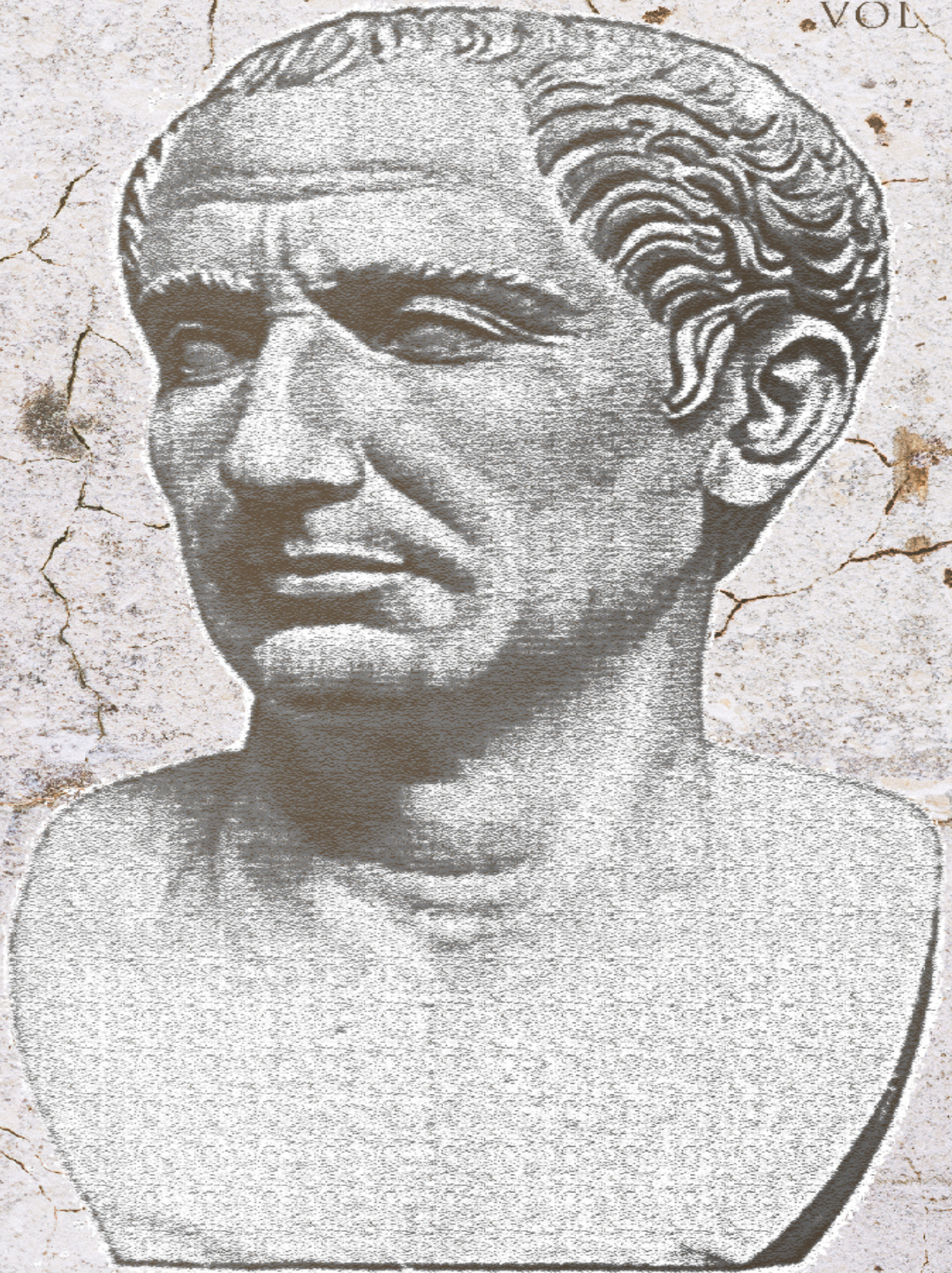


HISTORY OF JULIUS CAESAR

VOL. 1&2



Napoleon III Emperor of the French

Napoleon III Emperor of the French

History of Julius Caesar (Vol. 1&2)

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PREFACE.

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Historic truth ought to be no less sacred than religion. If the precepts of faith raise our soul above the interests of this world, the lessons of history, in their turn, inspire us with the love of the beautiful and the just, and the hatred of whatever presents an obstacle to the progress of humanity. These lessons, to be profitable, require certain conditions. It is necessary that the facts be produced with a rigorous exactness, that the changes political or social be analysed philosophically, that the exciting interest of the details of the lives of public men should not divert attention from the political part they played, or cause us to forget their providential mission.

Too often the writer represents the different phases of history as spontaneous events, without seeking in preceding facts their true origin and their natural deduction; like the painter who, in re-producing the characteristics of Nature, only seizes their picturesque effect, without being able, in his picture, to give their scientific demonstration. The historian ought to be more than a painter; he ought, like the geologist, who explains the phenomena of the globe, to unfold the secret of the transformation of societies.

But, in writing history, by what means are we to arrive at truth? By following the rules of logic. Let us first take for granted that a great effect is always due to a great cause, never to a small one; in other words, an accident, insignificant in appearance, never leads to important results without a pre-existing cause, which has permitted this slight accident to produce a great effect. The spark only lights up

a vast conflagration when it falls upon combustible matters previously collected. Montesquieu thus confirms this idea: "It is not fortune," he says, "which rules the world.... There are general causes, whether moral or physical, which act in every monarchy, raising, maintaining, or overthrowing it; all accidents are subject to these causes, and if the fortune of a battle—that is to say, a particular cause—has ruined a state, there was a general cause which made it necessary that that state should perish through a single battle: in a word, the principal cause drags with it all the particular accidents."¹

If during nearly a thousand years the Romans always came triumphant out of the severest trials and greatest perils, it is because there existed a general cause which made them always superior to their enemies, and which did not permit partial defeats and misfortunes to entail the fall of the empire. If the Romans, after giving an example to the world of a people constituting itself and growing great by liberty, seemed, after Cæsar, to throw themselves blindly into slavery, it is because there existed a general reason which by fatality prevented the Republic from returning to the purity of its ancient institutions; it is because the new wants and interests of a society in labour required other means to satisfy them. Just as logic demonstrates that the reason of important events is imperious, in like manner we must recognise in the long duration of an institution the proof of its goodness, and in the incontestable influence of a man upon his age the proof of his genius.

The task, then, consists in seeking the vital element which constituted the strength of the institution, as the predominant idea which caused man to act. In following this rule, we shall avoid the errors of those historians who gather facts transmitted by preceding ages, without properly

arranging them according to their philosophical importance; thus glorifying that which merits blame, and leaving in the shade that which calls for the light. It is not a minute analysis of the Roman organisation which will enable us to understand the duration of so great an empire, but the profound examination of the spirit of its institutions; no more is it the detailed recital of the most trivial actions of a superior man which will reveal the secret of his ascendancy, but the attentive investigation of the elevated motives of his conduct.

When extraordinary facts attest an eminent genius, what is more contrary to good sense than to ascribe to him all the passions and sentiments of mediocrity? What more erroneous than not to recognise the pre-eminence of those privileged beings who appear in history from time to time like luminous beacons, dissipating the darkness of their epoch, and throwing light into the future? To deny this pre-eminence would, indeed, be to insult humanity, by believing it capable of submitting, long and voluntarily, to a domination which did not rest on true greatness and incontestable utility. Let us be logical, and we shall be just.

Too many historians find it easier to lower men of genius, than, with a generous inspiration, to raise them to their due height, by penetrating their vast designs. Thus, as regards Cæsar, instead of showing us Rome, torn to pieces by civil wars and corrupted by riches, trampling under foot her ancient institutions, threatened by powerful peoples, such as Gauls, Germans, and Parthians, incapable of sustaining herself without a central power stronger, more stable, and more just; instead, I say, of tracing this faithful picture, Cæsar is represented, from an early age, as already aspiring to the supreme power. If he opposes Sylla, if he disagrees with Cicero, if he allies himself with Pompey, it is the result

of that far-sighted astuteness which divined everything with a view to bring everything under subjection. If he throws himself into Gaul, it is to acquire riches by pillage² or soldiers devoted to his projects; if he crosses the sea to carry the Roman eagles into an unknown country, but the conquest of which will strengthen that of Gaul,³ it is to seek there pearls which were believed to exist in the seas of Great Britain.⁴ If, after having vanquished the formidable enemies of Italy on the other side of the Alps, he meditates an expedition against the Parthians, to avenge the defeat of Crassus, it is, as certain historians say, because activity was a part of his nature, and that his health was better when he was campaigning.⁵ If he accepts from the Senate with thankfulness a crown of laurel, and wears it with pride, it is to conceal his bald head. If, lastly, he is assassinated by those whom he had loaded with benefits, it is because he sought to make himself king; as though he were to his contemporaries, as well as for posterity, the greatest of all kings. Since Suetonius and Plutarch, such are the paltry interpretations which it has pleased people to give to the noblest actions. But by what sign are we to recognise a man's greatness? By the empire of his ideas, when his principles and his system triumph in spite of his death or defeat. Is it not, in fact, the peculiarity of genius to survive destruction, and to extend its empire over future generations? Cæsar disappeared, and his influence predominates still more than during his life. Cicero, his adversary, is compelled to exclaim: "All the acts of Cæsar, his writings, his words, his promises, his thoughts, have more force since his death, than if he were still alive."⁶ For ages it was enough to tell the world that such was the will of Cæsar, for the world to obey it.

The preceding remarks sufficiently explain the aim I have in view in writing this history. This aim is to prove that, when Providence raises up such men as Cæsar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon, it is to trace out to peoples the path they ought to follow; to stamp with the seal of their genius a new era; and to accomplish in a few years the labour of many centuries. Happy the peoples who comprehend and follow them! woe to those who misunderstand and combat them! They do as the Jews did, they crucify their Messiah; they are blind and culpable: blind, for they do not see the impotence of their efforts to suspend the definitive triumph of good; culpable, for they only retard progress, by impeding its prompt and fruitful application.

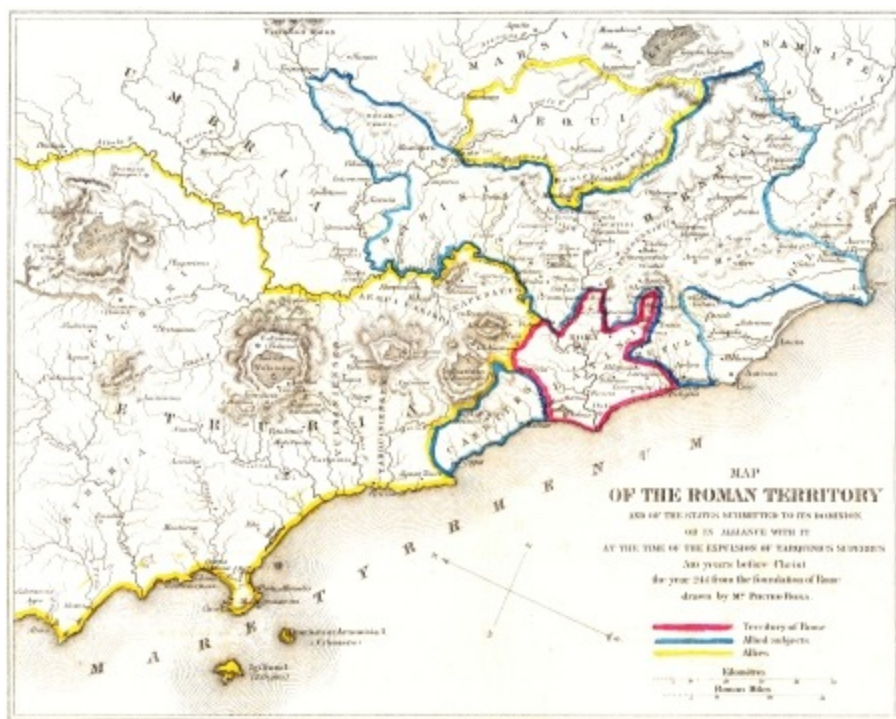
In fact, neither the murder of Cæsar, nor the captivity of St. Helena, have been able to destroy irrevocably two popular causes overthrown by a league which disguised itself under the mask of liberty. Brutus, by slaying Cæsar, plunged Rome into the horrors of civil war; he did not prevent the reign of Augustus, but he rendered possible those of Nero and Caligula. The ostracism of Napoleon by confederated Europe has been no more successful in preventing the Empire from being resuscitated; and, nevertheless, how far are we from the great questions solved, the passions calmed, and the legitimate satisfactions given to peoples by the first Empire!

Thus every day since 1815 has verified the prophecy of the captive of St. Helena:

“How many struggles, how much blood, how many years will it not require to realise the good which I intended to do for mankind!”⁷

Palace of the Tuileries, March 20th, 1862.

NAPOLEON.



BOOK I.

ROMAN HISTORY BEFORE CÆSAR.

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CHAPTER I. ROME UNDER THE KINGS.

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I. "In the birth of societies," says *The Kings* Montesquieu, "it is the chiefs of the *found the* republics who form the institution, and in *Roman* the sequel it is the institution which forms *Institutions*. the chiefs of the republics." And he adds,

"One of the causes of the prosperity of Rome was the fact that its kings were all great men. We find nowhere else in history an uninterrupted series of such statesmen and such military commanders."⁸

The story, more or less fabulous, of the foundation of Rome does not come within the limits of our design; and with no intention of clearing up whatever degree of fiction these earliest ages of history may contain, we purpose only to remind our readers that the kings laid the foundations of those institutions to which Rome owed her greatness, and so many extraordinary men who astonished the world by their virtues and exploits.

The kingly power lasted a hundred and forty-four years, and at its fall Rome had become the most powerful state in Latium. The town was of vast extent, for, even at that epoch, the seven hills were nearly all inclosed within a wall protected internally and externally by a consecrated space called the *Pomœrium*.⁹

This line of inclosure remained long the same, although the increase of the population had led to the establishment of immense suburbs, which finally inclosed the Pomœrium itself.¹⁰

The Roman territory properly so called was circumscribed, but that of the subjects and allies of Rome was already rather considerable. Some colonies had been founded. The kings, by a skilful policy, had succeeded in drawing into their dependence a great number of neighbouring states, and, when Tarquinius Superbus assembled the Hernici, the Latins, and the Volsci, for a ceremony destined to seal his alliance with them, forty-seven different petty states took part in the inauguration of the temple of Jupiter Latialis.¹¹

The foundation of Ostia, by Ancus Martius, at the mouth of the Tiber, shows that already the political and commercial importance of facilitating communication with the sea was understood; while the treaty of commerce concluded with Carthage at the time of the fall of the kingly power, the details of which are preserved by Polybius, indicates more extensive foreign relations than we might have supposed.¹²

II. The Roman social body, which *Social Organisation.* originated probably in ancient transformations of society, consisted, from the earliest ages, of a certain number of aggregations, called *gentes*, formed of the families of the conquerors, and bearing some resemblance to the clans of Scotland or to the Arabian tribes. The heads of families (*patresfamilias*) and their members (*patricii*) were united among themselves, not only by kindred, but also by political and religious ties. Hence arose an hereditary nobility having for distinctive marks family names, special costume,¹³ and waxen images of their ancestors (*jus imaginum*).

The plebeians, perhaps a race who had been conquered at an earlier period, were, in regard to the dominant race, in a situation similar to that of the Anglo-Saxons in regard to

the Normans in the eleventh century of our era, after the invasion of England. They were generally agriculturists, excluded originally from all military and civil office.¹⁴

The patrician families had gathered round them, under the name of *clients*, either foreigners, or a great portion of the plebeians. Dionysius of Halicarnassus even pretends that Romulus had required that each of these last should choose himself a patron.¹⁵ The clients cultivated the fields and formed part of the family.¹⁶ The relation of patronage had created such reciprocal obligations as amounted almost to the ties of kindred. For the patrons, they consisted in giving assistance to their clients in affairs public and private; and for the latter, in aiding constantly the patrons with their person and purse, and in preserving towards them an inviolable fidelity: they could not cite each other reciprocally in law, or bear witness one against the other, and it would have been a scandal to see them take different sides in a political question. It was a state of things which had some analogy to feudalism; the great protected the little, and the little paid for protection by rents and services; yet there was this essential difference, that the clients were not serfs, but free men.

Slavery had long formed one of the constituent parts of society. The slaves, taken among foreigners and captives,¹⁷ and associated in all the domestic labours of the family, often received their liberty as a recompense for their conduct. They were then named *freedmen*, and were received among the clients of the patron, without sharing in all the rights of a citizen.¹⁸

The *gens* thus consisted of the reunion of patrician families having a common ancestor; around it was grouped a great number of clients, freedmen, and slaves. To give an idea of the importance of the *gentes* in the first ages of

Rome, it is only necessary to remind the reader that towards the year 251, a certain Attus Clausus, afterwards called Appius Claudius, a Sabine of the town of Regillum, distinguished, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, no less for the splendour of his birth than for his great wealth, took refuge among the Romans with his kinsmen, his friends, and his clients, with all their families, to the number of five thousand men capable of bearing arms.¹⁹ When, in 275, the three hundred Fabii, forming the *gens Fabia*, offered alone to fight the Veians, they were followed by four thousand clients.²⁰ The high class often reckoned, by means of its numerous adherents, on carrying measures by itself. In 286, the plebeians having refused to take part in the consular comitia, the patricians, followed by their clients, elected the consuls;²¹ and in 296, a Claudius declared with pride that the nobility had no need of the plebeians to carry on war against the Volsci.²² The families of ancient origin long formed the state by themselves. To them exclusively the name of *populus* applied,²³ as that of *plebs* was given to the plebeians.²⁴ Indeed, although in the sequel the word *populus* took a more extensive signification, Cicero says that it is to be understood as applying, not to the universality of the inhabitants, but to a reunion of men associated by a community of rights and interests.²⁵

Political
Organisation.

III. In a country where war was the principal occupation, the political organisation must naturally depend on the military organisation. A single chief had the superior direction, an assembly of men pre-eminent in importance and age formed the council, while the political rights belonged only to those who supported the fatigues of war.

The king, elected generally by the assembly of the *gentes*,²⁶ commanded the army. Sovereign pontiff, legislator, and judge in all sacred matters, he dispensed justice²⁷ in all criminal affairs which concerned the Republic. He had for insignia a crown of gold and a purple robe, and for escort twenty-four lictors,²⁸ some carrying axes surrounded with rods, others merely rods.²⁹ At the death of the king, a magistrate, called *interrex*, was appointed by the Senate to exercise the royal authority during the five days which intervened before the nomination of his successor. This office continued, with the same title, under the Consular Republic, when the absence of the consuls prevented the holding of the comitia.

The Senate, composed of the richest and most illustrious of the patricians, to the number at first of a hundred, of two hundred after the union with the Sabines, and of three hundred after the admission of the *gentes minores* under Tarquin, was the council of the ancients, taking under its jurisdiction the interests of the town, in which were then concentrated all the interests of the State.

The patricians occupied all offices, supported alone the burden of war, and consequently had alone the right of voting in the assemblies.

The *gentes* were themselves divided into three tribes. Each, commanded by a tribune,³⁰ was obliged, under Romulus, to furnish a thousand soldiers (indeed, *miles* comes from *mille*) and a hundred horsemen (*celeres*). The tribe was divided into ten curiæ; at the head of each curia was a curion. The three tribes, furnishing three thousand foot soldiers and three hundred horsemen, formed at first the legion. Their number was soon doubled by the adjunction of new cities.³¹

The curia, into which a certain number of *gentes* entered, was then the basis of the political and military organisation, and hence originated the name of *Quirites* to signify the Roman people.

The members of the curia were constituted into religious associations, having each its assemblies and solemn festivals which established bonds of affiliation between them. When their assemblies had a political aim, the votes were taken by head;³² they decided the question of peace or war; they nominated the magistrates of the town; and they confirmed or abrogated the laws.³³

The appeal to the people,³⁴ which might annul the judgments of the magistrates, was nothing more than the appeal to the curia; and it was by having recourse to it, after having been condemned by the decemvirs, that the survivor of the three Horatii was saved.

The policy of the kings consisted in blending together the different races and breaking down the barriers which separated the different classes. To effect the first of these objects, they divided the lower class of the people into corporations,³⁵ and augmented the number of the tribes and changed their constitution;³⁶ but to effect the second, they introduced, to the great discontent of the higher class, plebeians among the patricians,³⁷ and raised the freedmen to the rank of citizens.³⁸ In this manner, each curia became considerably increased in numbers; but, as the votes were taken by head, the poor patricians were numerically stronger than the rich.

Servius Tullius, though he preserved the curiæ, deprived them of their military organisation, that is, he no longer made it the basis of his system of recruiting. He instituted the centuries, with the double aim of giving as a principle

the right of suffrage to all the citizens, and of creating an army which was more national, inasmuch as he introduced the plebeians into it; his design was indeed to throw on the richest citizens the burden of war,³⁹ which was just, each equipping and maintaining himself at his own cost. The citizens were no longer classified by castes, but according to their fortunes. Patricians and plebeians were placed in the same rank if their income was equal. The influence of the rich predominated, without doubt, but only in proportion to the sacrifices required of them.

Servius Tullius ordered a general report of the population to be made, in which every one was obliged to declare his age, his fortune, the name of his tribe and that of his father, and the number of his children and of his slaves. This operation was called *census*.⁴⁰ The report was inscribed on tables,⁴¹ and, once terminated, all the citizens were called together in arms in the Campus Martius. This review was called the *closing of the lustrum*, because it was accompanied with sacrifices and purifications named *lustrations*. The term *lustrum* was applied to the interval of five years between two censuses.⁴²

The citizens were divided into six classes,⁴³ and into a hundred and ninety-three centuries, according to the fortune of each, beginning with the richest and ending with the poorest. The first class comprised ninety-eight centuries, eighteen of which were knights; the second and fourth, twenty-two; the third, twenty; the fifth, thirty; and the sixth, although the most numerous, forming only one.⁴⁴ The first class contained a smaller number of citizens, yet, having a greater number of centuries, it was obliged to pay more than half the tax, and furnish more legionaries than any other class.

The votes continued to be taken by head, as in the *curiæ*, but the majority of the votes in each century counted only for one suffrage. Now, as the first class had ninety-eight centuries, while the others, taken together, had only ninety-five, it is clear that the votes of the first class were enough to carry the majority. The eighteen centuries of knights first gave their votes, and then the eighty centuries of the first class: if they were not agreed, appeal was made to the vote of the second class, and so on in succession; but, says Livy, it hardly ever happened that they were obliged to descend to the last.⁴⁵ Though, according to its original signification, the century should represent a hundred men, it already contained a considerably greater number. Each century was divided into the active part, including all the men from eighteen to forty-six years of age, and the sedentary part, charged with the guard of the town, composed of men from forty-six to sixty years old.⁴⁶

With regard to those of the sixth class, omitted altogether by many authors, they were exempt from all military service, or, at any rate, they were enrolled only in case of extreme danger.⁴⁷ The centuries of knights, who formed the cavalry, recruited among the richest citizens, tended to introduce a separate order among the nobility,⁴⁸ which shows the importance of the chief called to their command. In fact, the chief of the *celeres* was, after the king, the first magistrate of the city, as, at a later period, under the Republic, the *magister equitum* became the lieutenant of the dictator.

The first census of Servius Tullius gave a force of eighty thousand men in a condition to bear arms,⁴⁹ which is equivalent to two hundred and ninety thousand persons of the two sexes, to whom may be added, from conjectures, which, however, are rather vague, fifteen thousand artisans,

merchants, or indigent people, deprived of all rights of citizenship, and fifteen thousand slaves.⁵⁰

The comitia by centuries were charged with the election of the magistrates, but the comitia by curiæ, being the primitive form of the patrician assembly, continued to decree on the most important religious and military affairs, and remained in possession of all which had not been formally given to the centuries. Solon effected, about the same epoch, in Athens, a similar revolution, so that, at the same time, the two most famous towns of the ancient world no longer took birth as the basis of the right of suffrage, but fortune.

Servius Tullius promulgated a great number of laws favourable to the people; he established the principle that the property only of the debtor, and not his person, should be responsible for his debt. He also authorised the plebeians to become the patrons of their freedmen, which allowed the richest of the former to create for themselves a *clientèle* resembling that of the patricians.⁵¹

Religion.

IV. Religion, regulated in great part by Numa, was at Rome an instrument of civilisation, but, above all, of government. By bringing into the acts of public or private life the intervention of the Divinity, everything was impressed with a character of sanctity. Thus the inclosure of the town with its services,⁵² the boundaries of estates, the transactions between citizens, engagements, and even the important facts of history entered in the sacred books, were placed under the safeguard of the gods.⁵³ In the interior of the house, the gods Lares protected the family; on the field of battle, the emblem placed on the standard was the protecting god of the legion.⁵⁴ The national sentiment and belief that Rome would become one day the mistress of Italy

was maintained by oracles or prodigies;⁵⁵ but if, on the one hand, religion, with its very imperfections, contributed to soften manners and to elevate minds,⁵⁶ on the other it wonderfully facilitated the working of the institutions, and preserved the influence of the higher classes.

Religion also accustomed the people of Latium to the Roman supremacy; for Servius Tullius, in persuading them to contribute to the building of the Temple of Diana,⁵⁷ made them, says Livy, acknowledge Rome for their capital, a claim they had so often resisted by force of arms.

The supposed intervention of the Deity gave the power, in a multitude of cases, of reversing any troublesome decision. Thus, by interpreting the flight of birds,⁵⁸ the manner in which the sacred chickens ate, the entrails of victims, the direction taken by lightning, they annulled the elections, or eluded or retarded the deliberations either of the comitia or of the Senate. No one could enter upon office, even the king could not mount his throne, if the gods had not manifested their approval by what were reputed certain signs of their will. There were auspicious and inauspicious days; in the latter it was not permitted either to judges to hold their audience, or to the people to assemble.⁵⁹ Finally, it might be said with Camillus, that the town was founded on the faith of auspices and auguries.⁶⁰

The priests did not form an order apart, but all citizens had the power to enrol themselves in particular colleges. At the head of the sacerdotal hierarchy were the pontiffs, five in number,⁶¹ of whom the king was the chief.⁶² They decided all questions which concerned the liturgy and religious worship, watched over the sacrifices and ceremonies that they should be performed in accordance with the traditional rites,⁶³ acted as inspectors over the

other minister of religion, fixed the calendar,⁶⁴ and were responsible for their actions neither to the Senate nor to the people.⁶⁵

After the pontiffs, the first place belonged to the curions, charged in each curia with the religious functions, and who had at their head a grand curion; then came the flamens, the augurs,⁶⁶ the vestals charged with the maintenance of the sacred fire; the twelve Salian priests,⁶⁷ keepers of the sacred bucklers, named *ancilia*; and lastly, the *feciales*, heralds at arms, to the number of twenty, whose charge it was to draw up treaties and secure their execution, to declare war, and to watch over the observance of all international relations.⁶⁸

There were also religious fraternities (*sodalitates*), instituted for the purpose of rendering a special worship to certain divinities. Such was the college of the fratres Arvales, whose prayers and processions called down the favour of Heaven upon the harvest; such also was the association having for its mission to celebrate the festival of the Lupercalia, founded in honour of the god Lupercus, the protector of cattle and destroyer of wolves. The gods Lares, tutelar genii of towns or families, had also their festival instituted by Tullus Hostilius, and celebrated at certain epochs, during which the slaves were entirely exempt from labour.⁶⁹

The kings erected a great number of temples for the purpose of deifying, some, glory,⁷⁰ others, the virtues,⁷¹ others, utility,⁷² and others, gratitude to the gods.⁷³

The Romans loved to represent everything by external signs: thus Numa, to impress better the verity of a state of peace or war, raised a temple to Janus, which was kept open during war and closed in time of peace; and, strange to say,

this temple was only closed three times in seven hundred years.⁷⁴

V. The facts which precede are sufficient to convince us that the Roman Republic⁷⁵ had already acquired under the kings a strong organisation.⁷⁶ Its spirit of conquest overflowed beyond its narrow limits. The small states of Latium which surrounded it possessed, perhaps, men as enlightened and citizens equally courageous, but there certainly did not exist among them, to the same degree as at Rome, the genius of war, the love of country, faith in high destinies, the conviction of an incontestible superiority, powerful motives of activity, instilled into them perseveringly by great men during two hundred and forty-four years.

*Results
obtained by
Royalty.*

Roman society was founded upon respect for family, for religion, and for property; the government, upon election; the policy, upon conquest. At the head of the State is a powerful aristocracy, greedy of glory, but, like all aristocracies, impatient of kingly power, and disdainful towards the multitude. The kings strive to create a people side by side with the privileged caste, and introduce plebeians into the Senate, freedmen among the citizens, and the mass of citizens into the ranks of the soldiery.

Family is strongly constituted; the father reigns in it absolute master, sole judge⁷⁷ over his children, his wife, and his slaves, and that during all their lives: yet the wife's position is not degraded as among the barbarians; she enjoys a community of goods with her husband; mistress of her house, she has the right of acquiring property, and shares equally with her brothers the paternal inheritance.⁷⁸

The basis of taxation is the basis of recruiting and of political rights; there are no soldiers but citizens; there are

no citizens without property. The richer a man is, the more he has of power and dignities; but he has more charges to support, more duties to fulfil. In fighting, as well as in voting, the Romans are divided into classes according to their fortunes, and in the comitia, as on the field of battle the richest are in the first ranks.

Initiated in the apparent practice of liberty, the people is held in check by superstition and respect for the high classes. By appealing to the intervention of the Divinity in every action of life, the most vulgar things become idealised, and men are taught that above their material interests there is a Providence which directs their actions. The sentiment of right and justice enters into their conscience, the oath is a sacred thing, and virtue, that highest expression of duty, becomes the general rule of public and private life.⁷⁹ Law exercises its entire empire, and, by the institution of the *feciales*, international questions are discussed with a view to what is just, before seeking a solution by force of arms. The policy of the State consists in drawing by all means possible the peoples around under the dependence of Rome; and, when their resistance renders it necessary to conquer them,⁸⁰ they are, in different degrees, immediately associated with the common fortune, and maintained in obedience by colonies—advanced posts of future dominion.⁸¹

The arts, though as yet rude, find their way in with the Etruscan rites, and come to soften manners, and lend their aid to religion; everywhere temples arise, circuses are constructed,⁸² great works of public utility are erected, and Rome, by its institutions, paves the way for its pre-eminence.

Almost all the magistrates are appointed by election; once chosen, they possess an extensive power, and put in

motion resolutely those two powerful levers of human actions, punishment and reward. To all citizens, for cowardice before the enemy or for an infraction of discipline,⁸³ the rod or the axe of the lictor; to all, for noble actions, crowns of honour;⁸⁴ to the generals, the ovation, the triumph,⁸⁵ the best of the spoils;⁸⁶ to the great men, apotheosis. To honour the dead, and for personal relaxation after their sanguinary struggles, the citizens crowd to the games of the circus, where the hierarchy gives his rank to each individual.⁸⁷

Thus Rome, having reached the third century of her existence, finds her constitution formed by the kings with all the germs of grandeur which will develop themselves in the sequel. Man has created her institutions: we shall see now how the institutions are going to form the men.

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CONSULAR REPUBLIC.

(From 244 to 416.)

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I. The kings are expelled from Rome. They disappear because their mission is accomplished. There exists, one would say, in moral as well as physical order, a supreme law which assigns to institutions, as to certain beings, a fated limit, marked by the term of their utility. Until this providential term has arrived, no opposition prevails; conspiracies, revolts, everything fails against the irresistible force which maintains what people seek to overthrow; but if, on the contrary, a state of things immovable in appearance ceases to be useful to the progress of humanity, then neither the empire of traditions, nor courage, nor the memory of a glorious past, can retard by a day the fall which has been decided by destiny.

Civilisation appears to have been transported from Greece into Italy to create there an immense focus from which it might spread itself over the whole world. From that moment the genius of force and imagination must necessarily preside over the first times of Rome. This is what happened under the kings, and, so long as their task was not accomplished, it triumphed over all obstacles. In vain the senators attempted to obtain a share in the power by each exercising it for five days;⁸⁸ in vain men's passions rebelled against the authority of a single chief: all was

useless, and even the murder of the kings only added strength to royalty. But the moment once arrived when kings cease to be indispensable, the simplest accident hurls them down. A man outrages a woman, the throne gives way, and, in falling, it divides itself into two: the consuls succeed to all the prerogatives of the kings.⁸⁹ Nothing is changed in the Republic, except that instead of one chief, elective for life, there will be henceforward two chiefs, elected for a year. This transformation is evidently the work of the aristocracy; the senators will possess the government, and, by these annual elections, each hopes to take in his turn his share in the sovereign power. Such is the narrow calculation of man and his mean motive of action. Let us see what superior impulse he obeyed without knowing it.

That corner of land, situated on the bank of the Tiber, and predestined to hold the empire of the world, enclosed within itself, as we see, fruitful germs which demanded a rapid expansion. This could only be effected by the absolute independence of the most enlightened class, seizing for its own profit all the prerogatives of royalty. The aristocratic government has this advantage over monarchy, that it is more immutable in its duration, more constant in its designs, more faithful to traditions, and that it can dare everything, because where a great number share the responsibility, no one is individually responsible. Rome, with its narrow limits, had no longer need of the concentration of authority in a single hand, but it was in need of a new order of things, which should give to the great free access to the supreme power, and should second, by the allurements of honours, the development of the faculties of each. The grand object was to create a race of men of choice, who, succeeding each other with the same principles and the

same virtues, should perpetuate, from generation to generation, the system most calculated to assure the greatness of their country. The fall of the kingly power was thus an event favourable to the development of Rome.

The patricians monopolised during a long time the civil, military, and religious employments, and, these employments being for the most part annual, there was in the Senate hardly a member who had not filled them; so that this assembly was composed of men formed to the combats of the Forum as well as to those of the field of battle, schooled in the difficulties of the administration, and indeed worthy, by an experience laboriously acquired, to preside over the destinies of the Republic.

They were not classed, as men are in our modern society, in envious and rival specialities; the warrior was not seen there despising the civilian, the lawyer or orator standing apart from the man of action, or the priest isolating himself from all the others. In order to raise himself to State dignities, and merit the suffrages of his fellow-citizens, the patrician was constrained, from his youngest age, to undergo the most varied trials. He was required to possess dexterity of body, eloquence, aptness for military exercises, the knowledge of civil and religious laws, the talent of commanding an army or directing a fleet, of administering the town or commanding a province; and the obligation of these different apprenticeships not only gave a full flight to all capacities, but it united, in the eyes of the people, upon the magistrate invested with different dignities, the consideration attached to each of them. During a long time, he who was honoured with the confidence of his fellow-citizens, besides nobility of birth, enjoyed the triple prestige given by the function of judge, priest, and warrior.

An independence almost absolute in the exercise of command contributed further to the development of the faculties. At the present day, our constitutional habits have raised distrust towards power into a principle; at Rome, trust was the principle. In our modern societies, the depositary of any authority whatever is always under the restraint of powerful bonds; he obeys a precise law, a minutely detailed rule, a superior. The Roman, on the contrary, abandoned to his own sole responsibility, felt himself free from all shackles; he commanded as master within the sphere of his attributes. The counterpoise of this independence was the short duration of his office, and the right, given to every man, of accusing each magistrate at the end of it.

The preponderance of the high class, then, rested upon a legitimate superiority, and this class, besides, knew how to work to its advantage the popular passions. They desired liberty only for themselves, but they knew how to make the image glitter in the eyes of the multitude, and the name of the people was always associated with the decrees of the Senate. Proud of having contributed to the overthrow of the power of one individual, they took care to cherish among the masses the imaginary fear of the return of kingly power. In their hands the *hate of tyrants* will become a weapon to be dreaded by all who shall seek to raise themselves above their fellows, either by threatening their privileges, or by acquiring too much popularity by their acts of benevolence. Thus, under the pretext, renewed incessantly, of aspiring to kingly power, fell the consul Spurius Cassius, in 269, because he had presented the first agrarian law; Spurius Melius, in 315, because he excited the jealousy of the patricians by distributing wheat to the people during a famine;⁹⁰ in 369, Manlius, the saviour of Rome, because he had expended his fortune in relieving insolvent debtors.⁹¹

Thus will fall victims to the same accusation the reformer Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, and lastly, at a later period, the great Cæsar himself.

But if the pretended fear of the return of the ancient *régime* was a powerful means of government in the hands of the patricians, the real fear of seeing their privileges attacked by the plebeians restrained them within the bounds of moderation and justice.

In fact, if the numerous class, excluded from all office, had not interfered by their clamours to set limits to the privileges of the nobility, and thus compelled it to render itself worthy of power by its virtues, and re-invigorated it, in some sort, by the infusion of new blood, corruption and arbitrary spirit would, some ages earlier, have dragged it to its ruin. A caste which is not renewed by foreign elements is condemned to disappear; and absolute power, whether it belongs to one man or to a class of individuals, finishes always by being equally dangerous to him who exercises it. This concurrence of the plebeians excited in the Republic a fortunate emulation which produced great men, for, as Machiavelli says:⁹² "The fear of losing gives birth in men's hearts to the same passions as the desire of acquiring." Although the aristocracy had long defended with obstinacy its privileges, it made opportunely useful concessions. Skilful in repairing incessantly its defeats, it took again, under another form, what it had been constrained to abandon, losing often some of its attributes, but preserving its prestige always untouched.

Thus, the characteristic fact of the Roman institutions was to form men apt for all functions. As long as on a narrow theatre the ruling class had the wisdom to limit its ambition to promoting the veritable interests of their country, as the seduction of riches and unbounded power