of decentralization, shrouds the operations of nature, can be measured by its effect in creating an autocratic class of miracle-workers. **Between the sixth and the thirteenth centuries, about one-third of the soil of Europe passed into the hands of religious corporations,** while the bulk of the highest talent of the age sought its outlet through monastic life.

The force operated on all; for, beside religious ecstasy, ambition and fear were at work, and led to results inconceivable when centralization has begot materialism. Saint Bernard's position was more conspicuous and splendid than that of any monarch of his generation, and the agony of terror which assailed the warriors was usually proportionate to the freedom with which they had violated ecclesiastical commands. They fled to the cloister for protection from the fiend, and took their wealth with them.

Gérard le Blanc was even more noted for his cruelty than for his courage. He was returning to his castle one day, after having committed a murder, when he saw the demon whom he served appear to claim him. Seized with horror, he galloped to where six penitents had just founded the convent of Afflighem, and supplicated them to receive him. The news spread, and the whole province gave thanks to God that a monster of cruelty should have been so converted.

A few days after, his example was followed by another knight, equally a murderer, who had visited the recluses, and, touched by their piety and austerity, resolved to renounce his patrimony and live a penitent.⁹²

Had the German migrations been wars of extermination, as they have sometimes been described, the imagination, among the new barbaric population, might have been so stimulated that a pure theocracy would have been developed between the time of Saint Benedict and Saint Bernard. But the barbarians were not animated by hate; on the contrary, they readily amalgamated with the old population, amongst whom the materialism of Rome lay like a rock in a rising tide, sometimes submerged, but never obliterated.

The obstacle which the true emotionalists never overcame was the inheritance of a secular clergy, who, down to the eleventh century, were generally married, and in the higher grades were rather barons than prelates. In France the Archbishop of Rheims, the Bishops of Beauvais, Noyon, Langres, and others, were counts; while in Germany the Archbishops of Mayence, of Treves, and of

⁹¹ *Monasticon*, v. 628, Ed. 1846.

⁹² *Les Moines d'Occident*, Montalembert, vi. 101.

The Catholic/Orthodox schism was the product of a deeper schism of mind: between the imaginative and economic. Where the East had capital at its disposal, the West relied on the supernatural as it lacked capital.

“That his judgments can be overruled by none, and he alone can overrule the judgments of all.

“That he can be judged by no one.

“That the Roman Church never has, and never can err, as the Scriptures testify.

.....

“That by his precept and permission it is lawful for subjects to accuse their princes.

.....

“That he is able to absolve from their allegiance the subjects of the wicked.”⁹⁷

The monks had won the papacy, but the emperor still held his secular clergy, and, at the diet of Worms, where he undertook to depose Hildebrand, he was sustained by his prelates. Without a moment of hesitation the enchanter cast his spell, and it is interesting to see, in the curse which he launched at the layman, how the head of monasticism had become identified with the spirit which he served. The priest had grown to be a god on earth.

“So strong in this confidence, for the honour and defence of your Church, on behalf of the omnipotent God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by your power and authority, I forbid the government of the German and Italian kingdoms, to King Henry, the son of the Emperor Henry, who, with unheard-of arrogance, has rebelled against your Church. I absolve all Christians from the oaths they have made, or may make to him, and I forbid that any one should obey him as king.”⁹⁸

Henry marched on Italy, but in all European history there has been no drama more tremendous than the expiation of his sacrilege. To his soldiers the world was a vast space, peopled by those fantastic beings which are still seen on Gothic towers. These demons obeyed the monk of Rome, and his army, melting from the emperor under a nameless horror, left him helpless.

Gregory lay like a magician in the fortress of Canossa; but he had no need of carnal weapons, for when the emperor reached the Alps he was almost alone. Then his imagination also took fire, the panic seized him, and he sued for mercy.

For three days long he stood barefoot in the snow at the castle gate; and when at last he was admitted, half-naked and benumbed, he was paralyzed rather by terror than by cold. Then the great miracle was wrought, by which God was made to publicly judge between them.

Hildebrand took the consecrated wafer and broke it, saying to the suppliant, “Man’s judgments are fallible, God’s are infallible; if I am guilty of the crimes you charge me with, let Him strike me dead as I eat.” He ate, and gave what remained to Henry; but though for him more than life was at stake, he dared not taste the bread. From that hour his fate was sealed. He underwent his penance and received absolution; and when he had escaped from the terrible old man, he renewed the war. But the spell was over him, the horror clung to him, even his sons betrayed him, and at last his mind gave way under the strain and he abdicated. In his own words, to save his life he “sent to Mayence the crown, the sceptre, the cross, the sword, the lance.”

On August 7, 1106, Henry died at Liège, an outcast and a mendicant, and for five long years his body lay at the church door, an accursed thing which no man dared to bury.

Such was the evolution of the mediæval theocracy, the result of that social disintegration which stimulates the human imagination, and makes men cower before the unknown. The force which caused the rise of an independent priesthood was the equivalent of magic, and it was the waxing of this force through the dissolution of the Empire of the West which made the schism which split Christendom in two. **The Latin Church divided from the Greek because it was the reflection of the**

⁹⁷ *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Baronius, year 1076.

⁹⁸ Migne, cxlvi. 790.

imaginative mind. While the West grew emotional, Constantinople stayed the centre of exchanges, the seat of the monied class; and when Cluny captured Rome, the antagonism between these irreconcilable instincts precipitated a rupture. The schism dated from 1054, five years after the coronation of Leo. Nor is the theory new; it was explained by Gibbon long ago.

"The rising majesty of Rome could no longer brook the insolence of a rebel; and Michael Cerularius was excommunicated in the heart of Constantinople by the pope's legates...."

"From this thunderbolt we may date the consummation of the schism. It was enlarged by each ambitious step of the Roman pontiffs; the emperors blushed and trembled at the ignominious fate of their royal brethren of Germany; and the people were scandalized by the temporal power and military life of the Latin clergy."⁹⁹

⁹⁹ *Decline and Fall*, ch. lx.

A central theme of history is that centralization cannot begin until the attack masters the defense in war. The Medieval times were a product of this law. The rise of a decentralized society centered around castles and convents sprung up because no force could conquer another.

CHAPTER III THE FIRST CRUSADE

Until the mechanical arts have advanced far enough to cause the attack in war to predominate over the defence, centralization cannot begin; for when a mud wall can stop an army, a police is impossible. The superiority of the attack was the secret of the power of the monied class who controlled Rome, because with money a machine could be maintained which made individual resistance out of the question, and revolt difficult. Titus had hardly more trouble in reducing Jerusalem, and dispersing the Jews, than a modern officer would have under similar circumstances.

As the barbarians overran the Roman provinces, and the arts declined, the conditions of life changed. The defence gained steadily on the attack, and, after some centuries, a town with a good garrison, solid ramparts, and abundant provisions had nothing to fear from the greatest king. Even the small, square Norman tower was practically impregnable. As Viollet-le-Duc has explained, these towers were mere passive defences, formidable to a besieger only because no machinery existed for making a breach in a wall. The beleaguered nobles had only to watch their own men, see to their doors, throw projectiles at the enemy if he approached too near, counter-mine if mined, and they might defy a great army until their food failed. **Famine was the enemy most feared.**¹⁰⁰

By the eleventh century these towers had sprung up all over the West. Even the convents and churches could be defended, and every such stronghold was the seat of a count or baron, an abbot or bishop, who was a sovereign because no one could coerce him, and who therefore exercised all the rights of sovereignty, made war, dispensed justice, and coined money. **In France alone there were nearly two hundred mints in the twelfth century.**

Down to the close of the Merovingian dynasty the gold standard had been maintained, and contraction had steadily gone on; but, for reasons which are not understood, under the second race, the purchasing power of bullion temporarily declined, and this expansion was probably one chief cause of the prosperity of the reign of Charlemagne. Perhaps the relief was due to the gradual restoration of silver to circulation, for the coinage was then reformed, and the establishment of the silver pound as the measure of value may be considered as the basis of all the monetary systems of modern Europe.

The interval of prosperity was, however, brief; no permanent addition was made to the stock of precious metals, and prices continued to fall, as is demonstrated by the rapid deterioration of the currency. In this second period of relapse disintegration reached its limit.

During the tenth and eleventh centuries the Northmen infested the coasts of France, and sailed up the rivers burning and ravaging, as far as Rouen and Orléans. Even the convents of Saint Martin of Tours and Saint Germain des Prés were sacked. The Mediterranean swarmed with Saracenic corsairs, who took Fraxinetum, near Toulon, seized the passes of the Alps, and levied toll on travel into Italy. The cannibalistic Huns overran the Lower Danube, and closed the road to Constantinople. **Western Europe was cut off from the rest of the world. Commerce nearly ceased—the roads were so bad and dangerous, and the sea so full of pirates.**

The ancient stock of scientific knowledge was gradually forgotten, and the imagination had full play. Upon philosophy the effect was decisive; Christianity sank to a plane where it appealed more vividly to the minds of the surrounding pagans than their own faiths, and conversion then went on rapidly. In 912 Rollo of Normandy was baptized; the Danes, Norwegians, Poles, and Russians followed; and in 997 Saint Stephen ascended the throne of Hungary and reopened to Latin Christians the way to the Sepulchre.

¹⁰⁰ *Dictionnaire de l'Architecture*, v. 50.

The sacred places of Christianity lie in the Levant, bringing Europe into contact, and conflict, with Asia. The crusades were a product of the imaginative societies of Western Europe, seeking glory and honor in the eyes of the Lord instead of material gain via consolidation.

Perhaps the destiny of modern Europe has hinged upon the fact that the Christian sacred places lay in Asia, and therefore the pilgrimage brought the West into contact with the East. But the pilgrimage was the effect of relic-worship, and relic-worship the vital principle of monasticism. In these centuries of extreme credulity monasticism had its strongest growth. A faculty for scientific study was abnormal, and experimental knowledge was ascribed to sorcery. The monk Gerbert, who became pope as Sylvester II., was probably the most remarkable man of his generation. Though poor and of humble birth, he attracted so much attention that he was sent to Spain, where he studied in the Moorish schools at Barcelona and Cordova, and where he learned the rudiments of mathematics and geography. His contemporaries were so bewildered by his knowledge that they thought it due to magic, and told how he had been seen flying home from Spain, borne on the back of the demon he served, and loaded with the books he had stolen from the wizard, his master. Sylvester died in 1003, but long afterwards anatomy was still condemned by the Church, and four separate councils anathematized experimental medicine, because it threatened to destroy the value of the shrines. The ascendancy of Cluny began with Saint Hugh, who was chosen abbot in 1049, the Year Leo's election. The corporation then obtained control of Rome, and in another twenty-five years was engaged in its desperate struggle with the remains of the old secular police power. But though Hildebrand crushed Henry, the ancient materialism was too deeply imbedded to be eradicated in a single generation, and meanwhile the imagination had been brought to an uncontrollable intensity. A new and fiercer excitement seethed among the people—a vision of the conquest of talismans so powerful as to make their owners sure of heaven and absolute on earth.

The attraction of Palestine had been very early felt, for in 333 a guide-book had been written, called the *Itinerary from Bordeaux to Jerusalem*, which gave the route through the valley of the Danube, together with an excellent account of the Holy Land. In those days, before the barbaric inroads, the journey was safe enough; but afterwards communication nearly ceased, and when Stephen was baptized in 997, the relics of Jerusalem had all the excitement of novelty. Europe glowed with enthusiasm. Sylvester proposed a crusade, and Hildebrand declared he would rather risk his life for the holy places "than rule the universe."

Each year the throngs upon the road increased, convents sprang up along the way to shelter the pilgrims, the whole population succoured and venerated them, and by the time Cluny had seized the triple crown, they left in veritable armies. Ingulf, secretary to William the Conqueror, set out in 1064 with a band seven thousand strong.

In that age of faith no such mighty stimulant could inflame the human brain as a march to Jerusalem. A crusade was no vulgar war for a vulgar prize, but an alliance with the supernatural for the conquest of talismans whose possession was tantamount to omnipotence. Urban's words at Clermont, when he first preached the holy war, have lost their meaning now; but they burned like fire into the hearts of his hearers then, for he promised them glory on earth and felicity in heaven, and he spoke in substance thus: No longer do you attack a castle or a town, but you undertake the conquest of the holy places. If you triumph, the blessings of heaven and the kingdoms of the East will be your share; if you fall, you will have the glory of dying where Christ died, and God will not forget having seen you in His holy army.¹⁰¹

Urban told them "that under their general Jesus Christ ... they, the Christian, the invincible army," would march to certain victory. In the eleventh century this language was no metaphor, for the Cluniac monk spoke as the mouthpiece of a god who was there actually among them, offering the cross he brought from the grave, and promising them triumphs: not the common triumphs which may be won by man's unaided strength, but the transcendent glory which belongs to beings of another world.

So the crusaders rode out to fight, the originals of the fairy knights, clad in impenetrable armour, mounted on miraculous horses, armed with resistless swords, and bearing charmed lives.

¹⁰¹ *Annales Ecclesiastici*, Baronius, year 1095.

Whole villages, even whole districts, were left deserted; land lost its value; what could not be sold was abandoned; and the peasant, loaded with his poor possessions, started on foot with his wife and children in quest of the Sepulchre, so ignorant of the way that he mistook each town upon the road for Zion. Whether he would or no, the noble had to lead his vassals or be forsaken, and riding at their head with his hawks and hounds, he journeyed towards that marvellous land of wealth and splendour, where kingdoms waited the coming of the devoted knight of God. Thus men, women, and children, princes and serfs, priests and laymen, in a countless, motley throng, surged toward that mighty cross and tomb whose possessor was raised above the limitations of the flesh.

The crusaders had no commissariat and no supply train, no engines of attack, or other weapons than those in their hands, and the holy relics they bore with them. There was no general, no common language, no organization; and so over unknown roads, and through hostile peoples, they wandered from the Rhine to the Bosphorus, and from the Bosphorus to Syria.

These earlier crusades were armed migrations, not military invasions, and had they met with a determined enemy, they must have been annihilated; but it chanced that the Syrians and Egyptians were at war, and the quarrel was so bitter that the caliph actually sought the Christian alliance. Even under such circumstances the waste of life was fabulous, and, had not Antioch been betrayed, the starving rabble must have perished under its walls. At Jerusalem, also, the Franks were reduced to the last extremity before they carried the town; and had it not been for the arrival of a corps of Genoese engineers, who built movable towers, they would have died miserably of hunger and thirst. Nor was the coming of this reinforcement preconcerted. On the contrary, the Italians accidentally lost their ships at Joppa, and, being left without shelter, sought protection in the camp of the besiegers just in time.

So incapable were the crusaders of regular operations, that even when the towers were finished and armed, the leaders did not know how to fill the moat, and Raymond of Saint Gilles had nothing better to propose than to offer a penny for every three stones thrown into the ditch.

On July 15, 1099, Jerusalem was stormed; almost exactly three years after the march began. Eight days later Godfrey de Bouillon was elected king, and then the invaders spread out over the strip of mountainous country which borders the coast of Palestine and Syria, and the chiefs built castles in the defiles of the hills, and bound themselves together by a loose alliance against the common enemy.

The decentralization of the colony was almost incredible. The core of the kingdom was the barony of Jerusalem, which extended only from the Egyptian desert to a stream just north of Beyrout, and inland to the Jordan and the spurs of the hills beyond the Dead Sea, and yet it was divided into more than eighteen independent fiefs, whose lords had all the rights of sovereignty, made war, administered justice, and coined money.¹⁰²

Beside these petty states, the ports were ceded to the Italian cities whose fleets helped in the conquest. Venice, Genoa, and Pisa held quarters in Ascalon, Joppa, Tyre, Acre, and Beyrout, which were governed by consuls or viscounts, who wrangled with each other and with the central government.

Such was the kingdom over which Godfrey reigned, but there were three others like it which together made up the Frankish monarchy. To the north of the barony of Jerusalem lay the county of Tripoli, and beyond Tripoli, extending to Armenia, the principality of Antioch. To the east of Antioch the county of Edessa stretched along the base of the Taurus Mountains and spread out somewhat indefinitely beyond the Euphrates.

Thus on the north Edessa was the outwork of Christendom, while to the south the castle of Karak, which commanded the caravan road between Suez and Damascus, held a corresponding position among the hills to the east of the Dead Sea.

¹⁰² *Les Familles d'Outre-Mer*, ed. Rey, 3.

“As the economic aristocracy of the capital lost its nutriment, it lost its energy”. The Byzantine Empire, once trade began flowing directly to Italy, decayed in every way. Its people became a mixed blood of lower vitality, its army decayed as did its art and literature.

Beyond the mountains the great plain sweeps away into Central Asia, and in this plain the Franks never could maintain their footing. Their failure to do so proved their ruin, for their position lay exposed to attack from Damascus; and it was by operating from Damascus as a base that Saladin succeeded in forcing the pass of Baniyas, and in cutting the Latin possessions in two at the battle of Tiberias.

A considerable body of Europeans were thus driven in like a wedge between Egypt and the Greek Empire, the two highest civilizations of the Middle Ages, while in front lay the Syrian cities of the plain, with whom the Christians were at permanent war. The contact was the closest, the struggle for existence the sharpest, and the barbaric mind received a stimulus not unlike the impulse Gaul received from Rome; for the interval which separated the East from the West, at the beginning of the twelfth century, was probably not less than that which divided Italy from Gaul at the time of Cæsar.

When Godfrey de Bouillon took the cross, the Byzantine Empire was already sinking. The Eastern trade which, for so many centuries, had nourished its population, was beginning to flow directly from Asia into Italy, and, as the economic aristocracy of the capital lost its nutriment, it lost its energy. Apparently it fell in 1081, in the revolution which raised Alexius Comnenus to the throne. Because Alexius sacked Constantinople with a following of mongrel Greeks, Slavs, and Bulgarians, he has been called the first Greek emperor, but in reality the pure Greek blood had long since perished. The Byzantine population at the end of the eleventh century was the lees of a multitude of races,—a mixture of Slavs, Armenians, Jews, Thracians, and Greeks; a residuum of the most tenacious organisms, after all that was higher had disappeared. The army was a mixed horde of Huns, Arabs, Italians, Britons, Franks; of all in short who could fight and were for sale, while the Church was servile, the fancy dead, and art and literature were redolent of decaying wealth.

Nevertheless, ever since the fall of Rome, Constantinople had been the reservoir whence the West had drawn all its materialistic knowledge, and therefore, it was during the centuries when the valley of the Danube was closed, that the arts fell to their lowest ebb beyond the Alps and Rhine. After pilgrimages began again in the reign of Stephen, the Bosphorus lay once more in the path of travel, and as the returning palmers spread over the West, a revival followed in their track; a revival in which the spirit of Byzantium may yet be clearly read in the architecture of Italy and France. Saint Mark is a feeble imitation of Saint Sophia, while Viollet-le-Duc has described how long he hesitated before he could decide whether the carving of Vézelay, Autun, and Moissac was Greek or French; and has dwelt upon the laborious care with which he pored over all the material, before he became convinced that the stones were cut by artists trained at Cluny, who copied Byzantine models.¹⁰³

But the great gulf between the economic and the imaginative development, separated the moribund Greek society from the semi-childhood of the Franks; a chasm in its nature impassable because caused by a difference of mind, and which is, perhaps, seen most strikingly in religious architecture; for religious architecture, though always embodying the highest poetical aspirations of every civilization, yet had in the East and West diametrically opposite points of departure.

Saint Sophia is pregnant with the spirit of the age of Justinian. There was no attempt at mystery, or even solemnity, about the church, for the mind of the architect was evidently fixed upon solving the problem of providing the largest and lightest space possible, in which to display the functions of a plutocratic court. His solution was brilliantly successful. He enlarged the dome and diminished the supports, until, nothing remaining to interrupt the view, it seemed as though the roof had been suspended in the air. For his purpose the exterior had little value, and he sacrificed it.

The conception of the architects of France was the converse of this, for it was highly emotional. The gloom of the lofty vaults, dimly lighted by the subdued splendour of the coloured windows, made the interior of the Gothic cathedral the most mysterious and exciting sanctuary for the

¹⁰³ *Dictionnaire de l'Architecture*, viii. 108.

The Moslems at the time were in their prime as the Europeans were still decentralized towns and farms. Adams marks the beginning of Arabic decline when its artists began to lose their instinct for form.

celebration of the miracle which has ever been conceived by man; while without, the doors and windows, the pinnacles and buttresses, were covered with the terrific shapes of demons and the majestic figures of saints, admonishing the laity of the danger lurking abroad, and warning them to take refuge within.

But if the Greeks and the Franks had little affinity for each other, the case was different with the Saracens, who were then in the full vigour of their intellectual prime, and in the meridian of their material splendour.

In the eleventh century, when Paris was still a cluster of huts cowering for shelter on the islands of the Seine, and the palace of the Duke of Normandy and King of England was the paltry White Tower of London, Cairo was being adorned with those masterpieces which are still the admiration of the world.

Prisse d'Avennes considered that, among the city gates the Bab-el-Nasr stands first in "taste and style," and the famous Bab-el-Zouilyeh is of the same period. He also thought the mosque of Teyloun a "model of elegance and grandeur," and observed, when criticising the mosque of the Sultan Hassan, built in 1356, that though imposing and beautiful, it lacks the unity which is only found in the earlier Arabic monuments, such as Teyloun.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the signs are but too apparent that, from the twelfth century, the instinct for form began to fail in Egypt, the surest precursor of artistic decay.

The magnificence of the decoration and furnishing of the Arabic palaces and houses has seldom been surpassed, and a few extracts from an inventory of a sale of the collections of the Caliph Mostanser-Billah, held in 1050, may give some idea of its gorgeousness.

Precious Stones.—A chest containing 7 *Mudds* of emeralds; each of these worth at least 300,000 dynars, which makes in all at the lowest estimation, 36,000,000 francs.

A necklace of precious stones worth about 80,000 dynars.

Seven *Waibah* of magnificent pearls sent by the Emir of Mecca.

.....

Glass.—Several chests, containing a large number of vases ... of the purest crystal, chased and plain.

Other chests filled with precious vases of different materials.

.....

Table Utensils.—A large number of gold dishes, enamelled or plain, in which were incrustated all sorts of colours, forming most varied designs.

.....

One hundred cups and other shapes, of bezoar-stone, on most of which was engraved the name of the Caliph Haroun-el-Raschid.

Another cup which was 3 ½ hands wide and one deep.

Different Articles.—Chests containing inkstands of different shapes, round or square, small or large, of gold or silver, sandal wood, aloe, ebony, ivory, and all kinds of woods, enriched with stones, gold and silver, or remarkable for beauty and elegance of workmanship.

.....

Twenty-eight enamel dishes inlaid with gold, which the Caliph Aziz had received as a present from the Greek emperor and each of which was valued at 3000 dynars.

¹⁰⁴ *L'Art Arabe*, 111 *et seq.*

The chief weakness of the feudal state was its inability to constrain its subjects to pay taxes. Europe's time had not yet come, as its advances in offensive military science had not advanced past those of its defense.

the Holy Sepulchre was dedicated in 1149, the abbey was completed in 1144, and the cathedral was begun almost immediately after.¹⁰⁸

Thenceforward the movement was rapid, and before the year 1200, Christian sacred architecture was culminating in those marvels of beauty, the cathedrals of Paris, of Bourges, of Chartres, and of Le Mans. Yet, though sacred architecture tells the story of the rise of the imagination as nothing else can, if it be true that centralization hinges on the preponderance of the attack in war, the surest way of measuring the advance toward civilization of rude peoples must be by military engineering.

In the eleventh century, north of the Alps, this science was rudimentary, and nothing can be more impressive than to compare the mighty ramparts of Constantinople with the small square tower which William the Conqueror found ample for his needs in London.

When the crusaders were first confronted with the Greek and Arabic works, they were helpless; nor were their difficulties altogether those of ignorance. Such fortifications were excessively costly, and a feudal State was poor because the central power had not the force to constrain individuals to pay taxes. The kingdom of Jerusalem was in chronic insolvency.

The life of the Latin colony in Syria, therefore, hung on the development of some financial system which should make the fortification of Palestine possible, and such a system grew up through the operation of the imagination, though in an unusual manner.

Fetish worship drew a very large annual contribution from the population in the shape of presents to propitiate the saints, and one of the effects of the enthusiasm for the crusades was to build up conventual societies in the Holy Land, which acted as standing armies. The most famous of the military orders were the Knights of the Temple and the Knights of Saint John. William of Tyre has left an interesting description of the way in which the Temple came to be organized:—

“As though the Lord God sends his grace there where he pleases, worthy knights, who were of the land beyond the sea, proposed to stay for ever in the service of Our Lord, and to live in common, like regular canons. In the hand of the patriarch they vowed chastity and obedience, and renounced all property.... The king and the other barons, the patriarch and other prelates of the Church, gave them funds to live on and to clothe themselves.... The first thing which was enjoined on them in pardon for their sins was to guard the roads by which the pilgrims passed, from robbers and thieves, who did great harm. This penance the patriarch and the other bishops enjoined. Nine years they remained thus in secular habit, wearing such garments as were given them by the knights and other good people, for the love of God. In the ninth a council was assembled in France in the city of Troyes. There were assembled the archbishops of Rheims and Sens and all their bishops. The bishop of Albano especially was there as papal legate, the abbots of Citeau and Clairvaux, and many other of the religious.

“There were established the order and the rules by which they were to live as monks. Their habit was ordered to be white, by the authority of Pope Honorius and the patriarch of Jerusalem. This order had already existed nine years, as I have told you, and there were as yet only nine brothers, who lived from day to day on charity. From that time their numbers began to increase, and revenues and tenures were given them. In the time of Pope Etigenius it was ordered that they should have sewn upon their copes and on their robes a cross of red cloth, so that they should be known among all men.... From thence have their possessions so increased as you can see, that the order of the Temple is in the ascendant.... Hardly can you find on either side of the sea a Christian land where this order has not to-day houses and brethren, and great revenues.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ See *Les Églises de la Terre Sainte*, Vogüé, 217; *Notre Dame de Noyon; Études sur l'Histoire de l'Art*, Vitet, ii. 122; *Dictionnaire de L'Architecture*, Viollet-le-Duc, ii. 301.

¹⁰⁹ *Hist. des Croisades*, xii. 7.

As the Saracens were more capable of centralization than Europeans, the inevitable reconquest of the Holy Land was just that, inevitable. The initial surprise victories were eventually beaten back by Moslems who could draw upon more resources and larger, offensive armies.

CHAPTER IV THE SECOND CRUSADE

As the East was richer than the West, the Saracens were capable of a higher centralization than the Franks, and although they were divided amongst themselves at the close of the eleventh century, no long time elapsed after the fall of Jerusalem before the consolidation began which annihilated the Latin kingdom.

The Sultan of Persia made Zenghi governor of Mosul in 1127. Zenghi, who was the first Atabek, was a commander and organizer of ability, and with a soldier's instinct struck where his enemy was vulnerable. He first occupied Aleppo, Hamah, and Homs. He then achieved the triumph of his life by the capture of Edessa. The next year he was murdered, and was succeeded by his still more celebrated son, Nour-ed-Din, who made Aleppo his capital, and devoted his life to completing the work his father had begun.

After a series of brilliant campaigns, by a mixture of vigour and address, Nour-ed-Din made himself master of Damascus, and, operating thence as a base, he conquered Egypt, and occupied Cairo in 1169. During the Egyptian war, a young emir, named Saladin, rose rapidly into prominence. He was the nephew of the general in command, at whose death the caliph made him vizier, because he thought him pliable. In this the caliph was mistaken, for Saladin was a man of iron will and consummate ability. William of Tyre even accused him of having murdered the last Fatimite caliph with his own hands in order to cause the succession to pass to Nour-ed-Din, and to seize on the substance of power himself, as Nour-ed-Din's representative.

Certainly he administered Egypt in his own interest, and not in his master's; so much so that Nour-ed-Din, having failed to obtain obedience to his commands, had prepared to march against him in person, when, on the eve of his departure, he died. Saladin then moved on Damascus, and having defeated the army of El Melek, the heir to the crown, at Hamah, he had himself declared Sultan of Egypt and Syria.

With a power so centralized the Franks would probably, under the best circumstances, have been unable to cope. The weakness of the Christians was radical, and arose from the exuberance of their imagination, which caused them to proceed by miracles, or more correctly, by magical formulas. An exalted imagination was the basis of the characters of both Louis VII. and Saint Bernard, and the faith resulting therefrom led to the defeat of the second crusade.

The Christian collapse began with the fall of Edessa, for the County of Edessa was the extreme northeastern state of the Latin community, and the key to the cities of the plain. When the first crusaders reached Armenia, Baldwin, brother of Godfrey de Bouillon, conceived the idea of carving a kingdom for himself out of the Christian country to the south of the Taurus range. Taking with him such pilgrims as he could persuade to go, he started from Mamistra, just north of the modern Alexandretta, and marched east along the caravan road. Edessa lay sixteen hours' ride beyond the Euphrates, and he reached it in safety.

At this time, though Edessa still nominally formed part of the Greek Empire, it was in reality independent, and was governed by an old man named Theodore, who had originally been sent from Constantinople, but who had gradually taken the position of a sovereign. The surrounding country had been overrun by Moslems, and Theodore only maintained himself by paying tribute. The people, therefore, were ready to welcome any Frankish baron capable of defending them; and Baldwin, though a needy adventurer, was an excellent officer, and well adapted to the emergency.

As he drew near, the townsmen went out to meet him, and escorted him to the city in triumph, where he soon supplanted the old Theodore, whom he probably murdered. He then became Count of Edessa, but he remained in the country only two years, for in 1100 he was elected to succeed his brother Godfrey. He was followed as Lord of Edessa by his cousin Godfrey de Bourg, who, in his

turn, was crowned King of Jerusalem in 1119, and the next count was de Bourg's cousin, Joscelin de Courtney, who had previously held as a fief the territory to the west of the Euphrates. This Joscelin was one of the most renowned warriors who ever came from France, and while he lived the frontier was well defended. So high was his prowess that he earned the title of "the great," in an age when every man was a soldier, and in a country where arms were the only path to fortune save the Church.

The story of his death is one of the most dramatic of that dramatic time. As he stood beneath the wall of a Saracenic tower he had mined, it suddenly fell and buried him in the ruins. He was taken out a mangled mass to die, but, as he lay languishing, news came that the Sultan of Iconium had laid siege to one of his castles near Tripoli. Feeling that he could not sit his horse, he called his son and directed him to collect his vassals and ride to the relief of the fortress. The youth hesitated, fearing that the enemy were too numerous. Then the old man, grieving to think of the fate of his people when he should be gone, had himself slung in a litter between two horses, and marched against the foe.

He had not gone far before he was met by a messenger, who told him that when the Saracens heard the Lord of Courtney was upon the march, they had raised the siege and fled. Then the wounded baron ordered his litter to be set down upon the ground, and, stretching out his hands to heaven, he thanked God who had so honoured him that his enemies dared not abide his coming even when in the jaws of death, and died there where he lay.

The second generation of Franks seems to have deteriorated through the influence of the climate, but the character of the younger Joscelin was not the sole cause of the disasters which overtook him. Probably even his father could not permanently have made head against the forces which were combining against him. The weakness of the Frankish kingdom was inherent: it could not contend with enemies who were further advanced upon the road toward consolidation. Had Western society been enough centralized to have organized a force capable of collecting taxes, and of enforcing obedience to a central administration, a wage-earning army might have been maintained on the frontier. As it was, concentration was impossible, and the scattered nobles were crushed in detail.

Antioch was the nearest supporting point to Edessa, and, when Zenghi made his attack, Raymond de Poitiers, one of the ablest soldiers of his generation, was the reigning prince. But he was at feud with the Courtneys; the king at Jerusalem could not force him to do his duty; the other barons were too distant, even had they been well disposed; and thus the key to the Christian position fell without a blow being struck in its defence.

To that emotional generation the loss of Edessa seemed a reversal of the laws of nature; a consequence not of bad organization but of divine wrath. The invincible relics had suddenly refused to act, and the only explanation which occurred to the men of the time was, that there must have been neglect of the magical formulas.

Saint Bernard never doubted that God would fight if duly propitiated; therefore all else must bend to the task of propitiation: "What think ye, brethren? Is the hand of the Lord weakened, or unequal to the work of defence, that he calls miserable worms to guard and restore his heritage? Is he not able to send more than twelve legions of angels, or, to speak truly, by word deliver his country?"¹¹¹

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, the soul of the second crusade, was born at the castle of Fontaines, near Dijon, in 1091, so that his earliest impressions must have been tinged by the emotional outburst which followed the council of Clermont. The third son of noble parents, he resembled his mother, who had the ecstatic temperament. While she lived she tried to imitate the nuns, and at her death she was surrounded by holy clerks, who sung with her while she could speak, and, when articulation failed, watched her lips moving in praise to God.

¹¹¹ Letter 363, ed. 1877, Paris.

The crusades to the Holy Land opened up trade routes long closed by the Hunnic barbarians. Capital began to accumulate in Venice, the next center of exchanges. The Venetians were economic men who had no scruples about committing sins in exchange for economic gain.

CHAPTER V THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Most writers on the crusades have noticed the change which followed the battle of Tiberias. Pigeonneau, for example, in his *History of Commerce*, pointed out that, after the loss of Jerusalem, the Christians "became more and more intent on economic interests," and the "crusades became more and more political and commercial, rather than religious, expeditions."¹²⁴

In other words, when decentralization reached its limit, the form of competition changed, and consolidation began. With the reopening of the valley of the Danube, the current turned. At first the tide ran feebly, but after the conquest of the Holy Land the channels of trade altered; capital began to accumulate; and by the thirteenth century money controlled Palestine and Italy, and was rapidly subduing France. Heyd remarked that "the commerce to the Levant took a leap, during the crusades, of which the boldest imagination could hardly have dreamed shortly before,"¹²⁵ because the possession of the Syrian ports brought Europe into direct communication with Asia, and accelerated exchanges.

From the dawn of European history to the rise of modern London, the Eastern trade has enriched every community where it has centred, and, among others, North Italy in the Middle Ages. Venice, Florence, Genoa, and Pisa were its creations.

In the year 452, when the barbarian migrations were flowing over the Roman provinces in steadily increasing volume, the Huns sacked Aquileia, and the inhabitants of the ravaged districts fled for shelter to the islands which lie in the shallow water at the head of the Adriatic. For many generations these fugitives remained poor, subsisting mainly on fish, and selling salt as their only product; but gradually they developed into a race highly adapted to flourish under the conditions which began to prevail after the council of Clermont.

Isolated save toward the sea, without agriculture or mines, but two paths were open to them, piracy and commerce: and they excelled in both. By the reign of Charlemagne they were prosperous; and when the closing of the valley of the Danube forced traffic to go by sea, Venice and Amalfi obtained a monopoly of what was left of the Eastern trade. For many years, however, that trade was not highly lucrative. Though Rome always offered a certain market for brocades for vestments and for altar coverings, for incense, and jewels for shrines, ready money was scarce, the West having few products which Asiatics or Africans were willing to take in exchange for their goods. Therefore it was not through enterprises sanctioned by the priesthood, that Venice won in the economic competition which began to prevail in the eleventh century.

Venetians prospered because they were bolder and more unscrupulous than their neighbours. They did without compunction what was needful for gain, even when the needful thing was a damnable crime in the eyes of the devout.

The valley of the Nile, though fertile, produces neither wood nor iron, nor men of the fighting type; for these the caliphs were ready to pay, and the Venetians provided them all. Even as early as 971 dealings with the common enemy in material of war had reached proportions which not only stimulated the Emperor John Zimisces to energetic diplomatic remonstrance, but made him threaten to burn all the ships he captured laden with suspicious cargoes.

To sell timber for ships, and iron for swords, to the Saracens, was a mortal sin in children of the Church; but such a sin was as nothing beside the infamy of kidnapping believers as slaves for infidels, who made them soldiers to fight against their God. Charlemagne and the popes after him tried to suppress the traffic, but without avail. Slaving was so lucrative that it was carried on in the

¹²⁴ *Histoire de la Commerce de la France*, 132.

¹²⁵ *Histoire du Commerce du Levant*, Heyd, French trans., i. 163.

Units of currency like the Florin, Grosso, and Venetian ducat are proof that the trade with the East as a result of contact was rewarding to the Europeans, providing her with much needed bullion to kickstart centralization.

streets of Rome herself,¹²⁶ and in the thirteenth century two thousand Europeans were annually disposed of in Damietta and Alexandria, from whom the Mamelukes, the finest corps of soldiers in the East, were recruited.

Thus a race grew up in Italy, which differed from the people of France and Germany because of the absence of those qualities which had caused the Germans to survive when the inhabitants of the Empire decayed. The mediæval Italians prospered because they were lacking in the imagination which made the Northern peoples subservient to the miracle-worker, and among mediæval Italians the Venetians, from their exposed position, came to be the most daring, energetic, and unscrupulous. By the end of the eleventh century their fleet was so superior to the Greek, that the Emperor Alexis had to confide to them the defence of the harbour of Durazzo against Robert Guiscard. Guiscard attacked Durazzo in 1081, at the time of the revolution which immediately preceded the debasement of the Byzantine coinage; and the demonstration that Venice had already absorbed most of the carrying trade, seems to prove that, during the last half of the eleventh century, the centre of exchanges had a pronounced tendency to abandon Constantinople. Moreover, the result of the campaign showed that the Venetian navy was the strongest in the Mediterranean, and this was of vital moment to the success of the crusades twenty years later, for, without the command of the sea, the permanent occupation of Palestine would have been impossible.

After the capture of Jerusalem in 1099, almost the first operations of Godfrey de Bouillon were against the Syrian ports; but as he controlled too small a force to act alone, he made a treaty with Venice, by which, in consideration of two hundred ships, he promised to cede to her a third part of every town taken. Baldwin made a similar arrangement with the Genoese, and, as the coast was subdued, the Italian cities assumed their grants, and established their administrations. In the end the Venetians predominated at Tyre, the Genoese at Acre, and the Pisans at Antioch. Before the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope, the spices, drugs, brocades, carpets, porcelains, and gems of India and China, reached the Mediterranean mainly by two routes. One by way of the Persian Gulf to Bagdad, up the Euphrates to Rakka, and by land to Aleppo, whence they were conveyed by caravan either to Antioch or Damascus. Damascus, beside being the starting-place of caravans for Mecca and Egypt, and the emporium for the products of Persia, had important manufactures of its own. Its glass, porcelain, steel, and brocades were famous, and it was a chief market for furs, which were highly prized throughout the Middle Ages, when heating was not understood.

The second route was by water. Indian merchants usually sold their cargoes at Aden, whence they were taken to a port in Upper Egypt, floated down the Nile to Cairo, and bought by Europeans at Damietta or Alexandria. The products of Egypt itself were valuable, and next to Constantinople, Cairo was the richest city west of the Indus.

What Europe gave to the Orientals in return is not so well known; but, beside raw materials and slaves, her woollens were much esteemed. At all events, exchanges must have become more favourable to her, as is proved by the increased supply of the precious metals.

Why the short period of expansion, which followed upon the re-establishment of the silver standard in the West, should have been succeeded by a sharp contraction is unknown, but the fact seems proved by the coinage. In the reign of Charlemagne a silver pound of 7680 grains was made the monetary unit, which was divided into 240 denarii, or pence.¹²⁷

For some time these pence were tolerably maintained, but as the empire of Charlemagne disintegrated, they deteriorated until, by the end of the twelfth century, those coined at Venice were but a quarter of their original weight and three parts alloy.¹²⁸ After Hattin a new expansion began, in which Venice took the lead. The battle was fought in 1187, and some years later, but probably

¹²⁶ *Histoire du Levant*, Heyd, French trans., i. 95.

¹²⁷ See, on this question of cheaper money in the Carolingian period, *Nouveau Manuel de Numismatique*, Blanchet, i. 101; also *Histoire du Commerce de la France*, Pigeonnet, 87 et seq.

¹²⁸ *Le Monete di Venezia*, Papadopoli, 73.

before 1200, the *grosso* was struck, a piece of fine silver, of good weight, which thereafter was maintained at the standard. Half a century later gold appeared. Florence coined the *florin* in 1252, Venice the *ducat* in 1284, and between the two dates, Saint Louis issued his crowns.

The return of the precious metals to the West indicated a revival of trade and a change in the form of competition. Instead of the imagination, the economic faculty began to predominate, and energy chose money as its vent. Within a generation the miracle fell decisively in power, and the beginning of this most crucial of social revolutions is visible in the third crusade, the famous expedition led by Philip Augustus and Cœur de Lion.

These two great soldiers probably learned the art of fortification at the siege of Acre, the most remarkable passage of arms of the Middle Ages. The siege is said to have cost one hundred thousand lives, and certainly called forth all the engineering skill of the time. Guy de Lusignan, having been liberated by Saladin soon after Hattin, wandered about the country, abandoned and forlorn, until at last he sat down before Acre, in 1189, with a force inferior to the garrison. There he was joined by the kings of France and England, who succeeded in capturing the city after a desperate defence of two years. An immense booty was taken, but the clergy complained that two secular princes had embezzled the heritage of God. On the other hand, the troops had not received the usual assistance from miracles; for though assaults were delivered almost daily, none were worked, and the Virgin herself only appeared once, and then so quietly as to arouse no enthusiasm.

After the surrender Philip went home, while Richard remained in command. The whole country had been overrun, only a few strongholds like the Krak des Chevaliers and Tortosa held out; and Richard, far from following the example of the first crusaders, who marched straight for the relics at Jerusalem, turned his attention to re-establishing the centres of trade upon the coast.

He moved south along the shore, keeping close to his fleet, with the enemy following on the mountains. As he approached Joppa, the Saracens descended into the plain and gave battle. They were decisively defeated, and Richard occupied Joppa without resistance. From Joppa the road ran direct to Jerusalem. The way was not long nor the country difficult, and there is no reason to suppose an attack to have been particularly hazardous. On the contrary, when Richard advanced, the opposition was not unusually stubborn, and he actually pursued the enemy to within sight of the walls. Yet he resolutely resisted the pressure of the clergy to undertake a siege, the inference being that the power which controlled him held Jerusalem to be worthless. That power must have been capital, for the treaty which he negotiated was as frankly mercenary as though made in modern times. The seaboard from Tyre to Joppa was ceded to the Franks; Ascalon, which was the key to Egypt, was dismantled, and the only mention made of Jerusalem was that it should be open to pilgrims in the future, as it had been in the past. Of the cross, which fifty years before had been prized above all the treasures of the East, not a word was said, nor does it appear that, after Hattin, either Infidels or Christians attached a money value to it.

Some chroniclers have insisted that Richard felt remorse at thus abandoning his God; and when, in a skirmish, he saw the walls of Jerusalem, they related that he hid his face and wept. He may have done so, but, during his life, the time came when Christian knights felt naught but exultation at having successfully bartered the Sepulchre for money. After Richard's departure, the situation of the Franks in the Holy Land went rapidly from bad to worse. The decay of faith constantly relaxed the bond which had once united them against the Moslems, while they were divided amongst themselves by commercial jealousies. The Temple and the Hospital carried on perpetual private wars about disputed property, the fourth crusade miscarried, and the garrison of Joppa was massacred, while Europe looked on with indifference.

When this point was reached, the instinct of self-preservation seems to have roused the clergy to the fact that their fate was bound up with the fate of the holy places: if the miracle were discredited, their reign was at an end. Accordingly, Innocent III., on his election, threw himself into a new agitation with all the intensity of his nature. Foulques de Neuilly was chosen to preach, like Saint

The crackdowns and hostility towards the clergy displayed by the Venetian Doge, and indifference in response to a Papal condemnation, showed the clergy they could not control a monied oligarchy.

“There was great pity among the people of the country and the pilgrims, and many tears were shed, because this worthy man had so much cause to stay behind; for he was old and ... his sight poor.”¹³⁰

Amidst an outburst of enthusiasm assent was given. Then, while the church rang with shouts, Dandolo knelt before the altar, in a passion of tears fixed the cross to the ducal bonnet, and rose, the commander of the finest army in the world.

And Dandolo was a great commander; a commander of the highest stamp. He tolerated no insubordination, and trod the clergy down. When Peter of Capua, the papal legate, interfered, Dandolo sternly told him that the army of Christ lacked not for military chiefs, and that if priests would stay therein they must content themselves with prayers.

A Cistercian monk, named Gunther, who had been appointed to follow his abbot on the pilgrimage, kept a chronicle of what he saw. His superior, named Martin, was so disheartened at Venice that he asked the legate for absolution from his vow, and for permission to return to his convent at Bâle; but this request the cardinal refused. The priests had determined to stay by Dandolo and fight him to the last. Therefore the abbot sailed with the Venetians, but he learned a bitter lesson at Zara. There the clergy received a letter from Innocent, explaining the position of the Church, and threatening with excommunication all who should molest the King of Hungary. Simon de Montfort and a portion of the more devout, who had from the first been scandalized at the contract made with Dandolo, then withdrew and camped apart; and, at a meeting called to consider the situation, Guy, Abbot of Vaux-de-Cernay, tried to read the letter. An outbreak followed, and some of the chroniclers assert that the Venetians would have murdered Guy, had not Simon de Montfort stood by him sword in hand.¹³¹

On the main point there is no doubt. The priests ignominiously failed to protect their ally; the attack was made, and nothing shows that even de Montfort refused to share in it, or to partake of the plunder after the city fell. There was no resistance. The besieged made no better defence than hanging crosses on their walls, and on the fifth day capitulated. First the Franks divided the plunder with the Italians; then they sent an embassy to Rome to ask for absolution.

They alleged that they were helpless, and either had to accept the terms offered by Dandolo, or abandon their enterprise. Innocent submitted. He coupled his forgiveness, indeed, with the condition that the plunder should be returned;¹³² yet no record remains that a single mark, of all the treasures taken from Zara, ever found its way back to the original owners.

The Venetians neither asked for pardon nor noticed the excommunication. On the contrary, Dandolo used the time when the envoys were at Rome in maturing the monstrous crime of diverting the crusade from Palestine to Constantinople.

Just before the departure from Venice, an event happened which Ville-Hardouin called “one of the greatest marvels you ever heard of.” In 1195 the Greek emperor, named Isaac, had been dethroned, imprisoned, and blinded by his brother Alexis, who usurped the throne. Isaac’s son, also named Alexis, escaped, and took shelter with his brother-in-law, Philip of Swabia. Philip could not help him, but suggested to him to apply to the crusaders in Venice, and ask them for aid. Whether or not this application had been arranged by Dandolo, does not appear. Alexis went to Venice, where he was cordially received by the doge; but as the fleet was then weighing anchor, his affairs were postponed until after the attack on Zara, when an embassy from Philip arrived, which brought up the whole situation at Constantinople for consideration. In the struggle which followed between the Venetians and the Church, the Franks lay like a prize destined to fall to the stronger, and in Gunther’s narrative the love the priests bore their natural champions can be plainly seen. In the

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Historiens de la France*, xix. 23.

¹³² *Patrologiæ Cursus Completus*, Migne, ccxiv. 1180.

thirteenth century, as in the fifth century, the ecclesiastics recognized that over a monied oligarchy they could never have control; accordingly the monks hated the Venetians, whom Gunther stigmatized as "a people excessively greedy of money," always ready to commit sacrilege for gain.

On his side Dandolo followed his instinct, and tried to bribe the pope by offering him an union of the communions. But Innocent was inflexible. He wrote in indignation that the crusaders had sworn to avenge the wrongs of Christ, and likened those who should turn back to Lot's wife, whom God turned into a pillar of salt for disobeying his commands.¹³³

Yet, though the priesthood put forth its whole strength, it was beaten. The power of wealth was too great. No serious defection took place. Ville-Hardouin gave a list of those who left the fleet, among whom was Simon de Montfort, adding contemptuously, "Thus those left the host, ... which was great shame to them."¹³⁴

Judging by the words alone, a century might have separated the writer and his comrades from the barons who abandoned Agnes to Innocent; yet they were the same men transplanted to an economic civilization, and excited by the power of wealth.

On Easter Monday, 1203, the fleet sailed for Corfu, where another and more serious split occurred. But the dazzling prize finally prevailed over the fear of the supernatural, and, getting under way once more, the pilgrims crossed the Sea of Marmora, and anchored at the convent of Saint Stephen, about twelve miles from Constantinople. Since exchanges had again returned to Italy, the vitality of the Greek Empire had burned low. It was failing fast through inanition. But Byzantium was still defended by those stupendous fortifications which were impregnable from the land, and only to be assailed from the sea by an admiral of genius.

Such an one was Dandolo, a born seaman, sagacious yet fiery; and, besides, a pilot of the port. At a council of war he laid out a plan of campaign:—

"My lords, I know more of the character of this country than you do, for I have been here before. You have before you the greatest and most perilous enterprise which any men have ever undertaken, and therefore it would be well that we should act prudently."¹³⁵

He then explained how the attack should be made; and had the Franks implicitly obeyed him, the town would have been carried at the first assault. Three days later the allies occupied Scutari, the Asiatic suburb of Constantinople, and lay there ten days collecting supplies. On the twelfth they stormed the tower of Galata, which commanded Pera, the key to the Golden Horn. While the action was going on, Dandolo forced his way into the port. The entrance was defended not only by a great tower, but by a huge iron chain, fastened to piles, and covered by twenty galleys armed with machines.

Nothing stopped the Venetians. Disregarding the fire, the sailors sprang on the chain, and from thence gained the decks of the Greek galleys, whose crews they threw overboard. Meanwhile, one of the Italian ships, provided with steel shears, bore down on the cable, cut it, and led the way into the harbour.

The weakest part of the walls being uncovered, Dandolo insisted that the only hope for success lay in assaulting from ship-board where the battlements were lowest; but the French obstinately refused to depart from their habits, and determined to fight on horseback. The event proved Dandolo's wisdom; for though the attack failed through the mistake of dividing the force, and of attempting the fortifications toward the land, the doge so led his sailors that Ville-Hardouin kindled with enthusiasm as he told the tale.

When the old man saw his ships recoil before the tremendous fire from the battlements,

¹³³ *Historiens de la France*, xix. 421.

¹³⁴ *Chronique*, ed. Buchon, 44.

¹³⁵ *Ville-Hardouin*, ed. Buchon, 51.

The Venetians could have accepted a peace deal with the Egyptian sultan which would have guaranteed them the entirety of the Holy Land, but refused in the hopes they could plunder Cairo for monetary gain as they had done to Constantinople. The Venetians were swallowed by the Nile

The relics at Jerusalem had first drawn the crusaders to the East, and, incidentally, the capture of the Syrian seaports led to the reopening of trade and the recentralization of the Western world. As long as imagination remained the dominant force, and the miracle retained its power, the ambition of the Franks was limited to holding the country which contained their talismans; but as wealth accumulated, and the economic type began to supplant the ecstatic, a different policy came to prevail.

Beside the cities of the Holy Land, two other portions of the Levant had a high money value—the Bosphorus and the valley of the Nile. In spite of Rome, the Venetians, in 1204, had seized Constantinople; at the Lateran council of 1215, Innocent himself proposed an attack on Cairo. Though conceived by Innocent, the details of the campaign were arranged by Honorius III., who was consecrated in July, 1216; these details are, however, unimportant: the interest of the crusade lies in its close. John of Brienne, King of Jerusalem, nominally commanded, but the force he led little resembled Dandolo's. Far from being that compact mass which can only be given cohesion by money, it rather had the character of such an hysterical mob as Louis the Pious led to destruction.

After some semblance of a movement on Jerusalem, the army was conveyed to the Delta of the Nile, and Damietta was invested in 1218. Here the besiegers amounted to little more than a fluctuating rabble of pilgrims, who came and went at their pleasure, usually serving about six months. Among such material, military discipline could not exist; but, on the contrary, the inflammable multitude were peculiarly adapted to be handled by a priest, and soon the papal legate assumed control. Cardinal Pelagius was a Spaniard who had been promoted by Innocent in 1206. His temperament was highly emotional, and, armed with plenary power by Honorius, he exerted himself to inflame the pilgrims to the utmost. After a blockade of eighteen months Damietta was reduced to extremity, and to save the city the sultan offered the whole Holy Land, except the fortress of Karak, together with the funds needed to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. King John, and all the soldiers, who understood the difficulty of invading Egypt, favoured a peace; but Pelagius, whose heart was fixed on the plunder of Cairo, prevented the council from reaching a decision. Therefore the siege went on, and presently the ramparts were carried without loss, as the whole population had perished from hunger and pestilence.

This victory made Pelagius a dictator, and he insisted on an advance on the capital. John, and the grand masters of the military orders, pointed out the disaster which must follow, as it was July, and the Nile was rising. In a few weeks the country would be under water. Moreover, the fleet could not ascend the river, therefore the army must be isolated in the heart of a hostile country, and probably overwhelmed by superior numbers.

Pelagius reviled them. He told them God loved not cowards, but champions who valued his glory more than they feared death. He threatened them with excommunication should they hang back. Near midsummer, 1221, the march began, and the pilgrims advanced to the apex of the delta, where they halted, with the enemy on the opposite shore.

The river was level with its banks, the situation was desperate, and yet even then the sultan sent an embassy offering the whole of the Holy Land in exchange for the evacuation of Egypt. The soldiers of all nations were strenuously for peace, the priests as strenuously for war. They felt confident of repeating the sack of Constantinople at Cairo, nor can there be a greater contrast than Martin spurning the wealth of Constantinople as dross, and Pelagius rejecting the Sepulchre that he might glut himself with Egyptian wealth.

But all history shows that the emotionalist cannot compete with the materialist upon his own ground. In the end, under free economic competition, he must be eliminated. Pelagius tarried idly in the jaws of death until the Nile rose and engulfed him.

Bit of a sum up of the past few chapters regarding decentralization, the crusades, and re-opening of trade between the west and east

CHAPTER VI THE SUPPRESSION OF THE TEMPLE

Physical weakness has always been the vulnerable point of the sacred caste, for priests have rarely been warriors, and faith has seldom been so profound as to guarantee ecclesiastics against attack. This difficulty was marked in the early Middle Ages, when, although disintegration so far prevailed as to threaten the very tradition of centralized power, a strong leaven of the ancient materialism remained.

In the ninth century the trend toward decentralization was resistless. Although several of the descendants of Charlemagne were men of ability and energy, the defence was so superior to the attack that they could not coerce their vassals, and their domains melted away into independent sovereignties until the crown became elective, and the monarchy almost a tradition. During the tenth century it seems possible that the regal authority might have been obliterated, even to the last trace, had it not been for the Church, which was in sore need of a champion. The priesthood cared nothing for the legitimate line; what they sought was a protector, and accordingly they chose, not the descendant of Charlemagne, but him who, in the words of the Archbishop of Rheims, was "distinguished by his wisdom and who found support in the greatness of his soul." Hugh Capet succeeded Louis V. because he was the best chief of police in France.

From such an alliance, between the priest and the soldier, has always sprung the dogma of the divine right of kings. In mediæval Europe, enchantment was a chief element of the royal power. The monarch was anointed with a magic oil, girt with a sacred sword, given a supernatural banner, and endowed with the gift of miracles. His touch healed disease. In return for these gifts, he fought the battles of the Church, whose property was the natural prey of a predatory baronage. Every diocese and every abbey was embroiled in endless local wars, which lasted from generation to generation, and sometimes from century to century. A good example was the interminable feud between the Abbey of Vézelay and the Counts of Nevers, and a letter of a papal legate named Conon, which described one of the countless raids, gives an idea of the ferocity of the attack.

"The men of the Count of Nevers have burst open the doors of the cloister, have thrown stones on the reliquaries which contain the bodies of Saint Lazarus, of Saint Martha, of Saint Andocius, and of Saint Pontianus; they have not even respected the crucifix in which was preserved a morsel of the true cross, they have beaten the monks, they have driven them out with stones, and having taken one of them, they have treated him in an infamous manner."¹⁴⁴

Until the stimulus given by the crusades was felt, subinfeudation went on uninterruptedly; the Capetians were as unable to stem the current as the Carolingians before them, so that, under Philip I., the royal domain had become almost as much dismembered as the kingdom of Lothaire a century earlier. Consolidation began after the council of Clermont, and Suger's *Life of Louis the Fat* is the story of the last years of the partisan warfare between the crown and the petty nobility which had been going on since the time of Hugh Capet.

During this long period the kings had fought a losing battle, and without the material resources of the Church would have been overpowered. Even as it was they failed to hold their own, and yet the wealth of the clergy was relatively enormous. The single abbey of Saint Denis was said to have controlled ten thousand men, and though this may be an exaggeration, the corporation was organized on a gigantic scale.

Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries it held in France alone three cities, upwards of seventy-four villages, twenty-nine manors attached to these possessions, over a hundred parishes.

¹⁴⁴ *Bibl. de l'École des Chartes*, 3d series, ii. 353.

and a great many chapels bringing in valuable rentals, beside numerous vineyards, mills and fields, with fifteen forests of the first class.¹⁴⁵

Suger's description of the country at the beginning of the twelfth century is highly dramatic. Every strong position, like a hill or a forest, was a baron's hold, from whence he rode to plunder and torment the people. One of the most terrible of these robbers was Hugh du Puiset, a man whom the Abbot of Saint Denis calls a ruffian, the issue of a long line of ruffians. To the churchman, Hugh was the incarnation of evil. He oppressed the clergy, and though hated by all, few dared oppose him. At last he attacked Adèle, Countess of Chartres, daughter of William the Conqueror, who went with her son Tybalt to seek redress from the king. Louis did not relish the campaign, and the monk described how the lady taunted him with the defeat his father had suffered from the father of Hugh, who pursued him to Orléans, captured a hundred of his knights, and cast his bishops into dungeons.

Afterward, an assembly was held at Melun to consider the situation, and there a concourse of prelates, clerks, and monks "threw themselves at the king's feet and implored him, to his great embarrassment, to repress this most greedy robber Hugh, who, more rapacious than a wolf, devoured their lands."¹⁴⁶

Certainly the priests had cause for alarm, for the venerable Archbishop of Chartres, who was present, had been captured, loaded with irons, and long left to languish in prison.

Three times this baron was defeated, but even when a prisoner, his family connection was so powerful he was permitted to escape. At last he died like a wolf, fighting to the last, having impaled the Seneschal of France on his spear.

Even singly, such men were almost a match for both Church and Crown; but when joined in a league, especially if allied to one of the great feudatories, such as the Duke of Normandy, they felt sure of victory. One day, when Eudes, Count of Corbeil, was to join this very Hugh, he put aside his armour-bearer who was attending him, and said to his wife: "Pray, noble countess, bring the glittering sword to the noble count, since he who takes it from you as a count, shall to-day return it as a king."¹⁴⁷

The immediate effect of the crusades was to carry numbers of these petty princes to Palestine, where they were often killed or ruined. As their power of resistance weakened, the crown gained, and Louis the Fat reconquered the domain. His active life began in 1097, the year of the invasion of Palestine, and his absorption of the lordship of Montlhéri is a good illustration of his success.

The family of Rochefort-Monthéri owned several of the strongest donjons near Paris, and was divided into two branches, the one represented by Guy Trousseau, Lord of Montlhéri, the other by Guy the Red, Lord of Rochefort. Guy Trousseau's father was named Milo, and all three went to Syria, where Milo was killed, and his son disgraced himself. Suger spoke of him with extreme disdain:—

"Guy Trousseau, son of Milo of Montlhéri, a restless man and a disturber of the kingdom, returned home from a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, broken down by the anxiety of a long journey and by the vexation of many troubles. And ... [being] panic stricken at Antioch at the approach of Corboran, and escaping down from a wall [he] ... abandoned the army of God and fled destitute of everything."¹⁴⁸

Returning a ruined man, he married his daughter to the illegitimate son of Philip, a half-brother of Louis, a child of twelve; and as his guardians, the king and prince got possession of the castle. This castle was almost at the gates of Paris, and a standing menace to the communications of the kingdom: therefore their delight was great. "They rejoiced as though they had taken a straw from

¹⁴⁵ *Histoire de l'Abbaye de Saint Denis*, D'Ayzac, i. 361–9.

¹⁴⁶ *Vie de Louis le Gros*, Suger, ed. Molinier, 61, 62.

¹⁴⁷ *Vie de Louis le Gros*, Suger, ed. Molinier, 70.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

their eyes, or as though they had burst the barrier which imprisoned them.”¹⁴⁹ And the old king said to his son: “Guard well the tower, Louis, which has aged me with chagrin, and through whose treachery and wicked fraud I have never known peace and quiet.”¹⁵⁰

Yet the destruction of the local nobility in Syria was the least important part of the social revolution wrought by the crusades, for though the power of the barons might have thus been temporarily broken, they could never have been reduced to impotence unless wealth had grown equal to organizing an overwhelming attack. The accumulation of wealth followed the opening of the Eastern trade, and its first effect was to cause the incorporation of the communes.

Prior to 1095 but one town is known to have been chartered, Saint Quentin, the capital of Vermandois, about 1080,¹⁵¹ but after the opening of the Syrian ports the whole complexion of society changed. Noyon was chartered in 1108, Laon in 1111, Amiens in 1113, and then free boroughs sprang up on every side.

For want of the mariner's compass, commerce could not pass north by the Straits of Gibraltar. Merchandise had therefore to go by land, and exchanges between the north and south of Europe centred in the County of Champagne, whose fairs became the great market of the thirteenth century.

The earliest dated document relating to these fairs is a deed drawn in 1114 by Hugh, Count of Troyes, by which he conveyed certain revenues derived from them to the Abbey of Montier-en-Der. Fifty years later, such mentions had grown frequent, and by the year 1200 the fairs had attained their full development.¹⁵²

Weaving had been an industry in Flanders under the Romans, and in the time of Charlemagne the cloth of the Low Countries had been famous; but in the twelfth century the manufacture spread into the adjoining provinces of France, and woollen became the most valuable European export. The fleeces were brought chiefly from England, the weaving was done on the Continent, and one of the sources of the Florentine wealth was the dressing and dyeing of these fabrics to prepare them for the Asiatic market.

For mutual defence, the industrial towns of the north formed a league called the Hanse of London, because London was the seat of the chief counting-house. This league at first included only seventeen cities, with Ypres and Bruges at the head, but the association afterward increased to fifty or sixty, stretching as far west as Le Mans, as far south as the Burgundian frontier, and as far east as Liège. Exclusive of the royal domain, which was well consolidated under Philip Augustus, the French portion of this region substantially comprised the counties of Blois, Vermandois, Anjou, Champagne, and the Duchy of Normandy. This district, which has ever since formed the core of France, became centralized at Paris between the beginning of the reign of Philip Augustus in 1180 and the reign of Philip the Fair a century later, and there can be little doubt that this centralization was the effect of the accumulation of capital, which created a permanent police.

The merchants of all the cities of the league bound themselves to trade exclusively at the fairs of Champagne, and, to prosper, the first obstacle they had to overcome was the difficulty and cost of transportation. Not only were the roads unsafe, because of the strength of the castles in which the predatory nobility lived, but the multiplicity of jurisdictions added to taxes. As late as the end of the thirteenth century, a convention was made between fifteen of the more important Italian cities, such as Florence, Genoa, Venice, and Milan, and Otho of Burgundy, by which, in consideration of protection upon the roads, tolls were to be paid at Gevry, Dôle, Augerans, Salins, Chalamont, and Pontarlier. When six imposts were levied for crossing a single duchy, the cost of importing the cheaper goods must have been prohibitory.

¹⁴⁹ Suger, ed. Molinier, 18.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Études sur les origines de la commune de Saint Quentin*, Giry, 9.

¹⁵² See *Études sur les Faires de Champagne*, Bourquelot, 72, 74; and generally on this subject.

“As religious competition sharpens, and the movement of society accelerates, religious ritual is supplanted by civil codes for the enforcement of contracts and the protection of the creditor class”

element of civilization. Before the crusades, the high offices of the kingdom of France, such as the office of the seneschal, were not only held by nobles, but tended to become hereditary in certain warlike families. After the rise of the Eastern trade the royal council was captured by the bourgeoisie. Jacques Cœur is a striking specimen of the class which ruled in the fifteenth century. Of this class the lawyers were the spokesmen, and men like Flotte and Nogaret, the chancellors of Philip the Fair, expressed the notion of centralization as perfectly as the jurists of ancient Rome. No one has understood the movement better than Luchaire. He has pointed out, in his work on French institutions, that from the beginning of the reign of Saint Louis (1226) the Privy Council steadily gained in consequence.¹⁵⁹ The permanent civil service, of which it was the core, served as a school for judges, clerks, seneschals, and all judicial and executive officers. At first the administration retained a strong clerical tinge, probably because a generation elapsed before laymen could be equally well trained for the work, but after the accession of Philip the Fair, toward the end of the century, the laymen decisively predominated, and when they predominated, the plunder of the Church began.

Abstract justice is, of course, impossible. Law is merely the expression of the will of the strongest for the time being, and therefore laws have no fixity, but shift from generation to generation. When the imagination is vivid and police weak, emotional or ecclesiastical law prevails. As competition sharpens, and the movement of society accelerates, religious ritual is supplanted by civil codes for the enforcement of contracts and the protection of the creditor class.

The more society consolidates the more legislation is controlled by the wealthy, and at length the representatives of the monied class acquire that absolute power once wielded by the Roman proconsul, and now exercised by the modern magistrate.

"The two great figures of Saint Louis and of Philip the Fair which dominate the third period are profoundly unlike, but considering the facts as a whole ... [they] have but moderately influenced the direction of the communal development. With the bailiffs and Parliament the monarchical machine is in possession of its essential works; it operates and will stop no more. In vain the king shall essay to arrest its march, or to direct it in another course: the innumerable army of agents of the crown does not cease for a moment to destroy rival jurisdictions, to suppress embarrassing powers, to replace everywhere private jurisdictions by the single authority of the sovereign.

"To the infinite diversity of local liberties its will is to substitute regularity of institutions; political and administrative centralization."¹⁶⁰

As Luchaire has elsewhere observed, the current everywhere "substituted, in the paths of administration, justice, and finance, the lay and burgher for the ecclesiastical and noble element." In other words, the economic type steadily gained ground, and the process went on until the Revolution. Saint Simon never forgave Louis XIV. for surrounding himself with men of mean birth, dependent on his will.

"The Duke of Beauvilliers was the single example in the whole course of his reign, as has been remarked in speaking of this duke, the only nobleman who was admitted into his council between the death of Cardinal Mazarin and his own; that is to say, during fifty-four years."¹⁶¹

From the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth century was an interval of almost unparalleled commercial prosperity—a prosperity which is sufficiently proved by the sumptuous quality of the architecture of the time. Unquestionably the most magnificent buildings of modern Europe date from this period, and this prosperity was not limited to any country, but extended from

¹⁵⁹ *Manuel des Institutions Françaises*, Luchaire, 535.

¹⁶⁰ *Les Communes Françaises*, Luchaire, 283.

¹⁶¹ *Mémoires du Duc de Saint-Simon*, ed. 1874, xii. 19.

Venice's currency was debased through the practice of coin clipping... 🤔

Cairo to London. Such an expansion of trade would have been impossible without a corresponding expansion of the currency, and as no new mines were discovered, recourse was had to paper. By the year 1200 bills of exchange had been introduced,¹⁶² and in order to give the bill of exchange its greatest circulating power, a system of banking was created which operated as a universal clearing house, and by means of which these bills were balanced against each other.

In the thirteenth century, Florence, Genoa, and Venice were the chief monied centres. In these cities the purchase and sale of commercial paper was, at the outset, monopolized by a body of money-changers, who, in Venice at least, seem to have been controlled by the council of merchants, and who probably were not always in the best credit. At all events, they were required in 1318 to make a deposit of £3,000 as security for their customers, and afterward the amount was increased.¹⁶³ Possibly some such system of deposits may have originally formed the capital of the Bank of Venice, but everything relating to the organization of the mediæval banks is obscure. All that seems certain is, that business was conducted by establishments of this character long before the date of any records which now remain. Amidst the multiplicity of mediæval jurisdictions, not only did the currency become involved in inextricable confusion, but it generally was debased through abrasion and clipping. Before clearings could be conveniently made, therefore, a coinage of recognized value had to be provided, and this the banks undertook to supply by their system of deposits. They received coin fresh from the mints, for which they gave credits, and these credits or notes were negotiable, and were always to be bought in the market. The deposits themselves were seldom withdrawn, as they bore a premium over common currency, which they lost when put in circulation, and they were accordingly only transferred on the books of the corporations, to correspond with the sales of the notes which represented them. Thus merchants from all parts of Europe and the Levant could draw on Venice or Genoa, and have their balances settled by transfers of deposits at the banks, without the intervention of coin. A calculation has been made that, by this means, the effective power of the currency was multiplied tenfold. Of all these institutions, the corporations of Genoa and Venice were the most famous. The Bank of Saint George, at Genoa, was formally organized in 1407, but it undoubtedly had conducted business from the beginning of the twelfth century;¹⁶⁴ next to nothing is known of the development at Venice. Probably, however, Florence was more purely a monied centre than either Venice or Genoa, and no money-lenders of the Middle Ages ever equalled the great Florentine banking families. Most of the important commercial centres came to have institutions of the kind.

The introduction of credit had the same effect as a large addition to the stock of bullion, and, as gold and silver grew more plentiful, their relative value fell, and a general reform of the currency took place. Venice began the movement with the grosso, it spread through Italy and into France, and the coin of Saint Louis was long considered as perfect money.

With the expansion of the currency went a rise in prices, all producers grew rich, and, for more than two generations, the strain of competition was so relaxed that the different classes of the population preyed upon each other less savagely than they are wont to do in less happy times.

Meanwhile no considerable additions were made to the volume of the precious metals, and, as the bulk of commerce swelled, the capacity of the new system of credit became exhausted, and contraction set in. The first symptom of disorder seems to have been a rise in the purchasing power of both the precious metals, but particularly of gold, which rose in its ratio to silver from about one to nine and a half, to one to twelve.¹⁶⁵ At the same time the value of commodities, even when measured in silver, appears to have fallen sharply.¹⁶⁶ The consequence of this fall was a corresponding addition to the burden of debt, and a very general insolvency. The communes had

¹⁶² *Le Commerce de Marseille au Moyen Age*, Blancard, 3.

¹⁶³ *La Libertà delle Banche a Venezia*, Lattes, 26.

¹⁶⁴ *Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce*, Bonnassieux, 23.

¹⁶⁵ *La Rapport entre l'or et l'argent au Temps de Saint Louis*, Marchéville, 22, 33.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 42.

The strength of the clergy and Christian warriors was an obstacle to the continued centralization of the French realm, and so the French King had the Knights Templar executed and seized their land and wealth. These acts led to the beginning of the early Protestant Reformation.

Vainly Benedict revoked the acts of his predecessor. Philip demanded that Boniface should be branded as a heretic, and sent Nogaret to Rome as his ambassador. The insult was more than the priesthood could yet endure. Summoning his courage, Benedict excommunicated Nogaret, Colonna, and thirteen others, whom he had seen break into the palace at Anagni. Within a month he was dead. Poison was whispered, and, for the first time since the monks captured the papacy, the hierarchy was paralyzed by fear. No complaint was made, or pursuit of the criminal attempted; the consistory met, but failed to unite on a successor.

According to the legend, when the cardinals were unable to agree, the faction opposed to Philip consented to name three candidates, from whom the king should select the pope. The prelate he chose was Bertrand de Goth, Archbishop of Bordeaux. Boniface had been his patron, but Philip, who knew men, knew that this man had his price. The tale goes that the king visited the bishop at an abbey near Saint-Jean-d'Angély, and began the conversation as follows: "My lord Archbishop, I have that in my hand will make you pope if I like, and it is for that I am come." Bertrand fell on his knees, and the king imposed five conditions, reserving a sixth, to exact thereafter. The last condition was the condemnation of the Templars.¹⁷⁵

Doubtless the picturesque old tale is as false in detail as it is true in spirit. Probably no such interview took place, and yet there seems little doubt that Clement owed his election to Philip, and gave pledges which bound him from the day of his coronation. Certainly he surrendered all liberty of action, for he established himself at Avignon, whence the battlements of Ville-Neuve can still be seen, built by Philip to overawe the town. Within an hour he could have filled the streets with his mercenaries. The victory was complete. The Church was prostrate, and spoliation began.

Clement was crowned in 1305, and after two years of slavery he began to find his compact heavy upon him. He yielded up the patronage, he consented to the taxation of the clergy, and he ordered the grand-masters of the crusading orders to return to Europe, all at Philip's bidding. But when he was commanded to condemn Boniface as a heretic, he recoiled in terror. Indeed, to have rejected Boniface as an impostor, and a false pope, would have precipitated chaos. His bishops and cardinals would have been set aside, Clement's own election would have been invalidated; none could foresee where the disorganization would end. To gain time, Clement pleaded for a general council, which the king morosely conceded, but only on the condition that the excommunications against his agents, even against Nogaret, should be withdrawn. Clement assented, for he was practically a prisoner at Poitiers, a council at Vienne was agreed to, and the Crown seized the Templars without opposition from the Church.

Criticism has long ago dispelled the mystery which once shrouded this bloody process. No historian now suggests that the knights were really guilty of the fantastic enormities charged against them, and which they confessed under torture. Scepticism doubtless was rife among them, as it was among the cardinals, but there is nothing to show that the worst differed materially from the population about them, and the superb fortitude with which they perished, demonstrates that lack of religious enthusiasm was not the crime for which they died.

When Philip conceived the idea of first murdering and then plundering the crusaders, is uncertain. Some have thought it was in 1306, while sheltered in the Temple, when, he having suddenly raised his debased money to the standard of Saint Louis, the mob destroyed the house of his master of the mint. Probably it was much earlier, and was but the necessary result of the sharpening of economic competition, which began with the accelerated movement accompanying the crusades.

After Clement's election, several years elapsed before the scheme ripened. Nothing could be done until one or both of the grand-masters had been enticed to France with their treasure. Under pretence of preparing for a new crusade this was finally accomplished, and, in 1306, Jacques de

¹⁷⁵ *Cronica di Villani*, viii. 80. Also *Ann. Eccl.*, Baronius, year 1305.

Molay, a chivalrous Burgundian gentleman, journeyed unsuspectingly to Paris, taking with him his chief officers and one hundred and fifty thousand florins in gold, beside silver "enough to load ten mules."

Philip first borrowed all the money de Molay would lend, and then, at one sudden swoop, arrested in a single night all the Templars in France. On October 13, 1307, the seizure was made, and Philip's organization was so perfect, and his agents so reliable, that the plan was executed with precision.

The object of the government was plunder, but before the goods of the order could be confiscated, legal conviction of some crime was necessary, which would entail forfeiture. Heresy was the only accusation adapted to the purpose; accordingly Philip determined to convict the knights of heresy, and the best evidence was confession. To extort confession the Inquisition had to be set in motion by the pope, and thus it came to pass that, in order to convey to the laymen the property of ecclesiastics, Christ's soldiers were tormented to death by his own vicar.

In vain, in the midst of the work, Clement, in agonies of remorse, revoked the commissions of the inquisitors. Philip jeered when the cardinals delivered the message, saying "that God hated the lukewarm," and the torture went on as before. When he had extorted what he needed, he set out for Poitiers; Clement fled, but was arrested and brought back a prisoner. Then his resolution gave way, and he abandoned the knights to their fate, reserving only the grand-master and a few high officials for himself. Still, though he forsook the individuals, he could not be terrified into condemning the order in its corporate capacity, and the final process was referred to the approaching council. Meanwhile, a commission, presided over by the Archbishop of Narbonne, proceeded with the trial of the knights.

For three years these miserable wretches languished in their dungeons, and the imagination recoils from picturing their torments. Finally Philip felt that an end must be made, and in March, 1310, 546 of the survivors were taken from their prisons and made to choose delegates, for their exasperation was so deep that the government feared to let them appear before the court in a body.

The precaution availed little, for the knights who conducted the common defence proved themselves as proud and bold in this last extremity of human misery, as they had ever been upon the day of battle. They denied the charges brought against them, they taunted their judges with the lies told them to induce them to confess, and they showed how life and liberty had been promised them, under the royal seal, if they would admit the allegations of the government. Then they told the story of those who had been steadfast to the end.

"It is not astonishing that some have borne false witness, but that any have told the truth, considering the sorrows and suffering, the threats and insults, they daily endure.... What is surprising is that faith should be given to those who have testified untruly to save their bodies, rather than to those who have died in their tortures in such numbers, like martyrs of Christ, in defence of the truth, or who solely for conscience sake, have suffered and still daily suffer in their prisons, so many torments, trials, calamities, and miseries, for this cause."¹⁷⁶

The witnesses called confirmed their statements. Bernard Peleti, when examined, was asked if he had been put to the torture. He replied that for three months previous to his confession to the Bishop of Paris, he had lain with his hands so tightly bound behind his back that the blood started from his finger nails. He had beside been put in a pit. Then he broke out: "If I am tortured I shall deny all I have said now, and shall say all they want me to say. If the time be short, I can bear to be beheaded, or to die by boiling water, or by fire, for the honour of the order; but I can no longer withstand the torments which, for more than two years, I have endured in prison."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ *Documents Inédits sur l'Histoire de France, Procès des Templiers*, Michelet, i. 166.

¹⁷⁷ *Procès des Templiers*, Michelet, i. 37.

"I have been tortured three times," said Humbert de Podio. "I was confined thirty-six weeks in a tower, on bread and water, quia non confitebatur quae volebant."¹⁷⁸ Bernard de Vado showed two bones which had dropped from his heels after roasting his feet.¹⁷⁹

Such testimony was disregarded, for condemnation was necessary as a preliminary to confiscation. The suppression of the Temple was the first step in that long spoliation of the Church which has continued to the present day, and which has been agonizing to the victims in proportion to their power of resistance. The fourteenth century was still an age of faith, and the monks died hard. Philip grasped the situation with the intuition of genius, and provided himself with an instrument fit for the task before him. He forced Clement to raise Philip de Marigni to the See of Sens, and Marigni was a man who shrank from nothing.

When made archbishop, he convoked a provincial council at Paris, and condemned, as relapsed heretics, the knights who had repudiated their confessions. Fifty-nine of these knights belonged to his own diocese. He had them brought to a fenced enclosure in a field near the Abbey of Saint Antoine, and there offered them pardon if they would recant. Then they were chained to stakes, and slowly burned to ashes from the feet upward. Not one flinched, but amidst shrieks of anguish, when half consumed, they protested their innocence, and died imploring mercy of Christ and of the Virgin.¹⁸⁰

Devotion so superb might have fired the imagination of even such a craven as Clement, but Philip was equal to the emergency. He had caused scores of witnesses to be examined to prove that Boniface was a murderer, a sorcerer, a debauchee, and a heretic. Suddenly he offered to drop the prosecution, and to restore the Temple lands to the Church, if the order might be abolished and the process closed. Clement yielded. In October, 1311, the council met at Vienne. The winter was spent in intimidation and bribery; the second meeting was not held until the following April, and then the decree of suppression was published. By this decree the corporation was dissolved, but certain of the higher officers still lived, and in an evil moment Clement bethought him of their fate. In December, 1313, he appointed a commission to try them. They were brought before a lofty scaffold at the portal of the Cathedral of Paris, and there made to reiterate the avowals which had been wrung from them in their dungeons. Then they were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. But at this supreme moment, when it seemed that all was over, de Molay, the grand-master, and the Master of Normandy, broke into a furious defence. The commissioners adjourned in a panic, but Philip, thirsting for blood, sprang upon his prey.

He gave his orders to his own officers, without consulting any prelate. On March 18, 1314, as night fell, the two crusaders were taken from the provost, who acted as their gaoler, and carried to a little island in the Seine, on which a statue of Henry of Navarre now stands. There they were burned together, without a trial and without a sentence. They watched the building of their funeral pile with "hearts so firm and resolute, and persisted with such constancy in their denials to the end, and suffered death with such composure, that they left the witnesses of their execution in admiration and stupor."¹⁸¹

An ancient legend told how de Molay, as he stood upon his blazing fagots, summoned Clement to meet him before God's judgment-seat in forty days, and Philip within a year. Neither survived the interval. Philip had promised to restore the goods of the Temple to the Church, but the plunder, for which this tremendous deed was done, was not surrendered tamely to the vanquished after their defeat. The gold and silver, and all that could be stolen, disappeared. The land was in the end ceded

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 264.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 75

¹⁸⁰ *Cronica di Villani*, viii. 92.

¹⁸¹ *Continuatio Chronici Guillelmi de Nangiaco*, mcccxiii.

to the Hospital, but so wasted that, for a century, no revenue whatever accrued from what had been one of the finest conventual estates in Europe.¹⁸²

Such was the opening of that social revolution which, when it reached its height, was called the Reformation.

¹⁸² *La Maison du Temple*, Curzon, 200, 204.

The Protestant Reformation was a phenomena largely found in Northern Europe, and strongest in the Low Countries. These were the wealthiest, most industrious states of Europe, and Protestantism became a way for this monied class to break from middlemen intercessors.

CHAPTER VII THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

Many writers have pointed out the relation between commerce and scepticism in the Middle Ages, and, among others, Thorold Rogers has a passage in his *History of Agriculture and Prices* so interesting that it should be read entire:—

“The general spread of Lollardy, about which all the theologians of the age complain, was at once the cause and the effect of progressive opulence. It cannot be by accident that all the wealthiest parts of Europe, one district only excepted, and that for very sufficient reasons, were suspected during the Middle Ages of theological nonconformity. Before the campaigns of Simon de Montfort, in the first half of the thirteenth century, Provence was the garden and workshop of Europe. The sturdiest advocates of the Reformation were the burghers of the Low Countries.... In England the strength of the Lollard party was, from the days of Wiclif to the days of Cranmer, in Norfolk [the principal manufacturing county]; and I have no doubt that ... the presence of students from this district must have told on the theological bias of Cambridge University, which came out markedly at the epoch of the Reformation....

“English Lollardy was, like its direct descendant Puritanism, sour and opinionative, but it was also moral and thrifty. They who denounced the lazy and luxurious life of the monks, the worldliness and greed of the prelates, and the gross and shallow artifices of the popular religion, were pretty sure to inculcate parsimony and saving. By voluntarily and sturdily cutting themselves off from the circumstance of the old faith, they were certain, like the Quakers of more than two centuries later, to become comparatively wealthy. They had nothing to spare for monk or priest...”¹⁸³

The Lollards were of the modern economic type, and discarded the miracle because the miracle was costly and yielded an uncertain return. Yet the mediæval cult was based upon the miracle, and many of the payments due for the supernatural services of the ecclesiastics were obligatory; beside, gifts as an atonement for sin were a drain on savings, and the economist instinctively sought cheaper methods of propitiation.

In an age as unscientific as the sixteenth century, the conviction of the immutability of natural laws was not strong enough to admit of the abrogation of religious formulas. The monied class, therefore, proceeded step by step, and its first experiment was to suppress all fees to middle-men, whether priests or saints, by becoming their own intercessors with the Deity.

As Dr. Witherspoon has observed, “fear of wrath from the avenger of blood” made men “fly to the city of refuge”;¹⁸⁴ but, as the tradesman replaced the enthusiast, a dogma was evolved by which mental anguish, which cost nothing, was substituted for the offering which was effective in proportion to its money value. This dogma was “Justification by Faith,” the corner-stone of Protestantism.

Far from requiring an outlay from the elect, “Justification by Faith” discouraged it. The act consisted in “a deep humiliation of mind, confession of guilt and wretchedness ... and acceptance of pardon and peace through Christ Jesus, which they have neither contributed to the procuring, nor can contribute to the continuance of, by their own merit.”¹⁸⁵

Yet the substitution of a mental condition for a money payment, led to consequences more far-reaching than the suppression of certain clerical revenues, for it involved the rejection of the sacred

¹⁸³ *A History of Agriculture and Prices*, J. E. Thorold Rogers, iv. 72.

¹⁸⁴ *On Justification*, Works, i. 60.

¹⁸⁵ *On Justification*, Works, i. 51.

Justification by Faith became central to Protestantism, and the Bible, not tradition or relics, became the sole authority on religious dogma. A priesthood and sacred caste was no longer necessary to interpret the Bible when the masses could do so for themselves.

tradition which had not only sustained relic worship, but which had made the Church the channel of communication between Christians and the invisible world.

That ancient channel once closed, Protestants had to open another, and this led to the deification of the Bible, which, before the Reformation, had been supposed to derive its authority from that divine illumination which had enabled the priesthood to infallibly declare the canon of the sacred books. Calvin saw the weak spot in the position of the reformers, and faced it boldly. He maintained the Scripture to be “self-authenticated, carrying with it its own evidence, and ought not to be made the subject of demonstration and arguments from reason,” and that it should obtain “the same complete credit and authority with believers ... as if they heard the very words pronounced by God himself.”¹⁸⁶

Thus for the innumerable costly fetishes of the imaginative age were substituted certain writings, which could be consulted without a fee. The expedient was evidently the device of a mercantile community, and the saving to those who accepted it enormous, but it disintegrated Christendom, and made an organized priesthood impossible. When each individual might pry into the sacred mysteries at his pleasure, the authority of the clergy was annihilated.

Men of the priestly type among the reformers saw the danger and tried to save themselves. The thesis which the early evangelical divines maintained was the unity of truth. The Scriptures were true: therefore if the whole body of Christians searched aright they could not fail to draw truth from them, and this truth must be the creed of the universal Church. Zwingli thus explained the doctrine:—

“Whoever hears the holy scriptures read aloud in church, judges what he hears. Nevertheless what is heard is not itself the Word through which we believe. For if we believed through the simple hearing or reading of the Word, all would be believers. On the contrary, we see that many hear and see and do not believe. Hence it is clear that we believe only through the word which the Heavenly Father speaks in our hearts, by which he enlightens us so that we see, and draws us so that we follow.... For God is not a God of strife and quarrel, but of unity and peace. Where there is true faith, there the Holy Spirit is present; but where the Holy Spirit is, there is certainly effort for unity and peace.... Therefore there is no danger of confusion in the Church since, if the congregation is assembled through God, he is in the midst of them, and all who have faith strive after unity and peace.”¹⁸⁷

The inference the clergy sought to draw was, that though all could read the Bible, only the enlightened could interpret it, and that they alone were the enlightened. Hence Calvin’s pretensions equalled Hildebrand’s:—

“This is the extent of the power with which the pastors of the Church, by whatever name they may be distinguished, ought to be invested; that by the word of God they may venture to do all things with confidence; may constrain all the strength, glory, wisdom, and pride of the world to obey and submit to his majesty; supported by his power, may govern all mankind, from the highest to the lowest; may build up the house of Christ, and subvert the house of Satan; may feed the sheep, and drive away the wolves; may instruct and exhort the docile; may reprove, rebuke, and restrain the rebellious and obstinate; may bind and loose; may discharge their lightnings and thunders, if necessary; but all in the Word of God.”¹⁸⁸

In certain regions, poor and remote from the centres of commerce, these pretensions were respected. In Geneva, Scotland, and New England, men like Calvin, Knox, and Cotton maintained

¹⁸⁶ *Institutes*, I. vii. 1 and 5.

¹⁸⁷ *Zwingli's Theologie*, August Baur, 319, 320.

¹⁸⁸ *Institutes*, IV. viii. 9.

Adams says the best place to study the Reformation is England, as it was primarily an economic phenomena and England would become the world’s center of exchanges. The Lollards challenged transubstantiation on the basis that men could not make the sacrament into Christ’s flesh.

themselves until economic competition did its work: then they passed away. Nowhere has faith withstood the rise of the mercantile class. As a whole the Reformation was eminently an economic phenomenon, and is best studied in England, which, after the Reformation, grew to be the centre of the world's exchanges.

From the beginning of modern history, commerce and scepticism have gone hand in hand. The Eastern trade began to revive after the reopening of the valley of the Danube, about 1000, and perhaps, in that very year, Berenger, the first great modern heretic, was born. By 1050 he had been condemned and made to recant, but with the growth of the Fairs of Champagne his heresy grew, and in 1215, just in the flush of the communal development, the Church found it necessary to define the dogma of transubstantiation, and declare it an article of faith. A generation later came the burning of schismatics; in 1252, by his bull "Ad extirpanda," Innocent IV. organized the Inquisition, and the next year Grossetête, Bishop of Lincoln, died, with whom the organized opposition of the English to the ancient costly ritual may be said to have opened.

In Great Britain the agitation for reform appears to have been practical from the outset. There was no impatience with dogmas simply because they were incomprehensible: the Trinity and the Double Procession were always accepted. Formulas of faith were resisted because they involved a payment of money, and foremost among these were masses and penances. Another grievance was the papal patronage, and, as early as the fourteenth century, Parliament passed the statutes of provisors and præmunire to prevent the withdrawal of money from the realm.

The rise of the Lollards was an organized movement to resist ecclesiastical exactions, and to confiscate ecclesiastical property; and, if 1345 be taken as the opening of Wickliffe's active life, the agitation for the seizure of monastic estates started just a generation after Philip's attack on the Temple in France. There was at least this difference in the industrial condition of the two nations, and probably much more.

Wickliffe was rather a politician than a theologian, and his preaching a diatribe against the extravagance of the Church. In one of his Saints' Days sermons he explained the waste of relic worship as shrewdly as a modern man of business:—

"It would be to the benefit of the Church, and to the honour of the saints, if the costly ornaments so foolishly lavished upon their graves were divided among the poor. I am well aware, however, that the man who would sharply and fully expose this error would be held for a manifest heretic by the image worshippers and the greedy people who make gain of such graves; for in the adoration of the eucharist, and such worshipping of dead bodies and images, the Church is seduced by an adulterous generation."¹⁸⁹

The laity paid the priesthood fees because of their supernatural powers, and the possession of these powers was chiefly demonstrated by the miracle of the mass. Wickliffe, with a leader's eye, saw where the enemy was vulnerable, and the last years of his life were passed in his fierce controversy with the mendicants upon transubstantiation. Even at that early day he presented the issue with incomparable clearness: "And thou, then, that art an earthly man, by what reason mayst thou say that thou makest thy maker?"¹⁹⁰

The deduction from such premises was inexorable. The mass had to be condemned as fetish worship, and with it went the adoration of relics.

"Indeed, many nominal Christians are worse than pagans; for it is not so bad that a man should honour as God, for the rest of the day, the first thing he sees in the morning, as that regularly that accident should be really his God, which he sees in the mass in the hands of the priest in the consecrated wafer."¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ *John Wickliffe and his English Precursors*, Lechler, Eng. trans., 302.

¹⁹⁰ Lechler, 349, note 1.

¹⁹¹ Lechler, 348, note. Extract from *De Eucharistia*.

Wickliffe died December 30, 1384, and ten years later the Lollards had determined to resist all payments for magic. They presented their platform to Parliament in 1395, summed up in their *Book of Conclusions*. Some of these "conclusions" are remarkably interesting:—

5th.—"That the exorcisms and hallowings, consecrations and blessings, over the wine, bread, wax, water, oil, salt, incense, the altar-stone, and about the church-walls, over the vestment, chalice, mitre, cross, and pilgrim-staves, are the very practices of necromancy, rather than of sacred divinity.

.....

7th.—"We mightily affirm ... that spiritual prayers made in the church for the souls of the dead ... is a false foundation of alms, whereupon all the houses of alms in England are falsely founded.

8th.—"That pilgrimages, prayers, and oblations made unto blind crosses or roods, or to deaf images made either of wood or stone, are very near of kin unto idolatry."¹⁹²

When Lord Cobham, the head of the Lollard party, was tried for heresy in 1413, Archbishop Arundel put him four test questions. First, whether he believed, after the sacramental words had been spoken, any material bread or wine remained in the sacrament; fourth, whether he believed relic worship meritorious.

His answers did not give satisfaction, and they roasted him in chains, in Saint Giles's Fields, in 1418.

A hundred years of high commercial activity followed Cobham's death. The discovery of America, and of the sea passage to India, changed the channels of commerce throughout the world, human movement was accelerated, gunpowder made the attack overwhelming; centralization took a prodigious stride, scepticism kept pace with centralization, and in 1510 Erasmus wrote thus, and yet remained in the orthodox communion:—

"Moreover savoureth it not of the same saulce [folly] (trow ye) when everie countrey chalengeth a severall saint for theyr patrone, assignyng further to each saint a peculiar cure and office, with also sundrie ways of worshipping; as this saint helpeth for the tooth-ache, that socoureth in childbyrth; she restoreth stolene goods; an other aydeth shipmen in tempests; an other taketh charge of husbandmens hoggs; and so of the rest; far too long were it to rehearse all. Then some saints there be, that are generally sued for many thynges; amongst whom chiefly is the virgin Mother of God, in whom vulgar folke have an especial confidence, yea almost more than in her Sonne."¹⁹³

When Erasmus wrote, the Reformation was at hand, but the attack on Church property had begun in England full two centuries before, contemporaneously with Philip's onslaught on the Temple. All over Europe the fourteenth century was a period of financial distress; in France the communes became bankrupt and the coinage deteriorated, and in England the debasement of the currency began in 1299, and kept pace with the rise of Lollardy. In 1299 the silver penny weighed 22 ½ grains; Edward I. reduced it to 22 ¼ grains; Edward III. to 18 grains; Henry IV. to 15 grains; and Henry VI., during his restoration in 1470, to 12 grains.

As the stringency increased, the attack on the clergy gained in ferocity. Edward I. not only taxed the priesthood, but seized the revenues of the alien priories; of these there might have been one hundred and fifty within the realm, and what he took from them he spent on his army.

Edward II. and Edward III. followed the precedent, and during the last reign, when the penny dropped four grains, these revenues were sequestered no less than twenty-three years. Under Henry IV. the penny lost three grains, and what remained of the income of these houses was permanently

¹⁹² *Acts and Monuments*, iii. 204, 205.

¹⁹³ *The Praise of Folie*, 1541. Englished by Sir Thomas Challoner.

As technology advanced and the attack overwhelmed the defense, capital consolidated and the currency contracted. The desire for cheap religion grew, and Protestantism was the answer.

applied to defraying the expenses of the court. Henry V. dissolved them, and vested their estates in the crown.

In the reign of Henry IV., when the penny was on the point of losing three grains of its silver, the tone of Parliament was similar to that of the parliaments of the Reformation. On one occasion the king asked for a subsidy, and the Speaker suggested that without burdening the laity he might "supply his occasions by seizing on the revenues of the clergy";¹⁹⁴ and in 1410 Lord Cobham anticipated the Parliament of 1536 by introducing a bill for the confiscation of conventual revenues to the amount of 322,000 marks, a sum which he averred represented the income of certain corporations whose names he appended in a schedule.¹⁹⁵

Year by year, as society consolidated, the economic type was propagated; and, as the pressure of a contracting currency stimulated these men to action, the demand for cheap religion grew fiercer. London, the monied centre, waxed hotter and hotter, and a single passage from the *Supplicacyon for Beggars* shows how bitter the denunciations of the system of paying for miracles became:—

"Whate money pull they yn by probates of testaments, priuy tithes, and by mennes offeringes to theyre pilgrimages, and at theyre first masses? Euery man and childe that is buried, must pay sumwhat for masses and diriges to be song for him, or elles they will accuse the dedes frendes and executours of heresie. whate money get they by mortuaries, by hearing of confessions ... by halowing of churches, altares, superaltares, chapelles, and bells, by cursing of men and absolving them agein for money?"¹⁹⁶

One of the ballads of Cromwell's time ridiculed, in this manner, all the chief pilgrimages of the kingdom:—

"Ronnyng hyther and thyther,
We cannot tell whither,
In offryng candels and pence
To stones and stockes,
And to olde rotten blockes,
That came, we know not from whense.

"To Walsyngham a gaddyng,
To Cantorbury a maddyng,
As men distraught of mynde;
With fewe clothes on our backes,
But an image of waxe,
For the lame and for the blynde.

"Yet offer what ye wolde,
Were it otes, syluer, or golde
Pyn, poynt, brooche, or ryng,
The churche were as then,
Such charitable men,
That they would refuse nothyng."¹⁹⁷

But the war was not waged with words alone. At the comparatively early date of 1393, London had grown so unruly that Richard assumed the government of the city himself. First he appointed Sir Edward Darlington warden, but Sir Edward proving too lenient, he replaced him with Sir Baldwin Radington. Foxe, very frankly, explained why:—

¹⁹⁴ *Parl. Hist.*, Cobbett, i. 295.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 310.

¹⁹⁶ *A Supplicacyon for Beggars*, 2. Early Eng. Text Soc.

¹⁹⁷ *Acts and Monuments*, v. 404.

Adams says that industry bred heretics (Protestants) and agriculture bred believers (Catholics). His evidence is the number of Protestant martyrs under Mary, which most came from wealthy, industrial areas.

“For the Londoners at that time were notoriously known to be favourers of Wickliff’s side, as partly before this is to be seen, and in the story of Saint Alban’s more plainly doth appear, where the author of the said history, writing upon the fifteenth year of King Richard’s reign, reporteth in these words of the Londoners, that they were ‘not right believers in God, nor in the traditions of their forefathers; sustainers of the Lollards, depravers of religious men, withholders of tithes, and impoverishers of the common people.’

“... The king, incensed not a little with the complaint of the bishops, conceived oftsoons, against the mayor and sheriffs, and against the whole city of London, a great stomach; insomuch, that the mayor and both the sheriffs were sent for, and removed from their office.”¹⁹⁸

By the opening of the sixteenth century a priest could hardly collect his dues without danger; the Bishop of London indeed roundly declared to the government that justice could not be had from the courts.

In 1514 the infant child of a merchant tailor named Hun died, and the parson of the parish sued the father for a bearing sheet, which he claimed as a mortuary. Hun contested the case, and got out a writ of *præmunire* against the priest, which so alarmed the clergy that the chancellor of the diocese accused him of heresy, and confined him in the Lollard’s tower of Saint Paul’s.

In due time the usual articles were exhibited against the defendant, charging that he had disputed the lawfulness of tithes, and had said they were ordained “only by the covetousness of priests”; also that he possessed divers of “Wickliff’s damnable works,” and more to the same effect.

Upon these articles Fitzjames, Bishop of London, examined Hun on December 2, and after the examination recommitted him. On the morning of the 4th, a boy sent with his breakfast found him hanging to a beam in his cell. The clergy said suicide, but the populace cried murder, and the coroner’s jury found a verdict against Dr. Horsey, the chancellor. The situation then became grave, and Fitzjames wrote to Wolsey a remarkable letter, which showed not only high passion, but serious alarm:—

“In most humble wise I beseech you, that I may have the king’s gracious favour ... for assured am I, if my chancellor be tried by any twelve men in London, they be so maliciously set, ‘in favorem hæreticæ pravitatis,’ that they will cast and condemn any clerk, though he were as innocent as Abel.”¹⁹⁹

The evidence is conclusive that, from the outset, industry bred heretics; agriculture, believers. Thorold Rogers has explained that the east of England, from Kent to the Wash and on to Yorkshire, was the richest part of the kingdom,²⁰⁰ and Mr. Blunt, in his *Reformation of the Church of England*, has published an analysis of the martyrdoms under Mary. He has shown that out of 277 victims, 234 came from the district to the east of a line drawn from Boston to Portsmouth. West of this line Oxford had most burnings; but, by the reign of Mary, manufactures had spread so far inland that the industries of Oxfordshire were only surpassed by those of Middlesex.²⁰¹ In Wickliffe’s time Norwich stood next to London, and Norwich was infested with Lollards, many of whom were executed there.

On the other hand, but two executions are recorded in the six agricultural counties north of the Humber—counties which were the poorest and the farthest removed from the lines of trade. Thus the eastern counties were the hot-bed of Puritanism. There, Kett’s rebellion broke out under Edward VI.; there, Cromwell recruited his Ironsides, and throughout this region, before the beginning of the

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, iii. 218.

¹⁹⁹ *Acts and Monuments*, iv. 196.

²⁰⁰ *Agriculture and Prices*, iv. 18.

²⁰¹ *Reformation of the Church of England*, Blunt, ii. 222.

Italy had fallen out of the Asiatic trade by the end of the 15th century with the advances in seafaring and Vasco da Gama’s discoveries.

Reformation, assaults on relics were most frequent and violent. One of the most famous of these relics was the rood of Dovercourt. Dovercourt is part of Harwich, on the Essex coast; Dedham lies ten miles inland, on the border of Suffolk; and the description given by Foxe of the burning of the image of Dovercourt, is an example of what went on throughout the southeast just before the time of the divorce:—

“In the same year of our Lord 1532, there was an idol named the Rood of Dovercourt, whereunto was much and great resort of people: for at that time there was great rumour blown abroad amongst the ignorant sort, that the power of the idol of Dovercourt was so great, that no man had power to shut the church-door where he stood; and therefore they let the church-door, both night and day, continually stand open, for the more credit unto their blind rumour. This once being conceived in the heads of the vulgar sort, seemed a great marvel unto many men; but to many again, whom God had blessed with his spirit, it was greatly suspected, especially unto these, whose names here follow: as Robert King of Dedham, Robert Debnam of Eastbergholt, Nicholas Marsh of Dedham, and Robert Gardner of Dedham, whose consciences were sore burdened to see the honour and power of the almighty living God so to be blasphemed by such an idol. Wherefore they were moved by the Spirit of God, to travel out of Dedham in a wondrous goodly night, both hard frost and fair moonshine, although the night before, and the night after, were exceeding foul and rainy. It was from the town of Dedham, to the place where the filthy Rood stood, ten miles. Notwithstanding, they were so willing in that their enterprise, that they went these ten miles without pain, and found the church door open, according to the blind talk of the ignorant people: for there durst no unfaithful body shut it. This happened well for their purpose, for they found the idol, which had as much power to keep the door shut, as to keep it open; and for proof thereof, they took the idol from his shrine, and carried him quarter of a mile from the place where he stood, without any resistance of the said idol. Whereupon they struck fire with a flint-stone, and suddenly set him on fire, who burned out so brim, that he lighted them homeward one good mile of the ten.

“This done, there went a great talk abroad that they should have great riches in that place; but it was very untrue; for it was not their thought or enterprise, as they themselves afterwards confessed, for there was nothing taken away but his coat, his shoes, and the tapers. The tapers did help to burn him, the shoes they had again, and the coat one Sir Thomas Rose did burn; but they had neither penny, halfpenny, gold, goat, nor jewel.

“Notwithstanding, three of them were afterwards indicted of felony, and hanged in chains within half a year, or thereabout.

.....

“The same year, and the year before, there were many images cast down and destroyed in many places: as the image of the crucifix in the highway by Coggeshall, the image of Saint Petronal in the church of Great Horkleigh, the image of Saint Christopher by Sudbury, and another image of Saint Petronal in a chapel of Ipswich.”²⁰²

England’s economic supremacy is recent, and has resulted from the change in the seat of exchanges which followed the discovery of America and the sea-route to India; long before Columbus, however, the introduction of the mariner’s compass had altered the paths commerce followed between the north and south of Europe during the crusades.

The necessity of travel by land built up the Fairs of Champagne; they declined when safe ocean navigation had cheapened marine freights. Then Antwerp and Bruges superseded Provins and the towns of Central France, and rapidly grew to be the distributing points for Eastern merchandise for Germany, the Baltic, and England. In 1317 the Venetians organized a direct packet service with

²⁰² *Acts and Monuments*, iv. 706.

Flanders, and finally, the discoveries of Vasco-da-Gama, at the end of the fifteenth century, threw Italy completely out of the line of the Asiatic trade.

British industries seem to have sympathized with these changes, for weaving first assumed some importance under Edward I., although English cloth long remained inferior to continental. The next advance was contemporaneous with the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope. On July 8, 1497, Vasco-da-Gama sailed for Calicut, and in the previous year Henry VII. negotiated the "Magnus Intercursus," by which treaty the Merchant Adventurers succeeded for the first time in establishing themselves advantageously in Antwerp. Thenceforward England began to play a part in the industrial competition of Europe, but even then her progress was painfully slow. The accumulations of capital were small, and increased but moderately, and a full century later, when the Dutch easily raised £600,000 for their East India Company, only £72,000 were subscribed in London for the English venture.

Throughout the Middle Ages, while exchanges centred in North Italy, Great Britain hung on the outskirts of the commercial system of the world, and even at the beginning of the reign of Henry VIII. she could not compare, either in wealth, refinement, or organization, with such a kingdom as France.

The crown had not been the prize of the strongest in a struggle among equals, but had fallen to a soldier of a superior race, under whom no great nobility ever grew up. No baron in England corresponded with such princes as the dukes of Normandy and Burgundy, the counts of Champagne and Toulouse. Fortifications were on a puny scale; no strongholds like Pierrefonds or Vitré, Coucy or Carcassonne existed, and the Tower of London itself was insignificant beside the Château Gaillard, which Cœur-de-Lion planted on the Seine.

The population was scanty, and increased little. When Henry VIII. came to the throne in 1509, London may have had forty or fifty thousand inhabitants, York eleven thousand, Bristol nine or ten thousand, and Norwich six thousand.²⁰³ Paris at that time probably contained between three and four hundred thousand, and Milan and Ghent two hundred and fifty thousand each.

But although England was not a monied centre during the Middle Ages, and perhaps for that very reason, she felt with acuteness the financial pressure of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. She had little gold and silver, and gold and silver rose in relative value; she had few manufactures, and manufactures were comparatively prosperous; her wealth lay in her agricultural interests, and farm products were, for the most part, severely pinched.

Commenting on the prices between the end of the thirteenth century and the middle of the sixteenth, Mr. Rogers has observed:—

"Again, upon several articles of the first importance, there is a marked decline in the price from the average of 1261–1400 to that of 1401–1540. This would have been more conspicuous, if I had in my earlier volumes compared all prices from 1261 to 1350 with those of 1351–1400. But even over the whole range, every kind of grain, except wheat and peas, is dearer in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries than it is in the first hundred and forty years of the present period [1401–1582]; and had I taken the average price of wheat during the last fifty years of the fourteenth century, it would have been (6s. 1 ½d.) dearer than the average of 1401–1540 (5s. 11 ¾d.), heightened as this is by the dearness of the last thirteen years."²⁰⁴

The tables published by Mr. Rogers make it possible to form some idea of the strain to which the population of Great Britain was exposed, during the two hundred and fifty years which intervened between the crisis at the close of the thirteenth century, and the discovery of the mines of Potosi in 1545, which flooded the world with silver. Throughout this long interval an expanding

²⁰³ *Industrial and Commercial History of England*, Rogers, 48.

²⁰⁴ *Agriculture and Prices*, iv. 715.

A lack of precious metals combined with rapid centralization meant inflation was the only means the English had of avoiding bankruptcy. This tendency erupted into a wealth redistribution which evicted the yeomanry with large farming.

commerce unceasingly enlarged the demand for currency, while no adequate additions were made to the stock of the precious metals; the consequence was that their relative value rose, while the value of commodities declined, and this process had a tendency to debase the coinage.

The latter part of the Middle Ages was a time of rapid centralization, when the cost of administration grew from year to year but in proportion as the necessities of the government increased, the power of the people to pay taxes diminished, because the products which they sold brought less of the standard coin. To meet the deficit the same weight of metal had to be cut into more pieces, and thus by a continued inflation of the currency, general bankruptcy was averted. The various stages of pressure are pretty clearly marked by the records of the Mint.

Apparently the stringency which began in France about the end of the reign of Saint Louis, or somewhat later, did not affect England immediately, for prices do not seem to have reached their maximum until after 1290, and Edward I. only reduced the penny, in 1299, from 22.5 grains of silver to 22.25 grains. Thenceforward the decline, though spasmodic, on the whole tended to increase in severity from generation to generation. The long French wars, and the Black Death, produced a profound effect upon the domestic economy of the kingdom under Edward III.; and the Black Death, especially, seems to have had the unusual result of raising prices at a time of commercial collapse. This rise probably was due to the dearth of labour, for half the population of Europe is said to have perished, and, at all events, the crops often could not be reaped through lack of hands. More than a generation elapsed before normal conditions returned.

Immediately before the French war the penny lost two grains, and between 1346 and 1351, during the Black Death, it lost two grains and a quarter more, a depreciation of four grains and a half in fifty years; then for half a century an equilibrium was maintained. Under Henry IV. there was a sharp decline of three grains, equal to an inflation of seventeen per cent, and by 1470, under Henry VI., the penny fell to twelve grains. Then a period of stability followed, which lasted until just before the Reformation, when a crisis unparalleled in severity began, a crisis which probably was the proximate cause of the confiscation of the conventual estates.

In 1526 the penny suddenly lost a grain and a half, or about twelve and a half per cent, and then, when further reductions of weight would have made the piece too flimsy, the government resorted to adulteration. In 1542, a ten-grain penny was coined with one part in five of alloy; in 1544, the alloy had risen to one-half, and in 1545, two-thirds of the coin was base metal—a depreciation of more than seventy per cent in twenty years.

Meanwhile, though prices had fluctuated, the trend had been downward, and downward so strongly that it had not been fully counteracted by the reductions of bullion in the money. Rogers thought lath-nails perhaps the best gauge of prices, and in commenting on the years which preceded the Reformation, he remarked:—

“From 1461 to 1540, the average [of lath-nails] is very little higher than it was from 1261 to 1350, illustrating anew that significant decline in prices which characterizes the economical history of England during the eighty years 1461–1540.”²⁰⁵

Although wheat rose more than other grains, and is therefore an unfavourable standard of comparison, wheat yields substantially the same result. During the last forty years of the thirteenth century, the average price of the quarter was 5s. 10³/₄d., and for the last decade, 6s. 1d. For the first forty years of the sixteenth century the average was 6s. 10d. The penny of 1526, however, contained only about forty-seven per cent of the bullion of the penny of 1299. “The most remarkable fact in connection with the issue of base money by Henry VIII. is the singular identity of the average price of grain, especially wheat, during the first 140 years of my present period, with the last 140 of my first two volumes.”²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ *Agriculture and Prices*, iv. 454.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, iv. 200. For the average prices of grain see tables in vol. i. 245, and iv. 292.

The evicted yeomans became the caste with which the British Empire would colonize the world. From the Reformation onward, European civilization has been dominated by the economic men, and the priestly and warrior types have been swept away.

After a full examination of his tables, Rogers concluded that the great rise which made the prosperity of Elizabeth's reign did not begin until some "year between 1545 and 1549."²⁰⁷ This corresponds precisely with the discovery of Potosi in 1545, and that the advance was due to the new silver, and not to the debasement of the coinage, seems demonstrated by the fact that no fall took place when the currency was restored by Elizabeth, but, on the contrary, the upward movement continued until well into the next century.

Some idea may be formed from these figures of the contraction which prevailed during the years of the Reformation. In 1544, toward the close of Henry's reign, the penny held five grains of pure silver as against about 20.8 grains in 1299, and yet its purchasing power had not greatly varied. Bullion must therefore have had about four times the relative value in 1544 that it had two hundred and fifty years earlier, and, if the extremely debased issues of 1545 and later be taken as the measure, its value was much higher.

Had Potosi been discovered a generation earlier, the whole course of English development might have been modified, for it is not impossible that, without the aid of falling prices, the rising capitalistic class might have lacked the power to confiscate the monastic estates. As it was, the pressure continued until the catastrophe occurred, relic worship was swept away, the property of the nation was redistributed, and an impulsion was given to large farming which led to the rapid eviction of the yeomanry. As the yeomen were driven from their land, they roamed over the world, colonizing and conquering, from the Mississippi to the Ganges; building up, in the course of two hundred and fifty years, a centralization greater than that of Rome, and more absolute than that of Constantinople.

Changes so vast in the forms of competition necessarily changed the complexion of society. Men who had flourished in an age of decentralization and of imagination passed away, and were replaced by a new aristocracy. The soldier and the priest were overpowered; and, from the Reformation downward, the monied type possessed the world.

Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, was the ideal of this type, and he was accordingly the Englishman who rose highest during the convulsion of the Reformation. He was a perfect commercial adventurer, and Chapuys, the ambassador of Charles V. at London, thus described his origin to his master:—

"Cromwell is the son of a poor farrier, who lived in a little village a league and a half from here, and is buried in the parish graveyard. His uncle, father of the cousin whom he has already made rich, was cook of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. Cromwell was ill-behaved when young, and after an imprisonment was forced to leave the country. He went to Flanders, Rome, and elsewhere in Italy. When he returned he married the daughter of a shepherd, and served in his house; he then became a solicitor."²⁰⁸

The trouble which drove him abroad seems to have been with his father, and he probably started on his travels about 1504. He led a dissolute and vagabond life, served as a mercenary in Italy, "was wild and youthful, ... as he himself was wont oftentimes to declare unto Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury; showing what a ruffian he was in his young days ... also what a great doer he was with Geffery Chambers in publishing and setting forth the pardons of Boston everywhere in churches as he went."²⁰⁹

These "pardons" were indulgences he succeeded in obtaining from the pope for the town of Boston, which he peddled about the country as he went. He served as a clerk in the counting house of the Merchant Adventurers at Antwerp, and also appears to have filled some such position with a

²⁰⁷ *Agriculture and Prices*, iv. 734.

²⁰⁸ Chapuys to Granville, *Cal.* ix. No. 862. The State Papers edited by Messrs. Brewer and Gairdner are referred to by the word "Cal."

²⁰⁹ *Acts and Monuments*, v. 365.

The crowning triumph of the monied class was the establishment of a permanent police. The Reformation swept away the old imaginative civilization of the Middle Ages. The new capitalists needed to rid themselves of their internal opposition, namely, the warrior class.

of competition slowly changed, capital accumulated, until, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, wealth reached the point where it could lay the foundation of the paid police, the crowning triumph of the monied class.

The Reformation was the victory of this class over the archaic type of man, and with the Reformation the old imaginative civilization passed away; but with all its power the monied intellect has certain weaknesses, and neither in ancient Rome nor modern England have capitalists been soldiers. The Tudor aristocracy was not a martial caste. Lacking physical force, this new nobility feared the ancient farming population, whom they slowly exterminated; and they feared them with reason, for from among the yeomanry Cromwell drew his Ironsides. Therefore one of the chief preoccupations of the Tudor nobility was to devise means to hold this dangerous element in check, and as it could not organize an army, it utilized the Church. The land-owners had other purposes for the priesthood than simply to rob it; they had also to enslave it, and Henry's title to greatness lies in his having attained both ends.

He not only plundered as no other man has plundered, but he succeeded in assuming the functions of God's high priest, and becoming Christ's vicar upon earth. Upon this point there can be no difference of opinion; not only are the formularies of the Church of England clear, but Anglicans themselves admit it. Macaulay was of Henry's communion; Macaulay is an historian whose opinion on such a point commands respect, and Macaulay has summed up the position of Henry VIII. as the head of the capitalistic hierarchy in these words:—

“What Henry and his favourite counsellors meant, at one time, by the supremacy, was certainly nothing less than the whole power of the keys. The king was to be the pope of his kingdom, the vicar of God, the expositor of Catholic verity, the channel of sacramental graces. He arrogated to himself the right of deciding dogmatically what was orthodox doctrine and what was heresy, of drawing up and imposing confessions of faith, and of giving religious instruction to his people.

“He proclaimed that all jurisdiction, spiritual as well as temporal, was derived from him alone, and that it was in his power to confer episcopal authority, and to take it away....

“According to this system, as expounded by Cranmer, the king was the spiritual as well as the temporal chief of the nation. In both capacities his Highness must have lieutenants. As he appointed civil officers to keep his seal, to collect his revenues, and to dispense justice in his name, so he appointed divines of various ranks to preach the gospel, and to administer the sacraments. It was unnecessary that there should be any imposition of hands. The king—such was the opinion of Cranmer given in the plainest words,—might, in virtue of authority derived from God, make a priest; and the priest so made needed no ordination whatever.”²³⁹

Under the Tudors commerce and industry were yet in their infancy. Great Britain still remained substantially agricultural, and capital primarily sought investment in land. The enclosure of the commons and the confiscations of the monastic estates, together formed a gigantic real estate speculation, with which faith had little to do, and which was possible only because force began to express itself through another type of intellect than that which had been able to defend its property during an imaginative age.

The commercial community always demanded cheap religion. Under Henry they inclined toward Zwingli, under Elizabeth toward Calvin, under Charles they were Presbyterian; the gentry, on the contrary, were by nature conservative, and favoured orthodoxy as far as their interest in Church plunder permitted them. Henry and Norfolk stood at the head of this class; Norfolk's conversion to Protestantism has been explained by Chapuys, and Henry remained a bigot to his death.

²³⁹ *History of England*, chap. 1.

The capitalist class had a lingering enemy in the wealthy Catholic church, and so they would need to seize their land and wealth. Thomas Cromwell, representative of monied interests, was able to act with energy as secretary of state to Henry VIII, crushing his enemies with money

"Shortly before he died, when about to communicate, as he always did, under one kind, he rose up from his chair, and fell on his knees to adore the body of our Lord. The Zwinglians who were present said that his majesty, by reason of his bodily weakness, might make his communion sitting in his chair. The king's answer was, 'If I could throw myself down, not only on the ground, but under the ground, I should not then think that I gave honour enough to the most Holy Sacrament.'"²⁴⁰

As to Norfolk, Chapuys has left his opinion in very plain words:—

"He [Norfolk] has a good deal changed his tune, for it was he alone [in] the Court who showed himself the best of Catholics, and who favoured most the authority of the pope; but he must act in this way not to lose his remaining influence, which apparently does not extend much further than Cromwell wishes."²⁴¹

To attain their end, the rising class, at whose head these two men stood, had to doubly despoil the Church in whose dogmas they believed. They confiscated her lands to enrich themselves, and they suppressed her revenues to buy the support of the traders. Finally, their lack of physical force suggested to them the expedient of seizing on the ecclesiastical organization and filling it with their servants, who should teach the people the religious duty of submission to an authority which distrusted an appeal to arms.

As Henry and Norfolk represented the landed magnates, so Cromwell represented the mercantile community; and when the alliance between these two monied interests had been perfected, by the appointment of Cromwell as secretary of state, some time previous to April, 1534, events moved with precision and rapidity. They crowned Anne Boleyn on June 1, 1533; in July the breach between the king and pope became irreparable; in November, 1534, Parliament declared Henry "Supreme Head" of the Church; and in the following winter the whole administration, both civil and ecclesiastical, was concentrated in Cromwell's hands. He acted with astonishing energy.

In the autumn of 1535 he set on foot a visitation, preparatory to the dissolution of the convents, and Parliament passed the bill for suppression the next February. Cromwell also, as vicar general, presided over the convocation of Canterbury, which made the first reformation of faith. This convocation met in June, 1536, only shortly before the Pilgrimage of Grace, and, under the fear of violence, Henry and the conservatives were reduced to silence. The evangelical influence for the moment held control, and the "Ten Articles," the foundation of the "Thirty-nine Articles," together with the "Institution of a Christian Man," which were produced, were a great departure from orthodoxy.

In the fourth article, the dogma of the "Supper" was made broad enough to include Lutherans, and in the sixth, image worship was condemned. On the other hand, "Justification by Faith" began to assume the importance it must always hold in all really Protestant confessions. In one of his homilies Cranmer, at a later time, showed the comparative futility of good works:—

"A man must needs be nourished by good works; but first he must have faith. He that doeth good deeds, yet without faith, he hath no life. I can shew a man that by faith without works lived, and came to heaven: but without faith never man had life."²⁴²

"Never had the Jews, in their most blindness, so many pilgrimages unto images ... as hath been used in our time.... Keeping in divers places, as it were marts or markets of merits; being full of their holy relics, images, shrines, and works of overflowing abundance ready to be sold.... Holy cowls, holy girdles, holy pardons, heads, holy shoes, holy rules, and all full of holiness.... Which were so esteemed and abused to the great prejudice of God's

²⁴⁰ *Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism*, Sander, trans. by Lewis, 161.

²⁴¹ Chapuys to Charles, *Cal. vi.* No. 1510, date Dec., 1533.

²⁴² *The Homilies*, Corrie, 49.

Landed interests would overpower the mercantiles, and Henry VIII would flip once more to the Catholics to purge Cromwell, who he now saw his enemy. Henry VIII played both religious factions against one another to further centralize his power, both ecclesiastically and temporally.

glory and commandments, that they were made most high and most holy things, whereby to attain to the everlasting life, or remission of sin."²⁴³

The anti-sacerdotal movement under Henry VIII. culminated in 1536 and 1537, when the country rebelled, and the land-owners were in need of help from the towns. As long as the latter felt uncertain of their grip on Church lands, the radical mercantile interest was permitted to mould doctrine; but when Norfolk had triumphed in the north, and Aske and Darcy had been executed, a reaction set in. In November, 1538, Lambert was burned for denying transubstantiation, and in 1539 the chapter in the statute book²⁴⁴ which followed that providing for the suppression of the mitred abbeys, re-established auricular confession, communion in one kind, private masses, and, in a word, strict orthodoxy, saving in the single tenet of the royal supremacy. To have conceded that would have endangered property. Twelve months later the landed magnates felt strong enough to discard the tradesmen; the alliance which had carried through the Reformation was dissolved, and Cromwell was beheaded.

Never did pope enforce the worship of the miracle more savagely than did Henry. By the act of the "Six Articles," the denial of the miracle of the mass was punished by burning and forfeiture of goods, without the privilege of abjuration. Purity of faith could not have been the ideal of reformers.

Until quite recently, Protestants have accepted the tradition that the convents of England were suppressed by the revolt of a people, outraged by the disclosure of abominations perpetrated under the shelter of monasticism. Within a few years, the publication of the British archives has thrown a new and sombre light upon the Reformation. They seem to prove, beyond a doubt, that as Philip dealt with the Templars, so did Henry deal with all the religious orders of his realm.

In 1533 Henry's position was desperate. He confronted not only the pope and the emperor, but all that remained of the old feudal society, and all that survived of the decaying imaginative age. Nothing could resist this combination save the rising power of centralized capital, and Henry therefore had to become the mouthpiece of the men who gave expression to this force.

He needed money, and money in abundance, and Cromwell rose to a practical dictatorship because he was fittest to provide it. On all that relates to Essex, Foxe is an undoubted authority, and Foxe did not hesitate to attribute to Cromwell Henry's policy at this crisis:—

"For so it pleased Almighty God, by means of the said Lord Cromwell, to induce the king to suppress first the chantries, then the friars' houses and small monasteries, till, at length, all the abbeys in England, both great and less, were utterly overthrown and plucked up by the roots....

"Of how great laud and praise this man was worthy, and what courage and stoutness was in him, it may hereby evidently appear unto all men, that he alone, through the singular dexterity of his wit and counsel, brought to pass that, which, even unto this day no prince or king, throughout all Europe, dare or can bring to pass. For whereas Brittain alone, of all other nations, is and hath been, of her own proper nature, most superstitious; this Cromwell, being born of a common or base stock, through a divine method or policy of wit and reason received, suffered, deluded, brake off, and repressed, all the policies, trains, malice, and hatred of friars, monks, religious men, and priests, of which sort there was a great rabble in England."²⁴⁵

Cromwell's strength lay in his superiority to those scruples of truth and honour which hamper feeblers. He did what circumstances demanded. His object, like Philip's, was to blacken his victims that he might destroy them, and, to gather the evidence, he chose instruments adapted to the work. To have used others would have demonstrated himself unfit. Mr. Gairdner has remarked in his

²⁴³ *The Homilies*, Corrie, 56, 58.

²⁴⁴ 31 Henry VIII., c. 14.

²⁴⁵ *Acts and Monuments*, v. 368, 369.

The attack of Cromwell's hirelings resembled the onslaught of an invading army. The convents fared like conquered towns; the shrines were stripped and the booty heaped on carts, as at the sack of Constantinople. Churches were desecrated, windows broken, the roofs stripped of lead, the bells melted, the walls sold for quarries. Europe overflowed with vestments and altar ornaments, while the libraries were destroyed. Toward the end of 1539 Legh reached Durham, and the purification of the sanctuary of Saint Cuthbert may be taken as an example of the universal spoliation:—

“After the spoil of his ornaments and jewels, coming nearer to his sacred body, thinking to have found nothing but dust and bones, and finding the chest that he did lie in, very strongly bound with iron, then the goldsmith did take a great forge-hammer of a smith, and did break the said chest open.

“And when they had opened the chest, they found him lying whole, uncorrupt, with his face bare, and his beard as it had been a fortnight's growth, and all his vestments upon him, as he was accustomed to say mass withall, and his meet wand of gold lying beside him.

“Then, when the goldsmith did perceive that he had broken one of his legs, when he did break open the chest, he was very sorry for it and did cry, ‘Alas, I have broken one of his legs.’

“Then Dr. Henley [one of the commissioners] hearing him say so, did call upon him, and did bid him cast down his bones.”²⁶⁰

By the statute of 1536, only those convents were suppressed which were worth less than £200 a year, or which, within twelve months after the passage of the act, should be granted to the king by the abbot. This legislation spared the mitred abbeys, and as long as any conventual property remained undivided, the land-owners kept Cromwell in office, not feeling, perhaps, quite sure of their capacity to succeed alone.

In 1539 it had proved impossible to force the three great abbots of Glastonbury, Reading, and Colchester into a surrender to the Crown, and accordingly Cromwell devised an act to vest in Henry such conventual lands as should be forfeited through attainder. Then he indicted the abbots for treason, and thus sought to bring the estates they represented constructively within the statute. The fate of Abbot Whiting, whom Layton incautiously praised, will do for all. He was eighty when he died, and his martyrdom is unusually interesting, as it laid the fortune of the great house of Bedford, one of the most splendid of modern dukedoms.

The commissioners came unexpectedly, and found the old monk at a grange at Sharpham, about a mile from Glastonbury. On September 19 they apprehended him, searched his apartment, and finding nothing likely to be of service, sent him up to London for Cromwell to deal with, though he was “very weak and sickly.” Cromwell lodged him in the Tower, and examined him, apparently in a purely perfunctory fashion, for the government had decided on its policy. The secretary of state simply jotted down a memorandum to see “that the evidence be well sorted and the indictments well drawn,” and left the details of the murder to John Russell, a man thoroughly to be trusted. Cromwell's only anxiety was about the indictments, and he had “the king's learned counsel” with him “all day” discussing the matter. Finally they decided, between them, that it would be better to proceed at Glaston, and Whiting was sent to Somersetshire to be dealt with by the progenitor of a long line of opulent Whig landlords.

In superintending the trial, Russell showed an energy and judgment which won its reward. On the 14th of November, when the invalid reached Wells, he wrote that he had provided for him “as worshipful a jury as was ever charged here these many years. And there was never seen in these parts so great appearance as were here at this present time, and never better willing to serve the king.”²⁶¹ Russell wasted no time. He arranged for the trial one day and the execution the next. “The

²⁶⁰ *Rites of Durham*, Surtees Soc., 86.

²⁶¹ Wright, 260.

Abbot of Glastonbury was arraigned, and the next day put to execution with two other of his monks, for the robbing of Glastonbury church."²⁶²

He had the old man bound on a hurdle and dragged to the top of Tor Hill, "but ... he would confess no more gold nor silver, nor any other thing more than he did before your Lordship in the Tower.... And thereupon took his death very patiently, and his head and body bestowed in like manner as I certified your lordship in my last letter."²⁶³ "One quarter standeth at Wells, another at Bath, and at Ilchester and Bridgewater the rest. And his head upon the abbey gate at Glaston."²⁶⁴

On the 17th of the following April, Henry created Cromwell Earl of Essex, preparatory to slaughtering him. Within two months the new earl was arrested by his bitterest enemy, the Duke of Norfolk, the chief of the landed interest; on the 28th of July he lost his head on Tower Hill, and his colossal fortune fed the men who had divided the body of Whiting.

²⁶² Ellis, 1st Series, ii. 99.

²⁶³ Wright, 261, 262.

²⁶⁴ Ellis, 1st Series, ii. 99.

The tax upon the farming population of Medieval England was their service in the military. The decentralization of the farmers, and their self sufficiency, meant that there were few taxes to be had for rulers.

CHAPTER IX THE EVICTION OF THE YEOMEN

Like primitive Rome, England, during the Middle Ages, had an unusually homogeneous population of farmers, who made a remarkable infantry. Not that the cavalry was defective; on the contrary, from top to bottom of society, every man was a soldier, and the aristocracy had excellent fighting qualities. Many of the kings, like Cœur-de-Lion, Edward III., and Henry V., ranked among the ablest commanders of their day; the Black Prince has always been a hero of chivalry; and earls and barons could be named by the score who were famous in the Hundred Years' War.

Yet, although the English knights were a martial body, there is nothing to show that, on the whole, they surpassed the French. The English infantry won Crécy and Poitiers, and this infantry, which was long the terror of Europe, was recruited from among the small farmers who flourished in Great Britain until they were exterminated by the advance of civilization.

244As long as the individual could at all withstand the attack of the centralized mass of society, England remained a hot-bed for breeding this species of man. A mediæval king had no means of collecting a regular revenue by taxation; he was only the chief of the free-men, and his estates were supposed to suffice for his expenditure. The revenue the land yielded consisted of men, not money, and to obtain men, the sovereign granted his domains to his nearest friends, who, in their turn, cut their manors into as many farms as possible, and each farmer paid his rent with his body.

A baron's strength lay in the band of spears which followed his banner, and therefore he subdivided his acres as much as possible, having no great need of money. Himself a farmer, he cultivated enough of his fief to supply his wants, to provide his table, and to furnish his castle, but, beyond this, all he kept to himself was loss. Under such a system money contracts played a small part, and economic competition was unknown.

The tenants were free-men, whose estates passed from father to son by a fixed tenure; no one could underbid them with their landlord, and no capitalist could ruin them by depressing wages, for the serfs formed the basis of society, and these serfs were likewise land-owners. In theory, the villains may have held at will; but in fact they were probably the descendants, or at least the representatives, of the *coloni* of the Empire, and a base tenure could be proved by the roll of the manorial court. Thus even the weakest were protected by custom, and there was no competition in the labour market.

245The manor was the social unit, and, as the country was sparsely settled, waste spaces divided the manors from each other, and these wastes came to be considered as commons appurtenant to the domain in which the tenants of the manor had vested rights. The extent of these rights varied from generation to generation, but substantially they amounted to a privilege of pasture, fuel, or the like; aids which, though unimportant to large property owners, were vital when the margin of income was narrow.

During the old imaginative age, before centralization gathered headway, little inducement existed to pilfer these domains, since there was room in plenty, and the population increased slowly, if at all. The moment the form of competition changed, these conditions were reversed. Precisely when a money rent became a more potent force than armed men, may be hard to determine, but certainly that time had come when Henry VIII. mounted the throne, for then capitalistic farming was on the increase, and speculation in real estate already caused sharp distress. At that time the establishment of a police had destroyed the value of the retainer, and competitive rents had generally supplanted military tenures. Instead of tending to subdivide, as in an age of decentralization, land consolidated in the hands of the economically strong, and capitalists systematically enlarged their estates by enclosing the commons, and depriving the yeomen of their immemorial rights.

By the time of Henry VIII the capitalists were buying up land and closing off the commons

The sixteenth-century landlords were a type quite distinct from the ancient feudal gentry. As a class they were gifted with the economic, and not with the martial instinct, and they thrived on competition. Their strength lay in their power of absorbing the property of their weaker neighbours under the protection of an overpowering police.

246 Everything tended to accelerate consolidation, especially the rise in the value of money. While, even with the debasement of the coin, the price of cereals did not advance, the growth of manufactures had caused wool to double in value. "We need not therefore be surprised at finding that the temptation to sheep-farming was almost irresistible, and that statute after statute failed to arrest the tendency."²⁶⁵ The conversion of arable land into pasture led, of course, to wholesale eviction, and by 1515 the suffering had become so acute that details were given in acts of Parliament. Places where two hundred persons had lived, by growing corn and grain, were left desolate, the houses had decayed, and the churches fallen into ruin.²⁶⁶ The language of these statutes proves that the descriptions of contemporaries were not exaggerated.

"For I myself know many townes and villages sore decayed, for yt where as in times past there wer in some town an hundred householdes there remain not now thirty; in some fifty, ther are not now ten; yea (which is more to be lamented) I knowe townes so wholly decayed, that there is neyther sticke nor stone standing as they use to say.

247 "Where many men had good lyuings, and mayntained hospitality, able at times to helpe the kyng in his warres, and to susteyne other charges, able also to helpe their pore neighbours, and vertuously to bring up theyr children in Godly letters and good scyences, nowe sheepe and conies deuoure altogether, no man inhabiting the aforesayed places. Those beastes which were created of God for the nourishment of man doe nowe deuoure man.... And the cause of all thys wretchednesse and beggery in the common weale are the gredy Gentylnen, whyche are shepemongers and grasyars. Whyle they study for their owne priuate commoditie, the common weale is lyke to decay. Since they began to be shepe maysters and feders of cattell, we neyther had vyttayle nor cloth of any reasonable pryce. No meruayle, for these forstallars of the market, as they use to saye, haue gotten all thynges so into theyr handes, that the poore man muste eyther bye it at their pryce, or else miserably starue for hongar, and wretchedly dye for colde."²⁶⁷

The reduction of the acreage in tillage must have lessened the crop of the cereals, and accounts for their slight rise in value during the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless this rise gave the farmer no relief, as, under competition, rents advanced faster than prices, and in the generation which reformed the Church, the misery of yeomen had become extreme. In 1549 Latimer preached a sermon, which contains a passage often quoted, but always interesting:—

"Furthermore, if the king's honour, as some men say, standeth in the great multitude of people; then these graziers, inclosers, and rent-rearers, are hinderers of the king's honour. For where as have been a great many householders and inhabitants, there is now but a shepherd and his dog....

248 "My father was yeoman, and had no lands of his own, only he had a farm of three or four pound by year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk for a hundred sheep; and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able, and did find the king a harness, with himself and his horse, while he came to the place that he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness when he went unto Blackheath field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now.

²⁶⁵ *Agriculture and Prices*, iv. 64.

²⁶⁶ 6 Henry VIII., c. 5; 7 Henry VIII., c. 1.

²⁶⁷ *Jewel of Joy*, Becon. Also *England in the Reign of Henry VIII.*, Early Eng. Text Soc., Extra Ser., No. xxxii. p. 75.

The acceleration of this trend meant that landlords would buy up land from their weaker, poorer neighbors. The commons was used for sheep farming, as wool had doubled in value, and where towns had once been, sheep pastures were erected, leading to an eviction of the yeomen.

The now vagrant yeomen were beggars in the streets, and Parliament attempted to kill the unemployed to solve homelessness. Men were turned into slaves, and in 1549 an insurrection engulfed England in which the homeless peasants attempted to overthrow their landlords.

"He married my sisters with five pound, or twenty nobles apiece; so that he brought them up in godliness and fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor. And all this he did of the said farm, where he that now hath it payeth sixteen pound by year, or more, and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, or give a cup of drink to the poor."²⁶⁸

The small proprietor suffered doubly: he had to meet the competition of large estates, and to endure the curtailment of his resources through the enclosure of the commons. The effect was to pauperize the yeomanry and lesser gentry, and before the Reformation the homeless poor had so multiplied that, in 1530, Parliament passed the first of a series of vagrant acts.²⁶⁹ At the outset the remedy applied was comparatively mild, for able-bodied mendicants were only to be whipped until they were bloody, returned to their domicile, and there whipped until they put themselves to labour. As no labour was supplied, the legislation failed, and in 1537 the emptying of the convents brought matters to a climax. Meanwhile Parliament tried the experiment of killing off the unemployed; by the second act vagrants were first mutilated and then hanged as felons.²⁷⁰

In 1547, when Edward VI. was crowned, the great crisis had reached its height. The silver of Potosi had not yet brought relief, the currency was in chaos, labour was disorganized, and the nation seethed with the discontent which broke out two years later in 249 rebellion. The land-owners held absolute power, and before they yielded to the burden of feeding the starving, they seriously addressed themselves to the task of extermination. The preamble of the third act stated that, in spite of the "great travel" and "godly statutes" of Parliament, pauperism had not diminished, therefore any vagrant brought before two justices was to be adjudged the slave of his captor for two years. He might be compelled to work by beating, chaining, or otherwise, be fed on bread and water, or refuse meat, and confined by a ring of iron about his neck, arms or legs. For his first attempt at escape, his slavery became perpetual, for his second, he was hanged.²⁷¹

Even as late as 1591, in the midst of the great expansion which brought prosperity to all Europe, and when the monks and nuns, cast adrift by the suppression of the convents, must have mostly died, beggars so swarmed that at the funeral of the Earl of Shrewsbury "there were by the report of such as served the dole unto them, the number of 8000. And they thought that there were almost as many more that could not be served, through their unruiness. Yea, the press was so great that divers were slain and many hurt. And further it is reported of credible persons, that well estimated the number of all the said beggars, that they thought there were about 20,000." It was conjectured "that all the said poor people were abiding and dwelling within thirty miles' compass of Sheffield."²⁷²

In 1549, just as the tide turned, insurrection blazed out all over England. In the west a pitched battle was fought between the peasantry and foreign mercenaries, and Exeter was relieved only after a long siege. In Norfolk the yeomen, led by one Kett, controlled a large district for a considerable time. They arrested the unpopular landlords, threw open the commons they had appropriated, and ransacked the manor houses to pay indemnities to evicted farmers. When attacked, they fought stubbornly, and stormed Norwich twice.

Strype described "these mutineers" as "certain poor men that sought to have their commons again, by force and power taken from them; and that a regulation be made according to law of arable lands turned into pasture."²⁷³

Cranmer understood the situation perfectly, and though a consummate courtier, and himself a creation of the capitalistic revolution, spoke in this way of his patrons:—

²⁶⁸ *First Sermon before Edward VI. Sermons of Bishop Latimer*, ed. of Parker Soc., 100, 101.

²⁶⁹ 22 Henry VIII., c. 12.

²⁷⁰ 27 Henry VIII., c. 25.

²⁷¹ 1 Edward VI., c. 3.

²⁷² *Brit. Mus.*, Cole MS. xii. 41. Cited in *Henry VIII. and the English Monasteries*, Gasquet, ii. 514, note.

²⁷³ *Ecl. Mem.*, ii. pt. 1, 260.

Though these revolts did not break out into open civil war, they did scare the landed aristocracy into abandoning their policy of killing the homeless, and now they attempted to help the starving masses. Puritanism was a revolt against this unrestricted economic competition.

“And they complain much of rich men and gentlemen, saying, that they take the commons from the poor, that they raise the prices of all manner of things, that they rule the poverty, and oppress them at their pleasure....

251“And although here I seem only to speak against these unlawful assemblers, yet I cannot allow those, but I must needs threaten everlasting damnation unto them, whether they be gentlemen or whatsoever they be, which never cease to purchase and join house to house, and land to land, as though they alone ought to possess and inhabit the earth.”²⁷⁴

Revolt against the pressure of this unrestricted economic competition took the form of Puritanism, of resistance to the religious organization controlled by capital, and even in Cranmer's time, the attitude of the descendants of the men who formed the line at Poitiers and Crécy was so ominous that Anglican bishops took alarm.

“It is reported that there be many among these unlawful assemblies that pretend knowledge of the gospel, and will needs be called gospellers.... But now I will go further to speak somewhat of the great hatred which divers of these seditious persons do bear against the gentlemen; which hatred in many is so outrageous, that they desire nothing more than the spoil, ruin, and destruction of them that be rich and wealthy.”²⁷⁵

Somerset, who owed his elevation to the accident of being the brother of Jane Seymour, proved unequal to the crisis of 1449, and was supplanted by John Dudley, now better remembered as Duke of Northumberland. Dudley was the strongest member of the new aristocracy. His father, Edmund Dudley, had been the celebrated lawyer who rose to eminence as the extortioner of Henry VII., and whom Henry VIII. executed, as an act of popularity, on his accession. John, beside inheriting his father's financial ability, had a certain aptitude for war, and undoubted courage; accordingly he rose rapidly. He and Cromwell understood each other; he flattered Cromwell, and Cromwell lent him money.²⁷⁶ Strype has intimated that Dudley had strong motives for resisting the restoration of the commons.²⁷⁷

In 1547 he was created Earl of Warwick, and in 1549 suppressed Kett's rebellion. This military success brought him to the head of the State; he thrust Somerset aside, and took the title of Duke of Northumberland. His son was equally distinguished. He became the favourite of Queen Elizabeth, who created him Earl of Leicester; but, though an expert courtier, he was one of the most incompetent generals whom even the Tudor landed aristocracy ever put in the field.

The disturbances of the reign of Edward VI. did not ripen into revolution, probably because of the relief given by rising prices after 1550; but, though they fell short of actual civil war, they were sufficiently formidable to terrify the aristocracy into abandoning their policy of killing off the surplus population. In 1552 the first statute was passed²⁷⁸ looking toward the systematic relief of paupers. Small farmers prospered greatly after 1660, for prices rose strongly, very much more strongly than rents; nor was it until after the beginning of the seventeenth century, when rents again began to advance, that the yeomanry once more grew restive. Cromwell raised his Ironsides from among the great-grandchildren of the men who stormed Norwich with Kett.

“I had a very worthy friend then; and he was a very noble person, and I know his memory is very grateful to all,—Mr. John Hampden. At my first going out into this engagement, I saw our men were beaten at every hand. I did indeed; and desired him that he would make some additions to my Lord Essex's army, of some new regiments; and I told him I would be serviceable to him in bringing such men in as I thought had a spirit that would do something in the work. This is very true that I tell you; God knows I lie not. ‘Your troops,’

²⁷⁴ Sermon on Rebellion, Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 194–6.

²⁷⁵ Sermon on Rebellion, Cranmer, *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters*, 195, 196.

²⁷⁶ *Cal.* ix. No. 193.

²⁷⁷ *Ecl. Mem.*, ii. pt. 1, 152.

²⁷⁸ 5 and 6 Edw. VI., c. 2.

The English population, once homogenous, was graduated into distinct classes - nobles, merchants, warriors, and laborers. The homeless farmers, now merchants and warriors, looked to expand outside of England, and these men formed the backbone of Britain's future colonial empire.

said I, 'are most of them old decayed serving-men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and,' said I, 'their troops are gentlemen's sons, younger sons and persons of quality: do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen, that have honour and courage and resolution in them?' ... Truly I did tell him; 'You must get men of a spirit: ... a spirit that is likely to go on as far as gentlemen will go;—or else you will be beaten still....'

"He was a wise and worthy person; and he did think that I talked a good notion, but an impracticable one. Truly I told him I could do somewhat in it, ... and truly I must needs say this to you, ... I raised such men as had the fear of God before them, as made some conscience of what they did; and from that day forward, I must say to you, they were never beaten, and wherever they were engaged against the enemy, they beat continually."²⁷⁹

Thus, by degrees, the pressure of intensifying centralization split the old homogeneous population of England into classes, graduated according to their economic capacity. Those without the necessary instinct sank into agricultural day labourers, whose lot, on the whole, has probably been somewhat worse than that of ordinary slaves. The gifted, like the Howards, the Dudleys, the Cecils, and the Boleyns, rose to be rich nobles and masters of the State. Between the two accumulated a mass of bold and needy adventurers, who were destined finally not only to dominate England, but to shape the destinies of the world.

One section of these, the shrewder and less venturesome, gravitated to the towns, and grew rich as merchants, like the founder of the Osborn family, whose descendant became Duke of Leeds; or like the celebrated Josiah Child, who, in the reign of William III., controlled the whole eastern trade of the kingdom. The less astute and the more martial took to the sea, and as slavers, pirates, and conquerors, built up England's colonial empire, and established her maritime supremacy. Of this class were Drake and Blake, Hawkins, Raleigh, and Clive.

For several hundred years after the Norman conquest, Englishmen showed little taste for the ocean, probably because sufficient outlet for their energies existed on land. In the Middle Ages the commerce of the island was mostly engrossed by the Merchants of the Steelyard, an offshoot of the Hanseatic league; while the great explorers of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were usually Italians or Portuguese; men like Columbus, Vespucci, Vasco-da-Gama, or Magellan. This state of things lasted, however, only until economic competition began to ruin the small farmers, and then the hardiest and boldest race of Europe were cast adrift, and forced to seek their fortunes in strange lands.

255 For the soldier or the adventurer, there was no opening in England after the battle of Flodden. A peaceful and inert bourgeoisie more and more supplanted the ancient martial baronage; their representatives shrank from campaigns like those of Richard I., the Edwards, and Henry V., and therefore, for the evicted farmer, there was nothing but the far-off continents of America and Asia, and to these he directed his steps.

The lives of the admirals tell the tale on every page. Drake's history is now known. His family belonged to the lesser Devon gentry, but fallen so low that his father gladly apprenticed him as ship's boy on a channel coaster, a life of almost intolerable hardship. From this humble beginning he fought his way, by dint of courage and genius, to be one of England's three greatest seamen; and Blake and Nelson, the other two, were of the same blood.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert was of the same west country stock as Drake; Frobisher was a poor Yorkshire man, and Sir Walter Raleigh came from a ruined house. No less than five knightly branches of Raleigh's family once thrived together in the western counties; but disaster came with the Tudors, and Walter's father fell into trouble through his Puritanism. Walter himself early had to face the world, and carved out his fortune with his sword. He served in France in the religious wars;

²⁷⁹ *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, Carlyle, Speech XI.

The landed capitalists feared the martial class, as they were the only ones capable of overthrowing them. The capitalists made sure to restrict and weaken the martial men of Britain when they could. These landed capitalists would control England until 1688.

afterward, perhaps, in Flanders; then, through Gilbert, he obtained a commission in Ireland, but finally drifted to Elizabeth's court, where he took to buccaneering, and conceived the idea of colonizing America.

256A profound gulf separated these adventurers from the landed capitalists, for they were of an extreme martial type; a type hated and feared by the nobility. With the exception of the years of the Commonwealth, the landlords controlled England from the Reformation to the revolution of 1688, a period of one hundred and fifty years, and, during that long interval, there is little risk in asserting that the aristocracy did not produce a single soldier or sailor of more than average capacity. The difference between the royal and the parliamentary armies was as great as though they had been recruited from different races. Charles had not a single officer of merit, while it is doubtful if any force has ever been better led than the troops organized by Cromwell.

Men like Drake, Blake, and Cromwell were among the most terrible warriors of the world, and they were distrusted and feared by an oligarchy which felt instinctively its inferiority in arms. Therefore, in Elizabeth's reign, politicians like the Cecils took care that the great seamen should have no voice in public affairs. And though these men defeated the Armada, and though England owed more to them than to all the rest of her population put together, not one reached the peerage, or was treated with confidence and esteem. Drake's fate shows what awaited them. Like all his class, Drake was hot for war with Spain, and from time to time he was unchained, when fighting could not be averted; but his policy was rejected, his operations more nearly resembled those of a pirate than of an admiral, and when he died, he died in something like disgrace.

257The aristocracy even made the false position in which they placed their sailors a source of profit, for they forced them to buy pardon for their victories by surrendering the treasure they had won with their blood. Fortescue actually had to interfere to defend Raleigh and Hawkins from Elizabeth's rapacity. In 1592 Borough sailed in command of a squadron fitted out by the two latter, with some contribution from the queen and the city of London. Borough captured the carack, the *Madre-de-Dios*, whose pepper alone Burleigh estimated at £102,000. The cargo proved worth £141,000, and of this Elizabeth's share, according to the rule of distribution in use, amounted to one-tenth, or £14,000. She demanded £80,000, and allowed Raleigh and Hawkins, who had spent £34,000, only £36,000. Raleigh bitterly contrasted the difference made between himself a soldier, and a peer, or a London speculator. "I was the cause that all this came to the Queen, and that the King of Spaine spent 300,000^{li} the last yere.... I that adventured all my estate, lose of my principall.... I tooke all the care and paines; ... they only sate still ... for which double is given to them, and less then mine own to me."²⁸⁰

258Raleigh was so brave he could not comprehend that his talent was his peril. He fancied his capacity for war would bring him fame and fortune, and it led him to the block. While Elizabeth lived, the admiration of the woman for the hero probably saved him, but he never even entered the Privy Council, and of real power he had none. The sovereign the oligarchy chose was James, and James imprisoned and then slew him. Nor was Raleigh's fate peculiar, for, through timidity, the Cavaliers conceived an almost equal hate of many soldiers. They dug up the bones of Cromwell, they tried to murder William III., and they dragged down Marlborough in the midst of victory. Such were the new classes into which economic competition divided the people of England during the sixteenth century, and the Reformation was only one among many of the effects of this profound social revolution.

In the first fifty-three years of the sixteenth century, England passed through two distinct phases of ecclesiastical reform; the earlier, under Henry, when the conventual property was appropriated by the rising aristocracy; the later, under Edward, when portions of the secular endowments were also seized. Each period of spoliation was accompanied by innovations in doctrine, and each was followed by a reaction, the final one, under Mary, taking the form of reconciliation with Rome.

²⁸⁰ Raleigh to Burleigh, *Life of Sir Walter Raleigh*, Edwards, ii. 76, letter xxxiv.

The old social fabric had been swept away by centralization. The old Catholic priesthood class were now subservient to the state, and preached obedience via Divine Right of Kings. The guild system was overturned by economic competition.

Viewed in connection with the insurrections, the whole movement can hardly be distinguished from an armed conquest of the imaginative by the economic section of society; a conquest which produced a most curious and interesting development of a new clerical type.

259 During the Middle Ages, the hierarchy had been a body of miracle-workers, independent of, and at first superior to, the State. This great corporation had subsisted upon its own resources, and had generally been controlled by men of the ecstatic temperament, of whom Saint Anselm is, perhaps, the most perfect example. After the conquest at the Reformation, these conditions changed. Having lost its independence, the priesthood lapsed into an adjunct of the civil power; it then became reorganized upon an economic basis, and gradually turned into a salaried class, paid to inculcate obedience to the representative of an oligarchy which controlled the national revenue. Perhaps, in all modern history, there is no more striking example of the rapid and complete manner in which, under favourable circumstances, one type can supersede another, than the thoroughness with which the economic displaced the emotional temperament, in the Anglican Church, during the Tudor dynasty. The mental processes of the new pastors did not differ so much in degree as in kind from those of the old.

Although the spoliations of Edward are less well remembered than those of his father, they were hardly less drastic. They began with the estates of the chantries and guilds, and rapidly extended to all sorts of property. In the Middle Ages, one of the chief sources of revenue of the sacred class had been their prayers for souls in purgatory, and all large churches contained chapels, many of them richly endowed, for the perpetual celebration of masses for the dead; in England and Wales more than a thousand such chapels existed, whose revenues were often very valuable. These were the chantries, which vanished with the imaginative age which created them, and the guilds shared the same fate.

260 Before economic competition had divided men into classes according to their financial capacity, all craftsmen possessed capital, as all agriculturists held land. The guild established the craftsman's social status; as a member of a trade corporation he was governed by regulations fixing the number of hands he might employ, the amount of goods he might produce, and the quality of his workmanship; on the other hand, the guild regulated the market, and ensured a demand. Tradesmen, perhaps, did not easily grow rich, but they as seldom became poor.

With centralization life changed. Competition sifted the strong from the weak; the former waxed wealthy, and hired hands at wages, the latter lost all but the ability to labour; and, when the corporate body of producers had thus disintegrated, nothing stood between the common property and the men who controlled the engine of the law. By the 1 Edward VI., c. 14, all the possessions of the schools, colleges, and guilds of England, except the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge and the guilds of London, were conveyed to the king, and the distribution thus begun extended far and wide, and has been forcibly described by Mr. Blunt:—

“They tore off the lead from the roofs, and wrenched out the brasses from the floors. The books they despoiled of their costly covers, and then sold them for waste paper. The gold and silver plate they melted down with copper and lead, to make a coinage so shamefully debased as was never known before or since in England. The vestments of altars and priests they turned into table-covers, carpets, and hangings, when not very costly; and when worth more money than usual, they sold them to foreigners, not caring who used them for ‘superstitious’ purposes, but caring to make the best ‘bargains’ they could of their spoil. Even the very surplices and altar linen would fetch something, and that too was seized by their covetous hands.”²⁸¹

These “covetous hands” were the privy councillors. Henry had not intended that any member of the board should have precedence, but the king's body was not cold before Edward Seymour began

²⁸¹ *The Reformation of the Church of England*, ii. 68.

The teachings of John Calvin reached England and were embraced by King Edward, son of Henry VIII.

an261 intrigue to make himself protector. To consolidate a party behind him, he opened his administration by distributing all the spoil he could lay hands on; and Mr. Froude estimated that “on a computation most favourable to the council, estates worth ... in modern currency about five millions” of pounds, were “appropriated—I suppose I must not say stolen—and divided among themselves.”²⁸² At the head of this council stood Cranmer, who took his share without scruple. Probably Froude’s estimate is far too low; for though Seymour, as Duke of Somerset, had, like Henry, to meet imperative claims which drained his purse, he yet built Somerset House, the most sumptuous palace of London.

Seymour was put to death by Dudley when he rose to power by his military success in Norfolk. Dudley as well as Cromwell was fitted for the emergency in which he lived; bold, able, unscrupulous and energetic, his party hated but followed him, because without him they saw no way to seize the property they coveted. He too, like Cromwell, allied himself with the evangelical clergy, and under Edward the orthodoxy of the “Six Articles” gave way to the doctrine of Geneva. Even in 1548 Calvin had been able to write to Somerset, thanking God that, through his wisdom, the “pure truth” was preached;²⁸³ but when Dudley administered the government as Duke of Northumberland, bishops did not hesitate to teach that the dogma of the “carnal presence” in the sacrament “maintaineth that beastly kind of cruelty of the ‘Anthrophophagi,’ that is, the devourers of man’s262 flesh: for it is a more cruel thing to devour a quick man, than to slay him.”²⁸⁴

Dudley resembled Henry and Norfolk in being naturally conservative, for he died a Catholic; but with them all, money was the supreme object, and as they lacked the physical force to plunder alone, they were obliged to conciliate the Radicals. These were represented by Knox, and to Knox the duke paid assiduous court. The Scotchman began preaching in Berwick in 1549, but the government soon brought him to London, and in 1551 made him a royal chaplain, and, as chaplain, he was called upon to approve the Forty-two Articles of 1552. This he could do conscientiously, as they contained the dogmas of election and predestination, original sin, and justification by faith, beside a denial of “the reall and bodilie presence ... of Christes fleshe, and bloude, in the Sacramente of the Lordes Supper.”

263Dudley tried hard to buy Knox, and offered him the See of Rochester; but the duke excited the deepest distrust and dislike in the preacher, who called him “that wretched and miserable Northumberland.” He rejected the preferment, and indeed, from the beginning, bad blood seems to have lain between the Calvinists and the court. Writing at the beginning of 1554, Knox expressed his opinion of the reforming aristocracy in emphatic language, beginning with Somerset, “who became so cold in hearing Godis Word, that the year befor his last apprehensioun, he wald ga visit his masonis, and wald not dainyie himself to ga frome his gallerie to his hall for heiring of a sermone.”²⁸⁵ Afterward matters grew worse, for “the haill Counsaile had said, Thay wald heir no mo of thair sermonis: thay wer but indifferent fellowis; (yea, and sum of thame eschameit not to call thame prating knaves.)”²⁸⁶

Finally, just before Edward’s death the open rupture came. Knox had a supreme contempt and antipathy for the Lord Treasurer, Paulet, Marquis of Winchester, whom he called a “crafty fox.” During Edward’s life, jeered Knox, “who was moste bolde to crye, Bastarde, bastarde, incestuous bastarde, Mary shall never rule over us,” and now that Mary is on the throne it is to her Paulet “crouches and kneeleth.”²⁸⁷ In the last sermon he preached before the king he let loose his tongue, and probably he would have quitted the court, even had the reign continued. In this sermon Dudley was Ahithophel, Paulet, Shebna:—

²⁸² *History of England*, v. 432.

²⁸³ Gorham’s *Reformation Gleanings*, 61.

²⁸⁴ Ridley’s disputation at Oxford in 1554, *Acts and Monuments*, vi. 474.

²⁸⁵ *A Godly Letter to the Faithful*, Works, iii. 176.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 177.

²⁸⁷ *A Faithful Admonition*, Works, iii. 283.

“Wherever civilization has reached the point at which energy expresses itself through money, faith must be subordinate to the representative of wealth”.

"I made this affirmacion, That commonlye it was sene, that the most godly princes hadde officers and chief counselours moste ungodlye, conjured enemies to Goddes true religion, and traitours to their princes.... Was David, sayd I, and Ezechias, princes of great and godly giftes and experience, abused by crafty counsailers and dissembling hypocrites? What wonder is it then, that a yonge and innocent Kinge be deceived by craftye, covetouse, wycked, and ungodly counselours? I am greatly afraid, that Achitophel be counsailer, that Judas beare the purse, and that Sobna be scribe, comptroller, and treasurer. This, and somewhat more I spake that daye, not in a corner (as many yet can wytnesse) but even before those whome my conscience judged worthy of accusation."²⁸⁸

Knox understood the relation which men of his stamp bore to Anglicanism. In 1549 much land yet remained to be divided, therefore he and his like were flattered and cajoled until Paulet and his friends should be strong enough to discard them. Faith, in the hands of the monied oligarchy, became an instrument of police, and, from the Reformation downward, revelation has been expounded in England by statute. Hence men of the imaginative type, who could not accept their creed with their stipend, were at any moment in danger of being adjudged heretics, and suffering the extreme penalty of insubordination.

Docility to lay dictation has always been the test by which the Anglican clergy have been sifted from Catholics and Puritans. To the imaginative mind a faith must spring from a revelation, and a revelation must be infallible and unchangeable. Truth must be single. Catholics believed their revelation to be continuous, delivered through the mouth of an illuminated priesthood, speaking in its corporate capacity. Puritans held that theirs had been made once for all, and was contained in a book. But both Catholics and Puritans were clear that divine truth was immutable, and that the universal Church could not err. To minds of this type, statutes regulating the appearance of God's body in the elements were not only impious but absurd, and men of the priestly temperament, whether Catholic or Puritan, have faced death in its most appalling forms, rather than bow down before them.

265 Here Fisher and Knox, Bellarmine and Calvin, agreed. Rather than accept the royal supremacy, the flower of the English priesthood sought poverty and exile, the scaffold and the stake. For this, the aged Fisher hastened to the block on Tower Hill; for this, Forest dangled over the embers of the smouldering rood; for this, the Carthusians rotted in their noisome dens. Nor were Puritans a whit behind Catholics in asserting the sacerdotal dignity; "Erant enim blasphemi qui vocarent eum [Henricum VIII.] summum caput ecclesiae sub Christo," wrote Calvin, and on this ground the Nonconformists fought the established Church, from Elizabeth's accession downward.

The writings of Martin Marprelate only restated an issue which had been raised by Hildebrand five hundred years before; for the advance of centralization had reproduced in England something of the same conditions which prevailed at Constantinople when it became a centre of exchanges. Wherever civilization has reached the point at which energy expresses itself through money, faith must be subordinate to the representative of wealth. Stephen Gardiner understood the conditions under which he lived, and accepted his servitude in consideration of the great See of Winchester. With striking acuteness he cited Justinian as a precedent for Henry:—

"Then, Sir, who did ever disallow Justinian's fact, that made laws concerning the glorious Trinity, and the Catholic faith, of bishops, of men, of the clergy, of heretics, and others, such like?"²⁸⁹

From the day of the breach with Rome, the British priesthood sank into wage-earners, and those of the ancient clergy who remained in the Anglican hierarchy after the Reformation, acquiesced in their position, as appeared in all their writings, but in none, perhaps, more strikingly than in the

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, iii. 281, 282.

²⁸⁹ *On True Obedience*, Heywood's ed., 73.

Faith and doctrine in the Church of England depended largely on what was pragmatic and convenient for the state at the time. The church's position on transubstantiation was changed five times within a single generation by royal decree or Parliament, for example.

Formularies of Faith of Henry VIII., where the episcopal bench submitted their views of orthodoxy to the revision of the secular power:—

“And albeit, most dread and benign sovereign lord, we do affirm by our learnings with one assent, that the said treatise is in all points so concordant and agreeable to holy scripture, as we trust your majesty shall receive the same as a thing most sincerely and purely handled, to the glory of God, your grace’s honour, the unity of your people, the which things your highness, we may well see and perceive, doth chiefly in the same desire: yet we do most humbly submit it to the most excellent wisdom and exact judgment of your majesty, to be recognised, overseen, and corrected, if your grace shall find any word or sentence in it meet to be changed, qualified, or further expounded, for the plain setting forth of your highness’s most virtuous desire and purpose in that behalf. Whereunto we shall in that case conform ourselves, as to our most bounden duties to God and to your highness appertaineth.”

Signed by “your highness’ most humble subjects and daily beadsmen, Thomas Cantuarien” and all the bishops.²⁹⁰

267A Church thus lying at the mercy of the temporal power, became a chattel in the hands of the class which controlled the revenue, and, from the Reformation to the revolution of 1688, this class consisted of a comparatively few great landed families, forming a narrow oligarchy which guided the Crown. In the Middle Ages, a king had drawn his army from his own domain. Cœur-de-Lion had his own means of attack and defence like any other baron, only on a larger scale. Henry VIII., on the contrary, stood alone and helpless. As centralization advanced, the cost of administration grew, until regular taxation had become necessary, and yet taxes could only be levied by Parliament. The king could hardly pay a body-guard, and such military force as existed within the realm obeyed the landlords. Had it not been for a few opulent nobles, like Norfolk and Shrewsbury, the Pilgrims of Grace might have marched to London and plucked Henry from his throne, as easily as William afterward plucked James. These landlords, together with the London tradesmen, carried Henry through the crisis of 1536, and thereafter he lay in their hands. His impotence appeared in every act of his reign. He ran the risk and paid the price, while others fattened on the plunder. The Howards, the Cecils, the Russells, the Dudleys, divided the Church spoil among themselves, and wrung from the Crown its last penny, so that Henry lived in debt, and Edward faced insolvency.

268Deeply as Mary abhorred sacrilege, she dared not ask for restitution to the abbeyes. Such a step would probably have caused her overthrow, while Elizabeth never attempted opposition, but obeyed Cecil, the incarnation of the spirit of the oligarchy. The men who formed this oligarchy were of totally different type from anything which flourished in England in the imaginative age. Unwarlike, for their insular position made it possible for them to survive without the martial quality, they always shrank from arms. Nor were they numerous enough, or strong enough, to overawe the nation even in quiet times. Accordingly they generally lay inert, and only from necessity allied themselves with some more turbulent faction.

The Tudor aristocracy were rich, phlegmatic, and unimaginative men, in whom the other faculties were subordinated to acquisition, and they treated their religion as a financial investment. Strictly speaking, the Church of England never had a faith, but vibrated between the orthodoxy of the “Six Articles,” and the Calvinism of the “Lambeth Articles,” according to the exigencies of real estate. Within a single generation, the relation Christ’s flesh and blood bore to the bread and wine was changed five times by royal proclamation or act of Parliament.

But if creeds were alike to the new economic aristocracy, it well understood the value of the pulpit as a branch of the police of the kingdom, and from the outset it used the clergy as part of the

²⁹⁰ *The Institution of a Christian Man*, Preface, *Formularies of Faith of Henry VIII.*, Lloyd, 26.

The Tudor’s, lacking martial ability, sought to influence the population via religious dictate. The Puritans, being dissatisfied with the state of things, fled to Holland. They found Holland no better than England, and so set sail for America in 1620.

set in; as the power of Spain dwindled, rents rose, and the farmers grew restive at the precise moment when men of the heroic temperament could be discarded. Raleigh was sent to the Tower in 1603.

According to Thorold Rogers, "good arable land [which] let at less than a shilling an acre in the last quarter of the sixteenth century, was let at 5s. to 6s. at the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth," while rent for pasture doubled.³¹¹ Rising rents, and prices tending to become stationary, caused suffering among the rural population, and with suffering came discontent. This discontent in the country was fomented by restlessness in the towns, for commerce had been strongly stimulated during the reign of Elizabeth by the Spanish wars, and the mercantile element began to rebel against legislation passed in the interest of the favoured class. Suddenly the dissatisfaction found vent; for more than forty years the queen's ministers had met with no serious opposition in Parliament; in 1601, without warning, their system of monopolies was struck down, and from that day to the revolution of 1688, the House of Commons proved to be unmanageable by the Crown. Even as early as the accession of James, the competition between the aristocracy and their victims had begun to glow with the heat which presages civil war.

Had the Tudor aristocracy been a martial caste, they would doubtless have organized an army, and governed by the sword; but they instinctively felt that, upon the field of battle, they might be at a disadvantage, and therefore they attempted to control the popular imagination through the priesthood. Thus the divine right of primogeniture came to be the distinguishing tenet of the Church of England. James felt the full force of the current which was carrying him onward, and expressed the situation pithily in his famous apothegm, "No bishop, no king." "I will have," said he, "one doctrine, one discipline, one religion in substance and ceremony;" and the policy of the interest he represented was laid down as early as 1604, at the conference at Hampton Court.

Passive obedience was to be preached, and the church filled with men who could be relied on by the oligarchy. Six weeks after the conference at Hampton Court, Whitgift died, and Bancroft, Bishop of London, was translated to Canterbury. Within a week he was at work. He had already prepared a Book of Canons with which to test the clergy, and this he had ratified by the convocation which preceded his consecration. In these canons the divine origin of episcopacy was asserted; a strange departure from the doctrine of Cranmer. In 1605 there are supposed to have been about fifteen hundred Puritan clergymen in England and Wales, and at Bancroft's first winnowing three hundred were ejected.

Among these Puritans was a certain John Robinson, the teacher of a small congregation of yeomen, in the village of Scrooby, in Nottinghamshire. The man's birth is unknown, his early history is obscure, but in him, and in the farmers who heard him preach, the long and bitter struggle against the pressure of the class which was destroying them, had bred that stern and sombre enthusiasm which afterward marked the sect. By 1607 England had grown intolerable to this congregation, and they resolved to emigrate. They had heard that in Holland liberty of conscience was allowed, and they fondly hoped that with liberty of conscience they might be content to earn their daily bread in peace. Probably with them, however, religion was not the cause, but the effect of their uneasiness, as the result proved.

After many trials and sorrows, these poor people finally assembled in Amsterdam, and thence journeyed to Leyden, where they dwelt some eleven years. But they found the struggle for life to be full as severe in the Low Countries as it had been at home, and presently the exiles began to long for some distant land where "they might more glorify God, do more good to their country, better provide for their posterity, and live to be more refreshed by their labours, than ever they could do in Holland." Accordingly, obtaining a grant from the Virginia Company, they sailed in the Mayflower in 1620, to settle in New England; and thus, by the eviction of the yeomen, England laid the foundation of one great province of her colonial empire.

³¹¹ *Agriculture and Prices*, Rogers, v. 804.

Spain never fully left its imaginative era, and so England, with its centralized society and superior energy, was able to defeat the Armada in 1588 and send Spain into a centuries long downward spiral.

CHAPTER X SPAIN AND INDIA

In the words of Mr. Froude: "Before the sixteenth century had measured half its course the shadow of Spain already stretched beyond the Andes; from the mines of Peru and the custom-houses of Antwerp the golden rivers streamed into her imperial treasury; the crowns of Aragon and Castile, of Burgundy, Milan, Naples, and Sicily, clustered on the brow of her sovereigns."³¹² But with all their great martial qualities, the Spaniards seem to have been incapable of attaining the same velocity of movement as the races with which they had to compete. They never emerged from the imaginative period, they never developed the economic type, and in consequence they never centralized as the English centralized. Even as early as the beginning of the seventeenth century this peculiarity had been observed, for the Duke de Sully remarked that with Spain the "legs and arms are strong and powerful, but the heart infinitely weak and feeble."

Captain Mahan has explained the military impotence of the mighty mass which, scattered over two continents, could not command the sea, and in the seventeenth century an intelligent Dutchman boasted that "the Spaniards have publicly begun to hire our ships to sail to the Indies.... It is manifest that the West Indies, being as the stomach to Spain (for from it nearly all the revenue is drawn), must be joined to the Spanish head by a sea force";³¹³ and the glory of the Elizabethan sailors lay not only in having routed this sea force, but in having assimilated no small portion of the nutriment which the American stomach should have supplied to the Spanish heart.

As Spain lingered long in the imaginative age, the priest and soldier there reigned supreme after the mercantile and sceptical type had begun to predominate elsewhere; and the instinct of the priest and soldier has always been to exterminate their rivals when pressed by their competition. In the Spanish peninsula itself the Inquisition soon trampled out heresy, but by the middle of the sixteenth century the Low Countries were a hotbed of Protestantism, and in Flanders these opposing forces fought out their battle to the death. The war which ruined Antwerp made England.

In 1576 Antwerp was sacked and burned; in 1585 the town was reduced to starvation by the Duke of Parma, and its commerce having been scattered by successive disasters, some of it migrated to Amsterdam, and some sought shelter in the Thames. In London the modern man was protected by the sea, and the crisis of the combat came in 1588, when the Spaniards, having decided to pursue their enemy to his last stronghold, sent the Armada to perish in the Channel. With that supreme effort the vitality of the great imaginative empire began to fail, disintegration set in, and on the ruins of Spain rose the purely economic centralization of Great Britain.

Like the Venetians, the British laid the basis of their high fortune by piracy and slaving, and their advantage over Spain lay not in mass, but in a superior energy, which gave them more rapid movement. Drake's squadron, when he sailed round the world, numbered five ships, the largest measuring only one hundred and twenty tons, the smallest twelve, but with these he succeeded because of their speed. For example, he overtook the *Cacafuego*, whose ballast was silver, and whose cargo gold and jewels. He never disclosed her value, but the Spanish government afterward proved a loss of a million and a half of ducats, beside the property of private individuals. In like manner the Armada was destroyed by little ships, which sailed round their clumsy enemy, and disabled him before he could strike a blow in self-defence.

The Spanish wars were halcyon days for the men of martial blood who had lost their land; they took to the sea by thousands, and ravaged the Spanish colonies with the energy and ferocity of vikings. For nearly a generation they wallowed in gold and silver and gems, and in the plunder of the American towns. Among these men Sir Francis Drake stood foremost, but, after 1560, the

³¹² *History of England*, viii. 425.

³¹³ *Influence of the Sea Power upon History*, Mahan, 41.

England poached negroes from Africa to sell to the Spanish in the Caribbean, netting them large sums of money. They would also rob Spanish treasure fleets to ensure a steady flow of bullion to London.

southern counties swarmed with pirates; and when, in 1585, Drake sailed on his raid against the West Indies, he led a force of volunteers twenty-five hundred strong. He held no commission, the crews of his twenty-five ships served without pay, they went as buccaneers to fatten on the commerce of the Spaniard. As it happened, this particular expedition failed financially, for the treasure fleet escaped, and the plunder of the three cities of Santiago, Saint Domingo, and Carthagen yielded only £60,000, but the injury done to Spain was incalculable.

No computation can be attempted of the spoil taken during these years; no reports were ever made; on the contrary, all concerned were anxious to conceal their doings, but certain prizes were too dazzling to be hidden. When Drake surprised three caravans on the Isthmus, numbering one hundred and ninety mules, each mule loaded with three hundred pounds of silver, the fact became known. No wonder Drake ate off "silver richly gilt, and engraved with his arms," that he had "all possible luxuries, even to perfumes," that he dined and supped "to the music of violins," and that he could bribe the queen with a diamond cross and a coronet set with splendid emeralds, and give the lord chancellor a service of plate. What he gave in secret he alone knew.

As Francis Drake was the ideal English corsair, so John Hawkins was the ideal slaver. The men were kinsmen, and of the breed which, when driven from their farms at the end of the Middle Ages, left their mark all over the world. Of course the two sailors were "gospellers," and Mr. Froude has quoted an interesting passage from the manuscript of a contemporary Jesuit, which shows how their class was esteemed toward the close of the sixteenth century: "The only party that would fight to the death for the queen, the only real friends she had, were the Puritans, the Puritans of London, the Puritans of the sea towns."³¹⁴ These the priest thought desperate and determined men. Nevertheless they sometimes provoked Elizabeth by their sermonizing. The story is told that one day after reading a letter of Hawkins to Burleigh she cried: "God's death! This fool went out a soldier, and has come back a divine."

Though both Drake and Hawkins possessed the predatory temperament, Hawkins had a strong commercial instinct, and kept closely to trade. He was the son of old William Hawkins, the first British captain who ever visited Brazil, and who brought from thence a native chief, whom he presented to Henry VIII. As a young man John had discovered at the Canaries "that negroes were a very good commodity in Hispaniola,"³¹⁵ and that they might easily be taken on the coast of Guinea. Accordingly, in 1562, he fitted out three ships, touched at Sierra Leone, and "partly by the sword and partly by other means," he obtained a cargo, "and with that prey he sailed over the ocean sea" to Hispaniola, where he sold his goods at a large profit. The West India Islands, and the countries bordering the Gulf of Mexico, cannot be cultivated profitably by white labourers; therefore, when the Spaniards had, by hard usage, partially exterminated the natives, a fresh supply of field hands became necessary, and these could be had easily and cheaply on the coast of Africa.

At first Spain tried to exclude foreigners from this most lucrative traffic; but here again the English moved too quickly to be stopped. Wherever Hawkins went, he went prepared to fight, and, if prevented from trading peaceably, he used force. In his first voyage he met with no opposition, but subsequently, at Burburata, leave to sell was denied him, and, without an instant's hesitation, he marched against the town with "a hundred men well armed," and brought the governor to terms. Having supplied all the slaves needed at that port, Hawkins went on to Rio de la Hacha, where he, in like manner, made a demonstration with "one hundred men in armour," and two small guns, and in ten days he had disposed of his whole stock.

As at that time an able negro appears to have been worth about £160 in the West Indies,³¹⁶ a cargo of five hundred ought to have netted between seventy and eighty thousand pounds, for the cost of kidnapping was trifling. No wonder, therefore, that slaving flourished, and that, by the middle of

³¹⁴ *English Seamen of the Sixteenth Century*, 6.

³¹⁵ Anderson's *History of Commerce*, i. 400.

³¹⁶ *S. P. Dom. Eliz.*, 53.

England's global expansion rose the conditions of its population. As capital accumulated for the monied oligarchy, it would continue to purge the island of its warriors, sending them to colonies to ensure their continued, uninterrupted rule.

the eighteenth century, England probably carried not far from one hundred thousand blacks annually from Africa to the colonies. The East offered no such market, and doubtless Adam Smith was right in his opinion that the commerce with India had never been so advantageous as the trade to America.³¹⁷

Both slavers and pirates brought bullion to England, and presently this flow of silver began to stimulate at London a certain amount of exchange between the East and West. The Orientals have always preferred payment in specie, and, as silver has usually offered more profit than gold as an export, the European with a surplus of silver has had the advantage over all competitors. Accordingly, until Spain lost the power to protect her communications with her mines, the Spanish peninsula enjoyed almost a monopoly of the trade beyond the Cape; but as the war went on, and more of the precious metal flowed to the north, England and Holland began to send their silver to Asia, the Dutch organizing one East India Company in 1595, and the British another in 1600.

Sir Josiah Child, who was, perhaps, the ablest merchant of the seventeenth century, observed that in 1545 "the trade of England then was inconsiderable, and the merchants very mean and few."³¹⁸ Child's facts are beyond doubt, and the date he fixed is interesting because it coincides with the discovery of Potosi, whence most of the silver came which supplied the pirates and the slavers. Prior to 1545 specie had been scarce in London, but when the buccaneers had been scuttling treasure galleons for a generation, they found themselves possessed of enough specie to set them dreaming of India, and thus piracy laid the foundation of the British empire in Asia.

But robbing the Spaniards had another more immediate and more startling result, for it probably precipitated the civil war. As the city grew rich it chafed at the slow movement of the aristocracy, who, timid and peaceful, cramped it by closing the channels through which it reached the property of foreigners; and, just when the yeomanry were exasperated by rising rents, London began to glow with that energy which, when given vent, was destined to subdue so large a portion of the world. Perhaps it is not going too far to say that, even from the organization of the East India Company, the mercantile interest controlled England. Not that it could then rule alone, it lacked the power to do so for nearly a hundred years to come; but, after 1600, its weight turned the scale on which side soever thrown. Before the Long Parliament the merchants were generally Presbyterians or moderate Puritans; the farmers, Independents or Radicals; and Winthrop, when preparing for the emigration to Massachusetts, dealt not only with squires like Hampden, but with city magnates like Thomas Andrews, the lord mayor. This alliance between the rural and the urban Puritans carried through the Great Rebellion, and as their coalition crushed the monarchy so their separation reinstated it.

Macaulay has very aptly observed that "but for the hostility of the city, Charles the First would never have been vanquished, and that, without the help of the city, Charles the Second could scarcely have been restored."³¹⁹ At the Protector's death the Presbyterians abandoned the farmers, probably because they feared them. The army of the Commonwealth swarmed with men like Cromwell and Blake, warriors resistless alike on land and sea, with whom, when organized, the city could not cope. Therefore it scattered them, and, throwing in its lot with the Cavaliers, set up the king.

For about a generation after the Restoration, no single interest had the force to impose its will upon the nation, or, in other words, parties were equally balanced; but from the middle of the century the tide flowed rapidly. Capital accumulated, and as it accumulated the men adapted to be its instruments grew to be the governing class. Sir Josiah Child is the most interesting figure of this period. His acquaintance remembered him a poor apprentice sweeping the counting-house where he worked; and yet, at fifty, his fortune reached £20,000 a year, a sum almost equal to the rent-roll of the Duke of Ormond, the richest peer of the realm. Child married his daughter to the eldest son of

³¹⁷ *Wealth of Nations*, book 4, ch. i.

³¹⁸ *Discourse of Trade*, Child, ed. 1775, 8.

³¹⁹ *History of England*, ch. iii.

the Duke of Beaufort, and gave her £50,000, and his ability was so commanding that for years he absolutely ruled the East India Company, and used its revenues to corrupt Parliament. On matters of finance such a man would hardly err, and he gave it as his opinion that in 1635 "there were more merchants to be found upon the Exchange worth each one thousand pounds and upwards, than were in the former days, viz., before the year 1600, to be found worth one hundred pounds each."

"And now ... there are more men to be found upon the Exchange now worth ten thousand pounds estates, than were then of one thousand pounds. And if this be doubted, let us ask the aged, whether five hundred pounds portion with a daughter sixty years ago, were not esteemed a larger portion than two thousand pounds is now; and whether gentlewomen in those days would not esteem themselves well clothed in a serge gown, which a chambermaid now will be ashamed to be seen in.... We have now almost one hundred coaches for one we had formerly. We with ease can pay a greater tax now in one year than our forefathers could in twenty. Our customs are very much improved, I believe above the proportion aforesaid, of six to one; which is not so much in advance of the rates of goods as by increase of the bulk of trade....

"I can myself remember since there were not in London used so many wharves or keys for the landing of merchants' goods, by at least one third part, as now there are, and those that were then could scarce have employment for half what they could do; and now, notwithstanding one-third more used to the same purpose, they are all too little, in time of peace, to land the goods at, that come to London."³²⁰

Child estimated that, within twenty years, wages had risen one-third, and rents twenty-five per cent, while "houses new-built in London yield twice the rent they did before the fire."³²¹ Farms that "their grandfathers or fathers bought or sold fifty years past ... would yield, one with another, at least treble the money, and in some cases, six times the money, they were then bought and sold for."³²² Macaulay has estimated the population of London in 1685 at half a million, and believed it to have then become the largest city in Europe.

The aristocracy were forced to tolerate men of the predatory type while they feared a Spanish invasion, but after the defeat of the Armada these warriors became dangerous at home, and the oligarchy, very naturally, tried to purge the island of a class which constantly menaced their authority. Persecution drove numbers of Nonconformists to America, and the story of Captain John Smith shows how hardly society then pressed on the race of adventurers, even where the bitterness of the struggle did not produce religious enthusiasm.

Smith lived a generation too late. Born in 1579, he was a child of nine when the Armada perished, and only sixteen when Drake and Hawkins died at sea. Smith's father had property, but when left an orphan his guardians neglected him, and at fifteen let him set out on his travels with only ten shillings in his pocket. At home no career was open to him, for the Cecils rather inclined to imprison and behead soldiers of fortune than to reward them. Accordingly he went abroad, and by twenty-five had seen service in most countries of the Continent, had been enslaved by the Turks, had escaped and wandered to Barbary, had fought the Spanish on a French man-of-war, and at last had learned that the dreams of his youth belonged to a past age, and that he must enter a new path. He therefore joined himself to a party bound for Virginia, and the hardship of the times may be gauged by the fact that out of a company of a hundred, fifty-two were gentlemen adventurers as needy as himself, none of whom sought exile for religion.

Smith's voyages to America brought him nothing but bitterness. He returned to England and passed his last years in obscurity and neglect, and perhaps the fate that awaited soldiers under James, has been nowhere better told than in Smith's own words. He spent five years and more than five

³²⁰ *Discourse of Trade*, Josiah Child, ed. 1775, 8, 9, 10.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, Pref. xxxi.

³²² *Ibid.*, 41.