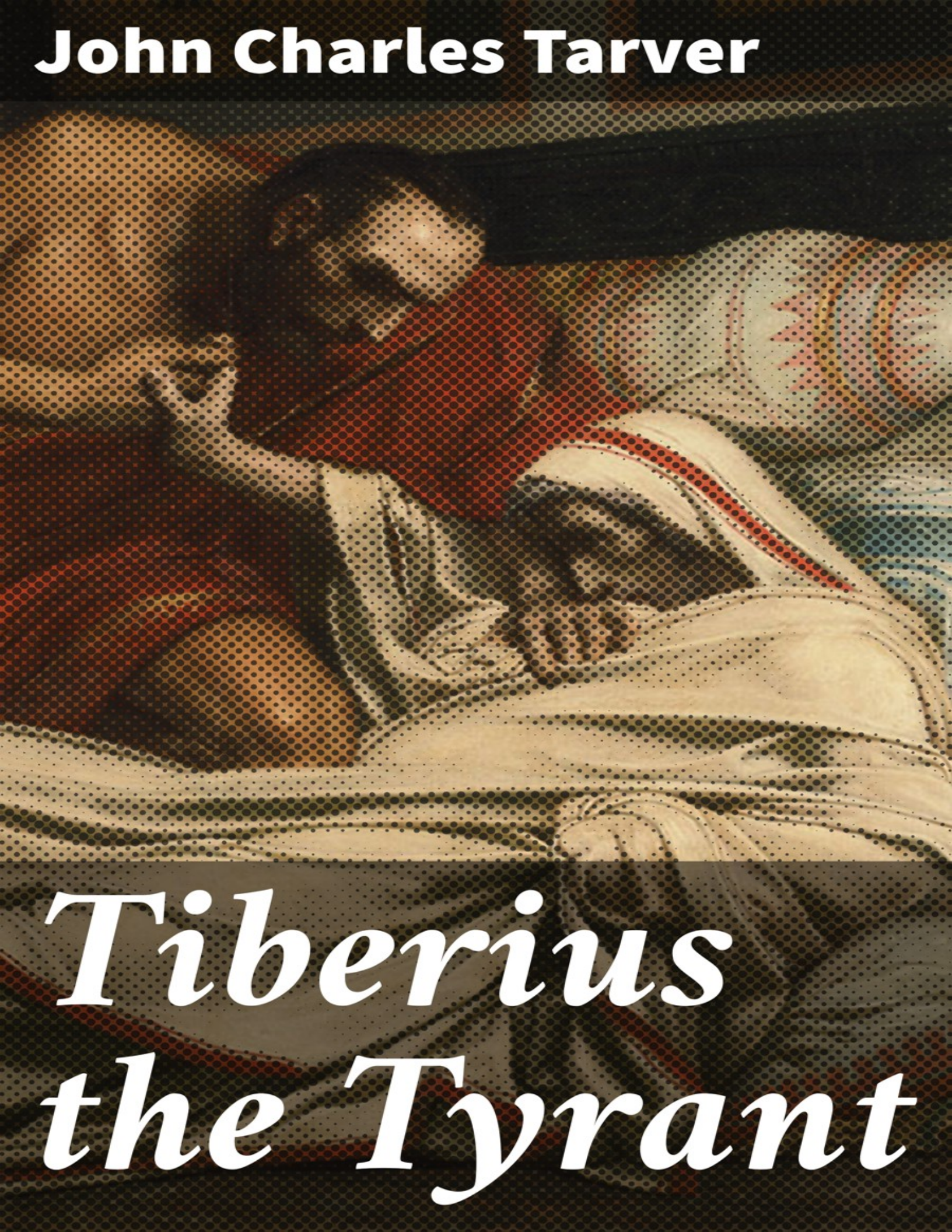
John Charles Tarver



Tiberius the Tyrant

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Table of Contents

Introduction

I
The Expansion of Rome and the Equestrian Order

Table of Contents

Used as we are to the terminology and conditions of hereditary monarchy and territorial sovereignty, we find it hard to appreciate, or even to express in terms of modern politics the difficulties which beset the statesmen of Rome at the death of Augustus; and we are further tempted to read into the story of that critical period ideas, which were only conceivable after the crisis was over; we can hardly avoid seeing those days in the light of subsequent events, or speaking of them in language which involves anachronism. Our information is principally derived from historians, who wrote a century and a half after the death of Julius Cæsar, when the Government of the Emperor and the Senate was established; but the position of the Emperor of those days was not the position of Augustus, and the Senate of Trajan was not the Senate of Tiberius. The experienced officials who formed the majority of the Senate of the Flavian Emperors were no longer the hereditary oligarchy by whose capacity Rome had been brought to be first among the city states of the world, but which was unequal to the task of organizing the Roman empire. The change had, however, escaped observation, and the warmest admirers of the Senate of the Republic were men whose position had

been won for them by the Emperors. Between the death of Augustus and the death of Vespasian we have but few contemporary historians; we have no letters of Cicero to throw light on the inner life of the statesmen of those days; there were private records, private letters, and private biographies; we can gather their tone from the extracts that have been preserved for us, but we have no opportunity of comparing them or checking them. Velleius Paterculus is the only contemporary historian of the reign of Tiberius, a portion of whose work still exists unabridged; and his narrative stops just at the period when we require most light —at the conspiracy of Sejanus—where there is also a gap in the annals of Tacitus. From the books of the New Testament we may infer much as to how the Empire appeared at a comparatively early period to the inhabitants of Greater Rome, much also from Josephus, a little from Philo, but we cannot re-people the Rome of Tiberius, as we can re-people the Rome of Augustus and the Rome of Cicero. Two facts stand clear to us from the pages of Tacitus, and in a less degree from those of Suetonius, that the Imperial Family was divided, that the old Roman princely houses never forgave the Empire, and that there was a Republican reaction in opinion at the centre of the Empire. History has repeated itself; just as the Curia of to-day cannot forgive the monarchy which represents the unity of Italy, so the Curia of the first century of the Christian era was irreconcilable to the monarchical constitution which represented the unity of the Empire. The Roman princes who wrote the memoirs of their houses for the edification of their children, and the delectation of their friends never inquired into the authority

of a story derogatory to the Emperors, and the one Emperor, who was never spared was Tiberius; it is no exaggeration to say that the madness of Caligula, and the monstrous freaks of Nero are dealt with tenderly by the writers of the silver age, if we compare the accounts of these with the deliberate malignity which attends on every word and action of Tiberius; and yet common sense tells us that only a very able man could have succeeded Augustus without breaking up his work. At the death of Augustus it was still possible that there would be no second Emperor; at the death of Tiberius the Roman Emperor had become an institution, the pivot upon which the whole machinery of civilized existence turned throughout the world. Hence the peculiar bitterness against Tiberius; the Curia felt that in his reign their last chance had gone, and more than this, that he had been in some sense a traitor to his own caste. Neither the Julian nor the Octavian families had been among the foremost houses of Rome, till the genius of the first Cæsar raised them from their comparative obscurity; but many of the most important events in the history of Rome, no less than her buildings, her roads, her aqueducts, and many of her public monuments, were associated with the Claudian stock, and the Livian, with which it was inter-married, was only less distinguished. Augustus had been tolerated, for his services to the State could not be disregarded, but some day Augustus would die; he did die; his power fell into the hands of the most prominent representative of the old Roman nobility; the opportunity for a restoration of the narrow oligarchy of the Republic came, and it passed away for ever. Two years after the death of Tiberius his lunatic successor

was stabbed by a soldier whom he had insulted; the State was left a few days without a head, and the Curia was so inanimate that it could neither restore its own rule, nor provide a new Emperor; it had to accept apparently at the dictation of the soldiers in the Prætorian barracks a man of letters who had hitherto been the laughing stock of the Imperial family.

The contemporary history of the years during which the Roman Empire took organic form is written in terms which tend to disguise the real significance of the change; our attention is attracted almost exclusively to the internal politics of the city of Rome; it is withdrawn from the politics of the Empire; the long struggle which ended by giving the whole civilized world one system of Government, which welded together in orderly association Italians, Greeks, Syrians, Africans, Egyptians, Spaniards, Gauls, Germans, and even Britons, is represented to us as being little more than a constitutional revolution inside the city; we see the external pressure, which forced a revised constitution upon the Roman oligarchy, but we only see it dimly; no Roman historian has been at the pains to trace out the process by which the civil administration of the Roman Empire was developed—surely no less wonderful an achievement than the conquests of the Roman generals. We have seen other conquerors, and more brilliant feats of arms than any Roman general achieved, but we have not seen any other nation impress its language and its law upon the populations of so wide an area or so permanently. Alexander did much, but the effects of the conquests of Rome have been more lasting than those of the conquests of Alexander;

except in Asia there is not a civilized people in the world which does not somewhere or other bear the impress of Rome, or cannot trace the pedigree of its religion and its law back to the Italian city. This great destiny was concealed from the makers of the Empire, but the immediate possibility, the consolidation of the conquests of Rome, and the permanent establishment of order over the whole area which drains into the Mediterranean was present to their minds; unfortunately the makers of the Empire have been mostly silent, and the only voices which have reached our ears are those of men who could only grasp the great idea intermittently, if at all, or who were annoyed by its insistence. Under Augustus for the first time the Empire became conscious, Virgil and Horace spoke in terms of the larger conception, but the grip of the Roman oligarchy has never relaxed its hold upon the imagination of educated men.

Conquest did not involve in ancient times any responsibility towards the conquered; war was believed to be, and was, a profitable investment; as Rome pushed her conquests, the organization which she gave to the conquered peoples was one which suited her own purposes, she did not consult their convenience, external pressure alone forced her to modify the conditions of conquest which were universally accepted by the ancient world; very gradually and very reluctantly she broke down the barriers which surrounded the city state of antiquity, and admitted first her immediate neighbours, and lastly the whole of Italy to some sort of constitutional communion with her. For a long time war had been forced upon Rome, the invasions of

the Gauls, the domination of Carthage in the Mediterranean, the invasion of Pyrrhus, the invasion of Hannibal, and lastly the invasion of the Cimbrians and Teutons involved her in a succession of defensive wars; the city itself could not find a sufficient supply of soldiers, and the price which Rome had to pay for being allowed to recruit over Italy was the partial incorporation of the Italians in the State. Wars of defence were accompanied and followed by wars of aggression; success encouraged speculation; after the happy issue of the second war with Carthage the Roman oligarchy began seriously to turn its attention to the Eastern Mediterranean, and another century found it entering upon the heritage of Alexander. This is the turning point of Roman history; from this time onwards a new conception occupied the minds of ambitious Romans; alongside of the ideal of the city State there existed the ideal of an extended Empire, of a world-wide organization, of something more permanent than conquest; alongside of the men who dreamed of Platonic republics in which perfect justice would be realized, there grew up men who formed a yet grander and no less civilized ambition. Pompey triumphed over Mithridates wearing a robe which had been worn by Alexander; Augustus used a head of Alexander for his signet ring; it was by the example of Alexander that Cleopatra seduced Mark Antony.

Alexander was no vulgar adventurer; he solved a problem which had hitherto baffled the most highly civilized race of the ancient world; he combined the city state of the Greeks with the Imperial organization of the Persians; and though, when the Romans came into close contact with Alexander’s Empire it had fallen into fragments, each

fragment preserved the impress of the great whole, and Roman generals could converse at Pergamus, at Antioch, or at Alexandria, with men trained to administer states in terms of the wider conceptions derived from Alexander and possibly through him from Aristotle; at the same time many men accustomed to deal with financial problems on a large scale passed into the service of the Roman conquerors as slaves or honoured dependants.

While the possibility of a beneficent organization of the conquests of Rome was thus presented to one order of mind, to another the same events introduced another set of ideas; while some Romans studied Alexander in the vestiges of his work, others entered into the full possession of the Greek historians and philosophers; the ideals of the Greek city state were replanted in a virgin soil, and the Romans for the first time began to theorise about their own Constitution. The men who were taken captive by Plato and Demosthenes did not see that Rome had long outgrown the conditions under which the theories of these men were applicable to her political life. The true liberal policy was the policy of Alexander, the false liberal policy unintentionally gave a new lease of life to the blind selfishness of the narrow oligarchy which had governed Rome. The daggers which struck down Cæsar were aimed by admirers of Verres no less than by students of Plato; and Cicero’s effusions over the merits of the tyrannicides were effectively stopped by the unforeseen but necessary emergence of Mark Antony, a tyrant of the conventional type.

From the moment when a year’s office as Consul or Prætor in the city of Rome was followed by a term of

practically irresponsible government in a dependency, the Civic Constitution was doomed; the magistracies of Rome were now of minor importance compared with the career to which they opened the way; it was impossible any longer to discuss the politics of Rome in terms of the politics of Athens or Plato’s Republic with any practical advantage, and indeed without inviting anarchy; but it was highly convenient to the hereditary aristocracy of Rome and its adherents that it should pose as representing the principles of Harmodius and Aristogiton; it found a clever man of letters and a skilled advocate, who had his own reasons for falling in with this conception, and who perpetuated it long after the facts had demonstrated its hollowness even to himself. Cicero as a politician is alternately a tragic and a comic figure; he is comic because he lived complacently in a world of his own imagining, which seldom lost its hold on his imagination, in spite of the rudest shocks, for it satisfied the promptings of his child-like vanity; he is tragic because he had his moments of seeing the realities clearly, and because combined with his vanity there was a genuine admiration for fine conduct, which led him to face danger manfully in his old age, and in some sense invite the death of a political martyr; he is yet further tragic, because he became the father of an equally blind posterity of politicians, who wasted their energies in spoiling the work of men of greater enlightenment; it is perhaps due to Cicero, more than to any other man, that the city of Rome has persistently filled a larger space than that of the Roman Empire in the works of subsequent historians.

In an expanding community the actual facts of the administration are seldom in exact correspondence with the forms; apparent rigidity, real elasticity, enable business to be carried on in accordance with the claims of new social factors without any sense of insecurity. The Roman, like the Englishman, preferred making new laws to repealing old ones; and when he made a fresh departure, he was at pains to represent it as a development of something by which it had been preceded; in both cases this profound respect for the historical aspect of law has been the foundation of national greatness; it has been extended beyond the races in which it originated, and in the case of England, as in that of Rome, has resulted in an exceptionally successful government of alien communities; laws and customs which are sanctified by immemorial usage appeal to the sympathy of the Englishman and command his respect; it was the same with the Roman. England has had her periods of aberration when she has given way to the proselytizing tendencies of sections of her population, but the broad lines of her policy in dealing with subject nationalities have followed the principle of accepting the existing conditions; in the same way Rome accepted the laws and customs of the Eastern Mediterranean and of Western Europe; she supplied a common law for her Empire, which applied where the local law had no application; its excellence was such that it became predominant, but she did not insist on remodelling every community over which she held supreme power in terms of her own constitution. This respect for antiquity and adherence to established forms has resulted in a misrepresentation of some of the facts of Roman

constitutional development, and especially of those which concern the development of the Empire, which is in the highest degree embarrassing to the student of the period in which the change took place. There was a time when the constitution of Rome and her political history differed little from that of any other city state of antiquity, but it would not be easy to state when that period began or ended; of one thing we may be quite certain, viz., that after the destruction of Carthage and the completion of the first great period of conquest in the Eastern Mediterranean in 145 B.C., the political life of the city of Rome was no longer comparable to that of any other city state; the forms remained, and the faith in the forms remained, but the substance was gone. There is for instance no term so misleading as one which was seldom out of the mouth of Cicero, “the Roman people”; there unquestionably was a time when the Roman people was an organized part of the Roman constitution, when it voted in an orderly fashion according to a property qualification for the election of certain magistrates, and the ratification of certain laws; when it voted according to a residential organization for the election of other magistrates, and to pass other laws; but the forms of popular government were maintained long after the reality of popular government had departed. It suited the convenience of noble agitators, such as the Gracchi, to see in the rabble of the streets the Comitia Tributa, it was equally convenient to the princely houses to dignify their own private arrangements with the forms of an election in the Comitia Centuriata, it was particularly pleasing to the middle class Roman to share in the spoils of

the Empire by exacting direct or indirect payment for his vote, and so the forms were maintained; an outward deference to them answered everybody's purpose, but the real political power and the real political struggles lay outside and beyond them. The Roman people, as a body of civilians, could riot, as the raw material of the Roman army it could strike, it was necessary to keep it in good humour, and to allow it to regard itself as an organized part of the constitution, as a body of free and independent electors; but to accept its own estimate of itself as an important factor in the politics of the Empire is to misread history; popular Government in any sense which would commend itself to the intelligence of an Englishman of to-day, or of an Athenian who listened to Demosthenes, did not and could not exist in the Rome which had begun to control the destinies of the Mediterranean; it was a legal fiction which it was convenient to maintain, the attempt to make it once again a reality resulted in the revolutionary excesses which preceded the Empire.

The real government of Rome was in the hands of the Senate, an assembly of nobles and capitalists, who shared between themselves the profits of the Roman conquests. Like all such assemblies, the senators had their good times and their bad; between the second and the third wars with Carthage they so conducted themselves as to impress the imagination of the civilized world; the successes of their armies, their fidelity to engagements, their comparative moderation in conquest, were the wonder of men; admiration for these qualities tempted Judas Maccabæus to engage their assistance in checking the aggressions of the

Greek rulers of Antioch; their mediation was invited by the chieftains of Gaul; it was recognized as an honour to them to be called friends of the Roman people, and the honour was attended by practical advantages. Success was followed by intoxication, and the time came when the sense of responsibility was lost in the secure accumulation of riches, and when the unscrupulous venality of the Senate became a by-word. Then the power of Rome seemed to be tumbling to decay; Jugurtha defied her in Africa, Mithridates in Asia, Spain threatened to organize itself against her under a Roman general, the Cimbrians and Teutons swarmed over her borders, her Italian allies made war upon her, she could with difficulty suppress an organized revolt of her rural slaves, at home she was at the mercy of the savage mob in her streets; out of this confusion she emerged victorious, and greater than before. The reason is a simple one; during her period of good behaviour Rome had become the financial capital of the world; she was indispensable, and when she could no longer help herself, others were ready to help her. Left to itself the Roman Senate would have brought ruin on the Roman Empire in the first half of the century preceding the Christian era; but it was not left to itself; its incompetence involved the ruin of too many other interests. We have the story of the Roman generals in full, but nobody has yet written the story of the Roman bankers; we are accustomed to think of the Romans as soldiers and lawyers, we forget that they were also shrewd financiers; with the Romans, as with ourselves, commerce usually preceded the flag; the soldier completed the work begun by the capitalist. We are told that the first war with Mithridates began with a

massacre of 80,000 Roman citizens in Asia Minor; the figures are probably exaggerated, but they are not questioned by any Roman historians; it did not appear improbable to them that the Roman residents in Asia should have been so numerous at that comparatively early date; and though part of the country was already a Roman province, and we may assume that the popular fury was largely directed against collectors of taxes, even the rich towns of Asia Minor can hardly have acquired the services of so large a body of revenue officials.

The political genius of a nation is shown by nothing so much as the success with which it supplements the deficiencies of its formal constitution by informal but recognized agencies. Rome was provided with a machinery for collecting and distributing her domestic revenue; she had a treasury and a staff of clerks, but she had no separate civil service for the Empire; the constitution of a city state did not admit of such a thing, and the collection of the revenue of a province was left to semi-private agencies, its taxes being farmed. At fixed periods the right of collecting the taxes assigned to the public treasury from the provinces was sold by public auction; the purchaser paid a lump sum to the treasury, and made the best of his bargain in the provinces; the speculation was an exceedingly profitable one, but its profits threatened to disappear owing to excessive competition among the farmers of taxes; in order to eliminate competition the farmers of taxes formed themselves into a close corporation, the taxes were bought in the name of an individual, but in fact by an association.

Alongside of the Senate there thus gradually grew an organized body which formed the permanent civil executive of the provinces, the body which was known as the Equestrian Order. As in our own history, so in Roman history, the value of terms alters from period to period, almost from year to year; it would therefore be rash to declare that at any one period every titular Roman knight was an active member of the Financial Corporation which farmed the taxes, or that the collection of revenue was the sole business of the corporation as a whole, or of its individual members. Again, that differentiation of functions in the case of the individual, or the association, which is to us almost a law of existence, was unknown to the ancients, or worked on lines of division not readily comprehensible to ourselves; there was, for instance, nothing absurd to Roman conceptions in sending out an advocate like Cicero to govern a frontier province, and placing him on active service in command of an army, for civil, military, and judicial functions of the highest responsibility were exercised simultaneously or successively by the same individual as a matter of course. But though it is difficult to draw fixed lines, there is quite sufficient evidence to warrant us in asserting that the Equestrian Order held a recognized position in the State, that it practically formed the Civil Service of the provinces, that its interests were repeatedly opposed to those of the Senate, that it roughly represented Greater Rome, as opposed to the city of Rome, that through all the disturbances of the Civil Wars it kept the machinery of Government outside Italy in working order, that it was the channel through which the leading provincials gradually

passed into the Civil Administration, and that eventually the Imperial Executive was built up on the foundation, not of the Senate, but of the Equestrian Order, and the Imperial Household.

The origin of the Equestrian Order is to be found in the Servian Constitution; we may not altogether believe in the Servian Constitution, which, as it is presented to us in the pages of Livy, looks like the clever guess of an antiquarian who was familiar with the Constitution provided for Athens by Cleisthenes, but we have no difficulty in believing that there was a time, when every citizen possessed of a certain amount of property was obliged to keep a horse for the service of the State, and was expected to take the field as a cavalry man; or that he was allowed certain distinctions of dress, and other privileges indicating public consideration; it is also easy to imagine the process by which the yeomanry force so constituted was replaced by more efficient cavalry soldiers, and the military significance of the Equestrian Order disappeared, while the name remained; of the intermediate steps which followed we have no detailed account; in theory every Roman citizen possessing more than a definite amount of property was entitled to be enrolled in the list of the Equestrian Order by the Censor, and if his property reached a yet higher value to be similarly called to the Senate, but the practice must have been different; not every man became a senator or a knight, who had the necessary property qualification, though demonstrated want of means might be a disqualification, and entail a loss of position when the Censor was rigorous, or when an excuse was wanted for reducing the numbers of

the Senate or the Order, or setting aside an undesirable personality. The time came when two political careers were open to the ambitious Roman; he could become a candidate for Public Office, and under the forms of public election eventually gain admission to the Senate through the Quæstorship, or he could be enrolled on the lists of the Equestrian Order. In the first case he might eventually become Prætor, Consul, and then Viceroy of a Province; in the second he became a member of the great financial corporation which supplied the Civil Service of the Empire; in the first case he might command armies and figure prominently before the eyes of men; in the second he might make a large fortune, but would not enjoy some of the sweets of power which attract ambitious men.

The relative positions are fairly comparable to those of an English member of Parliament, and an English clerk in a Public Department in the days before the Reform Bill; a young Englishman of good position could be nominated in those days by an influential friend either to a seat in the House of Commons, or to a subordinate place in one of the Executive Departments; in the former case he might ultimately become Prime Minister, in the latter Permanent Head of his department. In the one case he would be widely known and possibly respected; in the latter he might do work of the highest public utility, and never be heard of outside official circles.

To be successful in a senatorial career was an expensive and arduous process; it was necessary to pay a heavy initiatory fee in the form of direct and indirect bribery to the electors; it was then necessary to force a way into the inner

circle, which distributed the honours and emoluments; a new man could only do so by showing that he had a very strong force of public opinion behind him, and that he could make himself felt; admission to the Equestrian Order was less costly, and there was less risk; in consequence the career was deliberately chosen by large numbers of Romans, whose wealth and family connections might have tempted them to enter the ranks of the Senate; further, admission to the Equestrian Order was less jealously guarded; it probably had its hierarchy, and its inner circle like all similar organizations; and the summons of the Censor was possibly a mere formality, the nominations made by him having been previously determined by others; but it was much easier for an Italian, and eventually for a Provincial to become a Roman Knight than a Roman Senator. A Provincial, who had once secured the status of a Roman citizen, could secure the further dignity of a Roman Knight by processes which we may surmise, but cannot definitely prescribe; once a Roman Knight, he might look forward to a share in the financial administration of the provinces during the reign of the Senate, and to a Governorship under the Emperors.

It would be a mistake to assume that all Roman Knights were members of the Civil Service, that is to say, that they all belonged to the hierarchy which farmed the taxes and managed other business necessarily connected therewith; there were doubtless many Equestrians whose dignity was chiefly titular; others who as private financiers and contractors only were connected with the Order, but the continued allusions to the status of “Eques Romanus,” which

multiply as the Empire takes shape, forbid us to believe that this was in all cases a purely honorary dignity, which could be assumed by any wealthy man on application to the Censor. Were there no other evidence, the fact that we find the Equestrian Order ranged formally against the Senate at the beginning of the great constitutional struggle which ended in the Empire, shows that we have to do with no haphazard collection of wealthy individuals, distinguished from their fellow-citizens by an honorary precedence.

Cicero made his first triumphant appearance as a public man at Rome, when he conducted the case against Verres; whatever may have been the misconduct of Verres, and it was undoubtedly very serious, the action against him was not promoted by pure philanthropy; the case was a test case, it was part of a campaign directed against the provincial administration of the Senate by the Equestrian Order, whose interests were imperilled by rapacious Viceroys. The only check upon the proceedings of a Roman Proconsul lay in the possibility of bringing an action against him for improper exactions; in the purer days of the Senatorial administration such an action when instituted by the provincials might be successful, and the possibility of its success might be a deterrent, because though the offending Senator was in such a case tried by his peers, those peers, even if influenced by no higher motive, were interested in preventing the exhaustion of a province; any one of them might succeed to the wasted estate; the Proconsul who succeeded a Verres was not likely to make much out of his office, for he found the estate stripped. As the Senate became reckless, having found fresh and apparently

inexhaustible pastures in the East, scant attention was paid to the complaints of provincials till their cause was taken up by the Equestrian Order.

The Roman Proconsul was supreme Judge and supreme executive authority in his province; he imposed, sanctioned, and sometimes encouraged public works, such as roads, harbours and buildings; he regulated the mutual relations of the different independent communities within the area over which his authority extended; he had ample opportunities for indirect and direct extortion, but he did not collect the taxes; the collection of revenue was in the hands of the farmers of the taxes, that is to say, as time went on, of the Equestrian Order. A divergency of interests soon declared itself: if the Proconsul harried the province unmercifully, the tax gatherer found little or no revenue to collect, and could not reimburse himself. The Proconsul had the unfair advantage, that cases between the collectors of revenue and the provincials were tried in his court; thus the farmers of the taxes found that they had an interest in promoting appeals to Rome, and in aiding the provincials to bring actions for extortion against the provincial Governors at the end of their term of office. So long as the Senate acted equitably no great harm was done, but as soon as the Senate was found invariably to acquit its own members, the Equestrian Order became ranged formally against it, and pressed for reforms; it succeeded for a time in getting these case tried before a court composed entirely of its own members; Sulla the reactionary gave back the jurisdiction to the Senate. One consequence of the trial of Verres was the establishment of a mixed court composed partly of

Senators, partly of Equestrians. The net result was that the Equestrian Order formed an organized party, commanding enormous financial resources, in sympathy with the provinces, and more thoroughly conversant with the details of provincial business than the Senate. Thus eventually the Equestrian Order came to represent the party of the Empire, as opposed to the Senate which was the party of the ancient oligarchy of the city; for with the internal politics of the city the Order was only concerned so far as they affected or were affected by the standing quarrel between itself and the Senate. There were men of high moral standards at Rome both in the Senate and in the Order, who wished to deal justly with the provinces; but they were few. Either party left to itself would have plundered the provincials unmercifully; circumstance ruled that the selfishness of the Equestrians should be enlightened, that of the Senate unenlightened, while financial relations with men of business in the provinces, with skilled Greeks and Jews, taught the Order sounder views of political economy than were open to the average Senator. However oppressive the methods of the Equestrian Order might appear when judged by modern standards, they commended themselves to the favour of antiquity; the Roman Civil Service worked better than its predecessors, otherwise there would have been no Roman Empire. The ultimate collector of taxes is never a popular character, and the Roman Publicans enjoyed to the full the unpopularity which has been the fate of their brethren at all times, and in all places; but the revenues of the provinces were collected by the Roman Knights with less friction, and less capriciously, than by the representatives of Perseus of

Macedon, or Mithridates, or Antiochus; and in their own interests the Equestrian Order discountenanced other extortioners, whether high-placed officials or private adventurers. When the Civil Wars came the Order was interested in finding a counterpoise to the Senate, and eventually in arresting the progress of anarchy. Cæsar backed by the Order could confidently face the Senate and Pompeius; similarly his nephew having once gained its confidence was a match for the spendthrift Marcus Antonius. The Cæsars and the Order were of one mind in putting an end to the Senatorial misgovernment of the provinces, therefore Greater Rome recognized its champions in the Cæsars, and supported the organization of which they were the head without stopping to inquire whether the officials whom they employed were Freedmen or of the purest Roman nobility.

In order not to form a mistaken conception of the process by which the Roman Empire was built up, it is important to bear in mind that the term “province” only gradually acquired the territorial significance with which it is now inseparably associated. Any responsibility outside the city of Rome and the domain governed directly by the annually elected magistrates of the city might be called “a province.” The “province” at one time assigned to Pompeius was the duty of repressing piracy throughout the Mediterranean. The territorial aspect of a “province” was in fact accidental. The first territorial provinces, Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, happened to be islands, and a natural limitation was thus fixed to the responsibilities of the Roman Governors, whose duty was to maintain the Roman interests in Sicily and the

other islands against the aggressions of Carthage; the result was the unification of Sicily, and the realization of a political condition closely resembling though not absolutely identical with the modern conception of a province. As the dominions of Alexander successively passed into the hands of the Senate, it was convenient to use previously existing boundaries for the delimitation of the several spheres of influence for which the Roman Proconsuls were responsible, and thus a territorial significance increasingly attached to the words province and provincial. Similarly modern usage perverts the significance of the word “provincial” as applied to the inhabitants of those cities which passed under the protectorate of Rome. There was not quite the same quality of disparagement in the ancient use of the words as in the modern. The units of the Roman Empire were not originally territories, but individual cities, then, as the conquests of the Roman Generals extended to peoples not living under the city organization of the Greeks, Italians and Phœnicians, tribes or nationalities. Rome was first the universal peacemaker; only at a later time and by a gradual process did she become the universal ruler, and the centre of a hierarchy of officials. Such centralization of the details of Government as we are now familiar with was never realized by the Roman Empire; the inhabitants of the great cities of the East did not consider themselves “provincial” in our sense of the word.

II
The Roman People

Table of Contents

The official style of the Roman Government was that of the Senate and the Roman people. It is not easy to form an estimate of what constituted the Roman people at any particular date. In these days of individual freedom and independence the term people has a definite meaning; we know that for political purposes the English people means every registered voter, and that the process by which any resident within the limits of His Majesty's dominions can acquire a vote are comparatively simple for white men; but citizenship was not so simple a matter in ancient times, and antiquarian research fails in some measure to enlighten us, because the Romans had a habit of keeping the old names and the old forms long after their original significance and the powers implied had passed to new institutions or suffered complete change.

The very phrase the Senate *and* the Roman people is deeply significant, for it excludes the Senate from the people. Whatever may have been the original meaning of the word "Populus," it was clearly something distinct from the Senate, which was not *representative* of the people, but another power. The fusion between the two powers was in fact never completed till the predominance of the Imperial Hierarchy practically eliminated the Senate. There was a time in the history of the Republic when this fusion seemed

to be approaching completion, and when the Senate moved in the direction of becoming a representative body; but the Roman conquests threw such preponderating influence into the hands of the Senate, that the constitutional position which had been slowly won for the “people” became nominal rather than real. The oligarchy of Rome was never in the Republican period disestablished as the oligarchies of many Greek cities were disestablished.

The Roman historians have preserved for us a constitution based on property qualifications, which might tempt us to imagine that there was a time when a Government with something approaching to a democratic organization controlled the destinies of Rome. It is possible that there was a time when the Roman people was divided into classes according to their assessed property, and when each class voted separately; but it is exceedingly improbable that even in that golden age of liberty there was anything approaching to free and independent elections as we understand them.

The independence of the individual has always been tempered by the necessity of belonging to some form of organization. In these days a man belongs to a party, or a trades union or an association, and sacrifices a portion of his independence to the advantages gained by sharing in the strength of an organized coherent body; in ancient times even a modified independence of this kind was not possible, and in early times at Rome a man was expected to vote for his patron through thick and thin. To us it would appear that a man lost personal dignity by following blindly the fortunes of a greater man than himself; to a Roman it would seem

that the individual had no personal dignity, if he were not recognizably attached to a patron.

Individual independence is only possible in a very highly civilized society. Men may be technically equal in the eyes of the law long before they are so practically; even in modern England it has been found necessary to form associations whose members are bound to mutual assistance in defending or instituting some actions-at-law. The difference between ancient and modern society, and indeed between modern society before and after the French Revolution, lies in this, that the modern association is most commonly one of equal individuals for certain definite purposes, while the ancient association was one of inferiors of various degrees with a superior for all purposes. It would be rash to attempt to define too closely, but the general statement that in ancient Roman society there was no such thing as a free and independent individual, except among the wealthiest or otherwise most powerful, is near the truth. Numberless conditions unknown to modern society contributed to produce the same result; among them the following may be mentioned.

Residence as a means of acquiring political status was not recognized by the ancients; a man might reside in the same town all his life, and his children might succeed him, but neither he nor they could buy or sell, plead in the law courts, intermarry with the citizens, acquire real property, or in fact enjoy any of the benefits of civilized society, without making special arrangements; the resident was an alien until the authorities of the town in which he dwelt had conferred upon him a political status. Towns such as Rome

and Athens, which admitted resident aliens comparatively readily to a modified form of citizenship, expanded more quickly than other towns, and the history of the expansion of Rome is from this point of view the history of the processes by which she gradually admitted the stranger within her gates, and then the stranger without her walls to the privileges of citizenship.

The privileges of a citizen according to ancient ideas were separated into two classes: they were private and public; to the first class belonged the rights of buying and selling, intermarrying, making valid contracts, and acquiring by various tenures real property; to the second the right of voting in all or some elections, and, as the climax, of standing for some or all magistracies. The various degrees of citizenship might be conceded to individuals or to communities; Rome might admit all full citizens of Arpinum to all or some of the rights of Roman citizenship, and vice versâ, or similarly favour an individual citizen of Arpinum. Long before an alien community or individual received the benefits of citizenship business relations might be necessary, and in order to get over the difficulty of conducting business with persons who had no legal status, it was customary for aliens to form private relations with full citizens through whom their business was conducted; and here again the alien might be a whole community or a single individual. At Rome the citizen who thus took charge of an alien’s business was called his patron, and the alien was called a client. The principal service rendered by the patron was to appear on his client’s behalf in those law courts to which the client had otherwise no access; the case

was dealt with as the patron’s case by a convenient legal fiction. The service rendered by the client was not definitely prescribed in this case; it could not be, for he was unknown to the Roman law; but we have no reason to suspect the Roman patrons of not exacting a satisfactory equivalent for their services. The same men who were clients at Rome would be patrons in their own towns, and transact business for their Roman friend at Ephesus or Alexandria in return for his services at Rome. In the same way aliens resident at Rome, who for various reasons were unable or unwilling to acquire rights of citizenship, enrolled themselves among the clients of a patron. The system added enormously to the wealth and influence of the powerful men at Rome; for much in the same way that the status of citizen in its various degrees was personal and transmitted by descent, only to be revoked by a solemn process, so the relation of patron and client was personal and heritable on both sides. This combination of personal with business relationships is one of the peculiarities that make ancient society so difficult for us to understand.

Even after an alien had acquired the rights of citizenship the tie between his family and the patron’s family would continue. It would not be easy to prove that it was strictly obligatory in the eye of the law, but it was recognized by sentiment, and ingratitude on the part of the client, or neglect on the part of the patron, were severely punished by the unwritten law, and in certain cases by the written law.

Thus one form of the relation of patron and client arose out of the difficulties of intercourse between communities and individuals for business purposes in a state of society