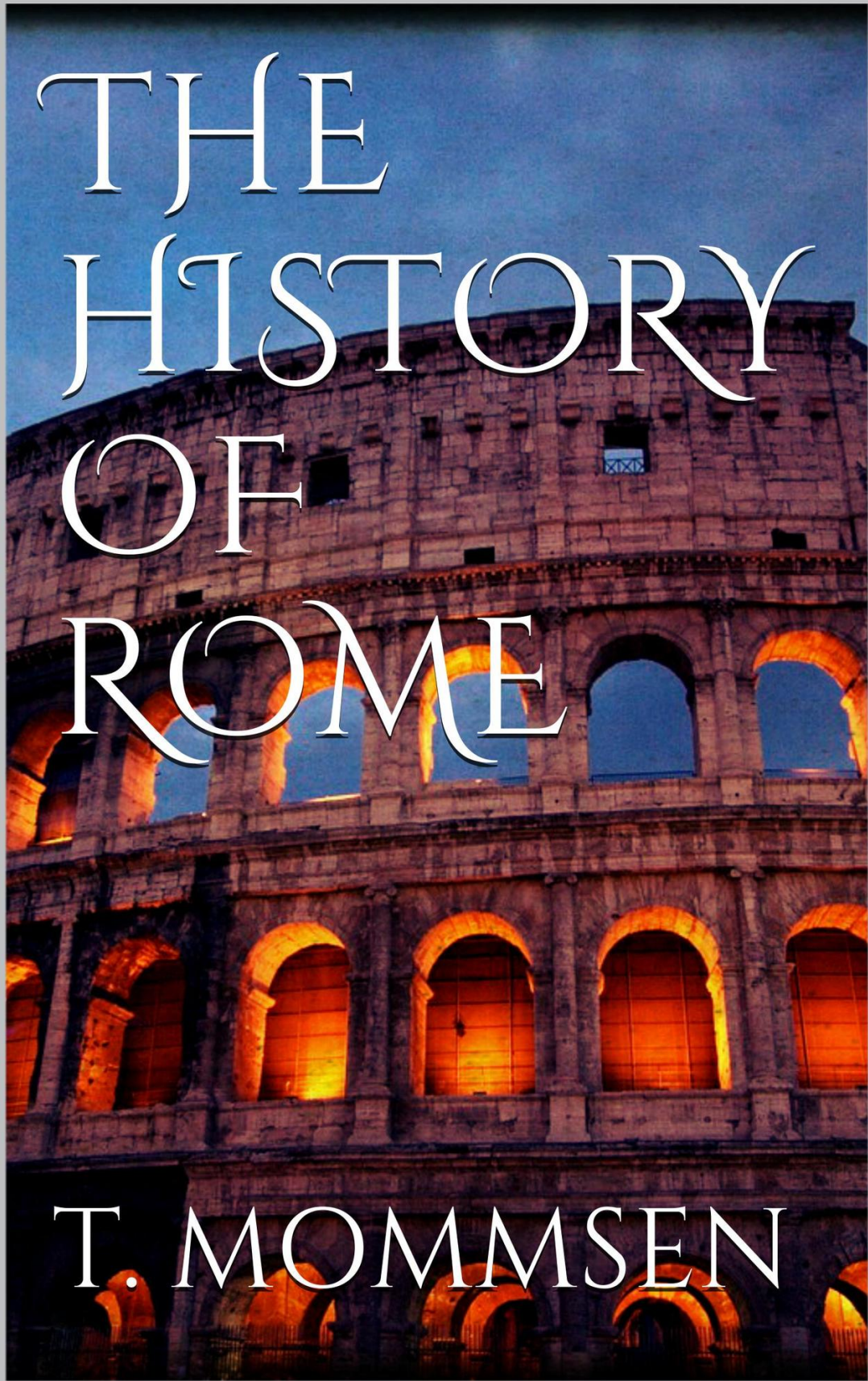


THE HISTORY OF ROME

T. MOMMSEN



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Theodor Mommsen



THE HISTORY OF ROME. BOOK I

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PREFACE

When the first portion of this translation appeared in 1861, it was accompanied by a Preface, for which I was indebted to the kindness of the late Dr. Schmitz, introducing to the English reader the work of an author whose name and merits, though already known to scholars, were far less widely familiar than they are now. After thirty-three years such an introduction is no longer needed, but none the less gratefully do I recall how much the book owed at the outset to Dr. Schmitz's friendly offices.

The following extracts from my own "Prefatory Note" dated "December 1861" state the circumstances under which I undertook the translation, and give some explanations as to its method and aims:—

"In requesting English scholars to receive with indulgence this first portion of a translation of Dr. Mommsen's 'Romische Geschichte,' I am somewhat in the position of Albinus; who, when appealing to his readers to pardon the imperfections of the Roman

History which he had written in indifferent Greek, was met by Cato with the rejoinder that he was not compelled to write at all—that, if the Amphictyonic Council had laid their commands on him, the case would have been different—but that it was quite out of place to ask the indulgence of his readers when his task had been self-imposed. I may state, however, that I did not undertake this task, until I had sought to ascertain whether it was likely to be taken up by any one more qualified to do justice to it. When Dr. Mommsen's work accidentally came into my hands some years after its first appearance, and revived my interest in studies which I had long laid aside for others more strictly professional, I had little doubt that its merits would have already attracted sufficient attention amidst the learned leisure of Oxford to induce some of her great scholars to clothe it in an English dress. But it appeared on inquiry that, while there was a great desire to see it translated, and the purpose of translating it had been entertained in more quarters than one, the projects had from various causes miscarried. Mr. George Robertson published an excellent translation (to which, so far as it goes, I desire to acknowledge my obligations) of the introductory chapters on the early inhabitants of Italy; but other studies and engagements did not permit him to proceed with it. I accordingly requested and obtained Dr. Mommsen's permission to translate his work.

"The translation has been prepared from the third edition of the original, published in the spring of the present year at Berlin. The sheets have been transmitted to Dr. Mommsen, who has kindly communicated to me such suggestions as occurred to him. I have thus been enabled, more especially in the first volume, to correct those passages where I had misapprehended or failed to express the author's meaning, and to incorporate in the English work various additions and corrections which do not appear in the original.

"In executing the translation I have endeavoured to follow the original as closely as is consistent with a due regard to the difference of idiom. Many of our translations from the German are so literal as to reproduce the very order of the German sentence, so that they are, if not altogether unintelligible to the English reader, at least far from readable, while others deviate so entirely from the form of the original as to be no longer translations in the proper sense of the term. I have sought to pursue a middle course between a mere literal translation, which would be repulsive, and a loose paraphrase, which would be in the case of such a work peculiarly unsatisfactory. Those who are most conversant with the difficulties of such a task will probably be the most willing to show forbearance towards the shortcomings of my performance, and in particular towards the too numerous traces of the German idiom,

which, on glancing over the sheets, I find it still to retain.

"The reader may perhaps be startled by the occurrence now and then of modes of expression more familiar and colloquial than is usually the case in historical works. This, however, is a characteristic feature of the original, to which in fact it owes not a little of its charm. Dr. Mommsen often uses expressions that are not to be found in the dictionary, and he freely takes advantage of the unlimited facilities afforded by the German language for the coinage or the combination of words. I have not unfrequently, in deference to his wishes, used such combinations as 'Carthagino-Sicilian,' 'Romano-Hellenic,' although less congenial to our English idiom, for the sake of avoiding longer periphrases.

"In Dr. Mommsen's book, as in every other German work that has occasion to touch on abstract matters, there occur sentences couched in a peculiar terminology and not very susceptible of translation. There are one or two sentences of this sort, more especially in the chapter on Religion in the 1st volume, and in the critique of Euripides as to which I am not very confident that I have seized or succeeded in expressing the meaning. In these cases I have translated literally.

"In the spelling of proper names I have generally adopted the Latin orthography as more familiar to scholars in this country, except in cases where the spelling adopted by Dr. Mommsen is marked by any special peculiarity. At

the same time entire uniformity in this respect has not been aimed at.

"I have ventured in various instances to break up the paragraphs of the original and to furnish them with additional marginal headings, and have carried out more fully the notation of the years B.C. on the margin.

"It is due to Dr. Schmitz, who has kindly encouraged me in this undertaking, that I should state that I alone am responsible for the execution of the translation. Whatever may be thought of it in other respects, I venture to hope that it may convey to the English reader a tolerably accurate impression of the contents and general spirit of the book."

In a new Library edition, which appeared in 1868, I incorporated all the additions and alterations which were introduced in the fourth edition of the German, some of which were of considerable importance; and I took the opportunity of revising the translation, so as to make the rendering more accurate and consistent.

Since that time no change has been made, except the issue in 1870 of an Index. But, as Dr. Mommsen was good enough some time ago to send to me a copy in which he had taken the trouble to mark the alterations introduced in the more recent editions of the original, I thought it due to him and to the favour with which the translation had been received that I should subject it to such a fresh revision as should bring it into conformity with the last

form (eighth edition) of the German, on which, as I learn from him, he hardly contemplates further change. As compared with the first English edition, the more considerable alterations of addition, omission, or substitution amount, I should think, to well-nigh a hundred pages. I have corrected various errors in renderings, names, and dates (though not without some misgiving that others may have escaped notice or been incurred afresh); and I have still further broken up the text into paragraphs and added marginal headings.

The Index, which was not issued for the German book till nine years after the English translation was published, has now been greatly enlarged from its more recent German form, and has been, at the expenditure of no small labour, adapted to the altered paging of the English. I have also prepared, as an accompaniment to it, a collation of pagings, which will materially facilitate the finding of references made to the original or to the previous English editions.

I have had much reason to be gratified by the favour with which my translation has been received on the part alike of Dr. Mommsen himself and of the numerous English scholars who have made it the basis of their references to his work.⁽¹⁾ I trust that in the altered form and new dress, for which the book is indebted to the printers, it may still further meet the convenience of the reader.

September 1894.

Notes for Preface

1. It has, I believe, been largely in use at Oxford for the last thirty years; but it has not apparently had the good fortune to have come to the knowledge of the writer of an article on "Roman History" published in the Encyclopedia Britannica in 1886, which at least makes no mention of its existence, or yet of Mr. Baring-Gould, who in his Tragedy of the Caesars (vol. 1. p. 104f.) has presented Dr. Mommsen's well-known "character" of Caesar in an independent version. His rendering is often more spirited than accurate. While in several cases important words, clauses, or even sentences, are omitted, in others the meaning is loosely or imperfectly conveyed—e.g. in "Hellenistic" for "Hellenic"; "success" for "plenitude of power"; "attempts" or "operations" for "achievements"; "prompt to recover" for "ready to strike"; "swashbuckler" for "brilliant"; "many" for "unyielding"; "accessible to all" for "complaisant towards every one"; "smallest fibre" for "Inmost core"; "ideas" for "ideals"; "unstained with blood" for "as bloodless as possible"; "described" for "apprehended"; "purity" for "clearness"; "smug" for "plain" (or homely); "avoid" for "avert"; "taking his dark course" for "stealing towards his aim by paths of darkness"; "rose" for "transformed himself"; "checked everything like a praetorian domination" for "allowed no

hierarchy of marshals or government of praetorians to come into existence"; and in one case the meaning is exactly reversed, when "never sought to soothe, where he could not cure, intractable evils" stands for "never disdained at least to mitigate by palliatives evils that were incurable."

INTRODUCTION

The Varronian computation by years of the City is retained in the text; the figures on the margin indicate the corresponding year before the birth of Christ.

In calculating the corresponding years, the year 1 of the City has been assumed as identical with the year 753 B.C., and with Olymp. 6, 4; although, if we take into account the circumstance that the Roman solar year began with the 1st day of March, and the Greek with the 1st day of July, the year 1 of the City would, according to more exact calculation, correspond to the last ten months of 753 and the first two months of 752 B.C., and to the last four months of Ol. 6, 3 and the first eight of Ol. 6, 4.

The Roman and Greek money has uniformly been commuted on the basis of assuming the libral as and sestertius, and the denarius and Attic drachma, respectively as equal, and taking for all sums above 100 denarii the present value in gold, and for all sums under 100 denarii the present value in silver, of the corresponding weight. The Roman pound (=327.45

grammes) of gold, equal to 4000 sesterces, has thus, according to the ratio of gold to silver 1:15.5, been reckoned at 304 1/2 Prussian thalers [about 43 pounds sterling], and the denarius, according to the value of silver, at 7 Prussian groschen [about 8d.].(1)

Kiepert's map will give a clearer idea of the military consolidation of Italy than can be conveyed by any description.

1. I have deemed it, in general, sufficient to give the value of the Roman money approximately in round numbers, assuming for that purpose 100 sesterces as equivalent to 1 pound sterling.—TR.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Ancient History

The Mediterranean Sea with its various branches, penetrating far into the great Continent, forms the largest gulf of the ocean, and, alternately narrowed by islands or projections of the land and expanding to considerable breadth, at once separates and connects the three divisions of the Old World. The shores of this inland sea were in ancient times peopled by various nations belonging in an ethnographical and philological point of view to different races, but constituting in their historical aspect one whole. This historic whole has been usually, but not very appropriately, entitled the history of the ancient world. It is in reality the history of civilization among the Mediterranean nations; and, as it passes before us in its successive stages, it presents four great phases of development—the history of the Coptic or

Egyptian stock dwelling on the southern shore, the history of the Aramaean or Syrian nation which occupied the east coast and extended into the interior of Asia as far as the Euphrates and Tigris, and the histories of the twin-peoples, the Hellenes and Italians, who received as their heritage the countries on the European shore. Each of these histories was in its earlier stages connected with other regions and with other cycles of historical evolution; but each soon entered on its own distinctive career. The surrounding nations of alien or even of kindred extraction—the Berbers and Negroes of Africa, the Arabs, Persians, and Indians of Asia, the Celts and Germans of Europe—came into manifold contact with the peoples inhabiting the borders of the Mediterranean, but they neither imparted unto them nor received from them any influences exercising decisive effect on their respective destinies. So far, therefore, as cycles of culture admit of demarcation at all, the cycle which has its culminating points denoted by the names Thebes, Carthage, Athens, and Rome, may be regarded as an unity. The four nations represented by these names, after each of them had attained in a path of its own a peculiar and noble civilization, mingled with one another in the most varied relations of reciprocal intercourse, and skilfully elaborated and richly developed all the elements of human nature. At length their cycle was accomplished. New peoples who hitherto had only laved the territories

of the states of the Mediterranean, as waves lave the beach, overflowed both its shores, severed the history of its south coast from that of the north, and transferred the centre of civilization from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic Ocean. The distinction between ancient and modern history, therefore, is no mere accident, nor yet a mere matter of chronological convenience. What is called modern history is in reality the formation of a new cycle of culture, connected in several stages of its development with the perishing or perished civilization of the Mediterranean states, as this was connected with the primitive civilization of the Indo-Germanic stock, but destined, like the earlier cycle, to traverse an orbit of its own. It too is destined to experience in full measure the vicissitudes of national weal and woe, the periods of growth, of maturity, and of age, the blessedness of creative effort in religion, polity, and art, the comfort of enjoying the material and intellectual acquisitions which it has won, perhaps also, some day, the decay of productive power in the satiety of contentment with the goal attained. And yet this goal will only be temporary: the grandest system of civilization has its orbit, and may complete its course but not so the human race, to which, just when it seems to have reached its goal, the old task is ever set anew with a wider range and with a deeper meaning.

Italy

Our aim is to exhibit the last act of this great historical drama, to relate the ancient history of the central peninsula projecting from the northern continent into the Mediterranean. It is formed by the mountain-system of the Apennines branching off in a southern direction from the western Alps. The Apennines take in the first instance a south-eastern course between the broader gulf of the Mediterranean on the west, and the narrow one on the east; and in the close vicinity of the latter they attain their greatest elevation, which, however, scarce reaches the line of perpetual snow, in the Abruzzi. From the Abruzzi the chain continues in a southern direction, at first undivided and of considerable height; after a depression which forms a hill-country, it splits into a somewhat flattened succession of heights towards the south-east and a more rugged chain towards the south, and in both directions terminates in the formation of narrow peninsulas.

The flat country on the north, extending between the Alps and the Apennines as far down as the Abruzzi, does not belong geographically, nor until a very late period even historically, to the southern land of mountain and hill, the Italy whose history is here to engage our attention. It was not till the seventh century of the city that the coast-district from Sinigaglia to Rimini, and not

till the eighth that the basin of the Po, became incorporated with Italy. The ancient boundary of Italy on the north was not the Alps but the Apennines. This mountain-system nowhere rises abruptly into a precipitous chain, but, spreading broadly over the land and enclosing many valleys and table-lands connected by easy passes, presents conditions which well adapt it to become the settlement of man. Still more suitable in this respect are the adjacent slopes and the coast-districts on the east, south, and west. On the east coast the plain of Apulia, shut in towards the north by the mountain-block of the Abruzzi and only broken by the steep isolated ridge of Garganus, stretches in a uniform level with but a scanty development of coast and stream. On the south coast, between the two peninsulas in which the Apennines terminate, extensive lowlands, poorly provided with harbours but well watered and fertile, adjoin the hill-country of the interior. The west coast presents a far-stretching domain intersected by considerable streams, in particular by the Tiber, and shaped by the action of the waves and of the once numerous volcanoes into manifold variety of hill and valley, harbour and island. Here the regions of Etruria, Latium, and Campania form the very flower of the land of Italy. South of Campania, the land in front of the mountains gradually diminishes, and the Tyrrhenian Sea almost washes their base. Moreover, as the Peloponnesus

is attached to Greece, so the island of Sicily is attached to Italy—the largest and fairest isle of the Mediterranean, having a mountainous and partly desert interior, but girt, especially on the east and south, by a broad belt of the finest coast-land, mainly the result of volcanic action. Geographically the Sicilian mountains are a continuation of the Apennines, hardly interrupted by the narrow "rent"—Pegion—of the straits; and in its historical relations Sicily was in earlier times quite as decidedly a part of Italy as the Peloponnesus was of Greece, a field for the struggles of the same races, and the seat of a similar superior civilization.

The Italian peninsula resembles the Grecian in the temperate climate and wholesome air that prevail on the hills of moderate height, and on the whole, also, in the valleys and plains. In development of coast it is inferior; it wants, in particular, the island-studded sea which made the Hellenes a seafaring nation. Italy on the other hand excels its neighbour in the rich alluvial plains and the fertile and grassy mountain-slopes, which are requisite for agriculture and the rearing of cattle. Like Greece, it is a noble land which calls forth and rewards the energies of man, opening up alike for restless adventure the way to distant lands and for quiet exertion modes of peaceful gain at home.

But, while the Grecian peninsula is turned towards the east, the Italian is turned towards the west. As the coasts

of Epirus and Acarnania had but a subordinate importance in the case of Hellas, so had the Apulian and Messapian coasts in that of Italy; and, while the regions on which the historical development of Greece has been mainly dependent—Attica and Macedonia—look to the east, Etruria, Latium, and Campania look to the west. In this way the two peninsulas, so close neighbours and almost sisters, stand as it were averted from each other. Although the naked eye can discern from Otranto the Acroceraunian mountains, the Italians and Hellenes came into earlier and closer contact on every other pathway rather than on the nearest across the Adriatic Sea. In their instance, as has happened so often, the historical vocation of the nations was prefigured in the relations of the ground which they occupied; the two great stocks, on which the civilization of the ancient world grew, threw their shadow as well as their seed, the one towards the east, the other towards the west.

Italian History

We intend here to relate the history of Italy, not simply the history of the city of Rome. Although, in the formal sense of political law, it was the civic community of Rome which gained the sovereignty first of Italy and then of the world, such a view cannot be held to express the higher and real meaning of history. What has been called the subjugation of Italy by the Romans appears rather, when viewed in its true light, as the consolidation into an

united state of the whole Italian stock—a stock of which the Romans were doubtless the most powerful branch, but still were only a branch.

The history of Italy falls into two main sections: (1) its internal history down to its union under the leadership of the Latin stock, and (2) the history of its sovereignty over the world. Under the first section, which will occupy the first two books, we shall have to set forth the settlement of the Italian stock in the peninsula; the imperilling of its national and political existence, and its partial subjugation, by nations of other descent and older civilization, Greeks and Etruscans; the revolt of the Italians against the strangers, and the annihilation or subjection of the latter; finally, the struggles between the two chief Italian stocks, the Latins and the Samnites, for the hegemony of the peninsula, and the victory of the Latins at the end of the fourth century before the birth of Christ—or of the fifth century of the city. The second section opens with the Punic wars; it embraces the rapid extension of the dominion of Rome up to and beyond the natural boundaries of Italy, the long status quo of the imperial period, and the collapse of the mighty empire. These events will be narrated in the third and following books.

Notes for Book I Chapter I

1. The dates as hereafter inserted in the text are years of

the City (A.U.C.); those in the margin give the corresponding years B.C.

CHAPTER II

The Earliest Migrations into Italy

Primitive Races of Italy

We have no information, not even a tradition, concerning the first migration of the human race into Italy. It was the universal belief of antiquity that in Italy, as well as elsewhere, the first population had sprung from the soil. We leave it to the province of the naturalist to decide the question of the origin of different races, and of the influence of climate in producing their diversities. In a historical point of view it is neither possible, nor is it of any importance, to determine whether the oldest recorded population of a country were autochthones or immigrants. But it is incumbent on the historical inquirer to bring to light the successive strata of population in the country of which he treats, in order to trace, from as remote an epoch as possible, the gradual progress of civilization to more perfect forms, and the suppression

of races less capable of, or less advanced in, culture by nations of higher standing.

Italy is singularly poor in memorials of the primitive period, and presents in this respect a remarkable contrast to other fields of civilization. The results of German archaeological research lead to the conclusion that in England, France, the North of Germany and Scandinavia, before the settlement of the Indo-Germans in those lands, there must have dwelt, or rather roamed, a people, perhaps of Mongolian race, gaining their subsistence by hunting and fishing, making their implements of stone, clay, or bones, adorning themselves with the teeth of animals and with amber, but unacquainted with agriculture and the use of the metals. In India, in like manner, the Indo-Germanic settlers were preceded by a dark-coloured population less susceptible of culture. But in Italy we neither meet with fragments of a supplanted nation, such as the Finns and Lapps in the Celto-Germanic domain and the black tribes in the Indian mountains; nor have any remains of an extinct primitive people been hitherto pointed out there, such as appear to be revealed in the peculiarly-formed skeletons, the places of assembling, and the burial mounds of what is called the stone-period of Germanic antiquity. Nothing has hitherto been brought to light to warrant the supposition that mankind existed in Italy at a period anterior to the knowledge of agriculture and of the smelting of the

metals; and if the human race ever within the bounds of Italy really occupied the level of that primitive stage of culture which we are accustomed to call the savage state, every trace of such a fact has disappeared.

Individual tribes, or in other words, races or stocks, are the constituent elements of the earliest history. Among the stocks which in later times we meet with in Italy, the immigration of some, of the Hellenes for instance, and the denationalization of others, such as the Bruttians and the inhabitants of the Sabine territory, are historically attested. Setting aside both these classes, there remain a number of stocks whose wanderings can no longer be traced by means of historical testimony, but only by a priori inference, and whose nationality cannot be shown to have undergone any radical change from external causes. To establish the national individuality of these is the first aim of our inquiry. In such an inquiry, had we nothing to fall back upon but the chaotic mass of names of tribes and the confusion of what professes to be historical tradition, the task might well be abandoned as hopeless. The conventionally received tradition, which assumes the name of history, is composed of a few serviceable notices by civilized travellers, and a mass of mostly worthless legends, which have usually been combined with little discrimination of the true character either of legend or of history. But there is another source