

## THE MORAL CHARACTER OF ROMAN CONQUEST.

NOTHING can be more self-complacent than Roman writers concerning the relations and comparison of their own State to foreigners. Livy and Sallust, Cicero and Tacitus, are in substantial agreement here; and, beyond what might have been expected, the moderns adopt their moral tone. Gibbon saw through the extravagance of Livy: Niebuhr deplores the wickedness of Rome, from the time that her superiority in arms to Carthage was complete: Arnold is always free-judging: Dean Merivale vehemently denounces the oppressions of the conquering republic, in order to glorify Cæsar's usurpation. Yet on the whole we are taught from our youth up that the military successes of Rome were a great blessing to the world, and mere warlike prowess is constantly held up to admiration. It seems to be fully worth while to review the moral aspect of this history in brief, at the expense of traversing again some of the ground which may have been familiar to us at school or college. It certainly is not superfluous. Mazzini, a man whom it is scarcely possible to name without respect, assumed as axiomatic that Europe owes priceless benefits to Rome, which she has long been repaying with ingratitude. The language of the accomplished Pliny may be here adduced as a literary curiosity: no modern panegyrist can come up to him (*Nat. Hist.* 6). In describing the geography of Italy, he says: 'I grieve to touch so lightly on a land which is at once a nursing and parent of all lands; *elected by the fiat of the gods to make heaven itself more illustrious, to consolidate scattered dominion, to soften religions, to bring together by intercourse of speech the discordant and wild languages of so many peoples, to give to man interchange of thought and humanity; in short, to become*

*the single Fatherland of all the races in the whole globe.'* Though Rome is not named, Rome is intended, in the 'consolidation of dominion.'

In mentioning discordant languages Pliny certainly does not confine himself to Italy; but he cannot have been ignorant how great a difficulty this topic placed in the way of Italian union; and to this first it is expedient to address ourselves. The case of Italy was widely diverse from that of ancient Greece. The tribes of Greece whom the Greeks called *barbarians* were either few and scattered, or had no political strength; whether Pelasgians or Chaonians and Molossians or other Epirots. The Greeks, who were mutually intelligible, were conscious of substantial unity, and strove for political union. No such unity can be alleged of ancient Italy, nor was any abstract desire of union possible. The Latin race, which at length established its supremacy in the peninsula, was at first contained within the narrowest limits, and often seemed likely to be overwhelmed.

To understand the magnitude of the task implied in Italian union, a definite idea must be attained as to the diversity of languages. The northern region which we call Lombardy, was early occupied by Gauls, of the same blood and language as those on this side of the Alps. Without entering into the controversy whether the modern Welsh or the modern Irish more nearly represents their tongue, no one doubts that it was wholly unintelligible to Latins. Also, they were by far the rudest people in Italy, having, in the time of the second Punic war, none of the cultivation which Roman generals afterwards found in southern Gaul. The Romans solved the problem by the expulsion of this people, not by their incorporation with the Empire: hence no further notice of

them is here needed. Their soil was occupied by Latin colonies.

At the opposite end of Italy we may pass by the Iapygian tribes, equally as any scattered Pelasgian settlements; for, whatever the languages, they went into disuse before the era of political consolidation. But the Greek colonies, which gave the name *Magna Græcia* to the south, are far more important. The enormous contrast of Greek to Latin is an open fact to our schoolboys. That the Greeks came in as colonists by sea was perfectly notorious, and has never been disputed. That the Etruscans also arrived by sea, and were emigrants from Lydia, was an all but universal article of faith with the ancients. Cicero, it is observed, speaks of Etruscans as *homines barbari*, a phrase he would not use of Sabines, Umbrians or Oscans, who were accounted old Italians.

But when our modern historians speak of 'the old Italian stock,' we are liable to delusion, as though these people and the Latins could, somehow, understand one another; as though their speech were a mere difference of dialect. The Sabine indeed was probably a dialect of Umbrian, or, as some say, of Oscan. We have only single words, not sentences, in the language. Dionysius calls the Sabines emigrants from Umbria; but this does not prove them Umbrians: apparently they were absorbed in other races, before the last century of the Roman Republic. But when the terrible 'Social War,' the war against the *Italian* allies, burst upon Rome, four languages appear as of political importance, Latin, Etruscan, Umbrian and Oscan. It is certain that they were contrasted, not as dialects, but as languages, as entirely as French and English, Greek and Persian. It avails not to talk, as ethnologists,

about 'primitive connection.' Just so Irish and Welsh, just so Russian and Polish, have primitive connection; yet they are widely separate now, and the peoples are mutually unintelligible.

Let anyone who knows the elements of Latin peruse two Umbrian paragraphs. First, one of old Umbrian. 'Sacre sewacne opetu. Jowe Patre promom ampentu destro sese ase. Fratruser Attieries, ahdisper cicwasatis, totaper Ijowina, trefiper Ijowina, diplom sewacnim deitu; inomec owem sewacnim opetu.' Second, of somewhat later Umbrian: 'Verfale, pufe arsfertur trebeit, ocer pehanner, erse stahmito, eso tuderato est. Angluto hondomu, porsei nesimei Asa Deveia est, anglome sommo, porsei nesimei Vapersus Aviecleir est; eine, angluto sommo Vapefe Avieclu totcome tuder, angluto hondomu Asame Deveia totcome tuder: eine, totceir tuderus seipodruhpei, —seritu.'<sup>1</sup> Here the word *est* catches attention as Latin; nothing else. But *est* is scarcely altered in German, Greek and modern Persian.

Next, the reader may be pleased to see a specimen of Oscan from the Bantine Tablet; but the lines are almost all broken at the end. 'Pis pocapit post post exac comono hafiert, meddis dat castridlouf en eituas factud pous touto deivatuns tanginom deicans stom dat eizasc idictanon deicum pod valæmom touticom tadait ezum, nep fepacid pod pis dat eizac.'<sup>2</sup> Oscan has the letter *z*, unknown to Latin, and *x* in some new sense, probably for our *sh*. Umbrian had both *z*, and a peculiar *r*, as also a modified *c*, probably for our *tch*.

As to the Etruscan language, our knowledge is indeed very small, but it is distinct and significant. By help of proper names, and a few bilingual inscriptions, it is ascertained that the Etruscans had a

<sup>1</sup> In a small pamphlet I have essayed a translation of the Iguvine Tablets, from which these specimens are taken. (Trübner & Co.)—F. W. N.

<sup>2</sup> Mommsen has very ably elucidated the Oscan remains.

genitive case ending in *-s*. I think further that they had a dative in *-si*, an accusative in *-m*, and (what is very peculiar) an ablative feminine in *-al*. The following translations seem to me reliable:

## ON A CUP.

Mi Larthia.

*Me Lartius (finxit).*

## OVER TOMBS.

Larth Velimnas Aules.

*Lars Volumnii Auli (filius).*

Thefri Velimnas Tarchis clan.

*Tiberius Volumnii Tarchi filius.*

Arnth Velimnas Aules.

*Aruns Volumnii Auli (filius).*Aule Velimnas Thefrisa<sup>3</sup> Nufrunal clan.*Aulus Volumnii Tiberii (ex) Nofronâ filius.*

Vele Velimnas Aules.

*Velus Volumnii Auli (filius).*

Aule Tarchnas Larthal clan.

*Aulus Tarquinii (ex) Lartiâ filius.*

Laris (?) Pumpus Arnthal clan.

*Lars Pompeii (ex) Arruntiâ filius.*

Pup. Velimna Aules Cafatal.

*Publius Volumnii Auli (filius) (ex) Cafatiâ.*

## IN THE PERUSINE INSCRIPTION.

Aulesi Velthinas Arxnal clensi.

*Aulo Volsinii (ex) Aruxnâ filio.*

Clel Afuna Velthinam.

*Genuit (?) Aponius Volsinium.*

Larthals Afunes clen.

*Lartialis Aponii filius.*

## INSCRIPTION ON AN ORATOR'S CLOAK.

Aulesi Metelis Ve, Vesial clensi.

*Aulo Metelli Veli (ex) Vesîâ filio.*

## SHORT INSCRIPTIONS.

A. Abassa Arnthal Fraunal.

*Aulus Abassa (ex) Arruntiâ Feroniâ.*

Ve. Cusu Cr. L(ucumo)apa Petruâl clan.

*Velus Cossus Cnei primigenius ex Petreid filius.*

Titia C. L. Fausal.

*Titius Caius primigenius (ex) Fausâ.*

The Etruscans must have frequently omitted short vowels in writing, as do the Hebrews and Arabs; for it was impossible to pronounce without additional vowels such combinations of consonants as *flerth rce*, *lml*, *srancxl*, *cicnl*. We

may then easily be deceived as to the sound, by the aspect of the writing. The language had the Greek aspirates *th*, *ch*; and *z* and *x* besides. We have no clue as yet to the demonstrative or relative pronouns, and the materials are so scanty as to give little hope of increased knowledge. Nevertheless, it is impossible to dwell on the Perusine Inscription, without seeing how entirely unlike is the language to Latin, Oscan and Umbrian.

To unite in one dominion and reconcile to a common rule nations so diverse, was not a hopeful undertaking. It may be added, that their religions also were different. Nevertheless, this did not with the ancients cause national repugnance. They generally undertook the task, more charitable than philosophic, of identifying every foreign deity with one of their own. But when mythologies have essential contrasts, we see that the people had grown up under different mental influences. Even the Oscans and the Umbrians had separate Pantheons. The Etruscan religion was in many ways very peculiar: some things the Romans had adopted; yet the Latins differed from them all. At a very early time the Greeks were in some sense mediators and reconcilers in religion to Etruscans, Latins and Oscans. Etruscan pottery shows that the artists of that nation had become familiar with the Greek heroes and heroines. Rome largely blended in her ceremonies the religions of all her neighbours: yet she never lost the Latin tendency to worship abstract ideas, such as Concord, Fortune, Health, Womanly Honour. Herein the Latins may seem to have anticipated modern Comtism.

The Etruscans, as known to us, were confined to Etruria proper, where Etruscan tombs abound, and nowhere else. The Umbrians had been expelled by them from this whole district, and remained in a

<sup>3</sup> Or, Thefrisa (?)—  
Tiberii ex—

very limited area in the northern Apennine, between Tuscany and Rimini. The Oscans were of all by far the most widely spread, over the great mass of the Apennines, with its valleys and slopes, over the Adriatic coast from Rimini southward, perhaps over all Apulia (but this is doubted), certainly over Campania and Lucania. The Latin language was originally confined to the single district marked in our maps as Latium, and a considerable part of even this was occupied by tribes of another origin and speech. The city which was destined to conquer and centralise Italy, lay in a corner, pressed upon by Etruscans, Sabines and Latins. Antiquity universally believed that Rome was a very mongrel city; that each of these three peoples had entered into her composition organically from the beginning; also, that Arcadians from Greece, and Trojans from Asia, had still earlier planted themselves on this very area. But Mommsen, the authority in these matters who has supplanted Niebuhr, is pleased to call it *irrational* to imagine the Romans a mixed people. One who holds to the old belief that early Rome had Sabine, Latin and Tuscan tribes, finds it easy to understand both her ambition to incorporate in her dominion her neighbours of all three languages, and her success in that ambition during the regal period. But the revolution which expelled the Tarquins broke up the dominion of Rome. Her conquest by the Etruscan Porsena following made her struggles tedious and long very doubtful.

Niebuhr originated a new view of the renewed alliances of Rome, which he said (perhaps correctly) had been falsified by Roman compilers of history; men unwilling to believe, and incapable of imagining, that Rome had ever dealt with her allies upon equal terms: but this does not much concern us here. To give some backbone of approximate chronology, it may be laid down

that kings were expelled from Rome, and tyrants from Attica, almost simultaneously; say, B.C. 510. The Latin and Hernican league was made nearly about B.C. 490, the date of the battle of Marathon. By this league the consul Spurius Cassius began the restoration of Rome from her gravest foreign dangers. Simultaneously, concessions to the plebeians staved off domestic revolution. The foreign enemies most pressing are called Æqui and Volsci, men certainly foreign in race to Latium, perhaps Sabine and Umbrian. The contest was very tedious and very uncertain, until the year B.C. 428, one year after the death of Pericles, when the dictator Aulus Postumius Tubertus gained a decisive victory. Thenceforward Rome, though struggling, is manifestly always winning.

To any moral criticism of Roman conduct, it is common to reply: 'Every one of the neighbours would have been as bad, if they had had the power.' This is easily said, and has no proof. In the earliest era our materials fail; but a little later, we have illustrations to the contrary, proving that the neighbours were more moderate, more peaceful, more truthful, more just. We know that *all* men are liable to be corrupted by despotic power, Oscans as well as Romans. To adduce this as a reason for sympathising with despotic successes, is illogical and demoralising.

By the bravery and fidelity of the Latin and Hernican allies, and at the large expense of their blood, Rome had been delivered from imminent dangers, had grown strong, and, we may well believe, more arrogant. The allies felt it keenly, and complained (according to Livy) that they were treated as vassals. The Latins sent an embassy to the Senate, claiming equality in the State, but desiring to be one people, and to be called Romans. Their numbers and strength being equal, half the Senate and one consul

ought to be Latins. Livy regards the demand as insolent in the extreme, and seems to approve of the speech which he ascribes to the consul Manlius, who declared that if the Senate were mad enough to yield, he himself would kill with his own hand the first Latin who tried to take his seat. The Senate, however, was of Manlius's mind, and chose rather to peril the existence of the State, than to enlarge and strengthen it by the free incorporation of a kindred people, whose fidelity was long tried.

After three years of war, the Romans conquered. Nevertheless, fifteen years later, during the first Samnite war, they had to yield before the armed demands of the Latins, whose general Lucius Fulvius Curvus, Dictator of Tusculum, the head of insurrection, was accepted by the Roman Senate as Consul. Thus the fusion of Rome with Latium became complete, B.C. 321. Rome granted to necessity what, at the expense of bloody war, she refused to equity and to sound policy. This seems to have been her uniform course.

It may be asked: Why did two centuries need to pass, after the league of Servius Tullius, before a union could be effected, which the Roman plebs and the Latin towns must alike have desired? This is to me explicable only by the heterogeneity of the Roman patricians, who, long after Latin was their language, still retained Sabine and Etruscan sentiment, and made their religious ceremonies (which were foreign to the plebeians) a pretext of exclusiveness.

The Sabines or Sabellians are always praised in later times for their simple manners and austere morality; but this description belongs to those who continued to live as rustics, without the demoralising influences of power, wealth and ambition. In this respect we may compare them to the Ottoman

Turks, who are admired by all strangers in their own villages for the noble and sterling qualities almost universal to them: yet the same men are for the most part quickly corrupted by office and power, and become capable of great atrocities: It is interesting to alight upon a description of the modern *Umbrians* in Mrs. Hamilton Grey's *Tour to the Sepulchres of Etruria*. She says:

One of our party told me, that the farmer with whom he was quartered had with him a band of 30 shepherds, who slept round the court-yard after the manner of the ancient Tuscans, and whose employment all day was milking and tending the flocks and making cheeses and *ricotta* (a sort of curd) from the milk of goats and ewes; and that their food never was anything else, morning, noon and night, all the year round, but this same *ricotta*, excepting twice a week when they fasted [*quæ* feasted?] upon meal porridge or upon polenta and lentils. He said that *they were Umbrians* and kept themselves most clannishly distinct from all the other peasants, having a pride in their ancient country, which has never changed its name from the earliest records; and also in their descent, a thing much prized by all classes in Italy. He described them as tall, powerful, and handsome; such figures as we see depicted in the ancient tombs; and men of that proud and high stamp of character, *who are above robbery, cruelty and meanness*.

Such primitive populations, with rustic simple habits, abounded in Italy, whether called Umbrian, Sabine or Samnite; men unaccustomed to wide political or military combinations, but noble-hearted and upright. It was the cruel mission of Rome to crush, exterminate or corrupt them. By constant occupation in war she learned policy, intrigue and fraud, as well as discipline and large schemes of campaigning. Hence her uniform ultimate successes.

In the second era, after the complete union of the Latins with Rome, war with the Oscan nations began on a greater scale. The first Samnite war has been alluded to, but the second was far more severe, and we

gain insight into the Roman method and *morale* of conquest. Roman encroachments were the sole cause of war. The Samnites, after it had broken out, humbly asked for peace, on terms of equality and friendship, and offered pecuniary payment; but the Romans insisted on absolute submission to their despotic military rule.

The Samnites were a simple martial people, but had no such military institutions as the Romans. The policy of Rome was aggressive, and her mode of warfare was by systematic devastation. The Samnites were less ambitious, and too much satisfied with defence. When successful, they did not follow up success haughtily and bloodily in Roman fashion. We know the events from the Romans only, and by their account the Samnites were greatly the superior in moderation and equity. A most signal history, illustrating the morality of the two nations, was that known by the name of the Forks of Caudium. The Roman army had entered this defile, where they were so shut in by the Samnite general Pontius, that they could not escape. As Livy tells us, he might have massacred them easily; instead of this, he made a treaty to disarm and dismiss them in safety, on condition that the Romans would withdraw their settlers from the Samnite soil, and henceforth live in amity on equal terms. The two consuls, who were both intercepted, became sponsors for fidelity to the engagement; so did all the chief officers; and the army returned home safe. The Senate at once voted that the engagement was null and void, and, to save the public faith, sent heralds to surrender to the Samnites the

officers who had sworn fidelity. Pontius indignantly refused to accept them, and claimed that if the Senate did not like the treaty, it should not take advantage of it, but should replace the whole army into the defile: he therefore sent back the officers unharmed. The Romans renewed the war more fiercely than ever, and when, twenty-seven years later, they<sup>4</sup> captured this same Pontius, they led him in 'triumph,' which then, as always, was followed by beheading.

It may be proper to dwell on this; for when in a small book, called *Regal Rome*, I alluded to this systematic Roman cruelty, a learned German flatly denied my correctness. The classical passage on the subject is *Cicero in Verrem*, Act ii., Lib. v., 30, 77. He is expressing indignation that Verres had *not* executed a captured chief pirate. The imputation was, that Verres had taken a bribe to spare him, and had beheaded some one else in his place. Cicero urges, that the pirate might have escaped, to the danger of the public; and in reply to Verres's plea, that he needed to produce the pirate in his own defence, argues: 'So then! you are to defend yourself at the public risk! The punishments *which are due to conquered enemies* you will inflict at the time convenient to yourself! a public enemy of the Romans is to be kept safe under private guard! But even those who triumph, and *on that account* keep generals of an enemy *longer alive*, in order that, from their being led in the triumph, the Roman people may enjoy a most glorious spectacle and fruit of victory; yet, when they begin to turn the chariot from the forum into the Capitol, they order them to be led

<sup>4</sup> The fact that he was so dealt with is *Caicum Pontium, imperatorem Samnitium*, Arnold believes it unhesitatingly. I do Nothing is gained for the moral reputation captured.

stated in the Epitome of Livy's 11th book. *ductum in triumpho, securi percussit.* not know why anyone is incredulous. of Rome by doubting whether Pontius was

into prison; and the day which ends the command of the conqueror, ends also the life of the conquered.' It is not a question of special treachery, of violated treaty, or of desertion from Rome: to have been 'at the head of an enemy' in open war (just or unjust) is the whole offence: nor is there in all Roman history a single instance where a general, a king or a queen, who is led in triumph, ever reappears in life. Vercingetorix, the Gaulish prince who defended his native city against Cæsar's invasion, was kept in chains for years by Cæsar, until he could conveniently triumph: yet Cæsar was 'the gentlest and mildest of men,' according to Cicero; and certainly the Romans for the three centuries preceding are not likely to have been milder and more humane.

But to return to the earlier history. The Samnites, being Oscans, could not desire political union with Rome: they solely desired amity and good neighbourhood; but this was precisely the thing that it was impossible to get from Romans. It is very remarkable, that in a war with the Numantines of Spain, about 175 years later, an affair closely similar in every point to that of the Caudine Forks occurred, the Numantines showing the same mercy and magnanimity, the Romans the same want of good faith.

Since Rome had simultaneously given grave offence to the Etruscans by the appropriation of their soil, the Etruscans and Umbrians joined their cause with the Samnites; yet feebly at first. In the last Samnite war, the Etruscans and even the Gauls put forth great efforts, and the Samnite forces marched into Etruria, so that in one army were four nations, Etruscans, Samnites, Umbrians and Gauls. But the combination came too late, and Roman victory was only the more decisive in its result. A year before this great battle, the consuls Fabius and Decius had defeated a Samnite

army on its own soil. Livy tell us how they used their success, and adds no word of pity or disapproval (x. 15). 'The two consular armies, rambling in different directions, for five months together devastated everything. There were forty-five places in Samnium, in which Decius, eighty-six in which Fabius, had fixed his camp. They did not leave mere traces of the mounds and ditches, but far more signal memorials of emptiness and devastation in the regions around.' The system was continued by other consuls year after year. We may hesitate to believe the prodigious number of Samnites said by Livy to have been slain in the terrible series of battles, for apparently every man sold his life dearly. But we cannot doubt the wide starvation of women and children, and the enormous depopulation of entire districts by these fiendish destructions of crops, fruit trees, towns and villages. Livy's tale may assure us that the Caledonian chieftain in Tacitus spoke simple truth concerning Roman generals, when he said: 'They make a wilderness, and call it peace.' The method of Attila and the Huns was that by which Roman arms prospered. So Regulus in the first Punic war burned down all the beautiful villas of the wealthy Carthaginians to which he could reach, giving Hannibal the hint, by what processes alone the Romans themselves must be tamed. More savage and horrible still, if not more cruel in the result, was the practice of the Romans when they captured a city, according to their great admirer Polybius. He takes occasion to expound it, when his hero Scipio Africanus, the most specious of the Romans, had taken the great Spanish city New Carthage (Cartagena). 'When Publius [that is, Scipio] thought his force inside the walls was strong enough; forthwith, following the Roman custom, he sent the greater part of his soldiers

against the people of the city, commanding them to kill whomever they met, and spare no one, and not betake themselves to plunder, until the sign should be given. As I think, it is to inspire terror that the Romans follow this practice. Wherefore often, when they capture cities, one may see not only human beings massacred, but also the dogs cut into bits, and limbs of all other animals chopped off. But on that occasion this sort of thing was perfectly abundant, because of the hugeness of the population pent up in the city.' (*Polyb.* x. 15.) The historian utters no word of horror or disapproval, much as his own country had suffered from Roman violence. Q. Fabius Maximus in Spain cut off the hands of natives who had deserted from Roman garrisons, a method which, if directed against real and extreme ferocity of crime, might have its defence. But when the Numantines proved themselves warriors too formidable for the ordinary Roman generals, one might have hoped that the accomplished Scipio Æmilianus would have found some better mode of defeating or conciliating them. The tale in Appian shows how heartless the very best men of the Romans were. In Lutia, a flourishing town, the younger men desired to succour Numantia, about thirty miles distant, which Scipio was besieging. Scipio received notice of it, and suddenly appearing before Lutia with an overwhelming force, he demanded the surrender of those who had urged giving aid to the Numantines. By violent threats he got four hundred young men into his power, and cut off all their right hands. When the Numantines offered to capitulate, Scipio demanded surrender without terms, and would promise them nothing. Naturally they declined to submit to such mercy, and persevered amid all the horrors of famine into utter destruction. These were the men

who had repulsed a whole Roman army. At the beginning of the war in which they so often defeated the Romans, they had only 8,000 armed men, and Scipio besieged them with 60,000. Appian remarks that this Scipio had destroyed Carthage by express command of the Senate; but concerning Numantia no decree had been passed by Senate or people, and the city was neither large nor populous: hence the historian does not know whether such severity of Scipio was inspired by anger at its resistance, or by an idea that he would get more glory by it.

Another Roman general much praised for virtue and moderation, is Metellus Numidicus. He reduced Jugurtha to straits, chiefly by the system of hiring men to assassinate him: indeed, in war he had singularly little success to boast of. Appian tells of him, that when he had induced Jugurtha to surrender some Thracian and Ligurian deserters (men from whom no special allegiance to Rome could have been expected), 'Metellus cut off the hands of some; others he buried in the earth up to their middle, then shot at them from all round with arrows and darts, and finally, while they still breathed, set them on fire.' This Metellus is called by Sallust 'a great and wise man,' though he was of the opposite party to the historian. Metellus was succeeded in the same war by Marius, a coarse and violent plebeian. If he alone had acted ferociously, we might not wonder: but the comments of the accomplished historian on his conduct are the matter of chief importance. Marius was informed that across a great desert lay a populous city called Capsa, which he resolved to surprise. Having laden his horses chiefly with water bags, he made a sudden rapid march, and came upon the city before it had the least idea that it was accessible to an enemy. It surren-

dered itself at once, without resistance. Hereupon he killed all the adult males, plundered and burnt the city, led away the women and children and sold them as slaves, and divided all the booty among the soldiers. Upon this the historian calmly remarks: 'Such violation of the laws of war was not committed from avarice, nor from any guilt in the consul; but because the place was convenient for Jugurtha, and difficult of access to us. In fact, the African race is fickle and untrustworthy, and on former occasions had been found untractable alike to favours and to severity.' Thus men whom physical geography separated from Rome too widely to become part of the empire, were for that reason to be killed! It must be added, that the Jugurthine war, with its countless horrors, had no other avowed object, than to punish Jugurtha for the crime of murdering his two cousins—all of them being princes of a nation foreign to Rome, and nominally independent.

Reading such a comment from Sallust, we may be morally certain that the Romans two or three centuries earlier made no attempt to win the allegiance of Oscans or Etruscans by any process but that of brutal savagery. Even when they cross the Hadriatic, they show themselves morally inferior to the Ætoliens, then the most barbarous power in Greece; who, having been faithful and efficient allies of Rome, foolishly imagined, as did the Rhodians, that their services justified them in a demeanour of manly equality. But the Romans, like a tyrannical prince, never forgave one who had done them service and was proud of it. Quick and vehement war reduced the Ætoliens to severe straits; upon which they laid down their arms, and (in Greek phrase) 'gave themselves in trust to' the Romans. The consul instantly threw all the chief men into chains, who, in astonishment,

cried out (but in vain), 'We gave ourselves into trust, not into chains.' But to break the spirit was always the first object of the Romans, and at last they did it effectually everywhere.

The third Samnite war ended B.C. 290. It had been a war of vast exertion and great suffering to the Romans themselves. Three years had been marked by severe pestilence. The dead were left unburied, the fields were wasted and untilled, the population flocked into the towns. Great disaffection and, after some years, insurrection followed (indeed, it is said, a secession of the Roman plebs), which the dictator Hortensius appeased, by finally surrendering every barrier of aristocracy, and making 'the common people,' voting in their tribes, nominally sovereign. One might expect, that after such exhaustion, such misery, the Romans would at length take rest: indeed, we may find it hard to understand how they possibly could fight on. But a very few years sufficed; a phenomenon which cannot be understood without reference to the military institutions. Military colonisation and military conscription of the free cultivators of the soil lay at the bottom; and at the top the system of two consuls, who for one year were at the head of the national armies, and always wanted a war, to distinguish and enrich themselves.

There was no other career by which a Roman could rise to distinction, but through the army. Every young man in wealthy families was expected to serve ten years, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-eight. Even after Greece was opened to them and they could appreciate high culture, military eminence continued to dominate. Virgil, who called knowledge blessed; Virgil, whose heart was purity and his life gentleness; extols the Romans, as caring not to become

sculptors or orators or astronomers, but only rulers; caring only to impose law on others, to spare the subdued and wear out the proud by war. And to a Roman everyone seemed proud who was not submissive. Hence not only among themselves did no original genius arise, but even in long centuries of peace mind withered in all the subject nations. As among the Ottoman Turks there are noble treatises on morals and excellent rules of government, which yet avail nothing to the Empire, so neither could Roman jurisprudence be of avail, where the sword was law, and the civilian was trampled down.

No sooner had the Romans prevailed over an enemy, than (in their own phrase) they *gave peace* to the conquered, that is to say, they dictated the terms of peace: until they could do this, they persevered in war. Whatever the original cause of war, they enforced uniformly a large confiscation of land, often one-third of the enemy's territory. They selected the place most critical for military purposes, and planted it with a population speaking Latin. In some cases this was made a political extension of Roman soil, or what we call an Annexation. It then received the name of a Roman *Tribe*, i.e. parish, district or county, and the land was divided to settlers equally. But the Roman aristocracy invented another method, which kept the chief mass of confiscated lands as public property, of which the aristocracy made a convenience for themselves; giving to the settlers less land and a half franchise, entitled *Latin rights*. The settlement was then a *Latin colony*, though every settler might previously have been a full Roman citizen. Thirty of such Latin colonies were planted in various parts of Italy. Their towns were often, and perhaps generally, fortified with polygonal blocks of stone, which no battering

ram could shake. Although the Carthaginians used most elaborate arts of siege in Sicily and Spain, Hannibal never even attempted anything of the kind in Italy, and never captured the smallest Roman town except by intrigue or surprise. Roads also resting, at least in some cases, on polygonal blocks, which it was very difficult to tear up, were built (to build or fortify a road is the Latin phrase): thus the colonies, which Cicero calls 'the front ramparts of the Empire,' were defended and connected with the imperial centre. As nothing caused greater enmity in the old inhabitants than the seizing of their agricultural land, and planting fortified towns upon it, many a new colony lost its crops or its cattle; but the retaliation was swift and dreadful. Thus in the course of years the Roman tribes and the Latin colonies flourished amid desolation, and grew strong in men. Latium (as it were) spread over Italy, and old Latium became ever emptier. The thirty Latin colonies were staunch to Rome, all through the war of Hannibal. Their leading men all had easy access to the full Roman franchise, and were then eligible to the high offices. Every agriculturist was liable to conscription for the army. But, as early as the Punic wars, the conscription fell, not on Romans and Latins only, but on all conquered Italians whom the Romans admitted as 'citizens without suffrage,' that is, to total vassalage. Prefects were sent from Rome to govern them with power almost absolute. In the Roman army these Italians were called the Allies. They were officered by Romans, and, as elsewhere happens, discipline made them fight well, especially against an enemy from beyond Italy. Every Roman commander had power over the life of provincials, as well as over the lives of his subordinates in the army. He was attended by men with axes,

twelve or six; and at pleasure could produce terror in a whole population by beheading their chief men at his own discretion, with no court of appeal. Cicero correctly describes the Roman annexation of a country by the phrase: 'The province was cast beneath our axes.'

From such military institutions one could only expect hardness of heart, contempt for human life and human suffering. The eagerness of every new pair of consuls, annually elected, for a new war, was as a spark to a vast accumulation of fuel. After new insurrections in Samnium, they took the part of a Greek city against Lucania, and by violating their treaty with Magna Græcia, *not* to sail beyond a certain promontory, became embroiled with Tarentum, and hereby with Pyrrhus King of Epirus. In this new struggle the whole of southern Italy was conquered. It might have seemed at length time to heal the wounds of war, to provide for the cultivation of the soil, to conciliate the conquered, and thus to consolidate dominion. But Rome coveted extended rule, chiefly because it gave fresh materials for armies, fresh resources for new conquest, by which her aristocracy was enriched: hence a demand for soldiers crippled agriculture. Freemen were replaced by slaves; slaves could not be trusted to work. Cattle and grazing land supplanted men and crops, as fast as slaves were introduced, and the desolations of war were not healed in peace.

Hardly was the war against Pyrrhus ended, than it pleased the consuls to espouse the side of certain atrocious buccaneers in Sicily, with the express object of getting into a quarrel with the Carthaginians. The Senate was utterly ashamed of so bad a cause, and would not vote: yet (says Polybius) they wished for war with Carthage. If they had honestly put before the people the scandalous and odious

facts, their influence must have prevailed: but they left the consuls to seduce the populace by the shameless argument that a war would enrich the soldiers. The first Punic war was then fought for twenty-five years, without a week's intermission, with vaster resources and huger loss than ever war before, by sea as well as by land. Peace is hardly made, than they occupy Sardinia in a crisis of Carthaginian disaster; enter into war with Illyria (for which they cannot be blamed), and next with the Gauls of Lombardy, who resented the colonies planted on their soil. Hannibal's invasion of Italy, in revenge for the seizure of Sardinia, soon followed. Hannibal found nearly the whole peninsula, except the Latin colonies, hostile to Rome, and was soon at his ease with Etruscans, Umbrians, Oscans, and Greeks. As he remained master of the open field for seventeen years together, not once suffering defeat (so Polybius expressly tells us) he had abundant opportunity to retaliate with fire and plunder on Roman and Latin fields and homesteads. What mind can conceive the long anguish endured in this process? The Roman people never recovered from it. And when Hannibal was at length expelled, the turn for the other nations came; for Rome knew nothing of amnesty—neither the name nor the idea. Towns and populations, in proportion to the sympathy which they had shown to Hannibal, were punished by forfeiture of territory and of political rights, besides the beheading of their most spirited men.

If this process of lingering bloody devastating war had been closed by uniting all Italy in equal and free citizenship, the result would have been dearly bought, yet it might have been unspeakably precious. But the result was scarcely reached (a century and a half later), when citizenship almost lost its worth;

for freedom was no more. The Roman system of peace proved as ruinous as its wars. In fact, peace in Italy only meant perpetual war beyond Italy. Young Italians perished on every shore of the Mediterranean by thousands incessantly. The rural places became thinner and thinner (the phenomenon which shocked Tiberius Gracchus), and the little freeholds, left desolate, were invaded by the aristocratic tenants of public lands. Nothing more aggrieved the Italian soldiers than that they were exposed to flogging in the army, from which the Romans were exempt; hence for several generations disaffection spread wide and deep. The sufferings of Italy were diversified, a century after Hannibal, by the irruption of the Cimbri and Teutones. After their expulsion, the Italians might have been conciliated, if the Senate had been wise; but it did not look forward, and events rushed on precipitately, until all Oscan Italy blazed out into war (B.C. 90). Then at once to the Etruscans and Umbrians the full franchise was given, to prevent their joining the Oscans. The Senate, having command of the sea, could bring in Gaulish and Spanish auxiliaries; nay, even Mauritanian and Numidian are named; so after dreadful reverses Rome crushed the insurrection in the north. The terrible Mithridatic war was simultaneous. It was inaugurated by a universal massacre of Romans, men and women, in the Greek towns of Asia: a frightful mark how intense was the suffering of the Greeks under Roman rule; for they had never done anything like it before. Garrulous and faithless as they were, they for once kept a dreadful secret. In Rome itself the civil war of Marius and Sulla flamed out, before the other wars could be finished: and each party of the Romans then showed towards the

other the same heartless, remorseless cruelty into which they had long been trained against other nations. The civil war of Rome confused all parties in Italy. Etruria, the ally of Rome against the Oscans, suddenly found herself the enemy of Lucius Sulla, who trampled her out of political existence. The Samnites were finally crushed by him with barbarous slaughter after victory. All his political schemes and enactments were overthrown quickly after his death; Roman franchise was before long made universal; for everything was yielded after the war, which would have sufficed to prevent the war, and would have saved to Rome the lives of 300,000 soldiers. Upon the heels of these direful commotions, followed the ruinous war of Spartacus, and twenty years later the civil war of Cæsar, itself continuing not much less than twenty years, till Augustus Cæsar remained sole ruler.

Arnold comments with just severity on that stubbornness of the Roman Senate which has been much admired by historians;—Rome, forsooth, was never to make peace, until she could dictate the terms absolutely! A nation which acts on this principle is a nuisance and a curse to the world; for if other nations did the same, war could only end by total exhaustion. The horrors of war, instead of being kept down at their minimum, were hereby driven to their maximum. Of course the Romans never looked back to the *cause* of war; never considered whether it had originated from their own breach of treaties or of fundamental morality: but alas! seldom do the modern nations of Europe take account of this. But hereby the Roman successes were made immeasurably more noxious; for the better the enemy's cause, the stronger was his resistance, and the more cruel was his punishment. Moreover,

the Romans are admired for their refusal to exchange prisoners; which was an extreme cruelty and injustice to their own troops as well as to the enemy. Soldiers who had been made captive through the incompetence of their commander, were regarded as traitors to Rome and cowards. When Crassus, at his own will, without any public war voted by the people, chose to march into Parthia, and lost both his life and his army, the captive soldiers, despairing of return, at length married Parthian wives and reconciled themselves to a change of country. Thirty-two years later, Augustus Cæsar, moved by pride, not by pity, extorted from the Parthian king a restoration of these captives; but some of them slew themselves, others absconded. The jovial poet Horace treats it as a scandalous wickedness that rustics from Marsium and Apulia should ever submit to become Parthians. The Roman effort was, to establish as a fixed principle, what Thucydides denounces as intensifying all atrocity, 'Make ye everything else unimportant, in comparison to victory.'

It is often assumed that Roman conquest was arrested by the establishment of military monarchy, and that only the Republic was encroaching. Augustus Cæsar is supposed to have had a peaceful reign. But he added to the empire Egypt, Bulgaria, Servia, Pannonia, Rhætia, Styria, in short Austria and Switzerland; he completed the conquest of Spain and Gaul; he temporarily conquered Germany up to the Elbe; he planned to conquer Britain and Arabia, perhaps Persia (*Hor. Od.* iii. 5, 4); he sent an army into Armenia; finally in declining years his great disaster in Germany taught him that swamps and forests were not to be coveted. His successor Tiberius was peaceful on principle; otherwise, physical geography chiefly imposed a compara-

tive lull of conquest on the imperial policy.

Now comes the cardinal question to the historian and the moralist, What did Italy, and what did the world beyond Italy, gain by the Roman supremacy, so dearly purchased? Political union, especially of districts which have a geographical unity, is in itself so valuable, that when it is sought peaceably and candidly, on perfectly equal terms, diversity of language is not a permanent barrier. We see how well the Swiss go on together, in spite of French and German. Czech and Germans in Bohemia—Germans and Poles in Posen—Welsh and English in Wales—Magyars, Slovacks and Croats in Hungary—though the races have not had full equality, yet have maintained a tolerable content: nay, in France, the dialect of Languedoc is unintelligible to a mere Parisian, and German Alsace had by degrees become warmly attached to France. But Rome never sought for union on equal terms, and never yielded equality except by compulsion; that is to say, while Rome had any freedom herself. Raw violence and blind selfishness were her method and her motive; thus gaining the smallest result at the greatest expense. But, what is a more fatal condemnation still, the longer any district was subject to Roman rule, the worse was its condition. Its earliest conquests suffered the completest ruin. It amazed Pliny to contrast Latium as it had been, with Latium as he knew it. He recites the names (*Nat. Hist.* iii. 9) of twenty-one 'illustrious towns' of the old Latin league, and thirty-two more that were joined in the sacrifices on the Alban Mount, and then remarks: 'Thus fifty-three peoples have perished from the soil of ancient Latium without leaving a trace.' Elsewhere in three words he tells a secret: *Latifundia perdidere Italiam,*

'broad estates have been the ruin of Italy.' But it was the ravage of war, and covetous policy, which led to the broad estates. The country round Rome was in Cicero's time a desert, into which no prudent nobleman ventured without an armed guard. Lombardy alone (Cicero tells us) largely decided elections; for there the colonies were *newer*, and the country better peopled. Under the prudent rule of Tiberius Cæsar, Italy was still notoriously empty of 'men;' slaves did not count, but neither were their numbers at all commensurate. Sicily, the earliest province beyond Italy, was the most desolated. The strength of the Roman armies then came from every country rather than Italy. Gaul was at first an enormous addition to the strength of Rome; but, as Sismondi abundantly attests, Gaul became more and more miserable, weaker and more helpless, as time went on. In every province the cities were swollen with a huge population, while the rustic freemen dwindled in numbers, and were crushed in spirit. A small band of invading Germans could spread terror far and wide. The defence of every country was entrusted to standing armies, generally of foreigners, encamped on the soil; surely not a

regimen conducing to any permanent welfare of nations. That the institutions were fundamentally rotten, we have striking proof in the fact, that after the reign of four energetic emperors, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines (both models of good administration), the Empire was more ignorant, lower in art, taste and genius, than a century earlier, and less able to resist barbarian attack.

It is astonishing that learned men find a ground for extolling Roman conquest in the cry, 'How else could Europe have resisted the barbarians?' If Greece and Carthage had not been conquered by Rome, on the basin of the Mediterranean numerous powers would have kept one another in check, then as now. *Freedom* and *Law* would have been saved; and with them manly spirit. With the resources of civilised wealth, and unbroken national spirit, barbarians can always be repressed. Rome broke men's spirits, and would not endure that a provincial should ever have protection from a violent and tyrannical official. *Therefore* was Europe cursed by the barbarian invasion, with infinite anguish, and with an almost total wreck of the knowledge and culture which long centuries had worked out.

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