

**A BRIEF SURVEY  
OF  
HUMAN HISTORY**

BY

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**THE MYSTERIOUS SPHINX**

This figure symbolises for all time  
the emergence of Man from the Brute—  
the beginning of Human Civilisation.

is divided, and has always been so divided, there are other fundamentals which are common to the human race.

There is such a phenomenon as Progress ; call it culture, civilisation, or by any other name. There may be setbacks here and there, or retrogression now and again, in the long course of human history. But with all these, Man has evolved out of the brute-creation. He has risen above the mere animal. He has ever toiled to make his lot better than his inheritance in every age. And, whatever may be his ultimate Destiny, an eternal urge keeps him striving after Utopias. The Vision beckons and recedes before our faltering steps. Yet Faith keeps us steadfast on the thorny upward path. This is one of the fundamental human traits which are universally true. There is no West and East here. Man, the universally progressive creature, is the one subject of World History. Europe may be his workshop and Asia his dormitory for the time-being ; but time was when the reverse was the case. The Sun may shine on only one side of the globe at a time ; but no part of the earth is left in darkness for ever.

Political power is the engine which quickens the pace of progress. Sometimes it also retards the even march of man. Politics, therefore, is an important lever, but it is not the be-all and end-all of human existence. Political history may form the basis, or rather supply the bony skeleton of our treatment, but it must be clothed with the flesh and blood of all-sided human activity, and animated by the indefatigable aspirations of man. Our aim, in this little volume, will therefore be to hold the mirror up to the whole pageant of man's life, and not merely to chronicle his political career. We shall try to follow up the 'living past' of the *genus homo* in all parts of our planet, in all ages and climes, to the extent that space will permit.

Rich and alluring as our theme is we must necessarily submit to certain limitations. Where much is to be left out what is actually included must be governed by the judgment of the selector. Here I have been guided by no other principle than the choice of the significant. Whether what has appeared to me significant has been really vital to human history or merely spectacular without being significant, it is for discerning readers to judge. I shall have at least succeeded in evoking some interest in what is usually, though wrongly, considered a dry if not also a useless subject. It is my earnest hope that I may have raised the curtain on a scene in the drama which I have found extremely engaging.

It is obvious that such a work could not be carried out without laying several writers under contribution. My indebtedness to them is both general and specific, and I have acknowledged my sources in relevant places. It is my hope that these references may guide the interested reader to more extensive as well as intensive study. I have found it more useful to quote from my authorities verbatim rather than do them the injustice of indirect quotation through paraphrase.

I regard each of my chapters as an essay and have not therefore broken its homogeneity by marginal or inset headings. It is expected, however, that the descriptive 'contents' will serve to acquaint the reader with the core of each chapter though the analysis is neither detailed nor exhaustive.

Finally, it is my hope that, though the book is primarily intended for College under-graduates, it may not be without interest to the general reader as well as the High School student as an Introduction to higher studies.

1st June, 1938

S. R. SHARMA

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#### SECTION ONE

Herein is unfolded the Great Adventure of Man. Chapter I describes the *First Steps* in Man's emergence from brute creation and his giant struggle against Nature in the course of 50,000 years during which period he forged the first instruments of his ultimate triumph. Chapter II describes the wonderful *Gift of the Nile* which constitutes one of the most fascinating episodes in man's 'conquest of civilisation.' Chapter III reveals the glory of the *Land of the Twin Rivers*, Euphrates and Tigris, comprising the three great cultures of Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria. Chapter IV discloses the mysterious *Indus Civilisation* of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. Chapter V reveals the *Heart of Asia* in Mongolian China, Aryan India, and Semitic Asia-Minor. Chapter VI appraises the wealth of a *Medley of Cultures* that comprised the legacy of Asia to Europe. And Chapter VII recapitulates and evaluates the entire field of *Progress in Antiquity*.

## CHAPTER ONE

### FIRST STEPS

The fact that man possessed the capacity to rise from bestial savagery to civilization, at a time when it had *never before been done*, is the greatest fact in the history of the universe as known to us.—J. H. BREASTED

Man's life is a moment between two eternities. It is the hyphen that joins the Past with the Future. Most people are content with the animal satisfaction that is derived from the present. But this is not a quality that makes for progress. If we want to live intelligently, we must 'look before and after'. In this faculty, which does not belong to the sub-human world, lies the supreme privilege of man.

However keen the struggle for existence, however engrossing the living present, we shall be the better equipped for a happy and successful life, if we do not ignore the past. While the future for which we seek to provide is uncertain, scientific investigations have so enriched our knowledge of the past, that the vital dependence of our present upon the 'living past' is now considered quite axiomatic. Indeed, one imaginative writer has compared the present to a pygmy riding on the shoulders of the giant past, and pointed out how much we are benefited by this position of vantage. The present may be truly described as the child of the past and the parent of the future. Life is a continuous whole.

History is, therefore, a record of only one stage in human

life : .it deals with man's past on earth. Whatever may be the future of our species, man, to the best of our knowledge, is the last word in animate creation. It was Charles Darwin (1809-82), a nineteenth century biologist, who revealed to the modern world the continuity, not of human life only, but of all life, in his *The Origin of Species* and *The Descent of Man*. If we take into account the long process of evolution by which the human species grew up on this planet, our history appears so short that we cannot but marvel at the rapid progress man has made since he evolved out of the ape. While it took millions of years for Nature to bring man into existence, the dynamic intelligence of man (*homo sapiens*) has transformed life on earth so tremendously in the course of a few millennia which constitute the sum of human history. There is hardly a story more enthralling in its character than this truth about our human adventure which is stranger than fiction.

To-day man appears to dominate everything on earth. His mastery over Nature is all but complete. He has studied her secrets and harnessed her forces to serve human interests. Science has exploited all the resources of earth and sea and has now entered the very heavens. But all this is comparatively recent. Life on earth has not always been so very comfortable. Civilisation,<sup>1</sup> which is the term we use to describe our advanced way of living, literally means city-life. The oldest cities known to us are not more than 6000 years old. Before that, men lived at first in the jungles, then in very crude villages or hamlets, as they do even now in the less advanced parts of the world. Indeed, civilisation has,

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<sup>1</sup> Civilisation is a comparatively recent word. Dr. Johnson did not admit it into his Dictionary in 1772, but preferred *civility* in its stead.

during all ages, never spread uniformly over all parts of the globe. Why civilisation has haunted only certain places or zones on earth, to the exclusion of others, will become apparent as we go along. Here we must first describe the principal periods in the early history of our race.

How old is the history of man on earth is a very natural question to ask. But it is not so easy to answer. The sciences of Anthropology and Archæology, which have enabled us to ascertain the antiquity of man are hardly a century old. Anthropology has two departments: Physical Anthropology and Cultural Anthropology. The former deals with man as an *organism*, and the latter with man as an *organiser*.<sup>1</sup> Archæology is that science which studies man's life in the past as revealed in ancient relics and monuments. Both these are very difficult and delicate branches of investigation. Yet their value to human history is so great that scholars have devoted their lives to these subjects and rendered them more attractive than romance.<sup>2</sup> Their work has revealed to us two main divisions in the antiquity of man: Pre-historical and Historical.

The Historical period may be said to commence with the art of writing, which is not more than five to six thousand years old. We have written records of some sort, from Egypt and Babylonia, which date from about 4000—3000 B.C. Yet, thanks to Anthropology and Archæology, our knowledge of man extends far beyond that time. There are indications of man's emergence from the primates at least 500,000 years ago. Then he was, no doubt, little better than the brutes in most respects, but he was already marked out

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1 Read "Progress in Pre-historic Times" by R. R. Marett, in *Progress and History* by F. S. Marvin.

2 Read *Digging Up the Past* by Sir Leonard Woolley.

by his somewhat erect gait and a glint of primitive intelligence in his eyes, superior to that of any other animal. He possessed none of their natural equipment for self-protection. He had neither horns, nor claws, nor fangs; nor was he clothed like the sheep or the bear. But he was compensated by an inventive and resourceful brain. While in his organism he was a slave to Nature, like the rest of animate creation, his potential power of organisation was calculated to make him her master. However, it took him several thousands of years before he could appreciably demonstrate this unique faculty.

Anthropologists have marked the successive stages of man's ascent to manhood by observing his physical development, the evidence of which has been discovered in ancient graves. According to the places where such discoveries were made, the successive types have been named the Java, Heidelberg, Piltdown, Neanderthal, Aurignacian, and Cro-Magnon man, etc.<sup>1</sup> The last named appears to have been over six feet high and had all the features of a modern European, though he must have lived between 50,000 and 10,000 years ago. Before the close of this period man had distinguished himself by his superior tool-making capacity which gave him a distinct advantage over all other animals. He could fashion a stone, however crudely, into a defensive and offensive weapon. He could even fix it on a wooden handle or stick and use it as a spear or axe, and perhaps also

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<sup>1</sup> Skeletons or parts thereof, representing the various stages in the ascent of man, were found at Trinil in Java in 1891, at Heidelberg in Germany in 1907, at Piltdown in Sussex, England, in 1911, at Neanderthal in Germany in 1857, at Aurignac and Cro-Magnon in France in 1868. But the earliest known human skull, about 1,000,000 years old, was discovered by a young Chinese paleontologist, in 1929, near Peiping.

send it flying at an enemy by means of a sling or bow. More than anything else, he had discovered 'the red miracle of fire' which he could light or extinguish at will. And what is still more wonderful, he could communicate with his fellows through intelligible speech. What a catalogue of discoveries and inventions! Nothing like it had appeared on earth before. It was as if the Creator had suddenly turned alchemist or come upon an El Dorado. From the first chipping of wood and stone, and the first lighting of the Promethean spark, and the first intelligible gibber, the modern progress of man in all directions has followed as the culmination of a logical series. The fruits and flowers and thorns of modern civilisation are borne aloft on the stem of history whose roots are imbedded in the pre-historic soil of dim antiquity.

Scholars have divided the earliest history of man into two periods: Palæolithic or Old Stone Age, and Neolithic or New Stone Age.<sup>1</sup> Though this seems arbitrary it is not without reason. No other animal is known to have possessed the tool-making faculty which has given man such great mastery over Nature. Hence it is most natural to denote his early progress by the quality and material of his tools. By 'Old Stone Age' we, therefore, mean the period during which primitive man fashioned crude implements out of stone. Since even axe and spear heads were made out of hard stone or flint, it is obvious that metals had not yet been discovered. Wood was cut with a flint piece sharpened at the edge, and fire was also kindled with its help. No new discoveries were made for long ages, but during the 50,000 years or so, preceding the Neolithic Age (about 10,000—5,000 B.C.), considerable improvements were

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<sup>1</sup> Greek, *Palaios* = old; *lithos* = stone; *Neos* = new.

made even in the stone implements. On this account the later Palæolithic period is often distinguished separately as the Middle Stone Age.

During these fifty thousand years well-shaped stone implements with wooden handles were made, instead of the crude flint instruments. Even the bones and horns of animals killed in the hunt were now utilised for various purposes. For instance, needles and whistles of such material, made by primitive man, have been found by archæologists. Though the Middle Stone Age man had not discovered the arts of weaving and pottery, he wore garments of skin and used skin bags for storing things. His most remarkable contribution to civilisation was, however, in the field of Art.

In 1879 Señor Marcelino de Sautuola, a Spanish nobleman, accidentally came upon some cave-paintings on his estate at Altamira. They were figures of animals drawn with astounding skill on the ceiling of a cave. Similar art productions have since been discovered elsewhere also. There are drawings of reindeer, wild boars, the mammoth, etc., besides those of even men and women. They were painted with colours that have endured during at least 20,000 years. "These paintings are often of such delicacy, power and skill as to suggest the unhappy thought that art, in this field at least, has not advanced much in the long course of human history."<sup>1</sup> In some places bone tubes and stone paillettes with paints in them have also been found. On an Aurignacian cliff at Laussel, in France, has been discovered an astonishingly vivid bas-relief of an archer, while at Bruniquel, in the same country, wonderfully carved mammoth tusks have also been unearthed. The fact that these

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1 Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, I., 97.

primitive art works were executed in the dark recesses of caves indicates the use of artificial lights. This is confirmed by the discovery of hollow stone dishes which must have obviously served as lamps in which fat was burnt with a wick. Man-made fire was, indeed, a marvellous discovery. It protected him from cold, scared away beasts, cooked his food, and lighted up the primeval darkness of the jungle. And later, when metals were discovered, it could smelt them and fuse them,—“the only real advance in technology,” one writer calls this, “from Cro-Magnon days to the Industrial Revolution.”

The beginning of historic civilisation was yet a long way off when Palæolithic conditions developed into Neolithic, but not so distant as the Old Stone Age was from the New, being separated by the Middle Stone Age. Progress, when the primary discoveries or inventions had been made, moved with the gathering speed of an avalanche. The fundamental discoveries of the Palæolithic Age were fire, tool-making, and speech. Those of the Neolithic Age were weaving, pottery, cottage building, domestication of animals, agriculture, wheeled transport, boat construction, metals, and some sort of thought-recording which later developed into regular writing. A few comments may be made regarding each of these.

Weaving must obviously have been learnt from the observation of spiders' webs, birds' nests, and the natural plaiting and interlacing of creepers and branches of trees. Basket and mat plaiting might have preceded actual weaving of cloth, as the use of vegetable fibre may have preceded the spinning of yarn. Similarly, cave-dwelling and groves of trees, suggested artificial houses. At first constructed with branches and twigs, cottages were soon improvised with matted screens and thatch. Dobbins the walls



with wet mud and allowing them to dry in the sun, led to adobe and brick construction ; while the baking of clay for bricks, either in sun or fire, naturally suggested pottery. The oldest artificial dwellings still surviving are, perhaps, the pile constructions in the midst of the lakes of Wangen in Switzerland and other places. For purposes of greater security Neolithic men sometimes built their cottages on wooden supports driven into the beds of lakes, connecting them with the shore by a removable bridge. Some two hundred of such dwellings were discovered in Switzerland in 1854. But the most revolutionising change that came over human life in Neolithic times was due to agriculture. All the other innovations of the period are associated with agriculture.

“In one sense,” observes Professor Will Durant, “all human history hinges upon two revolutions : the neolithic passage from hunting to agriculture, and the modern passage from agriculture to industry.” Man was a food-gatherer or hunter before he became a food-producer or agriculturist. With the latter change he gradually ceased to be a wanderer and developed increasing attachment to a settled life. A sense of property and patriotism had their birth here. With settled life also came greater leisure, and concentration upon the improvement of all the instruments of material progress. From the digging stick were evolved the hoe and the plough, and the latter led to the utilisation of animal power. The dog and the ass appear to have been the first animals to be domesticated. Then came the goat, sheep and cattle, and finally the horse. The animal driven plough was undoubtedly the predecessor of the sledge, and the latter the parent of the wheeled vehicle. Some ingenious carpenter had hit upon the wheel whose potentialities were immense : it could roll a waggon, give shape to a pot, turn

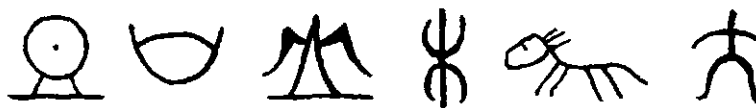
a spindle, and work as a pulley. Just imagine our modern machinery of all kinds without the wheel! The inventor of the wheel was, indeed, the greatest accelerator of progress. He was the father of transport. The increased production brought about by agriculture would have glutted the home of Neolithic man, had he not found the means of carting away the surplus. Just as agriculture had taught the members of a Neolithic family to co-operate among themselves, the wheeled vehicle enhanced intercourse between different settled communities. The boat was another such instrument of transport and communication. Floating wooden logs undoubtedly suggested the use. The first boats were dug-outs or canoes hollowed out of tree trunks. The wheel and the boat facilitated commerce, and commerce bred the complexity of human life and organisation.

In this later progress of man two new discoveries played a very important part: they were metals and the art of writing. Progress was bound to be slow when man had to work with and on so intractable a material as stone. During thousands of years of the Stone Age man seemed to be advancing with the pace of almost geological evolution. But with the advent of metals his speed was incredibly revolutionised. The malleability and ductility of metals opened up undreamt vistas of industrial progress. Though gold and silver may have been discovered earlier, the Age of Metals was not ushered in until copper was found towards the close of the Neolithic Age. The earliest traces of the use of this red metal have been found in the Lake-dwellings of Switzerland (c. 6,000 B.C.), already referred to, in pre-historic Mesopotamia (c. 4,500 B.C.), in Egypt (c. 4000 B.C.), and Ur (c. 3,100 B.C.). The extraction of pure copper by smelting was known in the Eastern Mediterranean region about 3,500 B.C. Casting was learnt by

1,500 B.C. But copper being too soft a metal its utility was still limited. When it was alloyed with tin to form bronze it really came to be more widely used. Between 3000 B.C. and 2000 B.C. bronze was used in Crete, Egypt and Troy. The two metals were, in fact, in vogue from Mohenjo-daro in the East to Crete in the West in the third millennium B.C. Iron came a thousand years later, but still rules the world.

Writing was only a modification of the arts of drawing and painting already known to pre-historic man. For the earliest form which it took was pictographic. The Egyptian hieroglyphic (or holy writing) and the Sumerian cuneiform (wedge-shaped) scripts, as well as the more recently discovered ideographs of Mohenjo-daro, are but variations of the same picture-writing art. Our modern alphabetic scripts have been evolved by gradual transformation of the pictographic into phonetic and syllabic forms. The mastery of this art in its various forms has enabled man to record his thoughts and experiences and transmit them to posterity. Henceforward there is less ambiguity about our knowledge of his doings. The discovery of the metals and some form of writing were approximately synchronous. With them begins the Historic as distinguished from the Pre-historic age.

The difference between these two periods in human history is one of the extent of our knowledge only and not of kind. Man has remained essentially the same through all the varying conditions of life. Our knowledge of him in the twentieth century A.D. may be fuller and more intimate than our knowledge of him in the twentieth century B.C., but that makes no difference in his fundamental character. He is still the intelligent and inventive brute that he was 500,000 years ago : affectionate at home, jealous of his neighbour, ferocious in war, and ruthless when his selfish instincts are roused ; but noble and progressive on the whole,



WORLD'S EARLIEST SCRIPTS

The invention of Writing divides Pre-historic times from the Historical.

with a marvellous organising capacity, which has made him master on earth over animate and inanimate creation alike.

World History is but a recalling of this wonderful creature's doings, his struggles, achievements and failures in the past, that they might instruct his present, and bear fruit in his future.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GIFT OF THE NILE

The Nile has become for us a great historical volume disclosing stage by stage the first advance of man from bestial savagery to civilization.--

J. H. BREASTED

The history of man's progress from the most primitive stage to the most advanced, in the ancient world, is nowhere traceable over so long a period and with such continuity as in Egypt, the land of the Pyramids, the Sphinxes, and the Mummies. This, rather than the claim that Egypt was the cradle of civilisation, might more reasonably justify priority being given to the land of the Nile in our brief survey of human history. It is vain to discuss the origins of civilisation with reference to any definite country or any precise period of chronology.<sup>1</sup> The *first steps* described in the previous chapter are indicative of *logical* rather than strictly *chronological* sequence. Even a survey of the modern world will show that, while some countries are in the vanguard of civilisation, others are in varying degrees of historical backwardness. The progress of primitive man from dark discomfort to enlightened comfort depended upon two factors: First, his native intelligence<sup>2</sup> which enabled

1 Read "When and Where did Civilization Begin?" by M. C. Burkitt, in *Wonders of the Past*, 1, 429-34.

2 The cranial capacity of man has varied with his stock. That of the Neanderthal man was 1600 cubic centimetres. That of the Cro-Magnon man ranged from 1590 to 1715 c.c.

him to learn from experience and improve either rapidly or slowly. Second, his geographical environment, including climatic conditions and natural resources like water supply, facilities for food-production, and quality of building materials available in the vicinity. Egypt was happy in the possession of all these pre-requisites of civilisation. Hence her marvellous achievements during antiquity. By 4000 B.C. she had emerged from nebulous pre-history and entered the more definite region of history. Of this she has left wonderful testimony in her pyramids, sphinxes, obelisks and mummies, etc.

The Pyramids are huge structures that impress us at first sight by their sheer immensity. Closer observation increases rather than diminishes our sense of astonishment. The Great Pyramid of Gizeh, for example, is 484 ft. high, and covers an area of  $13\frac{1}{4}$  acres. It is built of 2,300,000 limestone blocks, each weighing on an average two tons and a half; the largest being one hundred and fifty tons. According to Herodotus, the earliest of Greek historians, the building of this pyramid occupied 100,000 men with unceasing toil during twenty years. Breasted has observed that such rapid progress in the control of mechanical power can be found in no other period of the world's history until the nineteenth century A.D. The wealth expended over it must have been enormous. The Pyramids are spread over a distance of about sixty miles along the course of the Nile, and though all of them are not of the same size, their stones, brought from long distances, have been so skilfully set that the space between two of them averages not more than one fiftieth of an inch.<sup>1</sup> What human ingenuity could have

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<sup>1</sup> Read "The Pyramids of Egypt" by T. Eric Peet in *Wonders of the Past*, I, 453-62.

put together these huge blocks and raised them to such heights in the absence of mechanical appliances? They have endured during 5000 years. Why? and by whom were they erected? Who would not wonder and grow impatient for an explanation?

The Sphinxes are equally astounding figures. The biggest of them is 75 ft. high and 150 ft. long. They are images of crouching lions with human heads. The largest sphinx has a face 13 ft. 8 ins. across, and its nose alone measures 5 ft. 7 ins. It was first discovered by Capt. Caviglia in 1818 A.D. Later excavations have disclosed that it represents King Khafre (2867-2811 B.C.) the builder of the second pyramid of Gizeh. It is the largest human face ever sculptured in stone by man. What great mysteries have these sphinxes been guarding during these nearly fifty centuries of history? The ancient Egyptians called the Sphinx *Hu* or Guardian Watcher; their modern descendants know it only as '*Abu'l hol* or the Father of Terror.

The Obelisks are inscribed, free-standing monoliths, often of great height. There is one at Heliopolis, on the Nile Delta. A second, 68 ft. 5 ins. high, was transplanted, in 1877, by the British, and now stands in the Thames Embankment. A third, 67 ft. 2 ins. high, was carried to New York by American explorers. Each of them weighs from 500 to 1000 tons, and their transport, indeed, represented an engineering *tour-de-force*. In the Great Temple of Karnak, in Egypt, there are sculptures on the walls depicting such obelisks being conveyed in ships. An inscription of Queen Hatshepsut proudly declares that these obelisks are of hard granite from the quarries of the South; their tops are of fine gold chosen from the best in all foreign lands. They can be seen from afar on the river; the splendour of their radiance fills the Two Lands, and when the solar disc appears between them it is truly as if he rose up into the horizon of the



sky ... You who after long years shall see these monuments, who shall speak of what I have done, you will say, " We do not know, we do not know how they can have made a whole mountain of gold."

It goes on to say, ' To guild them I have given gold measured by the bushel, as though it were sacks of corn '.

Marvellous as these pyramids and sphinxes and obelisks appear to us, there is nothing in Egyptian antiquities so thought-provoking and wonder-evoking as the Mummies. In their very silence they are so touchingly eloquent ! They are the actual builders of the pyramids and sphinxes and obelisks, present before our eyes in their very flesh. They are the greatest of the ancient Egyptians immortalised by a process of embalming, the secrets of which are little known to us.<sup>1</sup> The earliest Mummy yet discovered is kept in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, Lincoln's Inn Fields. It was found by Sir Flinders Petrie, in 1892, near the pyramid of Medun. The oldest of the Royal Mummies is dated 2050 B.C. These Egyptians who have survived in their bodies during 4,000 years, are in such a state of preservation that they could be identified with reference to their contemporary sculptures, which are themselves marvellous specimens of the sculptor's art. We might truly say that, among the monuments of North-East Africa, an entire civilisation lies ' embalmed and treasured up for a life beyond life '. Our knowledge of ancient Egypt is derived mostly from the mo-

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<sup>1</sup> It is believed that they used common salt, natron and resin for preserving the bodies. The dry climate of Egypt and the warmth of the desert further helped the process which is elaborately described by Herodotus. The art appears to have reached its perfection between 1580 and 945 B.C. under the XVIII to XXI Dynasties. The best specimens are those of Amenhotep II, Thuthmose IV, Seti I and Ramesis II. Read Dr. E. Smith on the subject in *Wonders of the Past*, I, 549-59.

old filled their tombs with such treasures. Explanation of this practice is to be found in the beliefs of all ancient peoples in a life after death. Various kinds of tombs, scattered all over the world, testify to this universal custom of antiquity. The graves of the ancients are really so many source-books for the historian. Their significance is best brought out by Sir Leonard Woolley in the following extract from his extremely interesting book, *Digging up the Past* :—

“ All over the world, and at most periods in the history of each part of it, a belief in some kind of life after death has induced man to place in the graves of his dead things which may minister to the needs of another world : conversely, from the fact that a grave contains such objects, we can deduce that there prevailed a belief in a future life. I am not speaking of such very personal things as decency would naturally leave to the corpse, the pin that fastens cloak or winding-sheet, the ring on the finger, the amulet worn in life about the neck, nor again of such things as might be considered mere offerings to the memory of the dead, the sword by the warrior's hand, the toy with which the child played and none other must play, the wreaths of flowers which are our modern expression of sad respect. 'Grave furniture,' to use an archæological phrase, is something far more definite than this, and answers to far more definite ideas.

“ The Greek placed on the dead man's mouth a coin to pay Charon his fare for ferrying him across the river of Death. The Egyptian might take with him a copy of the Book of the Dead to prompt his memory so that he might give the right answers to the gods or demons who held the gates of the under-world and cross-examined all who would pass through. In Mesopotamia vessels of food and drink provide sustenance for the long journey which the dead must undertake, and during one period these vessels are stacked in a boat made of bitumen, implying that the journey must be made by water. But the journey is not everything, there is the whole life of the next world, and because it is difficult to imagine life otherwise than in terms of that which we know, it is assumed that man's occupations and needs hereafter will be very similar to what they have been in the past—the next world is a continuation of this. Whatever,

therefore, a man used and required in his lifetime he will use and require after death. The woman takes her spindle, her needle, her mirror and her cosmetics, the jeweller his balance and weights, the carpenter his saw and chisels, the soldier his weapons of war. The king must be provided with a goodly sample of his pomp on earth; the viking leader is laid in his barrow on the deck of his beaked galley with all his gear about him; the Sumerian king has not only his treasure of gold and silver, alabaster, lapis and bronze, but the bodies of his slaughtered court to bear him company and to minister to him in his new sphere of royalty; the Pharaoh, in the rock-hewn labyrinth of his tomb, had such a provision for his splendour that the grave of Tutankhamen, one of the most insignificant of Egypt's rulers, found intact, has astonished the whole world with its riches. It is not surprising, then, that the archaeologist derives most of his material from the cemeteries of the old world, and that what he there finds illustrates not only the beliefs and burial-customs of the past, but also its everyday life."<sup>1</sup>

In the course of a little over thirty centuries B.C. thirty-one dynasties ruled over Egypt. We have a wonderfully continuous, and all but complete, history of this long period of human endeavour and achievement, political as well as cultural, chronologically established, and for the most part authentically illustrated by the monuments and relics preserved for us by the historically minded climate of Egypt.

It is no mere metaphor that describes Egypt as the 'Gift of the Nile', as Herodotus did. The dry rainless tract has indeed been made to 'blossom like the rose' by the life-giving waters of that river. The ancient Egyptian, like the Vedic Aryan in India, apostrophised the Nile in the following manner :

Homage to thee, O Hapi ! Thou appearest in this land and thou comest in peace to make Egypt to live. Thou waterest the fields which Ra hath created, thou givest life unto all animals,

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1. Pp. 75-7.

and as thou descendest on thy way from heaven, thou makest the land to drink without ceasing. Thou art the friend of bread and drink. Thou givest strength to the grain and makest it to increase; and thou fillest every place of work with activity. Thou art the creator of barley, and thou makest the temples to endure for millions of years. Thou art the Lord of the poor and the needy. If thou wert overthrown in the heavens, the gods would fall upon their faces and men would perish. When thou appearest on the earth, shouts of joy rise up and all the people are glad; every man of might receiveth food, and every tooth is provided with meat. Thou fillest the store-houses; thou makest the granaries to overflow. Thou makest herbs and grain to grow that the desires of all may be satisfied; and thou art not impoverished thereby. Thou makest thy strength to be a shield for men.

Nature to the Egyptians was neither a pampering grandmother, nor a niggardly step-mother. She gave them just what their intelligence and industry might improve, and placed them in a situation that, while it gave them immunity from invasion, also drew them into a world larger, and in some respects, richer than their own. The desert on their west, the sea on their north and east, and the Dark Continent stretching in the south, afforded sufficient protection for hundreds of years. Their infant civilisation could thus mature into full manhood without much interference from outside. When it was sufficiently vigorous, it did not confine itself to its cradle or nursery, but strayed into the neighbouring world through the Isthmus of Suez and the seas. Their long line of Pharaohs, to a large extent, fostered and stimulated their culture during three thousand years. They, likewise, paved the way to their own and their country's ultimate ruin by their ambitions, power and grandeur.

The yearly renewal of the soil and fertility of the country, by the alternating ebb and flow of the Nile, suggested to the Egyptians the idea of Osiris, their River God, who perpe-



Power of the Pharaohs petrified  
King Khafre 2867-2811 B. C.  
Another example of powerful portrait sculpture in Ancient Egypt.

tually renovated himself. Death appeared to them, therefore, only as an ebb-tide in the river of life; hence their irrepressible hope in immortality. Since there was uniformity in Nature's periodic self-renewal, the after-life of man, they argued, could not be different from his ordinary mode of living. Hence their peculiar mania for preserving the human body, our corrupt tabernacle of life, from decay. How could the lamp be relit if its vessel were destroyed? How could the *Ka* or spirit be revived if the body was not preserved? This is the philosophy that explains the ancient Egyptian's meticulous care for the dead. This is the logic behind the pyramids and tombs and mummies, and their rich furnishings. But the Pharaohs alone could command the enormous wealth, industry and skill needed for the purpose. They were like the sun in their universal power. They were, accordingly, regarded as the sons of the effulgent orb of heaven, their god *Aton* or *Amon-Ra*.

Like king like subjects, declares an Indian proverb. The Pharaoh only represented the apex of the pyramid of Egyptian society and culture. As in all ages, the nobles copied the standards of royalty, and the common folk tried to follow in their footsteps. Thus we have all grades of tombs and mummies, differing only in their paraphernalia and wealth. But this morbid concentration on the *post-mortem* state ultimately resulted in feeding the dead at the expense of the living. This, no less than the proverbial tide in the affairs of men, accounts for the final disappearance of Egyptian civilisation.

If we leave out Horus, a purely mythical being, Menes appears to have been the first of the Pharaohs to rule over the whole of Egypt. From him no less than thirty-one dynasties of rulers are usually counted. There were kings in Egypt, however, before the First Dynasty (3400 B.C.) and

Egypt's glory was long past before the Thirty-first Dynasty ended (332 B.C.). But this division into Dynasties is misleading, because it is very artificial and arbitrary. A Dynasty, in every case, did not represent a change in the family of rulers or foreign invasion. Another suggested division is that into the Old Kingdom, the Middle Kingdom, and the New Kingdom. The first closed with the Tenth Dynasty (2160 B.C.); the second with the Seventeenth Dynasty (1580 B.C.); and the third with the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (650 B.C.). The close of each period was marked by decadence, anarchy or foreign invasion. But the most natural division of Egyptian history is the one suggested by Breasted, viz., (a) the Age of Pyramids (3000-2500 B.C.), (b) the Age of Feudalism (2000 B.C.), and (c) the Age of Empire (1580-1150 B.C.). Whichever of the divisions we might follow, three epochs are clearly discernible. Power and glory in each lead to inevitable decline in the end; but twice, at least, that decline acted as a spur to greater endeavour and achievement. We find in these symmetrical movements an echo, as it were, of the ebb and flow of the Nile, and a reflection of the alternating plains and pyramids of Gizeh. Three great cities, Memphis, Thebes, and Amarna, symbolised the three successive ages, not as capitals merely but as embodiments of changing ideas and ideals as well.

Egypt at first comprised two kingdoms: the Kingdom of the Delta, and the Kingdom of the South. They were united together for the first time under Menes, first of the Pharaohs (c. 3400 B.C.). The creation of this first empire in Egypt was signalled by the foundation of the new city of Memphis. This is usually called the Old Kingdom. It attained the zenith of its power and prosperity under the Fourth Dynasty (2900-2750 B.C.). The Great Pyramid of Gizeh, already described, still reminds us

of its achievements. It was built by Khufu (Cheops), the second ruler of the Dynasty (2898-75 B.C.). The Great Sphinx of Khafre (Chephren), brother of Khufu, is another great monument of the same period (2867-11 B.C.). The last event of interest in the annals of the Old Kingdom, before its decline, is the extraordinary reign of Seti II (1538-1444 B. C.), the longest recorded in history. After him came feudal anarchy.

The Middle Kingdom arose out of this chaos, under the Eleventh Dynasty, with Thebes as its capital. It lasted from 2100-1580 B.C. and has been described as the Feudal Age because of the extraordinary power wielded by the great nobles, and the social and economic conditions of the period, closely resembling those which obtained in Europe during the Middle Ages. It was an epoch of great intellectual activity, marked by considerable moral advancement as well. The so-called cliff-tombs of Egypt bear testimony to the civilisation of the period. In them have been discovered several rolls of papyrus with writings of unique historical value. It is interesting to notice in them expressions of human sentiments, such as, 'Do justice, comfort the mourner, oppress not the widow, and expel no man from the possessions of his father, etc.' There has also been found in them an anticipation of the Hebrew prophecy regarding the Messiah: 'He shall be the shepherd of his people, and in him there shall be no sin.' Feudal Egypt, however, had to pay dearly for her lack of co-ordinated authority by submission to foreign conquerors. The Hyksos, a people of obscure origin, invaded the land of the Nile and dominated it during five long centuries. Beyond the fact that they introduced the horse into Egypt, an animal not known there earlier, we hardly know anything more of the dark ages of their domination. They were overthrown by the founders of the



he by his son Thutmose IV. The latter is remembered for his dynastic marriage with a Mitanni princess, the first political marriage of its kind recorded in history. He was followed by Amenhotep III whose reign (1411-1375 B.C.) marked the Golden Age of Egyptian magnificence. In the words of G. A. Dorsey, "Egypt's Pharaoh was now easily the world's First man. Tribute poured into Thebes in floods. The temples blazed with jewels and gold beyond huge bronze doors. The whole civilized world—Babylon, Assyria, Mitanni—courted the smile of Amenhotep III, the magnificent. . . . His warships policed the Mediterranean, his trading ships went everywhere to gather *objects d'art* for Theban palaces and temples—damascened bronzes from Knossos, wonderful figurines, and other products of Minoan art."<sup>1</sup> A famous set of three hundred cuneiform letters, known as the Tell-el-Amarna Letters, constitute an invaluable source of information regarding this period.

By far the most fascinating figure in ancient Egyptian history is Amenhotep IV, the next ruler (1375-1358 B.C.). He was a great idealist like Akbar, but more visionary and without the patience and tact of the Great Mughal. He tried to sweep away all the superstitions of his country by one imperial decree, and in this, no doubt, he failed. But it was a failure which shines in human history like one of Hatshepsut's golden obelisks described above. Egypt's Pantheon was filled with ignominious godlings like those destroyed by Prophet Muhammad later in Arabia.<sup>2</sup> Amenhotep IV attempted to replace them by a reformed worship of the Sun, the most ancient and universal God of mankind. He there-

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1. *The Story of Civilization*, pp. 309-10.

2. Read "The Gods of Ancient Egypt" by Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie, in *Wonders of the Past*, II, 667-79.

fore forcibly swept away all the tribal deities of the Egyptians and sought to propagate his new faith with the zeal of a prophet. Though his endeavours proved futile and the suppressed gods and goddesses were all restored by his successor, the now famous Tutankhamen, the beauty of Amenhotep's vision has survived in one of the glorious hymns he composed in praise of the Sun whom he called *Aton*. A few lines from it may be cited here as a sample :

Aton, Creator of the World, King of Kings.  
Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky.  
O living Aton, beginning of life !  
When thou risest in the eastern horizon,  
Thou fillest every land with thy beauty.  
Thou art beautiful, great, glittering, high above every  
land...  
Thy rays, they encompass the lands, even all that thou  
hast made...  
Thou bindest them by thy love.  
Though thou art far away, thy rays are upon earth...  
The trees and the plants flourish,  
The birds flutter in their marshes,  
Their wings uplifted in adoration to thee...  
When the fledgling in the egg chirps in the shell,  
Thou givest him breath therein to preserve him alive...  
How manifold thy works ! ...  
There is a Nile for the stranger in the sky,  
And for the cattle of every country that go upon their feet.  
Thy rays nourish every garden ;  
When thou risest, they live,  
They grow by thee...  
Thou art in my heart,  
There is no other that knoweth thee  
Save thy son Ikhnaton.  
Thou hast made him wise,  
In thy designs and thy might.  
The world is in thy hand,  
Even as thou hast made them.

bodies ; they used the decimal system ; they knew elementary algebra, and could calculate the cubical contents of cylinders, hemispheres, etc.<sup>1</sup> ; they knew physiology and anatomy fairly accurately as is borne out by their medical treatise contained in the Edwin Smith papyrus ; they knew that the heart is the centre of vital power in the body, and that the brain is the centre of the nervous system ; they carried out surgical operations and had among them dentists, eye, stomach and other specialists ; their furniture, as preserved in Tutankhamen's tomb, has a modern appearance ; they used finger-bowls, cups, spoons, razors, wigs, hats, face paints, cosmetics, kilts, sandals, and wooden head-rests ; their children played with mechanical toys, their sculptors produced the most life-like images, and were called 'vivifiers' ; indeed, to carve was for them 'to give life' ; their jewellery would excite the cupidity of a modern woman of fashion ; they were the first people to have census and a postal system, to use sail-boats, and copper pipes as conduits ; to use glass, paper, ink, and to devise a system of education.

We catch a glimpse of their intellectual outlook in their familiar sayings, with a few of which we may fittingly close this chapter :

"The gods live as I, I live as the gods."

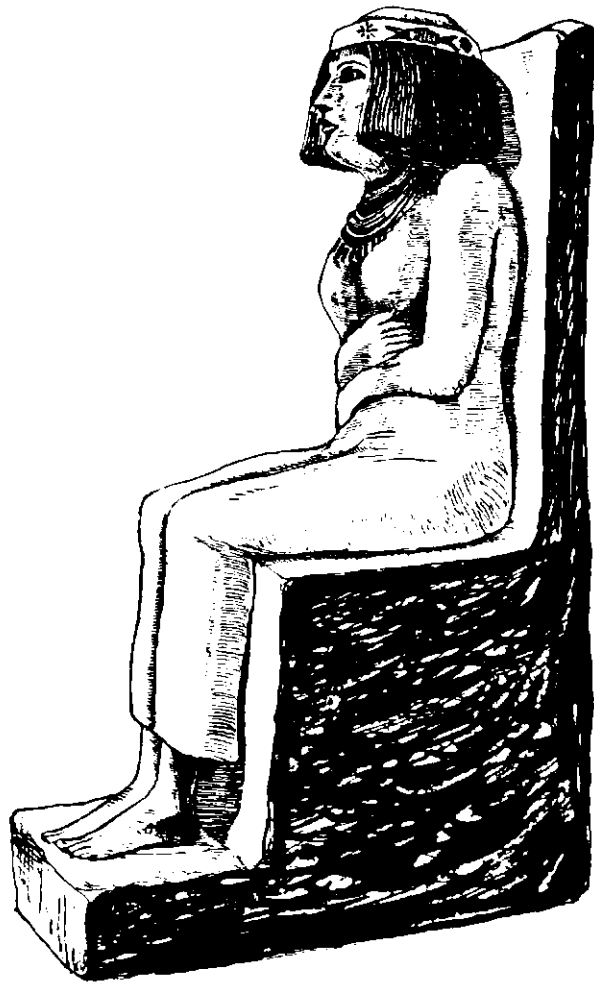
"Enough is as good as a feast."

"Let thy countenance shine joyfully as long as thou livest ; did a man ever leave the coffin after having once entered it ?"

"Be not puffed up because of the knowledge that thou hast acquired, and hold converse with the unlettered man as with the learned, for there is no obstacle to knowledge, and no handicraftsman hath attained to the limit of the knowledge of his art."

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1. Read the chapter on Egyptian Mathematics in *The Endless Quest* by F. W. Westaway.



The Modernity of Ancient Egyptian Style.  
It is immaterial whose portrait statue this is, but it  
represents two things: Feminine Fashion and the Skill of the  
Sculptor 5000 years ago.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LAND OF THE TWIN RIVERS

In studying and honouring the Near East we shall be acknowledging a debt long due to the real founders of European and American civilization.—WILL DURANT

By the *Near East* Europeans usually mean the south-west corner of Asia, including therein all the lands occupied by the Orientals. Since this latter term is equally vague, being indiscriminately applied to the Egyptians, Turks, Jews, Arabs, etc., it is desirable for us to define it more closely. We have noted in the preceding chapter the numerous contributions to civilisation made by the Egyptians. It is difficult to confine them all to the basin of the Nile alone. Excavations carried on over a wider area, across the Isthmus of Suez on the Asiatic side, have revealed the co-existence of a like civilisation in the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris as well. The land enclosed between these twin rivers was called Mesopotamia (lit. land between two rivers) by the Greeks. If we follow it up a little to the east and the west, we shall find a patch of green ribbon spreading over the desert extending northward from the Arabian peninsula. This has been described by Professor Breasted as the *Fertile Crescent*. It was the home of a wide-spread culture coeval with that of ancient Egypt. This was the *Near East* to which European and American civilisation is traced back. The extent of the world's in-

debtedness to ancient centres of civilisation will get defined with the progress of scientific investigations which are being carried out by archæologists. In the present state of our knowledge our conclusions must necessarily remain tentative. Yet, what is known with a fair degree of certainty warrants a picture of utmost interest to human history.

As in Egypt, so in Mesopotamia, our knowledge of the past is derived from graves and monuments. The sombre task of the sexton is enlivened by the acquisition of booty that might excite cupidity even in the least covetous. Though the monuments of Mesopotamia are different from those of Egypt, they are not less marvellous in their character or construction. In and beneath them is a record of human endeavour of astonishing antiquity. City after city has been exhumed, from the devouring sands of the great desert, by an army of excavators in recent years. Yet Herodotus, the Father of History, knew very little about them (with the exception of Babylon) in the fifth century B.C., while Berosus, a Babylonian historian writing about 250 B.C., vaguely refers to a race of monsters coming out of the Persian Gulf and introducing the arts of agriculture, metal-working and writing, in the legendary age, "and since that time no further inventions have been made." It was not until the middle of the last century that explorers like Hinks and Oppert discovered the first indications of a very ancient culture in its cuneiform writing. The Champollion of this script was Sir Henry Rawlinson, and its Rosetta Stone was the trilingual inscription of Behistun. Though excavations have been carried on in the Mesopotamian region since Layard unearthed, in 1842, the ruins of ancient buildings filled with sculptures and inscriptions, the most startling discoveries have been made very recently by the Anglo-American expeditions under Woolley and Langdon.

Corresponding to Memphis, Thebes, Karnak, and Amarna, we have here very ancient cities like Kish, Susa, Ur, Babylon and Nineveh. Some of them have disclosed a civilisation even older than that of Egypt. The relics of Kish and Susa begin with Palæolithic and Neolithic ages. In some places there are as many as ten layers superimposed one above another, representing different strata of civilisation. Describing the remains of Kish (meaning "universal dominion") Mr. Blaxland Stubbs has observed that "Civilization as we understand the term has, as yet, no earlier abiding centre. . . . The work of twelve years at Kish, laborious in detail but magnificent in planning and achievement, surely represents one of the outstanding romances of modern archæology . . . . this city of Kish had played its proud part not only as capital of the first Sumerian civilization, but also in the empires of Agade and Babylon, with an unbroken rôle, political or religious, down to the end of the Sassanian empire in 650 A.D."<sup>1</sup> The history of Kish begins about 4500 B.C. and it continues to be the dominating city down to the thirtieth century B.C. It is interesting to note that its Third Dynasty produced a great ruler, like Queen Hatshepsut, in the person of Azag-Bau who raised herself from the poor and unhonoured position of a wine-seller to the throne of Kish, and reigned as queen and regent for fifty years. Susa (modern Sushan) had a history not unlike that of Kish.<sup>2</sup> It was the capital of Elam to the east of Sumer. Here have been found human relics 20,000 years old and remains of an advanced culture dating from about 4500 B.C. They contain copper weapons and tools, hieroglyphs

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1. "Kish, the World's Oldest City," in *Wonders of the Past, I*, 413-18.

2. Read "Susa the Eternal City of the East," in *Wonders of the Past, II*, 697-702.

phic writings, mirrors and jewellery, finished vases "elegantly rounded and delicately painted with geometric designs, or with picturesque representations of animals and plants." The Elamites seem to have discovered the use of the wheel, both for vehicular and potter's purposes, earlier than the Babylonians or Egyptians. Susa flourished during six thousand years and witnessed the rise and fall of more than half-a-dozen empires: those of Sumer, Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome. But by far the most important and interesting of the cities of Mesopotamia were Ur, Babylon and Nineveh.

Ur is best described in the words of Leonard Woolley, Director of the British and American Joint Expedition to that city. Unravelling its treasures, the great archæologist observes—

"In arched and vaulted chambers of rubble masonry there lie concealed such treasures of art as revolutionise our ideas of early civilization; as far back in time as 3500 B.C., when Egypt was still barbarous, there in the Euphrates valley the Sumerian workers in gold and silver, in copper, stone and shell were turning out veritable masterpieces of design and technique, while their architects were familiar with all the main principles of modern construction. There is no written history of that age, but even from the offerings placed in the graves we can see how highly organized civilization had already become. Take the few objects illustrated here: the materials of which every one of them is made had to be imported from abroad: by land and by sea, from the Pamir Mountains, from Oman at the foot of the Persian Gulf, from Persia from the hills of Libanon, were brought the lapis lazuli, the copper and alabaster, the silver and the cedar wood which the craftsmen of Ur used in their manufacture, and since their own country produced nothing but grain and dates it must have been in manufactured goods that they paid for their

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1. "Ur: the City of 'The Flood,'" in *Wonders of the Past*, I, 19-26.



Imports. All this meant an elaborate system of trade and a foreign policy which by treaties or by force of arms secured the far-flung trade routes: the art of writing had been developed to meet the merchants' needs, and, as the 'Standard' shows, the Sumerian army with its heavy-armed phalanx and its chariotry had become a formidable weapon for opening up communications or resisting attack. We have evidence of a material prosperity seldom equalled in antiquity . . . . It must be clear to anyone that the objects from the tombs are the product of a civilization already old and experienced."

Before we pass to Babylon and Nineveh, it is necessary to acquaint ourselves with the earliest makers of this civilisation. They were the Sumerians, a people, like the Hyksos of Egypt, of very uncertain origin. Some imagine they came by land from Central Asia, others that they were Dravidians or Aryans who came by sea through the Persian Gulf. What is certain is that they were foreigners in the land of their occupation when the curtain of history lifted over them, about 3500 B.C. The land in which they settled was the Delta at the head of the Persian Gulf which was much higher up than it is to-day. Formerly the Euphrates and the Tigris entered the sea by separate estuaries. This region is referred to in the Bible as "Shinar." It is not strange, says one writer, that tradition should have located here Paradise, that primeval garden "out of the ground of which God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food." Hence, obviously, the struggle for its possession which throughout characterises Mesopotamian history. It was in its racial aspects a struggle between the Semites and non-Semitic people which, in a sense, has not yet come to an end.

The inhabitants of a rich oasis in the midst of an arid desert are compelled to be fighters. It is not surprising, therefore, that even the comparatively peaceful Sumerians

fought both among themselves and with the surrounding nomads of the desert by whom they were finally overthrown. The internal warfare in Sumeria was between rival city-states (like Ur, Nippur, Uruk, Larsa and Lagash) into which the country was divided as later in Greece. Each city-state was under a *Patesi* or priest-king who organised the people both in war and peace,—perhaps more often in war than peace.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the Sumerians made important contributions to civilisation, the nature of which can be learnt from the thousands of inscribed clay-tablets discovered by archæologists, no less than from their architectural monuments and other remains.

The temple-citadels of the Sumerians, called *ziggurats*, were the centres of their life. *Ziggurat* meant “the Mountain of God.” It was a terraced tower with tiers of steps to climb to the top where was the central shrine of Nannar, the Moon God, or Nin-gal, his wife. There were lesser shrines all around, as well as quarters for the priests.” These temples were not merely places of worship,” writes Woolley : “about their courts were store-houses and magazines for the multitudinous offerings in kind brought by faithful worshippers or paid as rent by tenants of the sacred estates : there were living quarters for the priests and the temple servants, and there were workshops and factories wherein the men and women attached to the temple were employed, spinning and weaving into cloth the raw wool which the farmers brought, casting and hammering into objects for the god's use the copper and the silver paid as tithes by the merchants of the city, cutting and carving the timber

1. “We found on the Nile the earliest highly developed art of peace ; we find here among the Sumerians the earliest highly developed art of war in the history of man.” J. H. Breasted. *The Conquest of Civilization*, p. 138.

imported from the north ; here too were the schools where the professional scribes were taught, and libraries where sacred texts and historical records and court proceedings were stored."

Among the external enemies of Sumer was Akkad which was situated on its north. We have already noticed its chief city Kish. In the twenty-eighth century B.C. there arose in Akkad a Semitic ruler named Sargon (2772-2717 B.C.). He was the first great builder of an empire in Western Asia and made himself master from Elam in the east to Syria in the west, or as he proudly proclaimed, "from the countries of the rising sun to the countries of the setting sun." Ur, Lagash and other Sumerian cities were all subdued by him. Thereafter the kings of Mesopotamia described themselves as kings of "Sumer and Akkad." They founded the city of Babylon which in course of time eclipsed all other cities and gave the name Babylonia to the southern part of the valley of the twin rivers.<sup>1</sup> It derived its name from its great *ziggurat*, (the Biblical Tower of Babel) the temple of its god Marduk (Merodach) or its goddess Ishtar : *Bab-ili*, the Gate of the Gods.

The real founder of the greatness of Babylon was king Hammurabi, who ruled for forty-three years, 2123-2080 B.C. His fame has been revived in this world, after four thousand years, on account of the discovery of his remarkable code of laws inscribed on a diorite pillar.<sup>2</sup> It will now endure as long as our language and civilisation last. 'In

1. For a description of Babylon read "Babylon the Great" by H. R. Hall, and "The Hanging Gardens of Babylon" by J. A. Brendon, in *Wonders of the Past*, II, 897-910 ; I, 605-8.

2. It was excavated near Susa by French archaeologists in 1897 and is now preserved in the Louvre Museum (Paris). There is a very good reproduction of it in the British Museum (London).

its wisdom, justice, and tolerance the Hammurabi Code forms one of the most remarkable of the early landmarks of civilization.' The Hebrew Code of Moses was directly derived from that of Hammurabi, as Hammurabi's was derived from the more ancient Sumerian. It is very comprehensive and contains over 280 sections. Some idea of this Code may be gained from the following excerpt from its epilogue :—

Hammurabi, the protecting King, am I. I have not withdrawn myself from the black-headed race that Bel has entrusted to me, and over whom Merodach has made me shepherd. I have not reposed myself upon my side, but I have given them places of peace. Difficult points have I made smooth, and radiance have I shed abroad. With the mighty weapon that Zamama and Ishtar have lent me, with the penetration which Ea has endowed me, with the valour that Merodach has given me, I have rooted out all enemies above and below, and the depths have I subjugated. The flesh of the land I have made rejoice : the resident people I have made secure ; I have not suffered them to be afraid. It is I that the great gods have elected to be the Shepherd of Salvation, whose sceptre is just. I throw my good shadow over my city. Upon my bosom I cherish the men of the lands of Sumer and Akkad. By my protecting genius, their brethren in peace are guided : by my wisdom are they sheltered. That the strong may not oppress the weak ; that the orphan and the widow may be counselled : in Babylon the city whose head has been lifted up by Anu and Bel ; in E Sagila, the temple whose foundations are so solid as heaven and earth : to proclaim the law of the land : to guide the procedure of the land, to sustain the feeble, I have written my precious words upon my pillar, and before my image as king of justice I have placed it . . . . . In after days, and for all time, the ruler who is in the land shall observe the words of justice which are written upon my pillar. He shall not alter the law of the land I have formulated, or the statutes of the country I have enacted, nor shall he damage my sculptures. If that man has wisdom, and strives to keep his land in order, he will heed the words which are written upon my pillar.

Apart from the quaint egotism of this proclamation the evidence of Hammurabi's actual doings is confirmed by a number of clay-tablets scattered about in his dominions. Besides "Sumer and Akkad" he also conquered Elam and Assyria. His promulgation of the laws (c. 2084-2081 B.C.) was but the culmination of a long and successful reign. "To his military achievements," writes a competent authority,<sup>1</sup> he added "a genius for administrative detail, and his letters and despatches which have been recovered reveal him as in active control of even subordinate officials stationed in distant cities of his empire. That he should have superintended matters of public interest is what might be naturally expected; but we also see him investigating quite trivial complaints and disputes among the humbler classes of his subjects, and even sending back a case for re-trial or further report. In fact, Hammurabi's fame will always rest on his achievements as a lawgiver, and the great legal Code which he drew up for use throughout his empire . . . . Its provisions reflect the king's own enthusiasm, of which his letters give independent proof, in the cause of his humbler and more oppressed classes of his subjects. Numerous legal and commercial documents also attest the manner in which its provisions were carried out; and we have evidence that the legislative system so established remained in practical force during subsequent periods."

Just as the Babylonians had eclipsed, then wiped out the Sumerians, so it was now the turn of Babylonians to be overcome by another people. These were the Kassites who came from the northern highlands, bringing with them a strange animal which the southerners naively called "the

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1. King, *History of Babylon*, p. 160; cited by Edwards, *The World's Earliest Laws*, pp. 11-12.

ass from the mountains." It was the horse! Not much is known about the Kassites, nor about the kings 'of the sea country'—the Hittites—who invaded from the north-west. They were followed by the Assyrians about whom we know more. The common result of all these inundations was that Babylonia was submerged for over a thousand years after Hammurabi.

The Assyrians got their name from their city of Ashur on the Tigris, which was their capital before Nineveh was founded. They were great fighters and their entire history (c. 1300-606 B.C.) is a record of wars. The chief of these were with the Hittites of Cappadocia, the Armeans of Syria, and the Babylonians of Mesopotamia. Their greatest rulers were Sargon II (722-705 B.C.), Sennacherib (705-681 B.C.), and Assurbanipal (called Sardanapalus by the Greeks—668-626 B.C.).

Assyria, rather than Babylon or Egypt, says Hogarth, heads the list of aspirants to the mastership of the world. It was particularly under Sargon II that she rose to the height of her grandeur and power as a military empire. To commemorate his victories he built a new fortified city to the north-east of Nineveh and called it Dur-Sharrukin or Sargonburg. Its enclosure was large enough to accommodate 80,000 people, and the royal palace alone covered an area of twenty-five acres. "Babylonia in her greatest days had never possessed a seat of power like this. In no uncertain terms it proclaimed Assyria mistress of Western Asia."<sup>1</sup>

Sennacherib, Sargon's son and successor, is even more celebrated on account of his mention in the Old Testament of the *Bible*. Hezekiah, King of Judah, having joined the

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1. Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization*, p. 168.

Phœnicians and the Philistines in a revolt, brought upon himself the might of the Assyrian emperor. Of this Sennacherib proudly says :

I took 46 of his strong fenced cities ; and of the smaller towns which were scattered about I took a countless number. And from these places I captured and carried off as spoil, 200,150 people, old and young, male and female, together with horses and mares, asses and camels, oxen and sheep, a countless multitude. And Hezekiah himself I shut up in Jerusalem, his capital city, building towers about the city to hem him in and raising banks of earth against the gate so as to prevent escape.

But Sennacherib himself met with a terrible fate. His army was destroyed by plague (2 Kings xx), and, some years later, he was murdered by his own sons. Yet the empire of Assyria reached its zenith under Assurbanipal (668-626 B.C.) and included, though only for a time, Northern Egypt and some of the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean. Great as Assurbanipal was as a conqueror, he was equally interested in the arts of peace. It was his boast that his father had taught him not only the arts of riding and shooting, but also the art of writing on clay-tablets and all the wisdom of his age. He was the proud possessor of a magnificent library, of course consisting of clay-tablets, of which no less than 30,000 have been recovered and placed in the British Museum. They are a mine of information regarding the culture of the age. But, before we turn to describe it, we must briefly notice the end of the imperial history of Mesopotamia.

The prosperity and culture of Nineveh sapped the vitality of the Assyrians, while, at the same time, the oppressive weight of their military rule goaded the provinces into rebellion. A powerful combination of their enemies stormed their capital city, in 606 B.C., and razed it to the ground, even as the Assyrians had done with Babylon. But, out of

the ashes of Babylon arose another power, that of the Chaldeans, under whom the ancient glory of that city seemed to revive for a time. Nebuchadrezzar, the greatest ruler of this last dynasty, reigned for over fifty years, from 612 to 561 B.C. After him Babylon rapidly dwindled and fell a prey to more vigorous invaders from the east, the Medes and the Persians (539 B.C.) Nebuchadrezzar is now remembered principally for two reasons: (1) he invaded Judah and brought the Jews as captives to Babylon (this was the famous Babylonian captivity of the *Bible*); (2) he built the Hanging Gardens of Babylon which the ancient Greeks counted among the Seven Wonders of the World. He also beautified Babylon with architecture. But of this nothing now remains but the Ishtar Gate and heaps of crumbling ruins.

Among the makers of Mesopotamian history, during thirty centuries, we have principally mentioned the Sumerians, the Babylonians, and the Assyrians. Of these we have indicated, at least broadly, the contributions to civilisation made by the first two. The greatness of the Assyrians, as might have been noticed, was in the spheres of war and government. Professor Hearnshaw has called them the Prussians of antiquity. Up to their day, he has observed, there had been no such fighting machine as their army. "Never before had there been so highly centralised an administration, or so effective an exploitation of subject peoples."

Nineveh was in its hey-day from 722 to 606 B.C. But only two hundred years later, when Xenophon marched past it with his famous Ten Thousand, it was in such a state of ruins that it was mistaken for the remains of a Parthian city. It was first discovered to the modern world, as already pointed out, by Layard in 1842. Excavations and researches since carried out warrant the reconstruction of a fairly full



picture of ancient Assyrian life such as is drawn by Mr. Lewis Spence in his "Splendours of Nineveh and Khorsabad." (*Wonders of the Past, II*, 769-86), from which the following excerpt may be read with interest. Describing the palace of Sennacherib, he observes that its brilliant paintings and sculptures present a vivid panorama of Assyrian life and customs as they appeared in the middle of the seventh century before Christ :

"But they also constitute a pictorial record of the imperial expansion of the Assyrian power, and delineate with skill and painstaking fidelity the dress, occupations, and characteristic features of subject races. Bas-reliefs of free and masterly execution retain for us the atmosphere of the Babylonian swamp-country of twenty-five centuries ago, the primitive inhabitants of which are depicted paddling about in their crazy coracles of skin and wickerwork, or sheltering among the reeds in hiding from the pursuing Assyrians. Or, the sculptor transports us to the highlands of Kurdistan, with their brawling mountain torrents and rude hill-forts, from which hungry tribesmen swarm down upon the rich low-lands. Long caravans of hapless prisoners are seen trudging along the well-laid military roads to Nineveh, shouldering the loot which they were compelled to carry, and dragging their children after them. The national costumes of these are sketched or chiselled with the minutest care, and these representations have enriched our knowledge of the customs of the ancient East as nothing else could possibly have done . . . .

"The new streets, some of which linked up the great gateways of the city, swarmed with cosmopolitan crowds representative of the subject races of the Assyrian empire. Merchants from Phœnicia and Elam sat at their canopied stalls, selling the dyed wools of Palestine, or strange pottery from the Mediterranean isles. Syrians sold fans of ostrich plumes, and Persians and Egyptians the cosmetics and perfumes for which there was a never-failing demand in Nineveh. The envoys of tributary principalities brought gold-dust and ivory to the temples, whose priests acted as the national bankers and money-lenders. Soldiers were seen on every hand—hard-bitten captains with fantastically curled false beards, and horsehair plumes waving above their

brass helmets, cavalymen on prancing horses, silent spearmen, Roman in their discipline and bearing."

Such pictures of ancient life in the Mesopotamian world could be cited from each one of its three principal zones : Sumer, Babylon, and Assyria. Although they differ in certain details the civilisation they represent is essentially the same. In Sumer and Babylon, for example, on account of their alluvial soil, they had necessarily to build with mud bricks which could not endure, while in Assyria they had plenty of stone for construction and have consequently left more lasting memorials. But the character of their architecture is everywhere the same ; it is poor as compared with that of Egypt. The *ziggurat* with its straight lines and sharp corners typifies the stiffness of its monotonous style. The Mesopotamians lacked the refinement and aesthetic sense of the Egyptians, though their achievements in the practical arts and sciences were equally great. Even here, the non-Semitic foreigners of Sumeria led, and the Semitic Babylonians and the mixed Assyrians only followed. The Sumerians were inventive, the Babylonians practical, and the Assyrians sordid, cruel and unoriginal. All that was best in the so-called Babylonian civilisation was due to the Sumerians. The Babylonians had the instincts of traders and made capital out of what they borrowed. The Assyrians, who were rough soldiers, sensuously enjoyed what they robbed and perished in the flames of Armageddon.

First, the art of incising cuneiform characters on clay-tablets, which, in the absence of other remains, has preserved so much of their civilisation for us, was neither Babylonian nor Assyrian, but Sumerian. Through the latter it was transmitted, in a modified form, to the Medes and the Persians. "He who shall excel in tablet-writing shall

shine like the sun" was a maxim found inscribed on a tablet discovered in one of their ancient school-houses. Their education appears to have principally consisted in the mastery of this script (which comprised about 300 signs or syllables, not alphabet), mathematics and religious lore. They had no literature worth mentioning. It contained but one epic, viz. the legend of *Gilgamesh*, and for the rest they had grammars and dictionaries, even histories of a sort (without sense of chronology like our Hindu *Purānas*), and business records. Their most valuable document for us is, however, the Hammurabi Code which throws considerable light on their social life and customs. Even the bedrock of this Babylonian code, as already noticed, was Sumerian.

Next to their script and laws, the world owes to the Sumerians-cum-Babylonians the first beginnings in mathematics and astronomy. "Babylonian records from as early as 3800 B.C.", Mr. Westaway says, "imply that even then the varying aspects of the sky had long been under expert observation. The temple towers made excellent observatories. The stars were grouped as we know them now at least as early as 2800 B.C. It was early discovered that the sun pursued amongst the stars practically the same path as the moon and planets; and this path was divided into 30° divisions among the belt of twelve constellations forming the Zodiac. The advantage of the easily factorizable number, 360, was evidently recognized."<sup>1</sup> Their records, he further observes, made an easy jumping-off ground for the Greeks. They had no instruments, though they invented a water clock (clepsydra) and they used a sun-dial. They could predict an eclipse, correct within an hour, though not to the minute as now. "The division of our month into four

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1. *The Endless Quest*, p. 23.

weeks, of our clock into twelve hours (instead of twenty-four), of our hour into sixty minutes, and of our minute into sixty seconds, are unsuspected Babylonian vestiges in our contemporary world."<sup>1</sup> This division into sixties was so current among the Babylonians that they measured out their units of value in fractions of sixty : thus 60 *shekels* made a *mina*, and 60 *minas* made a *talent*. (A *shekel* contained half an ounce of silver.)

The close connection between science, art, and religion is illustrated in the construction of the great *ziggurat* at Borsippa, known as "The Stages of the Seven Spheres." Each of its seven storeys was dedicated to one of the heavenly bodies and marked out by a symbolic colour : the lowest was black, the colour of Saturn ; the next was white, the colour of Venus ; the third was purple, of Jupiter ; the fourth blue, of Mercury ; the fifth scarlet, of Mars ; the sixth silver, of the Moon ; and the seventh gold, of the Sun. Beginning from the top, they represented the days of the week. As the *ziggurat* was their temple as well as observatory, the priests were their scientists. Under such auspices astronomy naturally shaded off into astrology. The necromancy of divination by observation of the heavenly bodies was further reinforced by the scrutiny of the livers of sacrificial animals.

In the field of art the Mesopotamians were poor even as imitators. They seem to have learnt little from their southwestern neighbours, the Egyptians. The glazed tile was their only legacy to the Persians. Their love of blazing colours for decoration showed their vulgar tastes. No doubt they were handicapped by lack of local material on which to work ; but even where it was available, as in Assyria, their

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1. Will Durant. *The Story of Civilization*, I, 257-8.

execution, except in animal sculpture, was crude and heavy. Few Babylonian works of art have survived that might enable us to judge properly. Rare finds like the inlaid dagger, lyre, bull's head, ornaments, etc. discovered by Woolley at Ur, serve to indicate that the Sumerians excelled in the art of the goldsmith. But so far as stonework is concerned, judging from available evidence, this civilisation produced little of abiding value. The description of Nineveh by Mr. Lewis Spence, cited earlier, appears, in the light of actual specimens, greatly overdrawn so far as the artistic aspect is concerned. It is true that "the chief glory of the Mesopotamian craftsman were the wonderful engraved gems which have been found in such profusion," and that "as he gained in skill and confidence he produced work which can almost compare with that of the best modern lapidaries." But when it came to handling larger subjects, the Babylonians strangely bungled. As Mr. Spence has admitted, "The heavy and luxurious cloaks and mantles in which the Chaldeans wrapped themselves rendered a vogue of the nude in art impossible, and thus gave the Sculptor no opportunity for the representation of that most noble of all subjects, the human form divine. Thus cut off from that anatomical study of the human body which is the basis of artistic excellence, the Babylonian sculptor, like the school-boy with slate and pencil, too often composed his figures as though they consisted of garments to which heads, arms and legs had been fortuitously attached."<sup>1</sup>

The real glory of the Mesopotamian (Assyrian) sculptor, however, was bas-relief of animals. Here he seemed to be in his own element, and produced his best which can challenge

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1. "The Arts in Assyria and Babylonia," by Lewis Spence in *Wonders of the Past*, II, 645-58.

comparison with the best of its kind elsewhere. The Assyrian was at all times a savage with unredeemed brute instincts, and showed masterly understanding of the mere animal in art. Thus we have from him masterpieces of animal life in all its vivacious poses, of the nimble deer, the wild horse, and the noble lion.

Indeed, the failure of Mesopotamian civilisation may be attributed to its sensuous animality and want of appreciation of human values. Its keynote was in the words of the *Ecclesiastes*—"Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest, all the days of the life of thy vanity." A culture that could cherish no nobler ambition than this could not endure for long. Its callousness to human suffering is shamelessly flaunted in the numerous sculptures and inscriptions of the Assyrian monarchs. One reads: "From their hostile mouths have I torn their tongues, and I have compassed their destruction. As for the others who remained alive, I offered them as a funerary sacrifice; . . . their lacerated members have I given unto the dogs, the swine, the wolves . . . By accomplishing these deeds I have rejoiced the heart of the great gods." Humanity could not thrive on such inhumanity.

The treatment of women was another rock on which Mesopotamian civilisation foundered. "In general," writes Mr. Will Durant, "the position of woman in Babylonia was lower than in Egypt or Rome, and yet not worse than in classic Greece or Medieval Europe." From Sumer, through Babylon, to Assyria, it shows progressive deterioration. At first there was exchange of gifts and dowry between both parties to a marriage. No marriage was valid without a con-

tract. "If a man take a wife and a contract has not concluded," declares Hammurabi's Code (128), "then that woman is no wife." Woman possessed independent rights to property and could engage in business of her own. She was also given sufficient protection by the law. "If a man point the finger against a holy sister or a man's wife unjustifiably, that man shall be thrown before the judge, and his brow shall be branded." (H. C. 127). Divorce was permitted and regulated by law. "If a man divorce his spouse who has not borne him children, he shall give to her all the silver of the bride-price, and restore to her the dowry which she brought from the house of her father; and so he shall divorce her." (H. C. 138). "If a man's wife, dwelling in a man's house, has set her face to leave, . . . has wasted her house, and has neglected her husband, then she shall be prosecuted . . ." (H. C. 141). A daughter had equal rights to her father's property, as her brothers as is indicated by H. C. 180: "If the father has not given a dowry to his daughter, . . . then after the father has gone to his fate, she shall take out of the possessions of the paternal house the portion of one son. She shall enjoy it during her life. What she leaves behind is to her brothers." But in course of time woman was reduced to helplessness and slavery. Priestly domination here, as in other directions, led the way to demoralisation and decline. In the name of Ishtar, the goddess of love, shameless orgies of immoral sensuality were sanctified and enjoyed. Temples became hotbeds of vice and legalised prostitution. War too brutalised men. Herodotus says, when the Babylonians were besieged, they strangled their wives, "to prevent the consumption of their provisions." The Assyrians were more coarse grained. But, as in Babylon, so in Nineveh, refinement only meant effeminate degeneracy: "Young men dyed and curled their

hair, perfumed their flesh, rouged their cheeks, and adorned themselves with necklaces, bangles, ear-rings and pendants." After the Persian conquest, greater degeneracy followed ; with lack of self-respect came lack of self-restraint and oppression as well. As one tablet mourns :

Men exalt the work of the great man who is skilled in murder.  
They let the strong take the food of the poor ;  
They strengthen the mighty ;  
They destroy the weak man, the rich man drives him away.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### INDUS CIVILISATION

Judging by the domestic architecture, the seal-cutting, and the grace of the pottery, the Indus civilization was ahead of the Babylonian at the beginning of the third millennium (c. 3000 B.C.).—V. G. CHILDE

Our survey of human history has so far revealed to us two great tracts of land, viz., Egypt and Mesopotamia in the "Near East," where well over 5000 years ago man had attained to a surprising state of civilisation. They were both civilisations thrown up, as it were, by the fertilising waters of the Nile, the Euphrates, and the Tigris. We now come nearer home and discover an equally fascinating culture, even more marvellous, in several respects, than what we have witnessed further west. Indian history, until fifteen years ago, was begun with the coming of the Aryans, about 1500 B.C. But the discovery of a more ancient civilisation on the banks of the Indus and its tributaries, made in recent years, has pushed back our history by not less than 2000 years. The excavations carried on since 1922 at Mohenjodaro (25 miles south of Larkana, in Sind), and at Harappa (about 400 miles further north, in the Montgomery District of the Punjab) a little earlier, have disclosed the remains of a civilisation contemporaneous with the earlier stages of that of Egypt and Mesopotamia, if not of even greater antiquity.

Here, for the first time, we come to a chapter of history where nothing shall be said about kings and conquerors, empires and armies, but everything about the people, their habits and customs, their arts and religion, etc. It is the history of peace rather than of war, unlike that of Assyria and Babylonia or even Egypt. We have here no Dynasties or dates to commit to memory, and no strange names to remember. It is one even picture of man as man, and his doings undisturbed by the inhumanities of war and imperialism. If there were kings in the Indus valley, we know nothing about them. It is just possible that the people of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa governed themselves without the expensive luxury of monarchs. If this were so, we have in them our earliest self-governing communities, which were not village republics, but autonomous city-states. Considering the early history of Sumer this does not seem unlikely.

A close examination of both the sites has disclosed wonders more valuable to human history than the treasures of Tutankhamen's tomb, found in that same year. The work of Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni at Harappa, in 1921, and of the late Mr. R. D. Banerji at Mohenjo-daro, in 1922, brought to light for the first time the indications of this buried civilisation of 5000 years ago. It is unfortunate that after ten years' persistent excavation the work had to be suspended, in 1931, for financial reasons, when the world's curiosity had been roused to a pitch but not fully satisfied. Yet the zealous labours of Sir John Marshall, Dr. Ernest Mackay and others of the Archaeological Department of the Government of India, during this short period, has succeeded in unravelling the essential features of that civilisation. The complete decipherment of its inscribed seals and tablets such as those of Sumer and Babylonia, which are now engaging scholars, will, no doubt, lead to a fuller knowledge

of the Indus culture ; but the other remains that have been carefully studied up till now give us a sufficient idea of life in the Punjab and Sind during the third millennium B.C. The digging up of other sites in that area, like Amri, Rupar, Nal, etc., has established beyond doubt that that culture was not confined to Mohenjo-daro and Harappa. On the contrary, the attempt to trace the various finds to their original sources has revealed far-reaching contacts. For example, the gold used in Mohenjo-daro (with its peculiar admixture of silver) could only have come from Mysore, and its semi-precious amazon-stones from the distant Nilgiri hills. A comparison of its pottery, seals and other articles with those of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Crete has not only suggested the range of its intercourse with the contemporary world in the West, but also led some into the belief that the proto-Sumerian culture might have owed its inspiration to India. "If so," asks Professor Childe, "had the Sumerians themselves come from the Indus, or at least from regions in its immediate sphere of influence?"

Harappa was the larger of the two cities. But its ruins, being quarried for bricks during successive ages, has been reduced to comparative insignificance. Mohenjo-daro ("the City of the Dead") lay undiscovered until recent years on account of its obscurity. The ruins are at a distance of a little over seven miles from Dokri railway station, and cover a square mile of ground, comprising two principal mounds, the larger of which is 1300 yds. long and 670 yds. wide, and the smaller 440 yds. by 330 yds. Unlike Sumer and Babylon these two cities were built entirely of burnt red bricks and have consequently better endured the ravages of time. The spade of the excavator has here unearthed layer after layer of buildings superimposed one over another like the nine cities of Troy. These strata of civilisation repre-

sent at least two ages : the Neolithic and the Chalcolithic. The implements, weapons and utensils are made either of flint, polished stone, copper or bronze. Gold, silver, and alloys like electrum have also been found, besides inferior metals like tin and zinc, but there is no trace of iron either at Harappa or Mohenjo-daro. The last named metal did not exist in Sumer, was very rare in Babylon, and was used for weapons only by the Assyrians at a very late age. Hence, scholars have found in this a clue to the age of the Indus civilisation. But, on that account, we are not to suppose that it was a very primitive culture. The people of Mohenjo-daro, as well as those of Harappa, were used to cosmetics, fine jewellery and a high standard of living as indicated by their excellent habitations and furnishings.

The city of Mohenjo-daro was a model of town-planning. Its broad streets, with straight rows of buildings, running due north and south, with cross-roads cutting at right-angles and running due east and west, may be seen even to-day. The main street was 33 ft. wide and the others rarely less than 18 ft. broad. There was, besides, a net-work of lanes, equally straight in their construction, separating the several blocks of buildings from one another. As a rule, individual houses never touched each other, but were always separated by alleys which provided the only access to them. The only defect in their construction, according to modern ideas, was that no doors or windows existed on the side facing the road. This must have given the roads a dull and monotonous appearance. Ventilation was admitted through openings into a court-yard within. Houses were invariably built on raised platforms and generally possessed an upper storey. This was necessitated by the constant danger of floods from which the city suffered several times. In larger houses there was a porter's lodge at the entrance, and usually the ground floor

was used by servants, and for kitchen, bath, etc. The living rooms were all upstairs. Every house had its own well in the centre of the court-yard as may be witnessed even today.

Drainage that might stand examination at the hands of modern sanitary engineers was the great speciality of the builders of Mohenjo-daro. Each house had a well constructed sink from which the water was drained off into the underground sewers in the streets. Archaeologists have marvelled at the skill with which the whole system was planned and constructed. It is obvious that such co-ordination between domestic and public construction, as we witness at Mohenjo-daro, could not have been possible without an efficient municipal administration. But how exactly this was organised we have no means of knowing now.

That the Indus people were punctilious about cleanliness is evidenced not only by their perfect drainage system, which has no parallel anywhere in the world until we come to our own times, but also by their provision for private as well as public bathing. Apart from the carefully constructed bathrooms in their domestic architecture, we have in Mohenjo-daro public baths of a type found nowhere before the days of the Roman Empire. The Great Bath excavated by Sir John Marshall, in 1925-6, is considered the most interesting building yet discovered at Mohenjo-daro. It was built entirely of burnt brick and measured 39 ft. 3 ins. by 23 ft. 2 ins. A paved walk, about 15 ft. across, surrounded the top of the bath, enclosed within a wall which separated it from another cloistered path, 7 ft. wide, and a series of chambers, intended for the bathers, and built all around. A large well in a room in the vicinity fed this reservoir, while a hole in its bed let out the used water through a well constructed culvert. Dr. Mackay thinks that "the presence of the great bath

and the smaller bathrooms strongly suggests that bathing was a ritual of the people of Mohenjo-daro and that both priests and laymen had regular ablutions to perform at stated times of the day."<sup>1</sup> But this is only a surmise. What is known about the religion of the Indus people has been deduced from their seals and amulets, and no trace has been found of temples or separate places of worship.

There are huge buildings in some parts of the city, but their use is uncertain. For instance, on the northern side is a structure about 242 ft. long and 112 ft. wide, with walls over 5 ft. thick. A little to the south of it is another large straggling building, about 220 ft. long and 150 ft. wide, with walls of equal thickness. "Possibly it combined the residence of the governor with the administrative offices of the city." In another quarter has been found a spacious hall, some 85 ft. square, whose entire structure indicates that it must have been used as a market square with lines of permanent stalls along its aisles. Such huge buildings also existed at Harappa where, in spite of systematic brick-robbing carried on through the centuries, a great storehouse, about 168 ft. by 134 ft., divided into several compartments, is still standing. The foundations of its walls are at places 9 ft. thick.

But in spite of their great capacity for building the Indus people appear to have been strangely unimaginative. Their pillars were all square, the only variation being a slight tapering upwards in some cases. Though the construction of round pillars and perfect arches was known to the contemporary Mesopotamians, with whom they were certainly familiar, they never copied the variation in style. The depressing monotony of blind walls along their roads was relieved only

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1. *The Indus Civilization*, p. 58.

by the admission of corner-houses which must have served them as public restaurants as ours do in modern cities. But there was no ornamentation anywhere in the Mohenjo-daro architecture, if we except a little corbelling, here and there, over doors and windows. Drab utilitarianism could go no further! To them the Egyptians, or even Babylonians, must have appeared extravagant. In the utter absence of grave-furniture or foundation deposits it is doubtful whether the people of Mohenjo-daro stretched their imaginations beyond the 'now' and the 'here.' We should look into other materials for a fuller appreciation of their living and ideas.

The art of the archæologist has imparted life to the dry bones in the valley, and, out of the scanty materials yet available, reconstructed a wonderful picture of the past. These materials, besides brick and mortar, consist of a few skeletons, urns, pottery, utensils of copper and bronze, weapons, jewellery, toys, and above all a number of most interesting seals, amulets, etc. It is from these last that most valuable inferences regarding the Indus people have been drawn.

The number of skeletons discovered is not more than fourteen, two of them being of women and two of children; ten are of adult males, one of which is truncated. They were not all found in a single place. Some were lying in the streets, some in the rooms, but none in a regular tomb. Thus, it is plain that all of them were victims of some sudden calamity, and did not die a natural death. The all but complete absence of tombs indicates that the disposal of the dead in the Indus valley differed from the practices of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The contents of the few urns discovered show that partial burial, after cremation or other disposal of the dead, was also in vogue, at least among some.

The prevailing mode must have been cremation as is still the custom among most Hindus. Although the population of Mohenjo-daro must obviously have been cosmopolitan, the specimens above referred to have been assigned by scholars to one or other of the following four racial types : Proto-Australoid, Mediterranean, Mongolian, and Alpine. The maximum height of the male skeletons was 5 ft. 4½ ins. and of the female not more than 4 ft. 4½ ins. Many of the doorways in Mohenjo-daro are less than six feet above the floor.

There are not many specimens of the art of the sculptor in Mohenjo-daro. But the few that have been discovered are of considerable interest and merit. In the opinion of Sir John Marshall, some of them represent work of which "a Greek of the 4th century B.C. might well have been proud." Two figures of dancing women and two mutilated male statuettes have attracted much appreciation. Two of them are in grey stone, one in steatite decorated with hard white paste and red ochre, and one is a bronze. Though they may not be portraits, their value to the historian lies as much in the ideas they suggest as in their artistic merit. The female figurines represent an ancient art, that of dancing ; and the bronze one illustrates the feminine passion for ornaments, which in this case consist of a whole armful of bracelets and bangles. The male steatite figure shows a close trimmed beard and well-dressed hair kept in position by a fillet rare to the sex. Other evidence indicates that, like the Sumerians and Babylonians, men in Mohenjo-daro often kept the beard but shaved the upper lip. Numerous razors of various sizes and shapes have been discovered, though not scissors. They are all of copper or bronze, of which latter material even mirrors were made.

Their weapons were simple, and axes, maces, spears, bows



and arrows practically exhausted their armoury. Only two copper swords, or dirks, not more than 18½ ins. long, have so far been discovered. "Swords of so early a date are extremely rare at any site," writes Dr. Mackay; "at present the only specimen to be compared with them is one lately discovered at Tell-el-Ajjul in Palestine by Sir Flinders Petrie, and assigned by him to the period of the Old Kingdom of Egypt, a period which is approximately that of Mohenjo-daro."<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the only danger to which Mohenjo-daro was exposed for centuries was the river in flood, and against this no armoury could serve.

They seem to have been a peaceful community of traders on the whole, and their food consisted chiefly of wheat, barley and dates, besides fish from the river. They also domesticated the cow, the buffalo and the goat for milk and other purposes. On their seals we have representations of these and other animals. Of bulls there were two varieties: the humped and the plain. They knew the tiger but not the lion; the elephant and the rhinoceros frequently appear; but strangely there is no trace of the ubiquitous 'ship of the desert', the camel. Asses must have been in use, but the horse was unknown.

Their pottery ranged from the crude and primitive to the sumptuously glazed and finished. It was usually coloured red with black designs, either geometrical, or floral. A few specimens have animal or even human figures. The glazed variety compared well with the best of its kind in the contemporary world. There were also huge jars of baked clay for storage purposes. Besides these pottery-work was put to a variety of other uses: there were pottery drain-pipes, candle-stands, spindle-whorls, mouse-traps, bird-cages, toys

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1. *The Indus Civilization*, p. 127.

and even bracelets. Stone vessels were rare, but specimens of extraordinary interest have been found: one of them is a flat-based tumbler, only four inches in height, made of a very rare jade-green crystal, "a material at the present time to be found no nearer to Mohenjo-daro than Mysore." In fact, as mentioned already, a careful comparison of archaeological notes has revealed the widespread contacts of the Mohenjo-daro people with their contemporary world, but chiefly with Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Crete.<sup>1</sup>

The Indus people produced a vast quantity of inscribed seals and amulets, even like those of Sumer and Babylon, which have given rise to much speculation on the part of scholars. It will be long, however, before the Indus script is deciphered with the certainty of either the hieroglyphic of Egypt or the cuneiform of Babylonia. Meanwhile we must be content with a description of some select tablets that do indicate the ideas of their authors. In the absence of a better medium the people of Mohenjo-daro tried to record their thoughts in the only manner known to their age, viz., through pictographs inscribed on either clay or stone tablets. Until they are all definitely deciphered we cannot even say for what purpose they were intended. But we are told by competent authority that these seal-amulets are "the most successful artistic achievement of the inhabitants of the Indus valley, and the numbers of them which have come to light make it fairly certain that they were carried by practically the entire population of both cities.

"These amulets which are invariably made of steatite," writes Dr. Mackay, "range in size from half an inch to just over two

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1. For further light regarding this point, read Dr. Mackay, *The Indus Civilization*. Ch. VIII entitled "Chronology and Connections with other Countries," p. 191 ff.

and a half inches square, although the most common sizes run from 0.7 to 1.2 inches. There are two main types, the first square, with a carved animal and inscription, the second rectangular, with an inscription only; and while the former have a small perforated boss at the back to take a cord, the latter are convex on the reverse side, with the hole running through the seal itself at right angles to its length."

There are on these seal-amulets all sorts of quaint figures which, on comparison with the gods and goddesses of Egypt and Mesopotamia, seem to represent the deities of the Mohenjo-daro people. The simplest, and by now the most familiar, of them is the figure of a humped bull of enormous size. Another seal, which has aroused the keenest interest, represents a nude three headed deity with horns, seated in what might be described as the *yoga* pose. Round about this central figure are a number of animals—a rhinoceros, an elephant, a tiger, a buffalo and two deer. Sir John Marshall has found in this the prototype of *Paśupati* or *Siva* as Lord of Beasts. This suggestion has led to the liveliest speculation, and the identification of *Pārvati* or *Durga* in the ubiquitous Mother Goddess of the Indus people. This latter is represented, also as a horned deity, seated under a *Pīpal* tree, with a devotee, also horned, kneeling in obeisance, while a goat with a human face looks on with evident interest. At the bottom of the seal are seven maidens with long pigtails, wearing a sprig of the sacred tree on the head, standing in a row. These illustrations, taken out of the many, should suffice to indicate both the nature of the seals and the speculations they have given rise to. Other Hindu symbols that have been traced in the seals are those of the *linga* and the *swastika*. Evidences of tree, serpent and river worship have also been discovered at Mohenjo-daro. We should guard ourselves, however, against accepting all these hypotheses as established truths. Further researches may confirm or demo-

lish these inferences.

The least ambiguous of all the finds which reflect the mind of the Mohenjo-daro people are their jewellery and toys. Whatever mysteries might surround the doings of the male human being, the genuine love of women for jewels and of children for toys seem to represent the simple and abiding truths of human life. Mohenjo-daro jewellery is made from all substances from pottery to ivory, and from bronze to silver and gold. There are girdles and necklaces, bracelets and bangles, as well as ear and nose ornaments. Finger rings are also plentiful. Fillets of the type found on the steatite statuette, referred to already, are common, and seen to have been worn by men as well as women. It is also of special interest to note that anklets found in Mohenjo-daro are of the same type as appear on a figure in a fresco at Cnossus in Crete. Likewise, some of the beads discovered here, especially the "etched carnelian" variety, have their replicas in the Royal Tombs of Ur unearthed by Sir Leonard Woolley. No less than twenty-three different varieties of precious or semi-precious stones used for ornamental purposes have been discovered. They have been worked upon with a skill that reveals an advanced stage of craftsmanship. A noteworthy example is that of the carnelian beads of cylindrical shape, each five inches long, used in a girdle. "The care taken to polish the interior of each bead so that no white marks should mar the semitransparent stone," says Dr. Mackay, "marks a very high stage of craftsmanship." In the matter of jewellery, therefore, the women of Mohenjo-daro were as well served as those of Sumer or Egypt. They proved their loyalty to the craftsmen, and to their own sex, by burying their jewels in caskets or vessels when they were threatened with annihilation. For this modern historians ought to be very grateful to them.

Of toys for children there has been found a great variety, from the crudest clay models to the highly finished bronze-ware. The animal models, especially, are of considerable interest. A bronze buffalo and the glazed figure of a monkey, in particular have attracted much attention. A few toy birds, one that was used as a whistle, miniature clay-carts, little scale-pans of pottery, etc. have also been discovered. A tiny clay donkey found in the Indus valley has a nodding head manipulated with a string. While the children played with these, and excellent marbles that might make a schoolboy of today jealous of his confrère of 5000 years ago, the elders of Mohenjo-daro amused themselves with board-games, as is evidenced by the numerous dice found in the Indus valley. They are mostly cubical in shape and are made of either pottery or stone. Unlike our modern pieces, on which the sum of the opposite sides is always seven, the Mohenjo-daro dice have one opposite two, three opposite four, and five opposite six. There are also a few tabular dice made of ivory which are marked one, two, and three on three sides only, the remaining sides having merely a few lines or other signs. "Games-men" of various shapes, some mistaken for the *linga*, have also been discovered. Other recreations were provided by hunting, cock-fighting, and dancing to the accompaniment of music. Some musical instruments such as the tambourine, harp and lyre, are discernible in the clay seals and other representations. Two specimens of dancing women have already been cited. Women of all classes, in addition, undoubtedly diverted themselves with spinning cotton yarn, as is indicated by the very large number of spinning-whorls made of all substances, from pottery to bronze and ivory.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE HEART OF ASIA

What the Far East possesses in arts, literature, and philosophy is almost wholly, directly or indirectly, the product of the Chinese genius—

V. A. RENOUF

We are so accustomed to talk of Europe and Asia as two separate continents that we hardly imagine they are really one. Their division is more mental than physical, more cultural than geographical. A mere glance at the map will show their essential unity. Neither the mountains nor the seas that are supposed to divide Europe from Asia are insurmountable barriers. The Ural and the Caucasus ranges are mere hills compared with the Himalayas which have not come in the way of regarding India as an integral part of Asia. The Caspian and the Black Seas can no more divide Europe from Asia than the North and the Baltic Seas have separated Britain and Scandinavia from the rest of Europe. Russia lying athwart the two continents proclaims their geographical no less than political indivisibility. In the light of these facts Europe looks like a peninsula of Asia stretching westwards, as those of Malay, India, and Arabia do southwards. Besides, populations, religions, and cultural movements starting in Asia have profoundly affected European civilisation in the past. The modern domination of Europe over Asia is like that of Rome, at one

time, over Europe itself.' From this viewpoint the history of Asia acquires a new and vital significance.

We have, in the preceding chapters, done little more than trace the First Steps in man's emergence from barbarism into civilisation. Indeed, in Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Indus valley, we witnessed even substantial improvements in the material comforts of life, such as good housing, furniture and other articles of luxury, as well as an attainment of artistic standards, in some respects, hard to excel even in modern times. But two great achievements remained yet to be added to human culture of which, though the initial stages had been covered, no real grasp was attained. This was in the realm of religion and science. A brief survey of both these fields will suffice to establish this fact.

The 'conquest of civilization' has two important aspects : (1) subjective, and (2) objective. Man being an intelligent, or rather, rational creature, he feels the urge to explain to himself both his own nature and Nature around him. To the extent he is able to do this correctly he attains mastery over himself and his environment. Religion and Science are both attempts to understand and interpret man's life in relation to the universe. In either field there is no finality to his conclusions ; he ever tends to comprehend reality and master it, but only with partial success. This is the meaning of civilisation in its inner and outer aspects. Primitive man found himself face to face with the ever recurring phenomena of dreams and death which baffled his intelligence. In the childhood of his race it was natural that he should formulate hypotheses that appear childish to our adult humanity. Blindly, but earnestly, he grappled with life and its manifold problems and arrived, or seemed to arrive, at certain solutions. Thus he came to believe in a life after death, and tried to make provision for it in the manner described

earlier. With equal application he watched the movements of the heavenly bodies, by day and by night, and seemed to find in them some meaning, though more of an astrological than astronomical character. Human progress since then has marked further stages in the directions first pointed out by primitive man. In this latter-day advancement Asia has primarily led in the field of Religion and its adjunct Philosophy, and Europe in the field of Science and the resulting material progress. We are not, however, to carry this distinction too far, for there are no exclusive monopolies in the various elements of human civilisation, any more than there are absolute divisions in our geographical composition.

There are three zones in Asia, each of which has made its own distinctive contributions to modern civilisation. They are China, India, and Asia-Minor. Without making a fetish of chronological priority, we might briefly assess their character, because, irrespective of time and country, they collectively represent the heart of Asia. If racial labels are of any use, we might speak of them as Mongolian, Aryan, and Semitic. For the sake of convenience and clearness we shall describe them in the sequence mentioned.

China is very ancient and has had a continuity of civilisation down to modern times, longer than that of Egypt or even India since Mohenjo-daro. Being isolated from the rest of the world by physical barriers her culture has survived through the centuries, for the most part, unaltered. "The geographical conditions of China were such," says Renouf, "as first, to favour the growth of a great civilized nation, and secondly, to isolate that nation from other civilized peoples living farther west." Yet, in her own world she remained mistress during at least thirty centuries, before the advent of Japan and the European nations, when her culture spread into Korea, Japan, and the states of



Indo-China. In certain important respects she was the pioneer in world civilisation as well. We owe the printing press, gun-powder, silk, paper, tea, and perhaps also the mariner's compass, to her, while porcelain of the best sort still bears the name of the country of its origin, China. In the words of Professor Hearnshaw, "If we remember what the compass, gunpowder, and the printing press meant to christendom in the fifteenth century A.D., we shall hardly regard it as fanciful to say that the Renaissance owed almost as much to China as to Greece."

The political history of China is in strange contrast to her cultural contributions. Though the Chinese were among the world's earliest historiographers, their annals are full of quaint and fanciful legends. For instance, they believed that *P'an Ku*, the First Man, hammered the world into shape, in the course of some 18,000 years, and that was about 2,229,000 B.C. Likewise, *Fu Hsi*, the supposed inventor of their picturesque script, their calendar, and their musical instruments, reigned from 2852-2738 B.C., and is represented in sculpture with a serpent's tail. He is also described as the founder of the institution of marriage. His successor *Shen Nung* (2737-2705 B.C.) was the Father of Agriculture, and bears in sculpture the head of an ox on a human body. But *Ssu-ma Ch'ien*, their first great historian (1st century B.C.), begins his history of China with *Huang Ti*, the *Yellow Emperor* (2704-2595 B.C.). He too is credited with developing astronomy with a view to determining the calendar in the interests of agriculture. His wife was the founder of the silk industry. The first real Dynasty, however, begins with *Yü* (2205-2197 B.C.), and is significantly called *Hsia* which means "civilised". It continued down to 1766 B.C. when it was superseded by the *Shang* or *Yin* Dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.).

"We know something of the culture of the Shang Dynasty", writes Professor Soothill, "and there is evidence that it had risen to an interesting degree of artistic development, especially in the making of bronze vessels and the carving of jade. The first important book on antiquities, written in the tenth century A.D. contains illustrations of existing bronze vessels of the Shang Dynasty. And on tortoise-shells, deer's horns, and sheep's clavicles, recently unearthed in Honan, a large number of characters have been found, showing that, though Shang writing was still archaic, it had already passed from the pictorial to a conventionalized stage, and was capable of expressing abstract ideas. The characters were painted or engraved on bamboo, wood, or bone. Some of the poems found in the *Book of Odes* are attributed to the Shang period, and are therefore the most ancient literary remains of the nation... Perhaps, the height of the civilization, as well as its degradation, is best indicated by the luxury of the court of the last emperor, the profligate Chou Hsin, whose magnificent palaces are reported as the storehouses of immense riches."<sup>1</sup>

This is known as the Age of Feudalism, for though emperors reigned, real power was in the hands of the great barons. Its interest lies in its large contributions to civilisation. *Wu Wang*, founder of the *Chou* Dynasty which followed the *Shang* Dynasty, we are told, founded schools throughout his dominions, and established infirmaries for the aged, "proofs of a humane statesmanship which cannot at this early period be paralleled in any other part of the world."<sup>2</sup> This Dynasty ruled during 868 years (1122-255 B.C.) and produced a galaxy of great men who laid the foundations of Chinese culture for all time. Among them were Lao-tze and Confucius, who (together with the Indian Buddha), have been the inspirers of China's philosophy, literature, history, poetry, art, social and political organisa-

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1. *A History of China*, pp. 9-10.

2. V. A. Renouf : *Outline of General History*, p. 56.

tion, moral theory, and religious observances. The two extracts from their writings given below will serve to acquaint the reader with the nature of their thoughts :

All things in nature, said Lao-tze, work silently... They fulfil their function and make no claim... When they have reached their bloom each returns to its origin... This reversion is an eternal law. To know that law is wisdom.

To those who are good I am good, and to those who are not good I am also good ; thus all get to be good. To those who are sincere I am sincere, and to those who are not sincere I am also sincere ; and thus all get to be sincere... The softest thing in the world...overcomes the hardest... There is nothing in the world softer or weaker than water, and yet for attacking things that are firm and strong there is nothing that can take precedence of it.

On the whole, it will be noticed, the teachings of Lao-tze were of a negative character. His *Tao* or Way of Life preached passivism.

The teachings of Confucius, on the other hand, were more positive and constructive. They are thus pithily summed up in *The Great Learning* :

The ancients who wished to illustrate the highest virtue throughout the empire first ordered well their own states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their own selves. Wishing to cultivate their own selves, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their own selves were cultivated. Their own selves being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole empire was made tranquil and happy.

Confucius (in Chinese, *Kung Fu Tze*) was born in 551 B.C. in the province of Lu (modern Shantung), and died in 479 B.C. He began his career as a teacher in his twenty-second year, and was appointed governor of a town by the Duke of Lu. He described himself as 'a transmitter and not a maker', i.e., he summed up the traditional wisdom of the ancients and did not innovate. An innovator arose in the person of *Chung* or *Shih Hwang-ti*, the second ruler of the *Ch'in* Dynasty from which the word China is derived. He assumed the title of *Hwang-ti* which meant Sovereign and Divine Ruler of the Earth, instead of merely *Wang* or King. He destroyed the feudal system and centralised the administration. China was divided into thirty-six provinces and placed under three viceroys who were directly responsible to him. He also created a civil service. His minister *Li*, who was a great scholar, is credited with having simplified the complex system of Chinese writing. But he is better remembered for the advice he gave his master by which *Shih Hwang-ti* ordered the destruction of all ancient books with the exception of those relating to the calendar, divination, medicine and agriculture in which he was personally interested. Among those destroyed were the works of the great sage Confucius. We owe our present knowledge of them to some scholars having committed them all to memory and reproduced them after the death of *Shih Hwang-ti*. The quixotic order appears to have been the result of the opposition of several learned men to the autocratic emperor's heterodox innovations. As many as 460 opposing scholars are said to have been buried alive for the same reason. Others were forced to work on the Great Wall which too was constructed by order of this extraordinary ruler.

The Great Wall of China is the biggest human construc-

tion on earth and stretches, like a huge writhing reptile, over 1500 miles from the eastern sea, across the northern border of the country, reaching past her western frontiers to the confines of Tibet in the south. "It is difficult to define the shape of the Great Wall," says one writer. "It twists and turns like a mighty serpent of stone. It scales mountains, plunges into ravines, bears the heat and dust of the desert, crosses streams, a great grey monster that knows no obstacle, however formidable, unless we except the White Meteor, which deflects its natural course. Seen beneath a blazing sun, the silver glitter of stars, or when it is touched by the white hand of snow, it remains the Wall of Walls, a wonder of beauty and strength and human endurance." It was begun in 214 B.C. and after the lapse of over twenty centuries, in its present dilapidated condition, contains no less than 20,000 ordinary and 10,000 watch-towers. Together with other walls of like construction in China, its length is said to exceed the diameter of the earth! At one end of it it bears the inscription: "*Heaven made the Sea and the Mountains*"; at the other end: "*This Martial Barrier of All under Heaven*." It was built to keep away the barbarians. But, though the Chinese never got over it, the Tartars did. To withstand enemies, a martial people, more than a martial barrier, were necessary, and that the Chinese were not. The Chinese proverb which declares, "Have no fear of the tiger from the South, but beware of the rooster from the North," has been proved true several times in the course of her long history. The Chinese civilisation, as Mr. Davies has correctly observed, is most decidedly organised for peace. "China is the one country in the world where it is considered disgraceful to be a soldier."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. A. Davies, *An Outline History of the World*, p. 77,

The Chinese were never metaphysically minded, however : they cared more for this world than for the next ; they thought of the visible man rather than of the invisible God. Hence, although they did not deny the existence of a Creator of heaven and earth, their religion took the more palpable shape of ancestor-worship. It inculcated the practical virtues of respect for elders and family affection. 'The higher type of man', Confucius declared, 'makes a sense of duty the groundwork of his character, blends with it in action a sense of harmonious proportion, manifests it in a spirit of unselfishness, and perfects it by the addition of sincerity and truth. Then indeed is he a noble character.' He also taught self-respect and self-reliance : 'The higher type of man', he said, 'seeks all that he wants in himself ; the inferior man seeks all that he wants from others'. This was China's greatest contribution to the moral advancement of the human race.

India, on the other hand, has enriched the heritage of mankind by the boldest speculations ever made by the human mind. To what extent this is due to her Aryan immigrants it is difficult to say, because the Aryans also went to Persia, Greece and other European countries, but produced altogether different results. If the people amongst whom they settled in India were the descendants of the creators of the Mohenjo-daro civilisation, we have already noticed how unimaginative they were. Under the circumstances we must attribute the character of the Indian civilisation to the mixture of divers elements : Aryan as well as non-Aryan.

We have little means of knowing definitely the conditions in North India when the Aryans first came. Though considerable antiquity was hitherto vaguely attached to that far off event, recent archaeological discoveries have now pres-

cribed a term to such speculations. The *Rig-Veda* can no longer be looked upon as the earliest 'book' of the human race. The Egyptian *Book of the Dead* and the Chaldean *Story of the Flood* are definitely older. There is no indication in the *Rig-Veda* of its authors' knowledge of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa which must have been buried beyond detection by their time. It is obvious, therefore, that the Aryans came into the Punjab very much later. A comparison of the *Rig-Veda* with the *Avesta* of the Iranians, as well as, the evidence of an inscription of the 14th century B.C. found in Cappadocia (in which Indo-Aryan gods like *Indra*, *Mitra*, and *Varuna* are mentioned), have led to assigning the *Rig-Veda* more definitely to the middle of the second millennium B.C. However, the vivid portrayal of Indo-Aryan life contained in the *Vedas* is more valuable for us than their exact chronology. From them we come to know that the Aryans were a pastoral people who settled down to an agrarian life when they came to India. They had undoubtedly much fighting to do, both amongst themselves (inter-tribal), and against the '*Dasyus*' (natives) whom they either enslaved, suppressed, or drove to the south. In course of time they evolved large kingdoms, and built cities like Ayodhya, Kashi, Mithila, Avanti, etc., but for a long time they continued to live a rural life. Theirs was not a 'brick and mortar' civilisation like that of the Indus people. Consequently, they developed an attitude of communion rather than hostility towards Nature; they felt themselves more and more in harmony with her instead of in a mood to fight and conquer her. That is why they became mystics and philosophers rather than scientists in our modern sense. But even a cursory acquaintance with their literature will show that they were not altogether other-worldly; time and experience brought their own correctives. In the

end they attained to a balanced view of life as appears from a verse in one of the *Upanishads* which declares that "He who lives exclusively for this world and neglects the other goes into darkness; and he who lives exclusively for the other world and neglects the present goes into greater darkness."

The *Rig-Veda* is for the most part composed of simple prayer-hymns, but it also throws ample light on the secular life of its authors. It contains 1017 hymns divided into 10,600 stanzas, which are equal in bulk to the extant poems of Homer. In their religious aspect the hymns are addressed to celestial gods like *Dyaus*, *Varuna*, *Mitra*, *Sūrya*, *Uśas*, and *Rātri*; atmospheric deities like *Indra*, *Rudra*, *Maruts*, and *Parjanya*; and terrestrial deities like *Agni*, *Soma*, and *Prithvi*. But about thirty of the hymns of the *Rig-Veda* deal with other subjects than these, and yield most interesting information to the historian. Twelve of them are concerned with magical practices which properly belong to the *Atharva-Veda*: some deal with augury (ii, 42, 43), some with spells against poisonous vermin (i, 191), or disease (x, 163), or a demon destructive of children (x, 162), or enemies (x, 166), or rival wives (x, 145); while a few are propitious incantations: to preserve life (x, 58, 60), or to induce sleep (vii, 55), or to obtain offspring (x, 183); and one is a panegyric of frogs as bringers of rain (vii, 103). Four are didactic poems, of which the gambler's lament (x, 34) is full of simple pathos:

For dice that only luckless throws effected  
 I've driven away from home a wife devoted.  
 Her mother hates me, she herself rejects me:  
 For one in such distress there is no pity...  
 The dice attract the gambler, but deceive and wound...  
 Play not with dice, but cultivate thy tillage,  
 Enjoy thy riches, deeming them abundant.



There are thy cows, there is thy wife, O Gambler :  
This counsel *Savitar* the noble gives me.

The following two verses, one about the pursuit of wealth (IX, 112) and another in praise of industry and charity (X, 117), are also interesting :

With various aims we strive for wealth,  
As if we followed after kine...  
The smith, with dry wood on his hearth,  
With wings of birds to fan the fire,  
With anvil and with glowing flames,  
Desires a patron rich in gold...  
The plough that cleaves the soil produces nurture ;  
He that bestirs his feet completes his journey.  
The speaking Brāhman earns more than the silent ;  
A friend who gives is better than the niggard.

An idea of the Aryan calendar may be gained from a long poem of 52 stanzas (i, 164) containing several riddles, of which one speaks of 'the wheel of order with 12 spokes, revolving round the heavens and containing within it in couples 720 sons.' It means the year of twelve months with 360 days and 360 nights. Though they worshipped several deities in the beginning, in course of time they unified them all into a single all-pervading, omnipotent God, *Brahman*, who was the creator of all else : 'For fear of Him fire burns, for fear of Him the sun shines, and for fear of Him the winds, the clouds and death perform their office.' This growing mono-theism is thus represented in the *Upanishads* :

Five house-holders led by Uddālaka approached King Aśvapati who asked each of them, 'Whom do you meditate on as the Self?' The first answered, 'Heaven,' the second, 'Sun ;' the third, 'Air ;' the fourth 'Ether ;' the fifth, 'Water'. And the King replied that each of them worshipped only a part of the Truth : 'Heaven is the head, the sun the eye, the air the breath, the ether the trunk, the water the bladder, and the earth

the feet of the central Reality, which is the World-Soul.

The *Upanishads* are philosophical disquisitions based on the hymns of the *Vedas*. "In the whole world," said Schopenhauer, "there is no study so beneficial and elevating as that of the *Upanishads*. It has been the solace of my life—it will be the solace of my death." The greatness of the *Upanishads* lies in their earnest striving after Truth. At the end of all their loftiest speculations, their authors declare that it is impossible for mere intellect or the senses to perceive Reality :

The eye does not go thither, nor speech, nor mind. We do not know. We do not understand how any one can teach it.

In the face of the Unknowable even the *Rig-Veda* appears to have, maintained a noble scepticism. For instance, after considerable speculation regarding the origin and purpose of the Universe, it concludes :

Who knows the secret? Who proclaims it here,  
Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?  
The gods themselves came later into being—  
Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?  
He from whom all this great creation came,  
Whether His will created or was mute,  
The Most High Seer that is in highest heaven,  
He knows it—or perchance even He knows not.

From this to the agnosticism of Gautama Buddha was not a great leap. The Aryans worshipped first as they saw and wondered, then as they felt and fancied, and lastly as they thought and reasoned. Their progress in religion and philosophy was, therefore, from the simple to the more complex. We can trace this gradual transformation in the following two examples : In the one the *Vedic Rishis* breathe the idyllic spirit of their pastoral simplicity ; in the other they foreshadow and illustrate the complexity of their later developments.

Sing a hymn, pleasing to *Varuna* the King—to him who spread out the earth as the butcher lays out a steer's hide in the sun.—He sent the cool breezes through the woods, put mettle in the steed (the sun), milk in the kine (clouds), wisdom in the heart, fire in the waters (lightning in the clouds), placed the sun in the heavens, the *Soma* on the mountains.—He upset the cloud-barrel and let its waters flow on Heaven, Air, and Earth, wetting the ground and the crops.—He wets both Earth and Heaven, and soon as he wishes for those kine's milk, the mountains are wrapt in thunder-clouds, and the strongest walkers are tired...

*Varuna* laid out the sun's path, and sent the waters coursing to the sea; for the days he appointed their wide tracks and guides them as a racer does his mares.—His breath is the wind that rushes through the sky... He leads forth the great, the holy sun-steed, that brings a thousand gifts.—When I gaze upon his face, I seem to see him as a blazing fire, as the King causes me to behold the splendour of light and darkness in the heavens.... The stars up there, that are seen at night, where do they hide in the day? But *Varuna's* ordinances are immutable and the moon goes shining brightly through the night.... He who knows the path of the birds as they fly through the ample space, and on the sea the ships, ... he who knows the track of the wind, ... he is seated in his mansion protecting the law, *Varuna*, Almighty King, and looks down attentively from there on all that is hidden, on all that has been and is still to be done. Arrayed in golden mail, he wraps himself in splendour as in a garment and around him sit his spies (the stars at night, the sun-beams by day).

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

*Purusha* of the thousand heads, the thousand eyes, the thousand feet, covered the earth in all directions and extended ten fingers beyond. *Purusha* is this whole universe, whatever has been, whatever shall be, and a possessor of the immortality which groweth great sacrificial food. So great is *Purusha*, yea, greater still. One quarter of him is all that hath been made, three quarters of him are the immortals in heaven. With three feet *Purusha* mounted up, with one foot he remained here; then he spread out on all sides and became that which eateth and that which eateth not. From him the *Virāj* was born, and from the

*Vīrāj* again *Purusha*. As soon as he was born he reached out beyond the earth at both ends. When the gods prepared the sacrifice with *Purusha* as the offering, the spring was the sacrificial butter, the summer was the fuel, the autumn was the (accompanying) oblation. On the sacrificial grass they anointed the victim, that *Purusha* who was born in the beginning; him the gods sacrificed, whose favour is to be sought, and the *Rishis*. When the sacrifice was completed, they collected the fat dripping from it; it formed the creatures of the air, and the animals that live in the forests, and those that live in the villages. From this sacrifice when completed were born the *Rig-hymns*, and the *Sāma-hymns*, and the incantations (of the *Atharvan*); and the *Yajus* was born from it. From it were born the horses and all the cattle that have two rows of teeth; the kine were born from it; from it the goats and sheep were born.

When they divided *Purusha*, into how many parts did they cut him? What was his mouth? What were his arms? What were his thighs and his feet called? The *Brāhman* was his mouth; the *Rājanya* was made from his arms; the *Vaishya* came from his thighs; and the *Sūdra* from his feet. The moon was born from his mind; the sun from his eye; *Indra* and *Agni* from his mouth; from his breath was born the wind. From his navel came the air, from his head sprang the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ears the regions: thus were the worlds formed.

When the gods bound *Purusha* as victim, preparing the sacrifice, seven enclosing bars of wood were placed for him, thrice seven layers of fuel were piled for him. So the gods through sacrifice earned a right to sacrifice; these were the first ordinances. Those mighty ones attained to the highest Heaven, where the ancient gods abide, whose favour is to be sought.

Buddhism was a reaction from the increasing obscurantism of the later Aryan religion and philosophy described as *Brāhmanism*. Apart from the perplexing subtlety of their metaphysics, two phases of *Brāhmanism* in particular provoked a revolt, viz. the over-elaboration of ritual, especially connected with animal sacrifices; and their exclusiveness. Both these had made religion an esoteric creed, of which

the *Brāhmins* were the sole custodians. It was far removed from its original simplicity, and thus became inaccessible for the common people. A verse in the *Aitareya Brāhmana* illustrates the doctrine well :

Heaven is established on the air, the air on the earth, the earth on the waters, the waters on truth, the truth on the mystic lore (of the sacrifice), and that on *Tapas*.

*Tapas* or self-mortification, the importance of sacrifices involving revolting cruelty to the animals, and a knowledge of the mystic lore, therefore, had precedence even over Truth ; and the ideal man of the age was one who

Bescorched, befozen, lone in fearsome woods,  
Naked, without a fire, afire within,  
Struggled in awful silence toward the goal !

For a time even the Buddha was lured into this path, but he soon realised its futility, though his great contemporary, Mahāvira (the founder of *Jainism*), persisted in the thorny path to the end. No better example of the exclusiveness of the Brāhmins can be cited than the stern ordinance of the *Manu-Smṛiti* (which, though later in composition, embodies earlier traditions) which declared :

The ears of the *Sūdra* who listens, intentionally, when the *Veda* is being recited, are to be filled with molten lead. His tongue is to be cut out if he recite it. His body is to be split in twain if he preserve it in his memory. (1.88)

The revolt against such a tyranny was naturally led by the non-Brāhmins under the leadership of the Kshatriyas. Gautama Buddha and Mahāvira were such leaders.

Though there were minor differences in their creeds, the two agreed on essentials : both taught in the language of the masses, instead of in the scholastic Sanskrit ; both inculcated the doctrine of *Ahimsa* or kindness towards all creatures, as against the cruelty involved in the Brāhmanical sacrifices ; and both promised salvation to all classes of

people irrespective of their original caste. They also founded monastic orders for the propagation of their faiths which swept over the land like a tornado, everywhere upsetting Brāhmanism. They attained both dignity and power when Kings became their disciples and propagandists. Of the two, *Buddhism*, under the patronage of the great Aśoka (274-236 B.C.), spread even beyond the borders of India, and still forms the faith of millions in China, Japan, Siam, Burma, and Ceylon, etc., though strangely exiled from the land of its birth. An inscription of Aśoka mentions that Buddhist missions were sent to Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene, Epirus, and Syria.

Buddha was born about 563 B.C. in the Lumbini Garden at Kapilavastu where an Aśoka pillar still reminds us, "*Here the Great One was born.*" His father was the chief of the Kshatriya clan of Sākya who formed one of the aristocratic republics situated between the kingdoms of Kosala and Magadha. Although he had all the wealth and opportunities for leading a life of worldly pleasure, he was too pensive by temperament and prone to think of a way of escape from the ills to which all flesh is heir. Consequently, he renounced the world in the prime of his life and after many years of spiritual travail and experiment became the Enlightened One. Speaking of these experiences to his followers later he himself said :

"I also, ye monks, before I had attained to Enlightenment, as yet not fully enlightened, still striving after Enlightenment, —myself subject to birth, growth and decay, sickness and death, pain and impurity, sought after what also is subject to these, viz. wife and children, slaves male and female, goats and sheep, fowls and swine, elephants, cattle, horses, mares, gold and silver ! Then, ye monks, the thought came to me : 'What, then, am I doing? Myself subject to birth, growth and decay, sickness, death, pain, impurity, and seeking also what is subject to these

—how if I seek the birthless, ageless, diseaseless, deathless and the stainless incomparable surety, the extinction of illusion!" And, ye monks, after some time, while still in my first bloom, shining, dark-haired, in the enjoyment of happy youth, in the first years of manhood, against the wish of weeping and wailing parents, with shorn hair and beard, clothed in ragged raiment, I went forth from home into homelessness."

Like Confucius, he never spoke of God. His teaching was calculated to bring men round to moderation—the Middle Path—from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. In his famous sermon preached in the Deer Park of Benares he expounded his Eightfold Path which he elaborated during the rest of his life. It comprised 1. Right Views; 2. Right Resolve; 3. Right Speech; 4. Right Action; 5. Right Living; 6. Right Effort; 7. Right Recollection; and 8. Right Meditation. In short, his service to his contemporaries consisted in stressing conduct as against ritual, character as against caste; his message to humanity for all time lies in nothing else so much as in his doctrine of *Ahimsa*:

For never in this world does hatred cease by hatred;  
Hatred ceases by love; this is always its nature.

(*Dhamma-pada*).

Indeed, the Buddha's Chinese contemporary, Lao-tze ("The Old Master"), also thought alike:

To those who are good I am good; to those who are not good I am also good.

Both spoke from the Heart of Asia and 'their echoes rolled from soul to soul'; from India to China and the rest of the world. Another such Enlightened One was to be born in the south-western corner of Asia, in the course of the next six centuries or so, viz., Christ. We shall in the meanwhile witness, in the next few chapters, how the ground was prepared for that 'far off divine event.'

CHAPTER SIX  
A MEDLEY OF CULTURES

All the Near Eastern world, about to die for  
a thousand years, prepared to lay its heritage  
at the feet of Greece.—WILL DURANT

Of the three distinctive 'culture zones' of Asia—China, India, and Asia-Minor—we have yet to describe the last one. China, on account of her long isolation, developed and maintained a culture of her own unaffected by the rest of the world. India, as we have noted, opened her north-western gateway very early in her history and ever since kept it open for intercourse with the West, viz. Sumer, Babylon, Egypt and the Mediterranean. It was through this open door that the Aryans entered India about the middle of the second millennium B.C. or a little earlier. That immigration was part of a wider movement of peoples of whom the Indo-Aryans formed only one branch. The original homes of these *Aryans*, or 'men of the plough', are not definitely known, although it is widely held that they belonged to the great Caucasian race and came from the Caspian region. From there they moved both westward and southward re-peopling India, Iran, and Europe about the same time. A comparison of the languages of most Europeans with those of ancient Persia (Iran) and India has revealed the close affinities of the eastern and western branches of this race. For instance, the words father, mother, and brother, could be very easily identified in the Sanskrit



*pitar*, *mātar*, and *bhrātar*, the Persian (Iranian) *pitar*, *mātar*, and *bratar*, the Greek *patēr*, *mētēr*, and *phrātēr*, the Latin *pater*, *māter*, and *frāter*, and the German *vater*, *mutter*, and *bruder*, etc. Hence the people using these languages are called Indo-Europeans. But language is not always an unfailing index to race, and there are numerous instances of people using languages other than their own. A surer guide are the ethnological traits. A Caucasian could be easily distinguished from a Semite or a Mongolian by his appearance. Thus a Chinaman, an Arab, and a European can never be mistaken one for another. Each one of them possesses not only physical characteristics of his own, but also a distinctive national culture. Civilisation as we know it to-day is a medley of these and other cultures.

The "Near East" (as defined in an earlier chapter) has been the corridor of Eur-Asia. Through it have been effected all the historical exchanges between Asia and Europe. Through it the peoples of Asia marched westwards and filled south-eastern Europe. Through it, as we shall presently witness, the Persian emperors led their mighty hosts to conquer the Hellenic world. Through it also Alexander the Macedonian paid Asia the compliment of a return-visit. As a result of these ethnic, military and political invasions, commercial and cultural intercourse was also stimulated and carried on through the "Near East" until it was deflected by the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 A.D. It has been again re-established after the opening of the Suez canal. To know correctly the circumstances under which this inter-continental intercourse first started on a large scale, it is necessary to acquaint ourselves with the peoples who were responsible for it. They were principally the Hittites, the Hebrews, the Phœnicians, the Medes and

the Persians. Racially the Hittites, Medes and Persians were Aryan, and the Hebrews and Phoenicians Semitic.

We have already met with the Hittites in their conflicts with Egypt and Assyria. They had captured Babylon as early as the twentieth century (1925) B.C. The fear of their constant incursions had converted the Assyrians into a militarist state. Egypt weakened under its idealist Pharaoh, Akhnaton (1376-62 B.C.), had felt their power. Under Shubbilulima (c. 1385-45 B.C.) the Hittites had sallied forth from Khatti (modern Boghaz-keui) and made themselves masters from the Armenian mountains to the confines of Sinai. However, the irresistible Rameses II (c. 1300-1234 B.C.) compelled them to come to terms, and, after the battle of Kadesh (c. 1295 B.C.), even entered into a marriage alliance with their king Mursil. This was due to the growing power of Assyria, on the one hand, and on the other, to the increasing menace of fresh Indo-European tribes pressing from the north and east. Only the massive ruins of Carchemish, recently excavated by the British Museum Expedition, now remain to remind us of their vanished power. "The decipherment of the Hittite inscriptions is one of the puzzles of modern archæology."<sup>1</sup>

The Hebrews were an equally ancient people. They are referred to in the famous Tell-el-Amarna Letters as the *Khiberu* or *Hiberu*. They were a wandering race originally belonging to Arabia. Some of them had very early settled down in Egypt and were later led into the Promised Land of Judea or Palestine by their famous patriarch Moses. Moses is regarded by some to have been a contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> Read "Carchemish of the Hittites" by Leonard Woolley and "The Hittites: Vestiges of a Vanished Empire" by J. Garstang, in *Wonders of the Past*, II, 727-46 and 827-41.

of Queen Hatshepsut (1501-1479 B.C.). He is celebrated in the *Bible* for delivering Israel, 'the chosen people of God' out of the Egyptian bondage. The *Exodus* says :

And the Lord said to him : I have seen the affliction of my people in Egypt, and I have heard their cry ; because of the rigour of them that are over the works. And knowing their sorrow, I am come down to deliver them out of the hands of the Egyptians : and to bring them out of that land into a good and spacious land, into a land that floweth with milk and honey, to the places of the Canaanite, and Hettite, and Amorrhite . . . . For the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me ; and I have seen their affliction, wherewith they are oppressed by the Egyptians. But come, and I will send thee to Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.

It is evident from the above that the new country (Palestine) into which Moses led the Hebrews was already the home of other peoples like the Canaanites and Hittites, etc. A conflict arose between the original inhabitants and the new comers which ended in the creation of a united kingdom composed of the old Canaanites and the new Israelite immigrants. Their patriarchal organisation of society and the law of Moses, based upon the Code of Hammurabi which we have noted before, provided the basis for the union of all the Israelites. Their chief cities were Samaria in the north and Jerusalem in the south. 'War begat the King' and their first kings were Saul, David and Solomon. The evils of monarchy had been anticipated and the Israelites had been warned by their patriarch Samuel in no uncertain terms :

This will be the right of the king that shall reign over you. He will take your sons, and put them in his chariots, and will make them his horsemen, and his running footmen to run before his chariots. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your best oliveyards, and give them to his servants,

Moreover he will take the tenth of your corn, and of the revenues of your vineyards, and give his eunuchs and servants. Your flocks also he will tithe, and you shall be his servants. And you shall cry out in that day from the face of the king, whom you have chosen to yourselves : and the Lord will not hear you in that day, because you desired unto yourselves a king.

Although during the heyday of the new monarchy the Israelites forgot this prophecy, its truth came home to them in the days of its decline. Saul 'the Lord's anointed' fell fighting against the enemies of the Israelites, and David, who was next chosen, also died after forty years : 'And he died in a good age, full of days, and riches, and glory. And Solomon his son reigned in his stead' (1015-975 B.C.).

And the Lord magnified Solomon over all Israel : and gave him the glory of a reign, such as no king of Israel had before him.

Solomon too reigned for another forty years, but they were the 'fateful forty' for Israel. After him followed disaster. By about 586 B.C. Jerusalem itself was destroyed by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadrezzar, as we have noticed already, and the Israelites were led in captivity to Babylon. But Solomon is still remembered for his proverbial wisdom, wealth, and wives. The Lord, says the *Book of Kings*, once appeared to Solomon in his dream and said : 'Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee', and he having asked for nothing more than 'an understanding heart, to judge thy people, and discern between good and evil', the Lord, mightily pleased, declared :

Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life or riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, but hast asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment, behold I have done for thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart : insomuch that there hath been no one like thee before thee, nor shall arise after thee. Yea

and the things also which thou didst not ask, I have given thee : to wit, riches and glory, so that no one hath been like thee among the kings in all days heretofore.

Out of the riches that the God of Israel had bestowed upon him, Solomon built a great golden temple for his glory : 'For the house which I desire to build, is great : for our God is great above all gods' ; and for that purpose 'he numbered out seventy thousand men to bear burdens, and eighty thousand to hew stones in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.' Here were sacrificed every day rams and oxen without number—'For the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God.'

Some of the wealth Solomon expended also on his own pleasures and glorification. He took to himself the modest number of "seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines." He also beautified his capital of Jerusalem and strengthened its fortifications. He divided his kingdom into twelve districts, for administrative purposes, ignoring the tribal boundaries with a view to weld his clannish people into a single nation. He financed his government by mining precious metals and levying a poll-tax upon all his subjects, besides creating state monopolies of trade in yarn, horses and chariots. He also imported articles of luxury—like "ivory, apes and peacocks"—from distant countries like India. But it was all a nine days' wonder ; for on the tenth day came death and devastation : 'vanity of vanities, and all is vanity !'

The oppressions of the poor on which the luxuries of the rich were raised find an echo in the denunciations of the Prophets which still ring in our ears as we read through the pages of the *Old Testament* :

Forasmuch, therefore, as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat ; ye have built houses of

hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink wine of them . . . . Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, . . . . that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the vial, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments. . . .

The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people and the princes thereof; for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor? . . . . Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth! . . . Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees to turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless. And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from afar? To whom will ye flee for help, and where will ye leave your glory?

The threatened doom and desolation came in the shape of conquest by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The Hebrew monarchy which had been founded by Saul, in c. 1050 B.C., ended its existence as a kingdom, in 586 B.C., with the Babylonian captivity. The Israelites won back their liberty and were restored to Palestine by the rising power of the Persians (Iranians) to whom we must next turn. The Hebrews were an essentially religious people according to their way of thinking. They made no contributions to either science or art. Their religion forbade their making "graven images" of God. They recognised other gods besides their own dread and jealous *Yahaveh* who, however, was for them *the God* above all gods. From this, in course of time, they worked up to the humane monotheism of the *New Testament* which depicts God as holy and just, com-

passionate and loving,—the Universal Father whose care is over all peoples and races, and not merely over His 'chosen people' like the Israelites. "This idea of God and his character," says one writer, "was the best element in the bequest which the ancient Hebrews made to the younger Aryan world of Europe, and is largely what entitles them to the pre-eminent place they hold in the history of humanity."<sup>1</sup>

The Medes and the Persians, as pointed out before, were both Aryans. The Greeks made no distinction between the two. But we might compare their relations to those of the Canaanites and Israelites of Palestine. The Medes had their capital at Ecbatana and the Persians at Susa and then at Persepolis. Their Saul was Cyrus (c. 550-29 B.C.), their David Cambyses (529-22 B.C.) and their Solomon Darius (521-486 B.C.). The Medes had joined with other powers in bringing about the destruction of Nineveh of the Assyrians in 606 B.C. (612 according to some). Cyrus absorbed the Medes and, in 538 B.C., destroyed Babylon, liberated the Hebrews and enabled them to repatriate to their dear Zion or Palestine, and overthrowing Croesus, the proud ruler of Lydia on the West coast, extended Persian dominion for the first time to the eastern shore of the Mediterranean (546 B.C.). These conquests brought the Persians into direct contact with the Hellenic world. This, as we shall see in a later chapter, was fraught with very great consequences to the history of human civilisation. By 543 B.C. most of the cities of Ionia were incorporated in the Persian Empire, and, under Cambyses (529-22 B.C.), even Egypt was absorbed. But the greatest ruler of this dynasty was, however, Darius (521-486 B.C.), who, during the thirty-

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1 Philip van Ness Myers, *General History*, p. 53.

five years of his memorable reign, built up the most magnificent empire of antiquity before the days of Alexander, Aśoka, and Augustus.

Cambyses had been an erratic monarch and ended his life by suicide. This event was signalled by a simultaneous revolt in the provinces of the empire. Darius subdued them with the ruthlessness which was characteristic of the age. For instance, the pacification of Babylonia was attended with the crucifixion of 3000 of its leading men. But after this "he put off the armour of war, became one of the wisest administrators in history, and set himself to re-establish his realm in a way that became a model of imperial organization till the fall of Rome. His rule gave western Asia a generation of such order and prosperity as that quarrelsome region had never known before." He divided his empire into twenty "satrapies" or provinces, viz. Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Phœnicia, Lydia, Phrygia, Ionia, Cappadocia, Cilicia, Armenia, Assyria, the Caucasus, Babylonia, Media, Persia, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, the Punjab up to the Indus, Sogdiana and Bactria. All these provinces were connected by an excellent road system, and a postal service was established to keep the Great King informed of all that transpired. The "eyes and ears" (informers) of Darius were everywhere. The imperial army was composed of divisions representing all the "satrapies", each with its own national colours, arms, and mode of fighting. But recruitment was enforced by a very severe law. Though punishments were barbaric the administration of justice was well organised. There were interpreters called "speakers of the law" to explain legal intricacies to litigants, and arbitration was encouraged. Delay in the execution of justice was prevented by prescribing a term to every case, and unjust judges were flayed alive. Bribery was a capital offence for



both the giver and the receiver. With all this, trial by ordeal also existed side by side, and punishments included poisoning, impaling, crucifixion, hanging, stoning, burning alive, smothering with hot ashes, etc. Taxation was also enormous. But as Mr. Will Durant has observed :

“Despite these high charges for its services, the Persian empire was the most successful experiment in imperial government that the Mediterranean world would know before the coming of Rome—which was destined to inherit much of the earlier empire’s political structure and administrative forms. The cruelty and dissipation of the later monarchs, the occasional barbarism of the laws, and the heavy burdens of taxation were balanced, as human governments go, by such order and peace as made the provinces rich despite these levies, and by such liberty as only the most enlightened empires have accorded to subject states. Each region retained its own language, laws, customs, morals, religion and coinage, and sometimes its native dynasty of kings. Many of the tributary nations, like Babylonia, Phœnicia, Palestine, were well satisfied with the situation, and suspected that their own generals and tax-gatherers would have plucked them even more ferociously. Under Darius I the Persian Empire was an achievement in political organization : only Trajan, Hadrian and the Antonines would equal it.”<sup>1</sup>

Like Napoleon’s later, the imperialistic ambition of Darius, however, over-reached itself. The result was a fateful contest with Hellas which we shall describe in Chapter Eight. Here we must have a glimpse of the Persian religion and the state of culture in Western Asia. The Persians, being Aryans, had much more in common with the Vedic Indians than with the Hebrews described above. Their sacred book was the *Avesta*, written in the *Zend* language, and closely resembles the *Rig-Veda*. The Iranians, to give them their proper name, began as a pastoral people like their Indian cousins, the Vedic Aryans, and later considered

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1 *The Story of Civilisation, I*, 363-4.

agriculture their primary occupation in life. But unlike the latter, they seem to have reached a monotheistic faith quite early and believed in *Ahura-Mazda* who possessed "Light, Good Mind, Right, Dominion, Piety, Well-being, and Immortality." Their great Prophet Zarathushtra conceived of the world in dualistic terms "as the stage of a conflict, lasting twelve thousand years, between the god Ahura-Mazda and the devil Ahriman." Purity and honesty were the greatest of the virtues, and would lead to everlasting life; the dead must not be buried or burned, but offered to the dogs or to birds of prey.

They also worshipped the sun and fire as the visible symbols of God. Like Christ and Buddha after him, Zarathushtra taught :

That nature alone is good which shall not do unto another whatever is not good unto its own self.

Man's duty is threefold : To make him who is an enemy a friend ; to make him who is wicked righteous ; and to make him who is ignorant learned.

This simple and noble religion was, however, soon clothed and embroidered by the *Magi*, or the Persian priesthood, with occult and theological garments, but the worship of the Sun (*Mithra*) continued and spread even under the Roman Empire. The former word is preserved in our "magic" and the latter practice in the celebration of Christmas which was originally a solar festival celebrating the triumph of the sun marked by the winter solstice (22nd December) when the day begins to grow longer.

The Iranis and Parsees of to-day are the sole survivors of the old faith. Little beyond their *Avesta* and other sacred books, their worship of the sacred fire, and their practice of allowing the dead to be devoured by vultures, exists to remind us of the ancient Iranians or Persians. The ruins of

their great palaces at Persepolis, destroyed later by Alexander the Great, and the Behistun inscription of Darius referred to earlier,<sup>1</sup> are other mementoes of their vanished glory. Persian art was not original, and borrowed much from Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt. But the *ensemble* "made Persian architecture individual and different—an aristocratic taste...refined the overwhelming columns of Egypt and the heavy masses of Mesopotamia into the brilliance and elegance, the proportion and harmony of Persepolis." In the final assessment, we might say with Professor Hearnshaw, first, that the Persian Empire was "organised for peace rather than for war; it lived by commerce not by brigandage; it ceased altogether from those annual raids which had made Assyria for centuries a terror to the Orient. Secondly, it was tolerant in religion; its lofty faith enabled it to see the soul of good in the cults of all the subject peoples; its attitude to the Jews was typical of its wise liberality throughout all the provinces of its wide dominion."<sup>2</sup>

Of the several peoples that lived within the Persian Empire, the Phœnicians, besides the Hebrews, made the greatest contributions to European civilisation. They were Semitic like the Hebrews and had settled down on the coastal strip to the west of Lebanon and the north of Palestine. Their

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1 Dr. Breasted writes: "This impressive monument is the most important historical document surviving in Asia...the Great King published his triumph in the three most important languages of this eastern region and placed the record overlooking a main road at Behistun where the men of the caravans passing between Babylon and the Iranian Plateau would look up 300 ft. and see the splendid monument, 25 ft. high and 50 ft. wide." Sir Henry Rawlinson, after heroic efforts, deciphered its script (1835-47). *The Conquest of Civilization*, p. 200.

2 *A First Book of World History*, p. 71.

chief cities like Byblos, Tyre, and Sidon, on the Syrian coast, were famous throughout the ancient world for their wealth and commerce. The Phœnicians were not creators of any new civilisation, like the Egyptians, the Sumerians, the Chinese, or the Indians, but they were great sailors and distributors of the products of all lands. Hence, they came into contact with different peoples, countries, and cultures, and garnered much from many quarters. Thus they took from India ivory, cotton fabrics and spices, from Babylonia weights and measures, from Persia carpets, from Arabia incense, and from Anatolia and the Caucasus minerals and slaves. Winwood Reade, in his *The Martyrdom of Man*, draws a vivid and realistic picture of their doings.

"The Phœnicians from fishermen became pirates, and from pirates traders, from simple traders they also became manufacturers. Purple was always the fashionable colour in the East, and they discovered two kinds of shell-fish which yielded a handsome dye. . . . When they sailed along the shores of that savage continent and came to a place where they intended to trade, they lighted a fire to attract the natives, pitched tents on shore, and held a six days' fair, exhibiting in their bazaar the toys and trinkets manufactured at Tyre expressly for their naked customers, with purple robes and works of art in tinted ivory and gold, for those who like the Greeks were more advanced. At the end of the week they went away, sometimes kidnapping a few women and children. . . . But in the best trading localities the factory system prevailed; and their establishments were planted in the Grecian Archipelago and in Greece itself, on the marshy shores of the Black Sea, in Italy, Sicily, the African coast and Spain. . . . They offered to every country something which it did not possess. They roused the savage Briton from his torpor with a rag of scarlet cloth, and stirred him to sweat in the dark bowels of the earth. They brought to the satiated Indian prince the luscious wines of Syria and the Grecian Isles in goblets of exquisitely painted glass. From the amber gatherers of the Baltic mud to the nutmeg growers of the equatorial groves, from the mulberry plantations of the celestial Empire to the tin

mines of Cornwall and the silver mines of Spain, emulation was excited, new wants were created, whole nations were stimulated to industry by means of the Phœnicians."

The antiquity of such activities may be determined from the fact that the Tell-el-Amarna tablets mention Tyre as already a place of great importance in the fifteenth century B.C. and it was also flourishing under Hiram I, a great friend of Solomon, in the tenth century B.C. The Phœnicians are mentioned in the Bible, and the ancient Greeks believed they owed their alphabet to them. Perhaps the earliest specimen of Phœnician writing is that found on a bronze cup of King Hiram I (c. 960 B.C.). It is alphabetic as distinguished from the pictographic writing of Egypt and the phonetic script of Babylon. The Armaeans of upper Syria who taught the use of the alphabet and pen and ink to the Assyrians, and made their language the *lingua franca* of Western Asia, themselves learnt it from the Phœnicians. Our own Indian scripts, both Sanskrit and vernacular, are equally supposed to have been originally derived from their writing. "These strange symbols are the most precious portion of our cultural heritage."

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### PROGRESS IN ANTIQUITY

If the old-world notions appear to us fantastic, let us at least recognize their imaginative quality as all to the good. Something was there in the mind of the race to cry "Forward," though no man knew exactly whither.—R. R. MARETT

In the foregoing pages we have traced the progress of man from the most primitive to the most advanced state of civilisation in antiquity. Until the days of Vasco da Gama (1498 A.D.) the ancient world for the Europeans was principally represented by Greece and Rome, and did not stretch beyond the few Oriental countries with which the Greeks and the Romans had come into contact. Even then their knowledge regarding eastern civilisations was very meagre. The reason for this was that, outside the Graeco-Roman world, civilisation came to Europe rather late, and the needs of the Europeans did not demand an acquaintance with other peoples or countries. Besides, the means of communication in the ancient world were so meagre that it was extremely difficult to go very far from one's own homeland. The Romans were the first to awaken the barbarians out of their primitive sleep. But the immediate result of this was that the barbarians overran the Roman Empire and for a time plunged Europe into 'chaos and her sister night.' That period is known as the Dark Age. From these emerged the medieval civilisation which continued down to the middle

of the fifteenth century A.D. Then came the Renaissance which really opened the eyes of the Europeans to the existence of a wider world. Their scramble for the riches of this new world has constituted modern history. To trace the fortunes of humanity through all these vicissitudes is indeed fascinating, but we should not forget that civilisation, like the sun, first dawned in the Ancient East before it travelled West. Europe received her first inspiration from Egypt and Asia. Hence, before we proceed to survey the beginnings of western civilisation, we might recapitulate the principal contributions of antiquity to human progress. For they constituted the Promethean spark which kindled the light first in Greece through Crete, and then through Greece and Rome in the rest of Europe.

The genesis of culture is a problem which is surrounded with much obscurity. Before intelligible records become available we have necessarily to depend upon surmise. All that is written about the pre-historic ages is a reasonable conjecture based upon such relics as primitive tools and skeletons dug out by the archaeologists. Naturally, even among experts, there is no unanimity of opinion as to the conclusions to be drawn from the relics of pre-historic antiquity. Often the peculiarities of an entire race are to be imagined from a single skull like that of the Java or the Peking man. Similarly, the extent of territory over which a culture must have spread is to be inferred from the scattered remains of a like nature such as flint, stone, copper, bronze and other artifacts. If, for instance, copper, bronze, or gold articles are found in a place which has no natural deposits of copper, tin, or gold, it is to be understood that there must have existed some contact or intercourse between the particular land where such relics have been discovered and the nearest country or countries having those metals. The age of pre-

historic finds is determined from various circumstances, such as the depth at which a skeleton or implement is found, the material of which a tool is made, the technique of its manufacture, etc. A number of experts like the geologist, the anthropologist and the archæologist, have to put their heads together to decide the chronology. Even then the age or period will be approximately indicated and not accurately fixed. Greater certainty is reached only in the historic period where we have written records and even dated inscriptions. A comparative study by specialists has yielded certain fairly settled conclusions which should suffice for our purposes.

Man (*homo sapiens*) has not lived on this planet since eternity. He has evolved out of the animal kingdom through roughly calculable ages. In the earlier stages of his physical and mental evolution he was hardly to be distinguished from the anthropoid apes. Then he gradually developed the characteristics and features now belonging to him. His permanently erect posture and gait gave him two fore limbs with which to defend himself and work. More than this his superior brain enabled him to understand more things than his animal forbears could. The first mark of this was the capacity to communicate with his own kind through intelligible sounds. The ability to remember them crystallised those sounds into language, spoken but not as yet written. But what a miraculous gift this! "In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God." By virtue of this single faculty man became at once a social and organising creature. His next great invention was the tool. Monkeys have been known to use a stick or even to contrive a ladder with two steps in order to reach a coveted object, but to man alone belongs the unlimited power to invent. Man is, therefore, not merely a tool-using but pre-eminently a tool-making animal. We have noted how his



career has been marked out in stages according to the material and technique of his implement-making : the Old Stone Age, the Middle Stone Age, the New Stone Age, and the Metal Age ; the last being again subdivided into Copper, Bronze, and Iron Ages. The technique of implement-making included improvement in the efficiency of instruments as well as the finish and refinement of their form. The former aspect developed the scientific and the latter aspect the artistic faculty in man. Sometime in the Palæolithic Age itself man also made the discovery of artificially kindled fire. This served him, no doubt, as one of his most powerful tools, but it also appeared to illumine his soul as much as it banished the primeval darkness ; it touched and enlivened his imagination as much as it warmed his body and roasted his meat. It could keep off the wild beasts, nay destroy and consume them ; so could it cremate the body of his dead companion. But this not so early. Yet terrestrial fire was little different from the lightning that singed the trees or even set a whole forest ablaze. Was that again very different from the blazing luminary in the sky ? The sun perhaps was the distant source of all fire, warmth, life itself ! Here were religion and philosophy born. This accounts for the universality of the Sun-cult. To the Egyptian he was *Amon-Ra* or *Aton* ; the Pharaoh himself was the son of the Sun. To the Zoroastrian again he was the visible symbol of *Ahura-Mazda*, the source of life, light and righteousness, and the enemy of death, darkness and the demon *Ahriman*. To the Indo-Aryan he was *Savitar*, *Aditya*, or *Sūrya*, the quickener of all life and intelligence. Hence from Akhnaton to Akbar and our own times sun-worship has played a prominent rôle. In Europe it assumed the form of *Apollo* and *Mithra* worship among the Greeks and the Romans respectively, and in India it gave rise to the belief in *Sūrya-wamsha* or the solar dy-

nasty of rulers. Religion thus born was later mystified, elaborated and perverted by priests and prostituted by princes.

It will be noticed from the above account of the fundamental discoveries of earliest man that progress in antiquity was both material and spiritual. These two broad traits have characterised human history in all ages. We shall follow them out briefly through all the stages of man's advancement in antiquity in the rest of this chapter.

If necessity is the mother of invention her children are twins ; for all inventions have a dual aspect—material and spiritual. By material we here mean those things which are visible and tangible, and by spiritual those that are invisible and intangible but cognisable by intellect or imagination. For example the body is physical and material, while vitality, mind, and imagination are spiritual. The history of man is an account of these dual aspects of his life. It is a history of inventions pertaining to his material as well as spiritual wants. The two are inseparable.

Wants may be further classified into primary and secondary. Primary wants are those without the satisfaction of which we can hardly live. Secondary wants are those for which we develop a craving after the primary wants have been satisfied. In the first category come food, clothing, shelter, and perhaps sex ; in the latter, religion, art and other luxuries. Every phase of our civilisation is connected with one or other of these human needs. Hence civilisation is described as the multiplication and refinement of wants.

There is an essential difference between man and the lower animals in the way they seek to satisfy their respective wants. Man is an inventive animal, whereas, all other creatures are dependent on what nature supplies them. In the beginning man also got his food, clothing and shelter directly

from nature, without his inventive transformation. Then he picked up berries or fruits, grubbed roots, or chased his prey and hunted ; lived in the natural shelter provided by trees and caves, in a state of nature, and satisfied his appetites like the other animals. But with the dawn of his inventive intelligence his life was at once lifted above the beasts of the jungle, and he became the potential lord of the earth and nature. In a sense he became the master of his destiny, that is to say, within the limits of his powers of organisation. From being a food-hunting individual he became member of a food-producing community. Henceforth he is definitely marked out as a social animal. But his herd instincts were nobler than those of other animals. Sex and speech knit him into a family—the nucleus of larger social organisations like clan, tribe, race, nation and state.

The family was either patriarchal or matriarchal. In the former the eldest male progenitor, and in the latter the eldest female, played the dictator. Conduct was controlled by the supreme governor of the family while natural affections engendered, secured and cemented group loyalties. The clan was a large family and the tribe an enlarged clan. At the dawn of the historical period we already find settled communities with some sort of organised government,—patriarchal, matriarchal, monarchical, republican, or theocratic. They are organised for peace as well as for war.

Law was largely derived from custom or tradition, and was greatly influenced by religious ideas and beliefs. It was, in course of time, crystallised into codes like those of Hammurabi, Moses and Manu, or rationalised and interpreted by great teachers like Zoroaster, Confucius and Buddha. The epochs during which the various prophets appeared in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Persia, India, and China indicate that progress had been arrested by some tyranny,

obsession or lopsided development. Thus Akhnaton came to deliver Egypt from her monstrous gods and goddesses; Hammurabi and Moses gave the Babylonians and Israelites just the law that suited their times; Confucius delivered China from the obscurantism of Lao-tze; and Buddha did the same in India from the tyranny of Brahmanism; while Zoroaster was Persia's saviour from a Magi-ridden society. ✓ The greatest evil of the world of antiquity was slavery. It continued as a recognised institution in the Graeco-Roman society and was not abolished until the last century in Europe and America. But, while in later times a slave who tried to repudiate his master could be put to death, the code of Hammurabi, severe though it was in other respects, declared: 'If a slave shall say to his master "Thou art not my master," he shall be prosecuted as a slave, and his owner shall cut off his ear.' (H. C. 282) 'If a man has bought another man's slave, male or female, in a foreign land, and when he has come into the midst of the country, the master of the slave recognises his male or female slave, then, if they are children of the land, he shall give them their freedom without price.' (H. C. 280) Another indication of the comparative humanity of Hammurabi's Code was its recognition of the rights of women. We have already cited a few instances of this in a previous chapter. Here we may add one more: 'If a woman hate her husband, and say, "Thou shalt not possess me," the reason for her dislike shall be enquired into. If she is careful, and has no fault, but her husband takes himself away and neglects her, then that woman is not to blame. She shall take her dowry and go back to her father's house.' (H. C. 142) But the law was characteristically severe where she was proved guilty: 'If she has not been careful, but runs out, wastes her house, and neglects her husband, then that woman shall

be thrown into water.' (H. C. 143)

The Babylonian code is also remarkable for its regulation of prices and wages as well as the conduct of public servants : 'If a man has hired an ox for threshing, 20 *qa* of corn is its hire ; if an ass has been hired for threshing, 10 *qa* of corn is its hire ; if a man hire cattle, wagon, and driver, he shall give 180 *qa* of corn per diem' ; etc. (H. C. 268, 269, 271). 'If a man hire a workman, then from the beginning of the year until the fifth month he shall give six grains of silver per diem. From the sixth month until the end of the year he shall give five grains of silver per diem.' (H. C. 273) 'If a doctor has treated a freeman with a metal knife for a severe wound, and has cured the freeman, or has opened a freeman's tumor with a metal knife, and cured a freeman's eye, then he shall receive ten *shekels* of silver ; if the son of a plebeian, he shall receive five *shekels* of silver ; if a man's slave, the owner of the slave shall give two *shekels* of silver to the doctor.' (H. C. 215-17) But woe to the doctor who failed in his operations : 'If a doctor has treated a man with a metal knife for a severe wound, and has caused the man to die, or has opened a man's tumor with a metal knife and destroyed the man's eye, his hands shall be cut off ; if a doctor has treated the slave of a plebeian with a metal knife for a severe wound and caused him to die, he shall render slave for slave.' (H. C. 218-19) It is interesting to note that the same law applied to even veterinary doctors : 'If a doctor of oxen or asses has treated either ox or ass for a severe wound, and cured it, the owner of the ox or ass shall give to the doctor one-sixth of a *shekel* of silver for his fee ; if he has treated an ox or an ass for a severe wound and caused it to die, he shall give the quarter of its price to the owner of the ox or the ass.' (H. C. 224-25)

But the code of Hammurabi was, on the whole, too crude

and severe even like that of the better known law of Moses.

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' was the principle underlying both : 'If a son has struck his father, his hands shall be cut off ; if a man has destroyed the eye of a freeman, his own eye shall be destroyed ; if he has broken the bone of a freeman, his bone shall be broken.' (H. C. 195-7) It was also based upon a class system and therefore invidious : 'If he has destroyed the eye of a plebeian, or broken a bone of a plebeian, he shall pay one *mina* of silver ; if he has destroyed the eye of a man's slave, or broken a bone of a man's slave, he shall pay half his value.' (H. C. 198-9) But with all this that it was just within its own ethics is obvious from the clause which says, 'If a man has struck another man in a dispute and wounded him, that man shall swear "I did not strike him knowingly," and he shall pay for the doctor.' (H. C. 206) •

When society was so organised it already possessed infinite potentialities for good as well as evil. The history of antiquity is one long illustration of this. On the one hand it could build up huge empires like those of the Pharaohs in Egypt, Darius in Western Asia, and Shih Hwang-ti in China ; on the other it could employ thousands of men to toil and sweat to raise such curious monuments like the pyramids of Egypt and the Great Wall of China. They are monuments as much of the tyranny of ancient monarchs as of the engineering skill that they could command. But such concentration of power has never been an unmixed evil. While it kept the peace over long stretches of time and territory civilisation flourished and put forth some of its best flowers. And not the least of the benefits derived by us from the vanity and superstitions of the ancient world are the rich treasures bequeathed by it to posterity in the shape of astonishing relics and monuments. We should indeed be grateful to the people

of the past for burying their dead, embalming their corpses, and storing their graves with the choicest articles of their use. But for these practices much of ancient life would have crumbled to dust and ashes long ago. The vanity of the builders of the pyramids, the sphinxes, and the magnificent temples of Luxor and Karnak has provided the richest quarries for the historian. But for their proud inscriptions and carvings we should have remained ignorant of the great and numerous contributions to modern civilisation made by Egypt. Had Hammurabi not cared to inscribe his wonderful code on the diorite pillar discovered near Susa (and now placed in the Louvre Museum), our knowledge of ancient society would have been poor indeed.

Though wars were frequent in the ancient world most of the countries whose history we have traced in the preceding chapters, with the exception of Assyria, were definitely organised for peace. Hence their great contributions to human progress in all directions. Assyria, however, was forced by her peculiar situation to organise herself for war. She converted herself into a military state and soon became the earliest imperialistic power in Asia. Her citizens were compelled to live like the Spartans and Prussians later, and inevitably sacrificed the humaner values in life. While they invented iron weapons and battering rams to destroy fortresses, they failed miserably to live as cultured men. Their art, as pointed out earlier, could not rise to a level where it could depict human subjects with sympathy and success. They lived a very brutal life and perhaps therefore could represent in sculpture and painting the animal world with marvellous truth and animation. Otherwise the luxuries of Nineveh were all borrowed. The Assyrians were human parasites. They sucked the blood of surrounding civilisations, destroyed the arts of peace, and pampered themselves to

death. So fell Nineveh.

In contrast to militant Assyria we find in India, China, Persia, and Palestine the non-militaristic "heart of Asia." Though at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa India seemed to be city-minded and thought in terms of brick and mortar, her genius was essentially sylvan. Her *Vedas* and *Upanishads* are her own, while in all else she was sharer in the common civilisation of antiquity. It is difficult to associate Buddha and Aśoka with any other country but India. They peculiarly represented in their actual living what may be described as the Indian attitude towards life :

Seeking nothing, he gains all ;  
Foregoing self, the Universe grows " I " :  
If any teach Nirvāna is to cease,  
Say unto such they lie.

China was not unworldly. Her culture was marked by a quiet charm. She glorified the domestic virtues and found salvation in ancestor-worship. Her genius was both practical and artistic. She gave to the world her exquisite porcelain, paper, silk-fabrics, mariner's-compass, printing press, and gun-powder. But her representative men were Lao-tze and Confucius who taught respectively non-aggression and a self-reliant morality. The Great Wall typified her perseverance and isolationism. Persia was again different, being neither metaphysical nor exclusive nor quietist. She was eminently constructive and tolerant. She borrowed the imperial ideas of the Assyrians but humanised them. Worshipping the Sun she became the torch-bearer of enlightenment in the East. On the whole, like her prophet Zoroaster, she stood on the side of Ahura-Mazda as opposed to Ahriman. She created order in a chaotic world, and established a road-system that became the permanent channel of intercourse between the East and the West. The restoration of the Israe-



lites to Palestine, after their Babylonian captivity, was her greatest gift to Europe; for it was the restored Hebrews that produced Christ. She also provided Rome her imperial model, and to the world the first demonstration of Asia's weakness and Europe's strength. But before she fell Persia had endowed her successors with the rich legacy of her eclectic culture garnered from Asia and Africa.

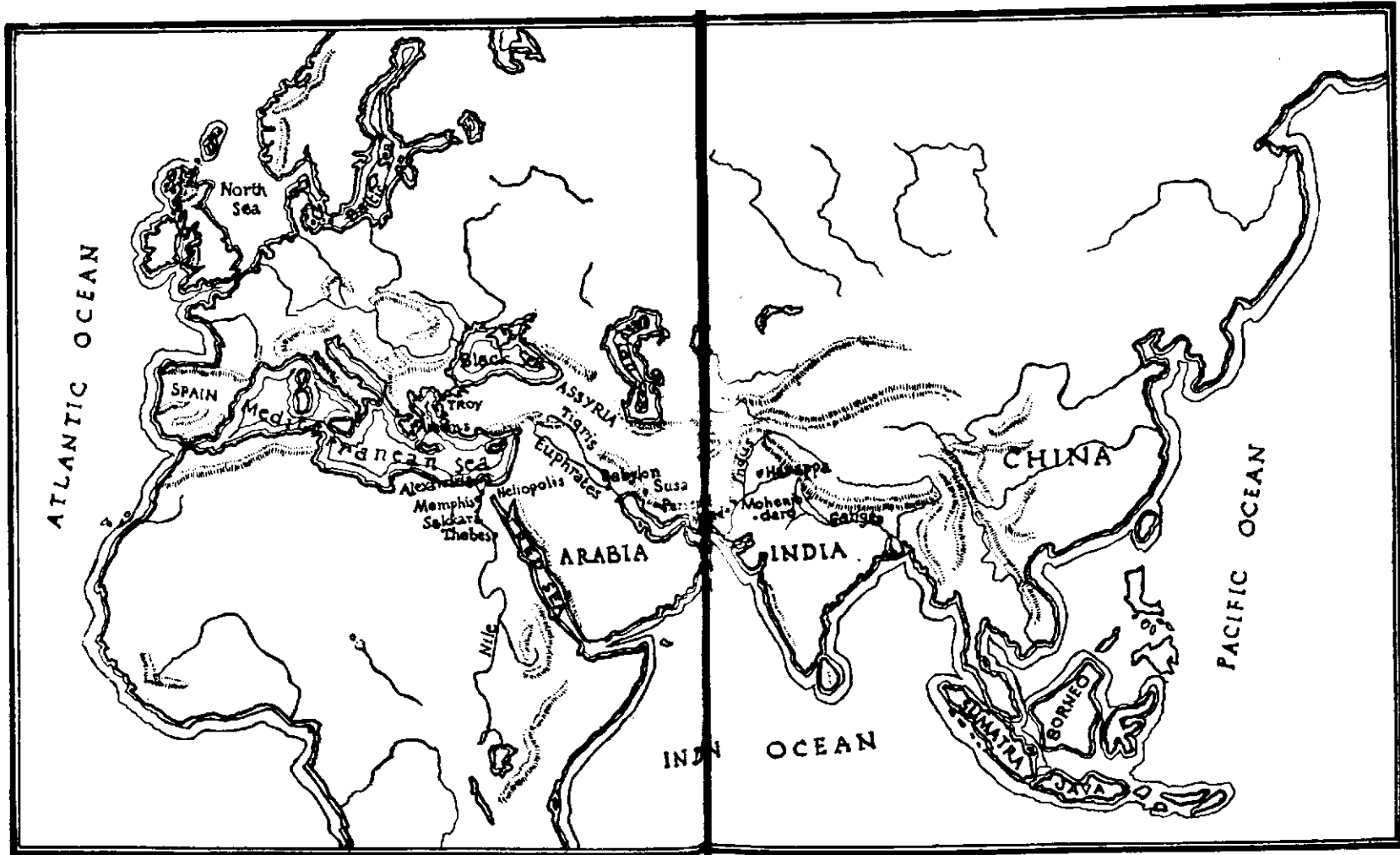
That culture, in the words of Professor Breasted, "gave the world the first highly developed practical arts, including metal work, weaving, glass-making, paper-making, and many other similar industries. To distribute the products of these industries among other peoples and carry on commerce, it built the earliest seagoing ships and it made the first roads and bridges. It first was able to move great weights and undertake large building enterprises--large even for us of today. The early Orient therefore brought forth a great group of inventions surpassed in importance only by those of the modern world. The Orient also gave us the earliest architecture in stone masonry, the colonnade, the arch, and the tower and spire. It produced the earliest refined sculpture, from the wonderful portrait figures and colossal statues of Egypt to the exquisite seals of early Babylonia. It gave us writing and the earliest alphabet. In literature it brought forth the earliest known tales in narrative prose, poems, historical works, social discussions, and even a drama. It gave us the calendar we still use. It made a beginning in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine. It first devised the administrative machinery of a government, with paid officials efficiently organized to collect taxes and disburse government payments. It first produced government on a large scale, whether of a single great nation or of an empire made up of a group of nations. Finally, in religion the East developed the earliest belief in a sole God and his fatherly care for all men, and it laid the foundations of a religious life from which came forth the founder of the leading religion of the civilized world today. For these things, accomplished--most of them--while Europe as a whole was in a state of savagery or barbarism, our debt to the Orient is enormous."

## CHRONOLOGY

### SECTION ONE

B.C.	
50,000	Approximate age of the earliest specimen of <i>Homo-sapiens</i> .
50,000	Cro-Magnon Man the proto-type of modern man.
20,000	Middle Stone Age paintings of Altamira.
10,000	Neolithic Age.
6,000	Lake-dwellers of Switzerland.
4,500	Metal Age in Mesopotamia : Susa and Kish.
4,241	Egyptian Calendar begun ; oldest writing
3,400	Menes first king of united Egypt ; Sumerian civilisation : beginnings of Babylonian astronomy.
3,000	Copper and Bronze Age from Crete to Mohenjodaro.
2,898—2875	Khufu (Cheops) Pharaoh of Egypt—built the Great Pyramid of Gizeh.
2,867—2811	Khafre of the Great Sphinx.
2,772—2717	Sargon I king of Sumer and Akkad.
2,205—2197	Yü begins first historical Dynasty in China.
2,160	Tenth Dynasty ; end of the Old Kingdom in Egypt. Glory of Thebes.
2123—2080	Hammurabi king of Babylon.
1766—1122	Shang or Yin Dynasty in China.
1580	Seventeenth Dynasty : end of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt.
1538—1444	Seti II Pharaoh of Egypt—the longest reign in history.
1501—1479	Hatshepsut queen of Egypt : Age of Moses the Hebrew patriarch : <i>Rig-Veda</i> .
1479—1447	Thuthmose III Napoleon of Egypt.
1411—1375	Amerhotep III : Golden Age of Egypt.
1385—1345	Shubbi-luli-urna king of Hittites.
1375—1358	Amenhotep IV (Akhnaton) : Age of reform in Egypt.

- 1350—1341 Tutankhamen of Egypt.  
1300—1234 Rameses II of Egypt ; 1295 battle of Kadesh with Hittites.  
1122—255 Chou Dynasty in China.  
1015—975 Solomon king of Israel.  
722—705 Sargon II of Assyria.  
705—681 Sennacherib of Assyria.  
668—626 Assurbanipal of Assyria.  
650 Twenty-fifth Dynasty of Egypt : end of New Kingdom.  
612—561 Nebuchadrezzar Chaldean king of Babylon.  
612—606 Nineveh destroyed.  
586 Jerusalem destroyed by Nebuchadrezzar ; Babylonian captivity of the Hebrews.  
563—486 Buddha.  
551—479 Confucius.  
550—529 Cyrus king of Persia.  
539 Babylon conquered by Cyrus.  
521—486 Darius king of Persia.  
332 Thirty-first Dynasty of Egypt ended.  
274—236 Asoka.  
215 Great Wall of China begun by Shih Hwang-ti of Ch'in Dynasty.



THE ANCIENT WORLD

## SECTION TWO

Herein is unfolded the marvellous advancement of human civilisation in the course of over four thousand years. Chapter VIII discloses the wonderful *Hellenic World*—the great stepping-stone from Eastern Antiquity to Europe. Chapter IX unravels the *Miracle of Greek Culture* in all its manifold aspects : aesthetic, intellectual and political inspirer of the Western World. In Chapter X is described *Rome as Republic and Empire* ; an instructive story of marvellous political growth and fateful imperial expansion. Chapter XI deals with the *Legacy of Rome* which together with the legacy of Greece supplied the foundations of European society and culture. Chapter XII dwells on *Buddhist Asia* during the period when India inspired both China and Japan just as Athens and Rome civilised the Western World. *The Dark Age in Europe* or the period of barbarian invasions forms the subject-matter of Chapter XIII ; while *The Golden Age of Hindu Culture* is described in Chapter XIV.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE HELLENIC WORLD

For weal or woe, the Greek hand touched every phase of this civilization of ours that was born in the Nearest East—and, touching, left a mark.

G. A. DORSEY

The first European country to profit by contact with the civilisations of antiquity was Greece. That country has been so named after the *Graeci* of the Romans. Even Homer, the earliest of Greek writers speaks only of Achæans, Argives, etc. but not of *Greeks*. Hesiod refers to them for the first time as the *Hellenes* as distinguished from the *Barbaroi* or foreigners. That name was derived from their legendary ancestor *Hellen* (not to be confounded with Hellen of Troy in Homer's *Iliad*), after whom also the land came to be called *Hellas*. The Hellenic world in ancient times was larger than modern Greece, and its history did not begin with Homer. Homer composed or put together (like our own Vyāsa of *Mahābhārata*) his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*—the *Bible* of Hellas—about a thousand years after the Hellenes settled down in the land named after them. They were Aryans whose migrations from the Caspian region, about 2000 B.C., have been referred to before. Hence they were the Western cousins of the Indo-Aryans, the Persians, and the Hittites already described. Their immigrations into the Aegean (Eastern Mediterranean) world were preceded by an earlier culture which has been variously known as the *Aegean*, *Cretan*, *Minoan* or *Mycenæan* civilisation. This was the window

through which light from the Orient first illumined the Occident.

The missing links between the Asiatic (including African) and European civilisations were discovered in the buried cities of Troy, Mycenæ, Tiryns, and Cnossus, by Heinrich Schliemann and Sir Arthur Evans, in 1870 and 1900 respectively. The former was an American born German grocer who was shipwrecked on the coast of Holland, but later amassed a fortune all of which he invested in his hobby of seeking for Homer's Troy. The latter was an English archæologist. Their excavations have done for European history what Mohenjo-daro and Harappa have done for India. Prior to their wonderful discoveries Greek history was begun with Homer; now it goes back to about 3600 B.C. Instead of following the order of their discoveries we shall describe them here in their true historical sequence: Cnossus, Mycenæ and Tiryns, and then Troy.

Cnossus is on the island of Crete which is centrally situated in the Eastern Mediterranean, thus forming a link between Asia, Africa and Europe. The excavations carried out on this island, by Sir Arthur Evans and others after him, have revealed a number of sites the chief of which are Cnossus and Phaestus. They represent a civilisation which was contemporaneous with Egypt, Babylon and Mohenjo-daro, and had spread as well over the mainland of Greece as across the Aegean to Troy in the north-east and Sicily in the west. For this reason it is called the Mediterranean or Aegean civilisation. It is also called Cretan on account of its island centre, and Minoan because of its legendary connexion with King Minos who had his home in Crete. Its extension to Mycenæ accounts for its being also known as Mycenæan. Sir Arthur Evans has divided it into three main periods with three further sub-divisions in each of them: The Early

Minoan (3600-2100 B.C.) ; the Middle Minoan (2100-1600 B.C.) ; and the Late Minoan (1600-1200 B.C.). Without entering into technical details we might acquaint ourselves with the salient features of this culture. We have here to depend largely upon archæological evidence, as we did in the Indus valley, for, although a large number of inscribed seals and tablets have been found in Crete they have not yet been deciphered.

The most valuable of the Cretan discoveries is the Palace of King Minos. It covers an area of six acres and contains the oldest throne found anywhere in Europe. Its Hall of the Double Axes is notable for the prominent use of the "double axe" which appears to have been the religious and royal symbol of the ruling house of Cnossus. But the most remarkable feature in the construction of the palace is its sanitary drainage. Sir Arthur Evans says, "As an anticipation of scientific methods of sanitation, the system of which we have here the record has been attained by few nations even at the present day." Buried under the floor of the palace in some rooms were a number of huge jars which bore marks of their having been used for storing olive oil as well as other precious articles. "It is by a minute study of its pottery, its porcelain, its gems, inlays, alabaster, frescoes, inscribed tablets, and religious emblems," writes Mr. A. H. Smith, "that its owner and excavator has done more than any other man to restore to the world a whole buried civilization hitherto hardly guessed at or imagined."<sup>1</sup> The frescoes and painted pottery of Crete are extremely interesting both on account of their artistic excellence and the light their designs throw on the dress, ornaments, and

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<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account read his article on "The Palace of Minos at Cnossus" in *Wonders of the Past*, II, 711-25.



ideas of the Cretan people of about five thousand years ago. The best example of Minoan art, however, is an ivory and gold statuette of the Snake Goddess (c. 1500 B.C.), about 6½ inches high. Its costume, consisting of a low-cut tight fitting bodice, a waist-compressing gold belt, and a full skirt with five flounces, is quite modern looking. Crete appears to have been but a province of the Egyptian Empire of Thuthmose III, in the fifteenth century B.C., as one of his officers bore the title of "governor of the islands in the midst of the sea" (i.e. the Aegean).<sup>1</sup>

In the Middle Minoan period, or a little later, the Cretan culture reached its height and spread even over the mainland of Greece. The remains of this culture have also been discovered at Mycenæ and Tiryns (c. 1600-1200 B.C.) as pointed out above. The labours of Dr. Schliemann (1870-80) were rewarded with a golden harvest, and the "golden Mycenæ" of Homer was found to be literally crammed with the yellow metal. Its amazing contents of "gold vessels, gold rings and necklaces, embossed and intricately decorated gold fittings and platings for furniture and clothing of which the perishable parts are dust or splinters, revealed not only a wealth of complicated design, but a whole style of art, with traditions and ideals of its own...unrelated (at the time of its discovery) to any comparable finds."<sup>1</sup> The remains of Mycenæ and Tiryns have disclosed two types of tombs described by archæologists as the "shaft tombs" and the "beehive tombs". In one of the latter was found the "Treasury of Atreus" father of the Homeric hero Agamemnon. The people of Mycenæ and Tiryns, unlike those of Cnossus, built like giants, and cyclopean walls surrounded the

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<sup>1</sup> "Golden Mycenæ" by J. L. Myres, in *Wonders of the Past*, II, 861-73.

two cities. Perhaps this was necessitated by their situation. While the Cretans could defend themselves by means of a strong fleet, those of the Argolic plain, where Mycenæ and Tiryns are situated, had to protect themselves by means of heavy fortifications, especially on account of their vast accumulations of gold. As at Cnossus so in the Argolic cities the palaces contained frescoes and other *objects d'art* graphically portraying for us the life of a bygone age. A pair of lions carved on a huge monolith, symmetrically posed on either side of a central pillar, in heraldic design, was found at the entrance of one of the palaces. But among the more interesting relics of this culture must be mentioned the wonderful sword blades, inlaid with gold and electrum, found by Dr. Schliemann at Mycenæ, and the still more exquisite golden cups of Vaphio discovered later in the Spartan plain but belonging to the same artistic epoch. Apart from the high refinement of their craftsmanship, the scenes of hunting lions, deer, etc. and the snaring of wild bulls, in which even women appear to have participated, indicate a love of healthy and vigorous life of out-door adventure among the predecessors of the ancient Greeks.

By far the greatest interest, however, attaches to the excavations on the Hissarlik mound, as that contained beneath it the famous City of Homer's *Iliad*, viz., Troy. Its situation on the bridge between the Euxine (Black Sea) and the Mediterranean, on the one hand, and the land route from Asia to Europe, on the other, made Troy the Pānīpat of opposing peoples and civilisations. Xerxes led his Persian hosts against the Greeks in the fifth century B.C. by that route, and Alexander the Great marched into Asia in the fourth century B.C. also by the same road. The Greeks of historical times knew the place as Ilion, and the

Romans called it Ilium. Nine superimposed layers representing various strata of civilisation (like those of Mohenjo-daro), ranging from the pre-historic period to the ascendancy of Rome, have been disclosed under the hill of Hisarlik where also stood Homer's Troy. In the words of Andrew Lang :

The sacred keep of Ilion is rent  
By shaft and pit ; foiled waters wander slow  
Through plains where Simois and Scamander went  
To war with gods and heroes long ago.

Like the indications of the Biblical Tower of Babel and of the story of the Flood found in Mesopotamia, the discoveries of Troy and Mycenæ have served to put the earliest legends of Hellas on unmistakable archæological foundations. This is the great service rendered by the adventurous Heinrich Schliemann to Homer and to history. The "treasure of Priam" was not less valuable than the "treasury of Atreus." Now placed in the Ethnographical Museum at Berlin, it "consisted of large copper or bronze bowls, of bronze tools and weapons, of many silver vessels and of a large hoard of gold jewellery of a characteristic and primitive kind. It included diadems with pendent chains and basket-like earrings with rosettes and twisted wires,"<sup>1</sup> etc. The *Iliad* describes but the events of a few days out of the ten years' siege of Troy ; but in it

The city is built  
To music, therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever.

Homer was not the author of the *Iliad* but only its compiler in the form in which we find it to-day ; while the

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1. A. H. Smith, "Troy : The City Sung by Homer," in *Wonders of the Past*, I, 323-31.

*Odyssey*, which describes the adventures of one of the heroes (Odysseus) of the Trojan war, also bears marks of different authorship. But both belong to the *Homeric cycle* of legends enshrining in immortal form the people's memories of historical happenings and 'battles long ago.' Their value for us is therefore both historical and literary. The Hellenic epics, like our own *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*), constitute a picture gallery full of vivid portrayals of ancient life. The civilisation they represent is the interlude between Mycenæ and Athens. We witness in them the Aegean world in the Bronze Age (c. 1500-700 B.C.).

The ancestors of the Greeks came into the Aegean world and largely displaced the Mediterranean peoples about the same time as the Aryans in India. They came in dribblets at first and then flooded the "Greek" peninsula, the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean, and even the western littoral of Asia-Minor. They comprised several tribal groups of which the Achæans and Dorians were the most important. The former concentrated in Attica, where they evolved the Athenian culture, and the latter in Laconia (Peloponnesus) which became famous under the leadership of Sparta. But the immediate effect of the Greek invasions was the destruction of the Aegean civilisation which is symbolised in the fall of Troy. It is significant that an account of it has come down to us, not from the Greeks of the mainland, but through the Ionic bard of Asia-Minor. Ionia was the inheritor of the Oriental civilisations and the inspirer of the historic Hellenic culture of Athens and Sparta. "The Greeks did not grow a civilization of their own," says Mr. H. G. Wells; "they wrecked one, and put another together upon and out of the ruins." The originality of the Greeks, however, lay in improving upon their inheritance and transforming it beyond recognition.

The early Greek invaders were, like the Indo-Aryans, a pastoral people. They dealt with the natives in the same manner as their confreres in India. Their ideas and institutions to start with were similar. They both worshipped the gods of Nature (Zeus, Apollo, Pan, etc.) and were tribally organised under their patriarchs. But nothing could be more dissimilar than the later developments of the Greeks and the Indians. The former became rational, scientific and practical, while the latter remained emotional, religious, and metaphysical. Hence to us the study of Greek history is peculiarly instructive. "Their outer political history, indeed," says Professor Gilbert Murray, "like that of all other nations, is filled with war and diplomacy, with cruelty and deceit. It is the inner history, the history of thought and feeling and character, that is so grand." We shall rapidly survey the former aspect of Hellenic life and then turn to their contributions to human civilisation and progress.

The excavations of Troy and Cnossus have somewhat authenticated two "events" in the legendary history of Hellas: (1) the capture of Troy itself from the pre-Hellenic (either Hittite or Mediterranean) rulers of the north-eastern Aegean; and (2) the overthrow of the rulers of Cnossus by Theseus of Athens who is said to have slain the Minotaur in the labyrinth built by Dædalus in the palace of Minos. Both these belong to the period when the Greeks were ruled over by kings. Kingship came to an end in Greece (with the exception of Sparta) about the middle of the eighth century B.C. The Greeks lived, not in large kingdoms or empires, as in Egypt and Asia, but in small city-states. This is largely accounted for by the peculiar geographical features of Hellas, but was equally due to the fissiparous national traits of the people themselves and their passion for liberty. The king was among them no more than a *primus inter pares* (first

among equals). Hence, with the growing importance of the nobles, it was easy to either eclipse or totally supersede the king who would always be most jealously watched in a Lilliputian world like the Greek city-state.

The immediate successors of the monarchs were the *Eupatridæ* or nobles who, after a spell of aristocratic rule, gave place to "tyrants." The nearest equivalents to these "tyrants" in the modern world are the Dictators like Il Duce (Sr. Mussolini) in Italy and Der Fuehrer (Herr Hitler) in Germany. They were mostly benevolent autocrats like Peisistratus of Athens. Owing to the widespread nature of this political change all over the Greek world during the sixth century B.C. that period is known as the Age of Tyrants (600-500 B.C.). We shall assess their contributions to Greek history later. Meanwhile it is to be remembered that the Persian empire under Cyrus, Cambyses, and Darius had been extended to the Mediterranean littoral of Asia-Minor and that had included the Greek colonies in that region. In 500 B.C. the liberty loving Greeks of Asia-Minor rebelled against Persia, and were supported by Athens and Eretria. This drew upon Hellas the whole might of the Great King Darius. For a time it appeared as if the tiny city-states of the Hellenes would all be brought under the Persian yoke. Darius swept like an avalanche over the Greek colonies and crushed their cities (496-494 B.C.) one after another, and, though one of his expeditions was wrecked off Mt. Athos in 492 B.C., he equipped another in the course of the next two years and appeared before Eretria and Athens in 490 B.C. But the Greeks, for once, joined together and put forth their greatest might against the invader. The result was the great victory of the Greeks over the Persians at *Marathon*—one of the most epoch-making triumphs in World History. "If the Greeks had been defeated on that

occasion," writes Professor Hearnshaw, "The whole course of man's cultural development would have been different." The credit is due to the courage of Miltiades and the genius of Callimachus who thus became the saviours of European freedom. Ten years later Xerxes, the son and successor of Darius, made a still more heroic effort to punish the Greeks, but all in vain. The battles of Salamis (480 B.C.), Plataea and Mycale (479 B.C.), confirmed the verdict of Marathon for all time. In the enthusiastic words of Professor Bury, "It was as if on that day the gods had said to them (*i.e.* Greeks)—'Go on and prosper'"; or as Creasy put it, "It secured for mankind the intellectual treasures of Athens, the growth of free institutions, the liberal enlightenment of the western world, and the gradual ascendancy for many ages of the great principles of European civilisation."

The history of Hellas from the defeat of the Persians to the rise of Macedonia (479-338 B.C.) constitutes one of the brightest epochs in world history; it was certainly the most glorious period in the history of the Greeks. It was the age "which gave to the world the immortal dramas of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, which saw the erection of the masterpieces of Athenian architecture, the creation of the gems of Hellenic sculpture, and the formulation of the Greek philosophy by Socrates and his disciples." The work of the Greek spirit may, indeed, be followed, as suggested by Mr. F. S. Marvin, in three distinct but parallel streams,—their fight for freedom, their realisation of beauty in drama and the plastic arts, their foundation of science by the earliest scheme of laws in mathematics and astronomy.<sup>1</sup> etc.

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1. *Old and New*, p. 79.

An eminent constitutional historian<sup>1</sup> of Greece has observed that "The central idea and what may be called the spirit of Greek history is its constitutionalism." The extraordinary emphasis the Greeks themselves laid on politics (which indeed is a Greek word : from *polis*=city) may be seen from Isocrates' description of the constitution as "the soul of the state." Aristotle went further and declared that "the constitution is the state." Almost all the Hellenic city-states passed through the Aristotelian cycle of governmental forms : monarchy, aristocracy and *politæ*, punctuated respectively by tyrannis, oligarchy and democracy. In all the history of antiquity we have not come across such a variety in forms of government. While monarchy was the predominant type, whether in small kingdoms or huge empires, the world before Greece in the centuries succeeding the eighth B. C. had not known a non-monarchial administration except perhaps in the aristocratic republics of Buddhist India. But in Greece the political cycle seemed to run its round with almost the inevitability of the seasons in the year. The progressive character of the Greek people is nowhere better illustrated than in this constitutional sphere. That was one of their greatest gifts to posterity. In this connexion the following remarks by Professor Zimmer are worthy of thoughtful attention :

"The first valuable contribution the Greeks made to political study was that they invented it. It is not too much to say that, before fifth-century Greece, politics did not exist. There were powers and principalities, governments and subjects, but politics no more existed than chemistry existed in the age of alchemy. An imitation of an idea, as Plato has taught us, is not the same as an idea ; nor is the imitation of a science the same as a science. Rameses and Nebuchadrezzar, Cræsus the

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1. A. H. J. Greenidge, *Greek Constitutional History*, p. 1.



Lydian and Cyrus the Persian, ruled over great empires; but within their dominions there were no politics because there were no public affairs. There were only the private affairs of the sovereign and his ruling class. Government and all that pertained to it, from military service and taxation to the supply of women for the royal harem, was simply the expression of the power and desire of the ruler. The great advance made by Greece was to have recognized that public or common interests exist and to have provided, first for their management, and secondly for their study. In other words, the Greeks were the first to rescue the body politic from charlatans and to hand it over to physicians."<sup>1</sup>

We have space in this little volume only for one illustration of this political transformation. As noticed before, there were kings in Athens like Theseus. They were the priests, judges and military commanders of the Athenians. But about the middle of the eighth century B.C., as in other parts of Greece, they were gradually superseded by an Aristocracy. The greatest service rendered to the Athenians by the aristocrats was to give them a code of laws. Their first law-giver was Draco (c. 621 B.C.). His code, like that of Hammurabi and Moses, was very drastic. It was therefore considerably modified later (c. 594 B.C.) by another nobleman named Solon. He was a "reconciler" of opposing interests. His greatest reforms were (1) the emancipation of the heavily indebted peasantry by his famous moratorium known as *seisachtheia* "which removed the burdens from the bodies of the masses, and was the first step in the establishment of a popular constitution in which their minds might have free play;" and (2) the creation of a mixed type of government which nevertheless laid the foundations of democracy by giving the people the right to sit in judg-

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1. Read "Political Thought" in *The Legacy of Greece* edited by R. W. Livingstone.

ment over the magistracy. The magistrates (public officials) were popularly elected in Athens and assumed office after they had taken an oath of integrity before the *heliaea* or people's court; at the end of their term of office they were again subject to scrutiny by the *heliaea* and perhaps punishment by the *Araeopagus*. Solon also made it obligatory on parents to teach their children some trade, failing in which they might not legally expect to be maintained in their old age by their children. By such salutary reforms Solon paved the way for a more perfect Democracy. But before this could be realised Athens had to pass through the *tyrannis* of Peisistratus (560-527 B.C.).

Peisistratus, like Draco and Solon, was also a nobleman. He established his *tyrannis* only with a view to rescue his countrymen from the chaos which followed the death of Solon. Although he concentrated all power in his own hands and those of his family, he utilised his dictatorship for the glorification of Athens. He encouraged agriculture, industry, commerce, and the arts. Taxation under him was very light (being 1/25 of the produce) and the people found employment in the great architectural works which the "tyrant" undertook in order to beautify Athens. Peisistratus also systematised the celebration of national festivals like the Dyonisiac, and instituted the practice of singing on such occasions the national epics like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He built a fleet of about fifty triremes and seized the mouth of the Hellespont (Dardenelles) on account of its strategic importance for trade. Judging from this and other like examples, Dr. Breasted has observed that "The Age of the Tyrants was therefore one of the great epochs of the world's history. Under the stimulus of the keen struggle for leadership in business, in government, and in society, the minds of the ablest men of the time were won-

derfully quickened, till they threw off the bondage of habit and entered an entirely new world of science and philosophy. The inner power of this vigorous new Greek life flowed out in statesmanship, in literature and religion, in sculpture and painting, in architecture and building,"<sup>1</sup> etc.

But, in Athens, liberty was valued more than anything else in life, and the successors of Peisistratus were not tolerated for long. Of his two sons, Hipparchus and Hippias, one was assassinated and the other fled to the Persians and treacherously helped them against his own countrymen. Though the murderers of Hipparchus, Harmodius and Aristogiton, were immortalised by the Athenians as their saviours, by setting up their marble statues at the Araeopagus, they had soon to face the Persians; with what results we have already described. Cleisthenes, one of the heroes of the Persian wars, took Athens one stage forward towards Democracy. He remedied the defects of the Solonian constitution, and made it more broad based. But his greatest innovation was the institution of what the Greeks called *ostracism* (from *ostrakon*=a potsherd). This was a plebiscite by which a person who was likely to assume autocratic authority within the state was sent into exile for a period of ten years, if at least 6,000 citizens desired it by recording their votes on potsherds. The person so ostracised did not lose either his civic rights, property, or honour, all of which he could enjoy unaffected on his return. It was merely insurance against *tyrannis*.

An interesting story is told by Plutarch about Aristides, a popular leader, who was once ostracised. He met an illiterate peasant who wanted to record his vote nevertheless. That peasant desired Aristides to write on the potsherd the

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1. *The Conquest of Civilization*, pp. 331-2.

name of the person (Aristides) he (the peasant) wished to see ostracised. On being asked the reason Aristides was told by the peasant, "The name of Aristides is so much on the lips of men, that I am sick of hearing it." Nevertheless Aristides did as he was bid and went into exile!

In the opinion of Greenidge the claim of Cleisthenes as a reformer rests on "the abolition of certain conditions which were unfavourable to any form of established government. The break up of the clan-organisation, the fresh local unions which banished old associations and substituted new ones in their place, and the introduction of ostracism, were all means of getting rid of disturbing causes. Thus the creations of Cleisthenes were permanent, and were the starting-point for all further development. The Cleisthenian constitution was the unalterable basis on which the future ultra-democratic changes rested, and in this sense, but in this sense only, Cleisthenes was the founder of the Athenian democracy."

The blossoming of Athenian democracy after the overthrow of the Persians was only one aspect of the flowering of the Greek genius. Under the aegis of Athens it was destined to make wonderful progress in all directions. The rise of the Progressive Party, first under the leadership of Themistocles, and then under Pericles (than whom Hellas produced no greater leader) marked the high water level of Greek achievement (460-429 B.C.). To appreciate the full measure of this greatness it is necessary for us to study its background a little. Greece was very much disunited, and Athens tried to unite her; Greece was culturally backward, and Athens raised her to the pinnacle of a glorious civilisation.

We have pointed out before how both the geographical features of Hellas and the clannish character of the Greeks

conspired to divide Greece into a number of tiny city-states. Each such city-state was no bigger than one of our districts in India, and its population not more than 280,000. Of these nearly three-quarters lived in the countryside and only one quarter occupied an urban centre like Athens. The town of Athens grew up around a fortified citadel known as the Acropolis. Its rendezvous was provided by a market-place, a temple of the goddess Athene, and the Pnyx where the free citizens met in 'parliament' for the discussion of public affairs. Besides these there was the Araeopagus where the elders met as a high-court for the trial of grave offenders. Of the 280,000 people of Attica (the province of Athens) hardly 50,000 were enfranchised citizens. For about 100,000 were slaves, 20,000 were foreigners, and the rest were women and persons below eighteen years of age,—all of whom were not entitled to exercise the franchise. None but a person whose father and mother were both Athenians could ever aspire to become a free citizen. So rigid was this rule that even so eminent an Athenian leader like Pericles was thereby prevented from marrying Aspasia, the woman he loved. This really reduced Athenian democracy to an aristocracy or an oligarchy and made the Athenians very parochial. Sparta, Thebes, and other city-states were no better. On account of this Greece before the Persian wars was a world divided against itself. Its only bonds of union were cultural.

The universal popularity of Homer's epics among all the Hellenic tribes contributed to their national cohesion. The common gods of the Hellenes were indeed given 'a local habitation and a name' by Homer. They were gathered together into a Pantheon on Mount Olympus (their *Kailas*) under the presidency of Zeus (their *Indra*). They were periodically summoned to participate in the national (Pan-

Hellenic) games which came to be described as the Olympiads. Once every four years all the Greeks and their gods gathered together in sacred places like Delphi which became famous throughout Hellas for its Oracle. The 'truce of god' was proclaimed all over the Greek world to enable people to come in safety to attend the Olympic games. Here the festivities started with the pouring of libations to the gods who were invoked to bless the celebrations. There were races of all kinds, wrestling matches, throwing the disc, wielding the javelin, exhibitions of physical strength and perfection of form, etc. The winners were crowned with a vine or olive wreath, which attained the distinction of a Nobel prize of our time; and they were feted for days together at public expense. Athletes in ancient Greece enjoyed the celebrity of Cinema 'stars' in modern America. But once the Olympiad was over the Greeks returned to their respective city-states and resumed their old rivalries and hatreds.

One important cause of this unhealthy spirit among the Greeks was their colonial system. When the mainland of Greece was overpopulated they were obliged to seek new homes in the islands and on the surrounding Mediterranean shores. But colonies once established tended to develop into independent city-states. Often quarrels arose between the mother and daughter cities as in the case of Corinth and Corcyra, Sparta and Syracuse. Sometimes the rivalry was commercial, at other times either political or racial as between Athens and Sparta. The two great cities of Hellas—one Achaean and the other Dorian—competed for the hegemony of Greece until both got entangled in a suicidal war (known as the Peloponnesian war, 431-404 B.C.) and finally lay prostrate before the Macedonian conqueror (338 B.C.). To know how this came about it is necessary

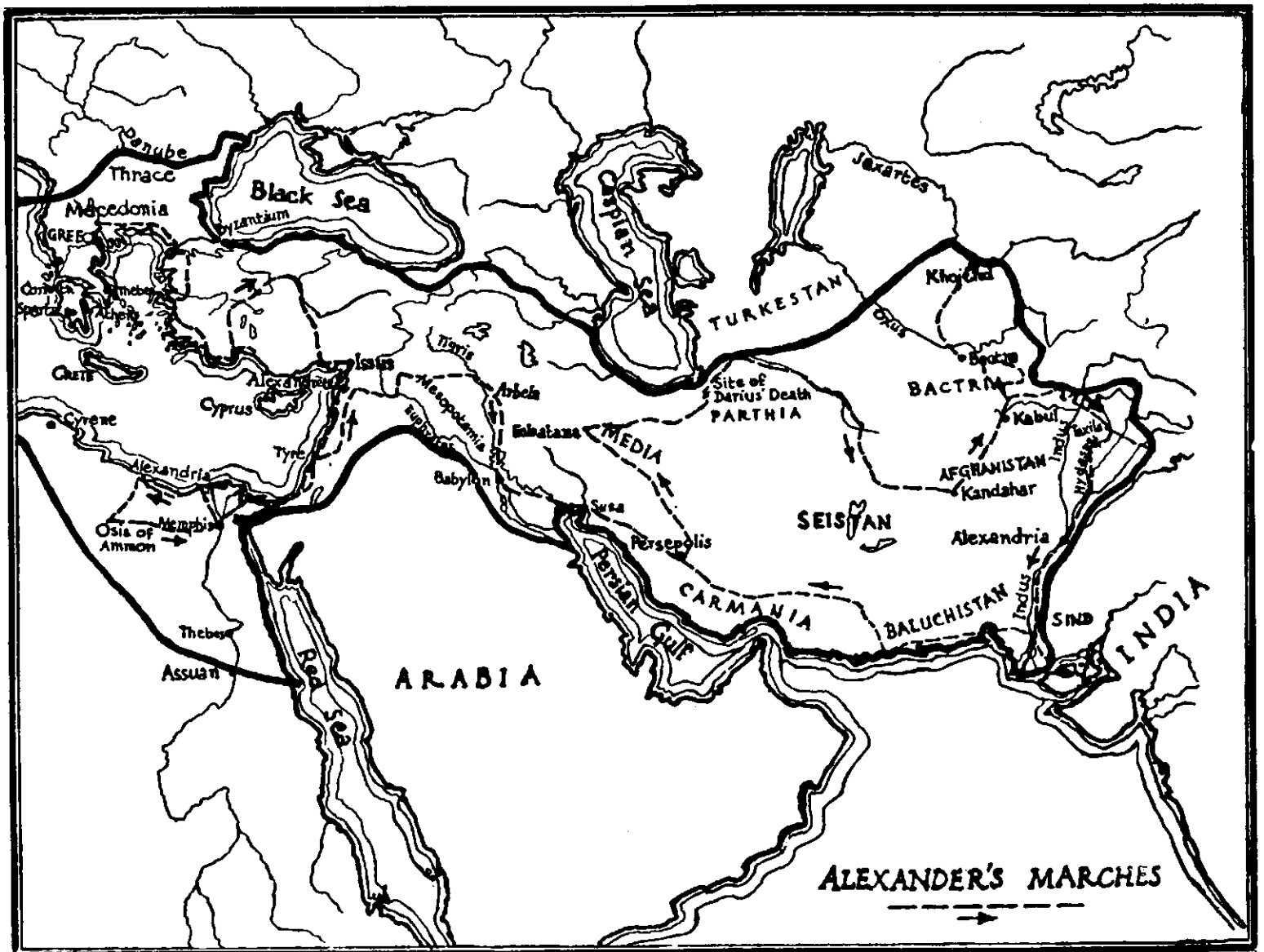
to follow (1) the development of Athens after the Persian Wars, and (2) the growth of the rival power of Sparta in the Peloponnesus. The former was strong at sea and the latter only on land. In some respects the Athenian adventure looked like the British, though it differed from it in others. In point of cultural growth and temperament Athens was like France and Sparta like Germany or rather Prussia. On the whole the Peloponnesian War is of special interest as foreshadowing the endless struggles of Europe in later times, just as the Persian Wars indicated the first trial of strength between Asia and Europe.

In the Hellenic war of liberation from the menace of Persia Athens had taken the leading part. She therefore naturally assumed the rôle of Protector in the post-war period as well. For this purpose she organised a league of Hellenic cities known as the Delian League. It was so named because of its headquarters on the island of Delos which was centrally situated. But from the first Athens dominated the Delian League as Britain over the League of Nations in our time. Very soon she transformed the League into an Empire. Membership and its obligation to contribute in cash towards its maintenance were at first voluntary. Then they were made compulsory. Drastic measures were adopted to coerce recalcitrant cities. Within twenty years the League treasury was removed from Delos to Athens. In return for policing the Aegean the Hellenic cities had to pay a very heavy price. But as the dangers of foreign invasion became less the members of the League showed increasing reluctance to bear the Athenian yoke. Sparta exploited this discontent to create her own hegemony in preference to that of her rival. This brought on the Peloponnesian War which ended in the prostration of Athens in 404 B.C.

Sparta had played an ignominious part on the whole in the history of Hellas. Her character and outlook were altogether different from those of Athens. Athens stood for a high and noble culture; Sparta for coarse militarism. Athens was the champion of freedom and democracy; Sparta was conservative and ever the refuge of oligarchy. Athens had borne the brunt of the Persian attacks; Sparta was tardy and fitful in her support. Her noblest sacrifice was that of Leonidas and his heroic followers at Thermopylæ during Xerxes' invasion; but she wiped out that heroism by inviting the Persian again in the course of her struggle against Athens and delivering up the Ionian cities of Asia-Minor to the tender mercies of the Persians. The Spartans indeed were nothing if not brave, but their national weakness was lack of patriotism. It was due to this that they overthrew Athens at the battle of Aegospotami (405 B.C.) with Persian help. But for Hellas the supremacy of Sparta meant the substitution of King Stork. "The sentimental complaints against Athenian supremacy were changed for the positive injuries of Spartan tyranny." The outcome of it all was another revolt of the subordinate cities, another interference by the Persian, and the humiliating Peace of Antalcidas (387 B.C.) by which it was proclaimed that

"King Artaxerxes thinks it just that the cities in Asia, and the islands of Clazomenæ and Cyprus, shall belong to him. Further, that all the Greek cities, small and great, shall be autonomous, except Lamnos, Imbros, and Scyrus, which shall belong to Athens as aforetime. If any refuse to accept this peace, I shall make war on them, along with those of the same purpose, both by land and sea, with both ships and money." In the meanwhile a third power was rising in the North. That was Macedonia. In her anxiety to crush Athenian dominion Sparta had encouraged the Macedonians even as





THE EMPIRE OF ALEXANDER

war-weariness, from the valley of the Hyphasis or Beas. Alexander was at Susa back again in 325, where he received the embassies from Carthage, Italy, and Western and Northern Europe; and while he was about to start on a fresh campaign died in July 323 B.C.

The career of Alexander, meteoric though it was, is one of the most brilliant episodes in World History. He was no less a statesman than he was a general; in short he was a man with a mission. He was the first European to marry Asiatics as a matter of deliberate policy; and this example was followed by over 10,000 in the rank and file of his army. Likewise he enlisted Asiatic youths in his army, and showed how excellently they could fight under Macedonian training. "Before the end of his reign he had 30,000 Hellenised orientals at his disposal, and between them and the Macedonian veterans a perfect equality was made to prevail." He was equally eclectic in the admission of oriental deities into his pantheon; may be he did this for political purposes, even as Napoleon afterwards did in Egypt. But above all he was a champion of Hellenism in the world beyond the bounds of Hellas, and the carrier of oriental civilisation to European lands. Seventy cities, each called Alexandria after its reputed founder, commemorated him, and survived as centres for disseminating his ideas.

"They were organised on the Hellenic model with a large measure of local autonomy; the language of the administration was the matchless tongue of Athens; they became centres of a commerce which linked Asia and Europe in the closest bonds of economic unity. . . . They were cosmopolitan cities wherein not only were inter-Hellenic differences ignored, but wherein East and West met in terms of equality and fraternity. Above all, they were cities where the new rationalism of the Greeks came into contact with the ancient mysticism of the Orient; where the

asceticism of Buddhist India mingled with the athleticism of Olympia ; where the Jews of the dispersion found themselves in company with the philosophers of the Academy and the Porch ; where Hellenism was joined in marriage to Hebraism, and where the two in fruitful union became in due time the parents of the Christian civilization."<sup>1</sup>

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1. F. J. C. Hearnshaw, *A First Book of World History*, pp. 85-6.

## CHAPTER NINE

### THE MIRACLE OF GREEK CULTURE

In spite of many differences, no age has had closer affinities with Ancient Greece than our own ; none has based its deeper life so largely on ideals which the Greeks brought into the world.—R. W. LIVINGSTONE

The ancient Greeks wrought a double miracle : (1) by transmuting the bronze culture of their pre-Persian-War days into the most marvellous polychromatic civilisation of the Periclean Age ; and (2) by transforming the 'barbaroi' of Europe, through Macedon and Rome, into the creators of a new and progressive civilisation. The latter process, being like a 'slow motion picture,' may be easily traced through the succeeding periods of history ; but the former was a quick spiritual or psychological miracle which is more difficult to understand. Obviously Greece experienced in the fifth century B.C. that exhilaration which comes to nations in their youth when they have successfully tided over a great crisis. It came in later times to England after the defeat of the Armada, to America (U.S.A.) after the War of Independence, to France in the first flush of the Revolution, and Japan after her triumph over Russia, etc. 'The power of Athens grew,' Herodotus tells us, 'and here is evidence—and there is proof of it everywhere that liberty is a good thing. While the Athenians were despotically governed, they were not superior in war to any of their neigh-

bours, but when they got rid of their despots, they far surpassed them. This shows that in subjection they did not exert themselves, but they were working for a master, but when they became free each individual keenly did his best on his own account.' But the seeds of greatness were already there even before the overthrow of the Peisistratidæ and the Persian wars. The civilisation of the Ionians of Asia-Minor was, indeed, a brilliant sunrise, "an overflowing of the delight in life, in beauty, in the exercise of all the faculties, which for a time dominated Greece itself." In the century before the Persian wars of 500-480 B.C., writes Professor Percy Gardner, "Greece, both Ionian and Dorian, was throwing out fresh shoots of life in every direction, breaking through the crust of archæic convention, producing a new standard of excellence, in poetry, in philosophy, in history, in art. In every province, morals, intellect, imagination, Greece was striking out, to the right and the left. And in the century after the Persian wars, she reaped the full harvest of her splendid sowing, and produced the masterpieces which have remained ever since memorable, to the study of which each generation recurs, and whence it learns of what human nature is capable."<sup>1</sup> The two chief exponents of this Greek culture were the Dorians (Sparta) and the Ionians (Asia-Minor); but their meeting place was Athens. It reached its climax during the thirty years of Pericles' rule, but also continued to bear its golden fruit long after. Alexandria, in Egypt, gathered in the whole harvest before chaos came again.

First, of course, comes Homer. Though Ionic born, he is Pan-Hellenic, universal. He was the inspirer of Virgil, Dante and Milton, in literature, and of all the Greeks in

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1. See *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 354.

life. Alexander of Macedonia sought to live like Achilles. The *Odyssey* was recommended, by the German philosopher Herbart, as 'the first connected reading book for children, combining, as it does, so many strands of interest—geography, history, a good story and poetry, beautiful even in translation.' Homer both mirrored and inspired the Greeks in every sphere of life, so that, as one writer has put it, "If not itself a fact, the Trojan War became the cause of innumerable facts". Its tales were recited by Greek historians, dramatised by Greek poets, cut in marble by Greek sculptors, and depicted by Greek painters on the walls and porticoes of Greek temples. "They thus constituted a very vital part of the education of every Greek and afforded the inspiration of many a great and worthy deed." Homer was to the Greeks what Vyāsa, Vālmiki, and Manu are to the Hindus. He gave shape to, though he did not create, their gods, their laws, and their aspirations.

Though the Greeks were not without a mythology, full of gods and goddesses, the outstanding quality of their religion was its humanism. The Greek deities were only super-men and super-women, magnified human beings. The Greek more than the Egyptian religion truly reflected the idea attributed to the latter: 'The gods live as I; I live as the gods.' In other words, the Greeks humanised their gods and strove to make human life divine.

Heaven-born, the soul a heavenward course must hold;—  
Ideal Form, the universal mould.

Just as in religion they turned more and more from mythology to such noble and practical ideals, so in philosophy the Greeks tried to realise the concept so pithily put in Keats' famous lines:

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty'—that is all  
Ye know on earth and all ye need to know.

They looked at life as a whole and steadily, and strove to live most earnestly and intensely. Hence their philosophy did not, like our own, lose itself in metaphysics; it derived its strength from science rather than religion. 'Truth, Goodness, Beauty' was as symbolic of Hellenic idealism as 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' has been that of modern France. This triple ideal of perfection the Greeks persistently sought to realise in the individual as well as in society, in literature as well as in the plastic arts, in philosophy as well as in science. We find illustrations of this in the self-centred life of the Spartans no less than in the noble universalism of the Athenians.

The Spartans were pure Dorians, but they were surrounded on all sides by a non-Dorian population whom they tried to keep in perpetual subjection. Hence, like the Assyrians, they were obliged to develop military qualities at the cost of everything else. Their state was a military camp, and Spartan society an army of occupation. From a very tender age every Spartan had to submit himself to lifelong military discipline of a very rigorous character. Even young women had to undergo physical training like young men. A weakling had no chance to survive among the Spartans. Consequently, Herodotus tells us, 'No men were braver than the Spartans taken singly, and when they unite they are the noblest of mankind. For though they are free they are not free in all things: They have one master and that master is the Law, whom they fear far more than your subjects fear you' (i.e. Xerxes). That Law was given to the Spartans, according to tradition, by Lycurgus (c. 800 B.C.). He fixed their political constitution which is described by Greenidge as a "dynastic oligarchy." It made the Spartans very conservative. They had two Kings at a time, so that one might always act as a check upon the

other. Besides, they had a council of elders and an assembly. But their effective governing body was a cabinet of five Ephors. Socially the Spartans were divided into three classes: (1) the *Spartiates* who were pure Dorians; (2) the *Perioeci* who were hybrids; and (3) the *Helots* who were slaves. Only the first named enjoyed the full privileges of free citizenship which included the right to bear heavy armour and to serve in the best ranks of the army. The *Spartiates* were forbidden to engage in commerce, industry or agriculture. Their duties were exclusively military. All other work was to be done by the *Helots*. The extreme nature of the Spartan discipline, which has made it proverbial, may be gathered from two facts, viz. their distrust of the influence of gold on character, and their restraint on speech. They were to use only iron currency, and even at the table they were to sit 'silent as statues.' In the words of Plutarch, "Lycurgus was for having the money bulky, heavy, and of little value; and the language, on the contrary, very pithy and short, and a great deal of sense compressed in a few words"—hence *laconic*, from Laconia wherein stood Sparta.

Sparta, however, had not always been under such a mechanical spell. "Discoveries made in 1906-9 suggest that from the ninth to the seventh centuries B.C. Sparta had some sort of an art of its own showing traces of Asiatic influence in its pottery—a little later Sparta concluded an alliance with Cræsus, King of Lydia, and Bathycles, an artist of Magnesia in Ionia, was treated with honour in Sparta."<sup>1</sup> It was especially in architecture that the Dorians left their permanent impress. Here, as in body-building, the Spartans imparted strength to the flimsy grace of Ionia. In the

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 404.



words of Professor Gardner, "It is precisely the Dorian ideas of discipline, of measure, of self-control, which entering into the art of Greece made it a noble and continuous development, instead of a mere brilliant flash." He is also of opinion that the Athenians of the early fifth century B.C. imbibed Dorian manners, Dorian dress, Dorian art;<sup>1</sup> but in the light of the anti-Spartan spirit of Periclean Athens, it seems certain that this must have been a short-lived influence.

The true miracle of Greek culture was undoubtedly performed by the Athenians. It was they that had freed Hellas from the menace of Persia, given the Hellenes and the world abiding lessons in democracy, and bequeathed to posterity invaluable treasures of art and literature such as few others have produced. Athens was indeed the cultural capital of Hellas. The greatest of the Greek poets, philosophers, historians, orators, artists and scientists, were either Athenians or admirers of Athens. With a legitimate pride, therefore, Pericles in the fifth century B.C. considered Athens the School of Hellas.

But we must, in this brief survey of Hellenic culture, merge Athenian and Spartan, Ionian and Dorian, into a single stream, and look upon the Greeks as a whole. Their national mind is successively reflected, in literature, first in the epics of Homer and Hesiod, then in the lyrics of Pindar, Sappho and a host of others, and finally in their immortal dramatists like Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes. As Mr. Livingstone has pointed out, "These divisions reflect the development of the national mind. Epic is the offspring of its childhood, delighting in stories for their own sake; lyric, of which the essence is

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

the expression of personal feelings, represents its adolescence, the age of emotion, conscious of itself and at moments touched by reflection; drama is its manhood, facing the problems of the world and life with all the forces of a full-grown mind." The Greek genius was rich in creativeness and had an instinct for system. Whether in literature or in other forms of art its notable features were (1) humanism, (2) simplicity, (3) balance and measure, (4) naturalism, (5) idealism, (6) patience, (7) joy, and (8) fellowship.<sup>1</sup> Two samples of the Greek manner and outlook may be here cited. A moonlit scene is thus described by Sappho the greatest woman poet of Hellas :

The stars about the lovely moon  
 Fade back and vanish very soon  
 When round and full her silver face  
 Swims into sight, and lights all space.

The following lyric of Anacreon inevitably reminds us of Shelley's "Love's Philosophy" :

The black earth drinks the falling rain,  
 Trees-drink the moistened earth again ;  
 Ocean drinks the streams that run  
 Only to yield them to the sun ;  
 And the sun himself as soon  
 Is swallowed by the thirsty moon.  
 All Nature drinks : if I would sip,  
 Why dash the goblet from my lip?

Interesting as the lyric poets are, to get into real touch with the true mind of Hellas we must go to the mature dramatists. Aeschylus (525-456 B.C.), first of the three tragedians, was a poet as well as a soldier. He fought at Salamis and Marathon, as well as wrote great dramas like

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 355.

the *Agamemnon*, the *Libation-Bearers*, and the *Furies*. Indeed, he seems to have valued his participation in the war of liberation more than his poetry, for his epitaph simply records that 'Aeschylus fought the Persians.' Sophocles (496-406 B.C.) also lived during the same exciting period, and wrote his immortal tragedies like the *Philoctetes* and the *Oedipus*. Matthew Arnold speaks of him as one

Whose even balanced soul  
Business could not make dull nor passion wild ;  
Who saw life steadily and saw it whole ;  
The mellow glory of the Attic stage.

But 'the most tragic of the poets', as Aristotle describes him, was Euripides (480-406 B.C.). He wrote several plays of which the *Medea*, the *Bacchae*, the *Trojan Women*, the *Electra*, and the *Alcestes* are the best known. He is still appreciated because he had something in him akin to 'the temper of the present day.' His mind was peculiarly free from the superstitions of his age, though he freely made use of legendary themes in his dramas. His perspicuous rationalism is visible in the following lines from the *Heracles* :

Say not there be adulterers in heaven,  
Nor prisoner gods and gaolers. . . .  
God, if he be God, lacketh naught. All these  
Are dead unhappy tales of minstrelsy.

Or again when he says, in the *Hippolytus*,

No man has tasted another life, because the things under  
us are unrevealed, and we float upon a stream of legend.

The heroism of Greek womanhood in the hour of crisis is thus brought out by Euripides in the *Iphigenia* :

I have chosen death : it is my own free choice,  
I have put cowardice away from me.  
Honour is mine, now. O mother, say I am right !  
Our country, our own Hellas, looks to me :  
On me the fleet hangs now, the doom of Troy,

Our women's honour through the years to come.  
 My death will save them, and my name be blest,  
 She who saved Hellas! Life is not so sweet  
 I should be craven. You who bore your child,  
 It was for Greece you bore her, not yourself.  
 Think! Thousands of our soldiers stand to arms,  
 They man the waiting ships, they are on fire  
 To serve their outraged country, die for Greece:  
 And is my one poor life to hinder all?  
 Could we defend that? Could we call it just?  
 No: take it, conquer Troy!—This shall be  
 My husband and my children and my fame.  
 Victory, mother, victory for the Greeks!  
 Barbarians must never rule this land,  
 Our own land! They are slaves, and we are free.

Aristophanes (446-385 B.C.), the comedian, was the arch-scoffer of the age that followed the death of Pericles when Athens was governed by Cleon the tanner, Eucrates the rope-maker, and Hyperbolus the lamp-maker. The travesty of democracy, that carried Athens from disaster to disaster, called forth from Aristophanes rollicking humour combined with a fantastic imagination and beautiful lyric poetry. In his the *Clouds*, the *Frogs*, the *Birds* and other plays we have entertaining cartoons of wonderful vivacity. The following contrast between the sturdy ideals of the Spartan youths and the emaciated Athenian Sophists will be read with peculiar interest by Indian students:—

If then you'll obey and do what I say  
 And follow with me the more excellent way,  
 Your chest shall be white, your skin shall be bright,  
 Your arms shall be tight, your tongue shall be slight,  
 And everything else shall be proper and right.  
 But if you pursue what men nowadays do,  
 You will have, to begin, a cold pallid skin,  
 Arms small and chest weak, tongue practised to speak,  
 Special laws very long, and the symptoms all strong  
 Which show that your life is licentious and wrong.

Turning to the historians of Hellas, we shall content ourselves with two examples, viz. Herodotus and Thucydides. Though the former has been described as the Father of History his writings are full of fanciful stories. He should be considered rather as the first great traveller who has left in writing a considerable body of information regarding the countries and peoples he visited or heard of which is useful to historians. He was born at Halicarnassus in Asia-Minor in 484 B.C. and died in 425 B.C. The object of his writing was 'that the great and wonderful deeds done by Greeks and Persians should not lack renown.' He called it 'history' which literally means 'inquiry.' But he candidly states, 'I am bound to report all that is said, but I am not bound to believe it.' His account of India may be cited as a sample :

'Other Indians dwell near the town of Caspatyrus (Kabul?), northward of the rest of India; they are of all Indians the most warlike, and it is they who are charged with the getting of the gold; for in these parts all is desert by reason of sand. There are found in this sandy desert ants (?) not so big as dogs but bigger than foxes; the Persian King has some of these, which have been caught there. These ants make their dwellings underground, digging out the sand in the same manner as do the ants in Greece, to which they are very like in shape, and the sand which they carry forth from the holes is full of gold. It is for this sand that the Indians set forth into the desert. They harness three camels apiece, a male led camel on either side to help in draught, and a female in the middle: the man himself rides on the female, careful that when harnessed she has been taken away from as young an offspring as may be. Their camels are as swift as horses, and much better able to bear burdens besides.

'Thus and with teams so harnessed the Indians ride after the gold, using all diligence that they shall be about the business of taking it when the heat is greatest; for the ants are then out of sight underground. Now in these parts the sun is hottest in



Herodotus and Thucydides  
They represented two views of History.  
For proper appreciation read pages 146-151.

the morning, not at midday as elsewhere, but from sunrise to the hour of market-closing. Through these hours it is hotter by much than in Hellas at noon, so that men are said to sprinkle themselves with water at this time. At midday the sun's heat is wellnigh the same in India and elsewhere. As it grows to afternoon, the sun of India has the power of the morning sun in other lands; with its sinking the day becomes ever cooler, till at sunset it is exceeding cold.

'So when the Indians come to the place with their sacks, they fill these with the sand and ride away back with all speed; for, as the Persians say, the ants forthwith scent them out and give chase, being, it would seem, so much swifter than all other creatures that if the Indians made not haste on their way while the ants are mustering, not one of them would escape. So they loose the male trace-camels that they led one at a time (these being slower than the females); the mares never tire, for they remember the young that they have left. Such is the tale.'

Of Thucydides Macaulay wrote with greater justification, "He is the greatest historian that ever lived." He was born in Athens about 471 B.C. and primarily wrote an account of the Peloponnesian War in which he personally fought. His history is of unique value both on account of its contemporary character, and also because Thucydides, though an active participant, writes with an impartiality that might indeed serve as a model to all historians. "He did not take his pen to celebrate," says Professor Bury; "his aim was to understand—to observe critically how the empire behaved in the struggle which was to test its powers." 'My history,' he himself prophetically wrote, 'is an everlasting possession, not a prize composition which is heard and forgotten.' He was not a mere chronicler, but a real and scientific historian: 'I have described nothing', Thucydides says, 'but what I either saw myself, or learned from others of whom I made the most careful and particular inquiry.' No greater praise could be bestowed upon so early a writer than that given by Professor Zimmern: "Let those who

deny that Thucydides was a sociologist. . . re-read his account of the evolution of Greek society from the earliest times to his own day. Let those who cry up anthropology examine into his treatment of legend and custom, and his power, untrained in Seminar or Institute, to use it as sociological evidence. Let the geographers. . . refresh their minds by recalling those brilliant sallies in geographical thinking, in which he explains some of the features of early Greek settlement and city-building. It is not only orthodox history, of the school of Ranke, of which Thucydides is the father and inspirer : there is not one of the many movements which have sought to broaden out historical study in recent years, from Buckle and Leplay and Vidal Lablache down to the psycho-analysts of our own day and of tomorrow, who will not find in Thucydides some gleaming anticipation along the path of their own thought."<sup>1</sup> Selection is difficult from such a versatile writer. But how much in advance of his times Thucydides was may be gathered from such wise observations as : 'I have remarked again and again that a democracy cannot manage an empire, but never more than now. . . You should remember that your empire is a despotism exercised over unwilling subjects, who are always conspiring against you ; they do not obey in return for any kindness which you do them to your own injury, but in so far as you are their masters ; they have no love of you, but they are held down by force. . . Dullness and modesty are a more useful combination than cleverness and licence ; and the more simple sort generally make better citizens than the more astute. For the latter desire to be thought wiser than the laws ; . . . whereas the others, mistrusting their own capacity, admit that the laws are wiser than them-

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1. Cited in *The Pageant of Greece*, pp. 201-2.



selves.' It is to be remembered that these admonitions came, not from a partisan demagogue, but from a patriotic citizen soldier of Athens who was anxious to see that the Athenians did not act 'contrary to our own better judgment.' No better testimony, apart from Thucydides' own services as a soldier, could be given than the memorable description of his city he put into the mouth of Pericles :

"Our government is not copied from those of our neighbours : we are an example to them rather than they to us. Our constitution is named a democracy, because it is in the hands of not the few but the many. But our laws secure equal justice for all in their private disputes, and our public opinion welcomes and honours talent in every branch of achievement, not for any sectional reason but on grounds of excellence alone. And as we give free play to all in our public life, so we carry the same spirit into our daily relations with one another... Open and friendly in our private intercourse, in our public acts we keep strictly within the control of law. We acknowledge the restraint of reverence ; we are obedient to those in authority, and to the laws, and more especially to those which offer protection to the oppressed and those unwritten ordinances whose transgression brings admitted shame. Yet ours is no workaday city only. No other provides so many recreations for the spirit—games and sacrifices all the year round, and beauty in our public buildings to cheer the heart and delight the eye day by day.

"Our military training too is different from our opponents. The gates of our city are flung open to the world. We practise no periodical deportations, nor do we prevent our visitors from observing or discovering what an enemy might usefully apply to his own purposes. For our trust is not in the devices of material equipment, but in our own good spirits for battle. So too with education. They toil from early boyhood in a laborious pursuit after courage, while we, free to live and wander as we please, march out none the less to face the selfsame dangers. Indeed, if we choose to face danger with an easy mind rather than after a rigorous training, and to trust rather in native manliness than in state-made courage, the advantage lies with

us... Here as elsewhere, then, the city sets an example which is deserving of admiration.

"We are lovers of beauty without extravagance, and lovers of wisdom without unmanliness. Wealth to us is not mere means for display but an opportunity for achievement; and poverty we think it no disgrace to acknowledge, but a real degradation to make no effort to overcome. Our citizens attend both to public and private duties, and do not allow absorption in their own various affairs to interfere with their knowledge of the city's. We differ from other states in regarding the man who holds aloof from public life not as 'quiet' but as useless; we decide or debate, carefully and in person, all matters of policy, holding, not that words and deeds go ill together, but that acts are foredoomed to failure when undertaken undiscussed. For we are noted for being at once most adventurous in action and most reflective beforehand... In a word I claim that our city as a whole is an education to Greece, and that her members yield to none, man by man, for independence of spirit, many-sidedness of attainment, and complete self-reliance in limbs and brain."

The war fever of Thucydides' days in Hellas is so well characterised by him, and in such universal terms, that it may be taken as a correct description of the situation in some parts of the world today: 'Revolution brought upon the cities of Hellas many terrible calamities, such as have been and always will be while human nature remains the same, but which are more or less aggravated and differ in character with every new combination of circumstances. In peace and prosperity both states and individuals are actuated by higher motives, because they do not fall under the dominion of imperious necessities; but war, which takes away the comfortable provision of daily life, is a hard master and tends to assimilate men's characters to their conditions. When troubles had once begun in the cities... the meaning of words had no longer the same relation to things, but was changed by them as they thought proper. Reckless

daring was held to be loyal courage ; prudent delay was the excuse of a coward ; moderation was the disguise of unmanly weakness ; ... Frantic energy was the true quality of a man. ... The seal of good faith was not divine law, but fellowship in crime. ... Any agreements sworn to by either party, when they could do nothing else, were binding as long as both were powerless. But he who on a favourable opportunity first took courage, and struck at his enemy when he saw him off his guard, ... congratulated himself that he had taken the safer course, and also that he had overreached his enemy and gained the prize of superior ability. ... Striving in every way to overcome each other, they committed the most monstrous crimes ; yet even these were surpassed by the magnitude of their revenges which they pursued to the very utmost, neither party observing any definite limits either of justice or public expediency. ... Thus revolution gave birth to every form of wickedness in Hellas. ... An attitude of perfidious antagonism everywhere prevailed ; for there was no word binding enough, nor oath terrible enough to reconcile enemies. Each man was strong only in the conviction that nothing was secure ; he must look to his own safety, and could not afford to trust others. ... when men are retaliating upon others, they are reckless of the future, and do not hesitate to annul those common laws of humanity to which every individual trusts for his own hope of deliverance should he ever be overtaken by calamity ; they forget that in their own hour of need they will look for them in vain.'

The greatest victim of the 'Age of Unreason' in Athens was Socrates (469-399 B.C.), deemed of all men of his time 'the wisest and justest and best' as Phædo described him. He was condemned to drink hemloc (poison) for 'corrupting the youth' of Athens, by which was meant that

he puzzled them out of their self-complacency and disturbed the 'sophists.' The sophists were teachers or professors who undertook to train young men in all matters, from shoemaking to war and metaphysics. It is said about one of them (Hippias) that 'He introduced into his discourses such subjects as geometry, astronomy, music and rhythm. He lectured too on painting and sculpture. At Sparta he spoke about the genealogy of heroes, about colonising, and about heroic deeds; for the Spartans, with their political ambitions, enjoyed such subjects. He went on more missions than any other Greek, representing his country, Elis, and in his speeches and lectures never belied his reputation. Indeed he made large sums of money and received the citizenship of many states great and small.' Though originally 'sophist' meant 'wise', now the word has a contemptuous meaning; for Plato denounced them as covetous pretenders who presumed to know many things only to make money. Perhaps this was partly due to their condemnation of Socrates, who was Plato's master. Socrates tore up their masks and showed to the people that they were not half so wise as they pretended. Socrates considered that knowledge was the road to virtue, and that true knowledge was 'self-knowledge'. He had begun life as a soldier, but lived as a philosopher, and died a martyr. "I would rather die having spoken after my manner," he said. "than speak in your manner and live."

Among the disciples of Socrates were Xenophon (434-354 B.C.) and Plato (427-347 B.C.). The former is chiefly remembered for his *Anabasis* in which he has described the celebrated 'Retreat of the Ten Thousand' (in 401 B.C.) referred to before. The latter is considered by Europeans the Father of Philosophy, even as his disciple, Aristotle (385-322 B.C.), is reckoned the Father of Science. Aristotle

was also the teacher of Alexander the Great. Plato wrote several *Dialogues* of which those entitled the *Republic* and the *Laws* are the most valuable. In them he has outlined an ideal society which, according to him, must be ruled by 'philosopher-kings': 'Until philosophers are kings, or the kings and rulers of this world have the spirit of philosophy, until political power and wisdom are united, until those commoner natures, who pursue either to the exclusion of the other, stand aside, states will never have rest from their evils—no, nor, I believe, will the human race; then only will this state of ours have a possibility of life and behold the light of day.'

Aristotle, though trained in Plato's idealist school—the *Academy* which endured during 800 years—, was himself a great realist. Plato was a poet-philosopher; Aristotle was a philosopher-scientist. The greatness of Plato lies in the loftiness of his vision; that of his disciple in his practical outlook and versatility. In the words of Mr. Livingstone, "Aristotle covers a field wider than the modern writer can command. He belongs to that finest and rarest type of human intellect in which the great humanist and the great man of science meet. On logic, moral philosophy, politics, metaphysics, psychology, physics, zoology (including embryology), poetry, the technique of speaking and writing, he wrote epochmaking works, which governed thought for more than a thousand years, some of which serve as textbooks to the present day. Neither before nor since has any human being covered so many fields of knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

The Greeks were essentially scientific in their outlook; they were more rational-minded than all other people before them. Hence their great achievements in the more

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

exact fields of knowledge. In this sense they were gifted with a mathematical genius. Even their idealistic philosopher, Plato, made no small contribution to the study of mathematics; while Pythagoras, Archimedes, Euclid and Diophantus are still considered the cornerstones of that subject. Much advance has certainly been made since, but the foundations of almost every branch of science are Greek. The psychology of this outlook may be illustrated by three quotations :

(1) 'The real philosopher is marked by the feeling of wonder, which is the only source of philosophy,' said Plato.

(2) 'Doubtless the contemplation of the heavenly bodies fills us with more delight than we get from the contemplation of lowly things; for the sun and stars are born not, neither do they decay but are eternal and divine,' declared Aristotle. 'But the heavens are high and far off, and of celestial things the knowledge that our senses give us is scanty and dim. On the other hand, the living creatures are nigh at hand, and of each and all of them we may gain ample and certain knowledge if we so desire. If a statue please us, shall not the living fill us with delight; all the more if in the spirit of philosophy we search for causes and recognise the evidences of design? Then will Nature's purpose and her deep-seated laws be everywhere revealed, all tending in her multitudinous work to one form or another of the Beautiful.'

(3) 'Nothing happens,' Leucippus noted, 'without a cause but everything for a reason and by necessity.'

It was this sense of wonder and the keen urge to understand the 'design' of Nature, through the investigation of the causes of things, that made the Greeks pioneer scientists. Though Aristotle is called the Father of Science he was by no means the earliest. Before him was Thales (c. 625 B.C.) of Miletus, chief of the Seven Wise Men of Ionia, and the first geometer of Greece. Then there was Pythagoras, at the close of the sixth century (530 B.C.), and Hip-

Pythagoras of Samos in Ionia, in the fifth century (460) B.C., to name only the greatest. Pythagoras is considered 'one of the most original figures in Greece and indeed in human history'. He was the first to maintain that the earth and the heavenly bodies are spherical in shape, and the first to give a scientific explanation of the different pitch of musical notes. To his school also we owe abstract mathematical concepts like point, line, surface, and magnitude, etc. He was, too, a believer in the transmigration of souls and the mystical theory of numbers.

Hippocrates was a great doctor. His surviving works are a wonderful record even for the medical profession of today. They contain model descriptions of cases and directions for surgical operations such as the preparation of the room, the management of light, the scrupulous cleanliness to be observed, the care and use of the instruments, the decencies to be observed, the general method of bandaging, the use and abuse of splints, the care of the patient, etc. The following remarkable observations of Hippocrates, regarding prognosis, diagnosis and clinical practice, are hard to be improved upon :—

'We form our opinion with regard to illness on our knowledge of the general character of all, and the particular character of each, on our knowledge of the complaint, the patient, the treatment applied, and the person applying it—for these have a favourable or unfavourable effect. We take into account climate in general, and the particular season and locality; the patient's habits, way of life, occupation and age; his words, ways, silence, thoughts, sleep or its absence, dreams (their character and occasion), picking, scratching, tears, paroxysms, discharges, sneezing, sickness. We note the number and character of the successive changes and developments of the illness towards a crisis or a fatal termination; we observe perspiration, coldness, rigor, cough, sneezing, hiccup, breathing, haemorrhage. These and their results are what we must bear in mind.'

The oath administered by Hippocrates to his pupils continues to be the gospel of the medical profession even to-day all over the world :

'I swear...I will follow that system of regimen which, according to my ability and judgment, I consider for the benefit of my patients, and abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous. I will give no deadly medicine to any one if asked, nor suggest any such counsel : nor will I aid a woman to produce abortion. With purity and holiness I will pass my life and practise my Art. Into whatever houses I enter, I will go there for the benefit of the sick, and will abstain from every act of mischief and corruption ; and above all from seduction...Whatever in my professional practice—or even not in connexion with it—I see or hear in the lives of men which ought not to be spoken of abroad. I will not divulge, deeming that on such matters we should be silent. While I keep this Oath unviolated, may it be granted me to enjoy life and the practice of the Art, always respected among men, but should I break or violate this Oath, may the reverse be my lot.'

In the course of a few pages of this little volume it is impossible to give more examples. But we cannot conclude this chapter without referring to some of the great men of science who followed Aristotle. They included among them Archimedes (287-212 B.C.) and Euclides (300 B.C.). Of the former's work in all branches of mathematics, Sir Thomas Heath, in his *History of Greek Mathematics*, has observed that it represents "a sum of mathematical achievement unsurpassed by any one man in the world's history." He invented, for instance, arithmetical terminology to express numbers up to one followed by 80,000 million million ciphers. In physics he discovered the way to determine specific gravity, as everyone knows, and was the inventor of the whole science of hydrostatics. About the *Elements* of Euclid it has been said that "No work presumably, except the *Bible*, has had such a reign ; and future



generations will come back to it again and again as they tire of the variegated substitutes for it and the confusion resulting from their bewildering multiplicity." Among mechanical inventions, the Alexandrian mathematician Heron (c. 1st Cent. A.D.) speaks of some eighty devices in his *Pneumatics*. They include among them an automatic machine for minting coins, a hydraulic organ, a self-trimming lamp, an odometer, mechanical birds that sing, a trumpet sounded by hydraulic means, and interesting anticipations of the steam and fire engines.<sup>1</sup>

In the days of the decline of Greece, after the death of Alexander the Great, the place of Athens as the School of Hellas was taken by Alexandria in Egypt. It possessed a wonderful library collected by the Ptolemies in the Royal Museum (or House of the Muses) which had its own lecture halls, exhibition rooms, and living quarters for the philosophers, scientists, and artists who resided in that institution. It is said that there were no less than half a million papyrus rolls in that Museum. They were cut into 'books' by Callimachus, its first librarian, who also prepared a catalogue, of both titles and authors, running into one hundred and twenty sections. That Library was unfortunately destroyed by fire during the days of Cæsar and Cleopatra (Oct. 48—June 47 B.C.).<sup>2</sup>

In this rapid sketch of Greek culture we have not spoken of Greek Art beyond making occasional references to it. The subject would demand a volume to itself; nor can it be adequately appreciated without vivid illustration. Yet Art was of the very essence of life to the Greeks. They had a passion for perfection. Truth, Beauty, Goodness were

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1. For details see *The Pageant of Greece*, pp. 434-6.

2. Breasted, *The Conquest of Civilization*, pp. 471 and 587.

for them synonymous. They tried to realise these in the individual, as well as in society. The harmonious cultivation of body, mind and soul was their ideal. For this they held their athletic competitions; for this they made endless experiments in political organisation; and for this they built up their Academy and the Lyceum. But the genius of the race found no better medium for self-expression than in sculpture, painting and architecture. "What the Greeks did," writes Sir Reginald Blomfield, "was to formulate a rhythmical architecture, in which each part stood in a definite and considered relation to the whole, so that even in their ruined state these Doric temples give an irresistible impression of a great idea, a great architectural epic, in which each detail, however beautiful, was subordinated to the unity of the conception as a whole." These remarks very well bring out the spirit of Greek art in general. As Professor Gardner has well said, "In the types of the gods which were produced when Greek Art was at its best we have a series of supermen and superwomen who represent the highest and best to which mortals can hope to attain, types embodying the highest perfection of body and mind. The influence of those types has gone on from century to century, never in the darkest ages wholly forgotten, and serving at all times to redeem human nature from foulness and degradation. All through the history of art they have been acting as a raising and purifying element."<sup>1</sup> The sincerity, patience and earnestness of the Greek artists may be illustrated by two examples: Protogenes, a Greek painter, spent seven years on a single figure, and he would have spent seven more if he had thought that thereby he could have improved it. "The idealism of the

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1. *The Legacy of Greece*, p. 360.

Greek artist," says Mr. Frank Rutter, "consisted in getting the very best he could from nature and putting it together in the most beautiful way. He always wanted models, and the more models he could get the greater were his resources for creating composite beauty. Thus we are told that when the painter Zeuxis was commissioned to paint a figure of Helen of Troy for the people at Croton, he made it a condition that he should have opportunities of studying the forms of the most beautiful maidens in the city. From the models offered him by the city, he selected five for more detailed study, and so great was the reverence for art in those days that the names of these five were handed down in honour to future generations by the historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus."

## CHAPTER TEN

### ROME AS REPUBLIC AND EMPIRE

While it was the Greek genius which, in its latter days, rose to conceptions of the unity of humanity, it was the Roman genius which translated those conceptions, . . . into an organized system of life.—EARNEST BARKER

The appeal of Roman history is of a different order from that of Greece or of any other country about which we have read so far. In a sense, Rome was the least original of the great centres of civilisation; she was, as Asquith described her, 'a great intermediary.' Or in the words of Nieburh, "As rivers flow into the sea, so does the history of all the nations known to have existed previously in the regions round the Mediterranean terminate in that of Rome." The first thing to be noted is that, more than in the case of Athens and Sparta, we speak of *Roman* civilisation instead of Italian. This is because, unlike Greece, wherein there were many centres of culture, in Italy during historic times there was no city equal in importance to Rome. We shall soon see how Rome was, more than a capital, the very soul of Italy. She began like Athens as a very small town (not more than five miles in extent in any direction) but ended by founding an empire which was the largest and best organised till then witnessed in the world. While the Greeks failed to unify themselves, on account of their fissiparous tendencies, Rome had a genius for organi-

sation. As Virgil sang :

Let others learn the courses of the stars,  
Map out the sky, or plead with subtle skill,  
Or mould us living faces from the marble :  
Thou, Roman, shalt remember how to rule,  
Lay down the laws of Peace, and teach her ways,  
Pardon the fallen, overthrow the proud.

The traditional date of the foundation of Rome by the half legendary Romulus and Remus is 753 B.C. But the real history of Rome must be commenced with her conversion into a republic in 509 B.C. Like Athens, Rome passed from monarchy to democracy through oligarchy, even as she did later from democracy to empire. And just as the Greeks were the inheritors of the earlier Aegean civilisation, so were the Romans the successors of the Etruscans whose culture about 1000 B.C. was as advanced as that of their contemporaries in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The Romans and their fellow Latins or Italians were Aryans like the Greeks and belonged to the same race as the Indo-Aryans and Iranians. Agriculture was their national occupation. "When our forefathers," wrote Cato later, "would praise a worthy man, they praised him as a good farmer and a good landlord ; and they believed that praise could go no further." Naturally they valued cattle as much as the Vedic Aryans did in India. Their standard of value was *pecus* (cattle) from which they called property *pecunia*, from which again we have the English word 'pecuniary' pertaining to wealth. The Roman gods were the western duplicates of the Greek and Vedic deities ; the greatest of them was *Jupiter* (the Greek *Zeus* and the Vedic *Dyauspitar*). Their social organisation was also a replica of the Greek and Vedic Aryans. It was patriarchal with the *paterfamilias* (head of the family) having powers of life

and death over all the members of the family. Politically Rome was a city-state to begin with. It gradually absorbed the surrounding townships and tribes. Rome of the Seven Hills secured dominion first over all Latium and then over all Italy; further it was led step by step to extend its power over Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica, Africa, Spain and Gaul in the West, and over Illyricum, Macedonia, Greece, Asia-Minor, and Syria in the East. "The time was to come when, one man being at the head of the State, all these countries and more were to be combined into one great Empire, in which all free inhabitants possessed equal rights of citizenship. But for a long time the peoples of the countries external to Italy remained in the position of conquered subjects, retaining indeed certain local freedom and in many cases even their native rulers, but being really subject to men of another race, who ruled and did not amalgamate with them." In this respect they anticipated the British.

The Roman Republic was transformed into an Empire when in 27 B.C. Cæsar Octavian became Princeps and Pontifex Maximus. It continued to flourish during the next two centuries until the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 A.D. Another three centuries passed before it was overthrown by the barbarians in 476 A.D., but during this latter period it was already in its decline owing to internal dissensions and other causes. Yet Rome had a full millennium to herself in which to develop her civilisation which was to leave its permanent legacy to the modern world. Before we can appraise this we must briefly survey her history.

As the native history of the Greeks began with the legends of Homer, so that of the Romans also commences with their legendary kings who were supposed to have been seven and ruled from 753-509 B.C. They were 'Romulus, the founder of Rome; Numa, the lawgiver; Tullus Hostilius and

Ancus Martius, both conquerors ; Tarquinius Priscus, the great builder ; Servius Tullius, the re-organiser of the government and second founder of the state ; and Tarquinius Superbus, the haughty tyrant whose oppressions led to the abolition by the people of the office of king.' During this royal period Rome was built, its surrounding marshes were drained and reclaimed to form the *Forum* or market-square with its Comitium or meeting place for the political assemblies of the people, and the original clans were re-organised for administrative and military purposes on a more rational basis. According to Roman tradition it was Servius Tullius who, like Solon and Cleisthenes in Athens, broke through the tangle of racial tribes and redistributed the people in artificial groups deriving their status from the wealth they possessed. The army too was re-organised in units of one hundred soldiers each, called *centuria*, and assembled on the Campus Martius (or Field of Mars) just outside the city-walls. The people were broadly divided into two classes, the aristocratic *Patricians* and the ordinary *Plebeians*. Their political distinction was like that between the Eupatridæ of Athens or the Spartiates of Sparta and the lesser Greek citizens. While the former formed the privileged order, the latter had only duties to perform with hardly any rights. But being admitted into the army, both the patricians and the plebeians combined together and overthrew the tyranny of the kings, in 509 B.C., about the same time that *tyranny* was brought to an end in Athens and the other cities of Greece.

To safeguard their liberty the Romans appointed two magistrates (like the Spartan kings) called at first *prætors* or leaders and then *consuls* or colleagues. They had equal authority and each could curb the other. They were accompanied by a bodyguard of twelve men who carried with

them a peculiar type of rods, called *fasces*, from which the modern "fascists" have derived their name. The *fasces* were symbols of authority and power. The consuls were elected and their term of office was only one year. If the state was faced with any serious danger or crisis they appointed a *Dictator* who had unrestricted power, but only for six months, like the "ordinance" rule of our governors. As in the case of the Athenian magistrates, though a Roman consul was immune from prosecution while in office, he could be tried when out of it for offences committed during his official term. Besides, there was a class of supervisors of the administration, known as the *Tribunes*, who could protect citizens against unjust treatment by the consuls.

At first the consuls were invested with all kinds of authority: they led the Roman armies, administered justice, and held charge of the public treasury. In course of time the last function was taken away from them and assigned to new officers called *Quæstors*. They were assisted by two *Censors* whose duty it was to keep lists of the citizens, to assess taxes, to determine the rights of voting, and to look after the daily conduct of the people. There was also a council of elders known as the *Senate* (from *senex* = old man) which was the "Witanagemot" of the Roman Kings. Under the Republic it played a more important part. Only the patricians were represented in it. None but a patrician could also be elected as consul or any other high official. The plebeians had a place only in the *Comitia Tributa*, or assembly of the tribes, which was presided over by the tribunes. This, together with the *Comitia Centuriata*, or the army assembly, even more than the Senate, became, in course of time, the real legislature of the Roman State. But the Senate continued to be a powerful cabinet of experienced statesmen who guided and controlled the



popular assemblies. In the words of Professor Breasted, the Roman Senators "formed the greatest council of rulers which ever grew up in the ancient world, or perhaps in in any age." But their aristocratic government plunged Rome for a time in civil strife which ended only in 450 B.C. with the publication of the "Laws of the Twelve Tables" and the assertion of equality between the patricians and the plebeians. In order to achieve this result the plebeians had to secede from Rome twice; once in 494 B.C. and again in 451 B.C. By a series of enactments the plebeians secured equality as legislators (449 B.C.), right of marriage with patricians (445 B.C.), right to appointment as consuls (444 B.C.), and as censors (443 B.C.). The charter of their liberties was guaranteed by the most solemn oaths. The tribunes, who were to be the permanent guardians of the plebeians, were to be elected by them, and their persons were to be sacrosanct. "Anyone interrupting a tribune in the discharge of his duties or doing him any violence was declared an outlaw whom anyone might kill. That the tribunes might be always easily found, they were not allowed to go more than one mile beyond the city walls. Their houses were to be open night and day, that any plebeian unjustly dealt with might flee thither for protection and refuge." Yet another, and the last, measure adopted for the "equalisation of the orders" was the Licinian Law of 367 B.C. After this the son of a plebeian peasant might hope to rise to the highest office to which a patrician nobleman could aspire. Thus invigorated with fresh blood the Republic of Rome entered upon a career of aggrandisement that soon made it the mistress of the western world.

The united Romans had two forces to contend with in Italy and two rivals to conquer outside. The former two were the Etruscans and the Latin tribes; the latter two

were the Greeks of Magna Graecia (Sicily and the heel and toe of Italy) and the Phœnicians of Carthage. After a ten years' siege (405-39 B.C.) the Romans captured Veii, the stronghold of the Etruscans, and made Etruria a part of their domain. The Latin tribes, being the kinsmen of the Romans by race, had been at first treated as "allies." But they were greatly dissatisfied with the inferiority which was attached to them by the Romans. Hence they revolted often at the instigation of the Etruscans. This led to a series of wars known as the Samnite Wars (340-290 B.C.). In the course of this struggle, all the continental enemies of the Romans, like the Etruscans, the Samnites and the Gauls, made common cause and organised a formidable league. But two terrible defeats, in 338 B.C. and 295 B.C., demonstrated to the world the growing strength of Rome. Thereafter the City of the Seven Hills became the capital of Italy. The Romans established their own colonies in the midst of the conquered people, thereby driving a wedge between them. They also treated the vanquished on different terms, so that they might not combine on account of common grievances. But the Italians were pacified by granting them social equality and allowing them to maintain their own armies, though they were denied other political rights and privileges.

The Greeks had settled on the coasts of southern Italy and the neighbouring islands long before Rome was founded. Among their colonies the most prosperous were Tarentum on the mainland and Syracuse on the island of Sicily. The strength of these settlements may be gauged from the fact that, in the year of Salamis (480 B.C.), the Syracusans had defeated the powerful Carthaginians in the Western Mediterranean. In the course of the Peloponnesian War Athens had also met with a disaster in her Syracusan ex-

pedition (413 B.C.). But with the consolidation of Italy under Roman leadership, the Greeks could not do much. In the days following the Hellenic conquests of Alexander the Great, their position in Italy was no longer tenable. Their effort to save themselves by calling in Pyrrhus of Epirus across the Adriatic proved futile (280-275 B.C.). Rome had triumphed over all since its foundation in 753 B.C. The whole of Italy was by now 'a kind of federation in which each city had its own alliance with the leading one, and no alliance with any other. Each had its own government and administered its own law, but placed all its military resources at the disposal of the Roman government. The fighting power of the future was to be Italy under Roman leadership, and all questions of foreign policy were decided by Rome alone. There was no general council of the whole confederacy. The Roman Senate controlled an ever-increasing mass of detailed and varied business, having to deal with Latins, Italians of the old stocks, Etruscans, Greeks and Gauls.'<sup>1</sup>

We must now turn to the epic struggle between Rome and Carthage for the mastery of the Western Mediterranean world. It lasted for over a century, from 264 to 146 B.C., and ended in the complete annihilation of the Phœnician power. It is represented in Roman history by the three Punic Wars: 264-241; 219-202; and 149-146 B.C. As the result of the first Punic War the Phœnicians were crippled at sea and Rome occupied the islands of Sicily, Corsica and Sardinia. But the Carthaginians were too strong to be dislodged from the Western Mediterranean. They tried to consolidate their position by occupying the Iberian peninsula and making that a base of operations against Rome. The

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1. W. Warde-Fowler, *Rome*, p. 53.

leaders of this great *coup* (the Second Punic War) were Hamilcar Barca, his son Hannibal, and son-in-law Hasdrubal. The first and the third lived only through the first phase of the struggle. Hannibal was destined to lead against Rome one of the most brilliant, though futile, military campaigns recorded in history. He took his army of about 100,000 men and some elephants via Spain and the southern coast of France, across the Alps, into Italy; won over the Gauls who were settled in the Po valley; surprised city and camp in the peninsula; and moving with lightning rapidity inflicted a series of defeats upon the Italian and Roman armies. The most disastrous of these was the battle of Cannæ (216 B.C.) where the Romans were butchered like the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat, and not a family was found in Rome but mourned for the death of some of its members. But the Romans did not despair. Thanks to the dash of one of their brave consul-generals, Claudius Nero, the shrewd strategy of another great commander, Scipio Africanus, and the "Fabian tactics" of a third general, Fabius, Hannibal, after twenty years' incessant fighting in a strange land seething with enemies, and himself cut off from all hopes of reinforcements, fell away again and again 'like a sea-wave spent and broken on a rocky shore.' Finally, Carthage itself being endangered by the valiant Scipio's attacks, the intrepid Phœnician was obliged to leave Italy to its fate and fly for the defence of his mother city. There he was defeated in 202 B.C., at the battle of Zama, and had to seek safety in exile. Carthage had to relinquish Spain to the conqueror, besides paying an indemnity of 10,000 talents (£2,400,000), and promising never to wage war against anyone without the permission of Rome. This last condition proved the hardest of all to fulfil, especially as Rome was determined to undo her foe even when fallen.

Though Carthage recovered her commercial prosperity in the course of the next fifty years, Rome unchivalrously provoked the Numidians to attack the Phœnicians, and when Carthage tried to defend herself, charged her with waging war without the permission of Rome. Under this pretext the perfidious Romans once more attacked the helpless Carthaginians, razed their city to the ground and, to confirm its annihilation, ploughed the ruins, and pronounced a curse against its revival, as the Mughals did later at Chitor. This was the Third Punic War (149-146 B.C.). Imperious Rome had already set her hands on universal dominion as we shall presently see. In the view of the Imperial historians there was nothing to regret in the destruction of Carthage. The pathetic tale is vividly recounted by Winwood Reade in *The Martyrdom of Man* wherein we are told

“The fall of the Carthaginian empire is not a matter for regret. Outside the walls of the city existed hopeless slavery on the part of the subject, shameless extortion on the part of the officials. Throughout Africa Carthage was never named without a curse. In the time of the mercenary war, the Moorish women, taking oath to keep nothing back, stripped off their gold ornaments and brought them all to the men who were resisting their oppressors. That city, that Carthage, fed like a vulture upon the land. A corrupt and grasping aristocracy, a corrupt and grasping populace, divided between them the prey. The Carthaginian customs were barbarous in the extreme. When a battle had been won they sacrificed their handsomest prisoners to the gods; when a battle had been lost the children of their noblest families were cast into the furnace. Their Asiatic character was strongly marked. They were a people false and sweet-worded, effeminate and cruel, tyrannical and servile, devout and licentious, merciless in triumph, faint-hearted in danger, divinely heroic in despair.”

Consequently the coast where Carthage stood became a browsing ground for cattle, a field of blood. Julius Cæsar later founded a New Carthage, but not on the accursed spot,



THE ROMAN EMPIRE

had already been subjugated in the course of the Punic Wars (154-133 B.C.). Likewise, Cis-Alpine Gaul, in the North, was made into a Roman province, about 81 B.C.; and about the middle of the first century (58-50) B.C. Julius Cæsar carried on his famous campaigns in the north as far as Britain. Thus, by the beginning of the Christian era, when Rome developed into an Empire, she was already mistress of the Mediterranean world from Spain in the West to the Euphrates in the East, and from the Sahara in the South to Britain in the North, her north-eastern boundary running along the Rhine-Danube line. This vast Empire endured in prosperity until Rome herself was overwhelmed by the barbarians after the death of Marcus Aurelius, the last of the great emperors. Between 200 and 250 A.D. that Empire was already tottering. Constantinople, which was to be the seat of the Eastern Empire, was founded in 330 A.D. The Western Empire practically came to an end when a barbarian kingdom was set up in Italy itself, in 476 A.D. By 500 A.D. Gothic kingdoms were established in Spain and Italy, a Vandal kingdom arose in Africa, a Frankish kingdom in Gaul, and a Saxon kingdom in Britain. With this brief summary of the external history of Rome, we must now turn to her more instructive internal life.

The reactions of the brilliant and extensive conquests of the Romans proved fateful for their future. They created problems difficult of solution both internally and externally. The conquered provinces of the far-flung Empire were entrusted to military governors with armies of tax-gatherers who batten on their enormous spoils and corrupted the entire imperial organisation. Although they carried Roman civilisation to distant parts of Europe (as Britain for example), constructed roads, built bridges, baths and villas, the selfishness of adventurous and ambitious generals made

*Roman* a byword for venality and a term of reproach. "O venal city," cried Juggurtha, King of Numidia, "thou wouldst sell thyself if thou couldst find a purchaser." The Empire became a huge farm for breeding slaves and feeding idle and luxurious Romans. This made the Romans both selfish parasites and callous brutes. They at first denied to others the rights and privileges enjoyed by the citizens living within the imperial capital. But the revolt of the Italian cities, known as the Social War (91-89 B.C.), compelled the Romans to extend full citizenship, at any rate in theory, to all the Italians. However, in practice, the active exercise of the vote and other privileges remained a monopoly of those who lived in Rome, for the Romans never conceived of representative government despite their republicanism. This resulted in great inequalities, and power and wealth accumulated in the hands of a few, while the many remained impotent and discontented. In the second century B.C. two noble Romans, Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus (who were brothers) attempted to reform this system by redistributing wealth, but they had to die as martyrs for all their efforts to reduce inequalities. When Tiberius was elected tribune, in 133 B.C., he told the people, "The beasts that prowl about Italy have holes and lurking places, where they may make their beds. You who fight and die for Italy enjoy only the blessings of air and light. You fight and die to give wealth and luxury to others. You are called the masters of the world; yet there is no clod of earth that you can call your own." He proposed to redistribute the public lands among the "have nots" and thus incurred the enmity of the "haves." When he attempted to get himself re-elected in order to enable him to give effect to his reforms, he was slain by the Senators who heartily hated him. His brother Gaius, elected tri-



bune in 123 B.C., tried to walk in his footsteps and met with the same fate. In their anxiety to help the poor the Gracchi had instituted an evil practice that was to cost the Romans dear before long. Bread was to be made available to the poor people in Rome at less than the market price. But soon this turned out to be an instrument of corruption in the hands of unscrupulous rivals contending for power. Finally, free distribution of bread at public cost became a bait for catching votes. Other soul-destroying entertainments were added when bread alone proved insufficient to enlist the support of the parasites. Such was the ultimate demoralisation that the ancient struggle between the patricians and plebeians was renewed in a new form in which the issues were decided by the naked sword and other inhumanities. Military commanders took the place of statesmen and reformers and Rome was plunged into the most brutal civil strifes. Matters, indeed, were carried to excess when Marius and Sulla (87-82 B.C.) tried to exorcise each other with their huge armies inebriated with victories in the provinces. Both were great generals, and both tried to "proscribe" the supporters and sympathisers of the other, which meant a war of mutual extermination and the institution of a "reign of terror" worse than France was to experience during the Revolution.

Such a state of chaos in the capital of the Empire was bound to have far-reaching reactions. One of the entertainments to which the Romans had got accustomed during these bloody days was the brutal contests of the *gladiators*, or armed men fighting each other to death. Thus thousands of people, especially slaves, criminals and desperadoes, came to be 'butchered to make a Roman holiday.' When they were wounded and disabled their half-living bodies were dragged to a corner of the arena by

means of long iron hooks to make room for others. Special schools were established to train gladiators and slaves were compelled to prepare themselves for the holocausts. This tyranny became so tantalising to the victims that 150,000 of the slaves and other malcontents rose in revolt (War of the Gladiators, 73-71 B.C.). But such was the military might of Rome that their insurrection was crushed, though it took three years of hard fighting to do so.

Another notorious example of the demoralising effects of the Roman imbroglio was the tyranny of Verres, the governor of Sicily in 70 B.C. For three years he plundered and ravaged the island with impunity, sold all the offices in his giving, confiscated all *objects d'art* for which he had a special liking, and had the temerity to confess that two-thirds of his loot was intended to purchase the judges and lawyers in Rome if he was unable to escape impeachment otherwise. But thanks to the brilliant oratory of Cicero (the Demosthenes of Italy) Verres had finally to seek safety in exile. It is difficult to omit the following sample from the prosecution :—

“ I come now to what Verres himself calls his passion ; what his friends call his disease, his madness ; what the Sicilians call his rapine ; what I am to call it, I know not . . . First of all, O judges, suffer me to make you acquainted with the description of this conduct of his ; and then, perhaps, you will not be very much puzzled to know by what name to call it. I say that in all Sicily, in all that wealthy and ancient province, . . . of such exceeding riches, there was no silver vessel, no Corinthian or Delian plate, no jewel or pearl, nothing made of gold or ivory, no statue of marble or brass or ivory, no picture whether painted or embroidered, that he did not seek out, that he did not inspect, that, if he liked it, he did not take away . . . I will say that he has left nothing in anyone's house, nothing even in the towns, nothing in public places, not even in the temples, nothing in the possession of any Sicilian, nothing in the possession

of any Roman citizen ; that he has left nothing, in short, which either came before his eyes or was suggested to his mind, whether private property or public, or profane or sacred, in all Sicily . . . . Oh, for the good faith of gods and men ! What is the meaning of all this ? What a cause is this ! What impudence is this ! ”

The impudence of acquisitive cupidity was not confined to Roman officers like Verres, however. The pirates of the Mediterranean took the fullest advantage of the dereliction of those in authority. After the destruction of Carthaginian power in the Western and the Hellenistic power in the Eastern Mediterranean, Rome was too much engrossed in her internal squabbles to keep the turbulent elements she had let loose under proper control. In these circumstances piracy became rampant all over the Mediterranean world. Corsairs infested the high sea and ravaged the shores as well. But a young aristocratic general soon arose in Pompey who, being invested with dictatorial powers over the Mediterranean and all its coasts up to fifty miles in the interior, succeeded in the course of three strenuous years (67-64 B.C.) in completely stamping out piracy everywhere. Pompey followed up this success by overthrowing the Greek general Mithradates who had thrown out in the East as great a challenge to Roman supremacy as Hannibal had done before in the South. But while Roman armies were thus busy abroad, a great conspiracy was hatched at home by a desperate citizen named Catiline who tried to seize power by murdering the consuls and senators and plundering the city. Once again the great orator Cicero arraigned the traitor before the Senate and the latter was slain in the course of a desperate struggle in Etruria (62 B.C.).

It is clear from the above narrative that things were moving fast in the history of Rome,—in fact too fast for the old constitution to grapple with. What with internal and

external troubles and dangers it was becoming more and more plain that only a strong Dictatorship could save the situation. This came in the shape of the so-called First Triumvirate of Cæsar, Crassus, and Pompey (60 B.C.). At first this combination derived strength from the genius of Cæsar, the wealth of Crassus, and the reputation of Pompey. But they did not hold together for long. The old story of the deadly rivalry of Marius and Sulla threatened to repeat, especially between Cæsar and Pompey. We have before referred to the extension of the Roman Empire in the North and in the East. When Cæsar returned from his great victories over the Gauls, Cicero declared with utmost animation, "Let the Alps sink; the gods raised them to shelter Italy from the barbarians; they are now no longer needed." But events were to prove that not even the Alps could prevent the barbarians from pouring into Italy once her Cæsars fell or were rendered impotent. Meanwhile Rome and Italy passed through some of the most momentous events recorded in history.

When Cæsar crossed the Rubicon the die was cast, not only for Cæsar, but also for Rome. The battle of Pharsalus in Thessaly (48 B.C.) between the two rivals bestowed the laurels on Cæsar. "Vini vidi, vici" (I came, I saw, I conquered) was literally true of Cæsar's triumphs everywhere except against Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, who ensnared him during the greater part of the year following Pharsalus (47 B.C.). Cæsar was now virtually the uncrowned king of the Roman dominions. The Senate made him perpetual Dictator in 44 B.C. and conferred on him the powers of censor, consul, and tribune, with the titles of Pontifex Maximus and Imperator. Coins were struck in his name and with his effigy. His statue was placed along with those of the seven kings of early Rome, though thrice the royal

crown was offered him and thrice he refused to wear it. The reason for this was that "Cæsar had been from his youth associated with the Popular party, and had been early familiarised with the idea of realising democratic ideas by the autocratic rule of a popular leader such as Marius and Cinna had been. The inversion of the constitution by which a supreme Senate ruled confronted him as them, and the innovation of Cæsar was not the inauguration but the crystallisation and legalisation of a supreme personal authority, to which the Senate should act in its original relation of adviser at request. That this was Cæsar's aim can hardly be doubted, whatever the name one may give to the new position he created."<sup>1</sup>

We have not the space here to describe or discuss the great and versatile abilities of Julius Cæsar. "He was a man of consummate and many-sided genius, almost equally great as soldier, administrator, legislator, politician and man of letters." But Rome appears to have been too jealous of her benefactors and saviours to allow them to live and serve for long. So Cæsar was murdered, like the brothers Gracchi, in the midst of his great work on the 15th March 44 B.C. by a band of misguided republicans. No better appreciation of the man and his work can be given than the following from Mommsen :—

"A thorough realist, he never allowed the images of the past or venerable tradition to disturb him; with him nothing was of value in politics but the living present and the law of reason . . . . A born ruler, he governed the minds of men as the wind drives the clouds, and compelled the most heterogeneous natures to place themselves at his service . . . . His talent for organisation was marvellous . . . . He was monarch: but he never

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1. H. Hardinge, *Julius Cæsar: Soldier, Statesman, Emperor*, p. 79.

played the king. Even when absolute lord of Rome, he retained the deportment of the party leader ; perfectly pliant and smooth ; easy and charming in conversation, complaisant towards every one, it seemed as if he wished to be nothing but the first among his peers . . . . He is perhaps the only one among the mighty men of the earth, who in great matters and little never acted according to inclination or caprice, but always without exception according to his duty as ruler, and who, when he looked back on his life, found doubtless erroneous calculations to deplore, but no false step of passion to regret . . . . He is, in fine, perhaps the only one of those mighty men who have preserved to the end of his career the statesman's tact of discriminating between the possible and the impossible, and has not broken down in the task which for nobly gifted natures is the most difficult of all—the task of recognising, when on the pinnacle of success, its natural limits . . . Such was this unique man, whom it seems easy and yet is so infinitely difficult to describe . . . . The secret lies in its perfection. In his character as a man as well as in his place in history, Cæsar occupies a position where the great contrasts of existence meet and balance each other. Of the mightiest creative power and yet at the same time of the most penetrating judgment ; no longer a youth and not yet an old man ; of the highest energy of will and the highest capacity of execution ; filled with republican ideals and at the same time born to be a king ; a Roman in the deepest essence of his nature, and yet called to reconcile and combine in himself as well as in the outer world the Roman and the Hellenic types of culture—Cæsar was the entire and perfect man . . . . Thus he worked and created as never any mortal did before or after him ; and as a worker and creator he still after wellnigh two thousand years, lives in the memory of the nations—the first, and the unique, Imperator Cæsar."

The assassination of Julius Cæsar inaugurated a fresh struggle between his supporters and enemies, and it seemed for a time that Rome was ever to be the victim of rival generals. A Second Triumvirate was formed by Cæsar's step-son Octavian, and his two other officers, Antony and Lepidus. In 42 B.C. they overthrew Brutus and Cassius.

the murderers of Julius Cæsar, in the battle of Philippi. But the victors could not agree among themselves. Though for a while Antony and Octavian divided between themselves the eastern and western dominions of Rome, no lasting settlement could be reached without the triumph of the strongest. The battle of Actium, in 31 B.C., finally declared in favour of Octavian. Antony, like Julius Cæsar, fell a prey to the wiles of Cleopatra, and, in the words of Shakespeare, 'That triple pillar of the world' was 'transformed into a strumpet's fool.' Unable to bear the triumph of their enemy, like Brutus and Cassius before them, Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide. Octavian thereafter became the sole master of the Roman world. He assumed the name of his great uncle, Cæsar, and the titles of *Princeps* (first among equals) and *Imperator* (Sovereign), and the Senate conferred upon him the additional distinction of being called *Augustus* (the auspicious)—the name by which he came to be most familiarly known. With him began the real Roman *Empire* as distinguished from the Roman *Republic*. Augustus ruled as Emperor from 31 B.C. to 14 A.D., and his reign became one of the most glorious epochs in World History. Before proceeding to assess its contributions to civilisation, however, we must briefly describe the rest of the imperial history of Rome.

The Roman Empire endured for about five hundred years before it was overthrown by the barbarians (476 A.D.). But it was already divided into the Eastern and Western Empires in 364 A.D. and had ceased to be glorious after the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 A.D. There was a fitful revival under Diocletian in 284 A.D. when the Principate established by Augustus was converted into a genuine monarchy. But the forces of disruption were so great that even Diocletian was obliged to abdicate in 305 A.D. Indeed with-

in a few months of Diocletian's abdication there were no less than six rival emperors contending for supremacy, until the great Constantine emerged out of the chaos, in 323 A.D. Apart from political and civic strife, the long period, during which the Empire was a-dying, had been marked as well by the rise and persecution of Christianity. At last in 330 A.D. Constantine made peace with the Church, adopted a tolerant policy towards Christianity and founded a "New Rome" at Byzantium and christened it Constantinople.

The greatest of the Emperors were Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, Antonius Pius, Marcus Aurelius, Diocletian, and Constantine. It is not necessary for our purposes to deal with them individually. Collectively they represented a system. There was little extension of territory beyond the limits indicated earlier in this chapter. But of consolidation and better organisation of power there was much in successive reigns. Little by little the authority of the Emperor tended to become absolute. Augustus had thought it prudent to couch his authority in republican forms. Under him the Assembly still elected the magistrates, though in fact no one could hold office without the Emperor's approval; the Senate still discussed, though the Emperor's voice was decisive in clinching matters; the magistrates continued to act, but according as the Emperor directed them. With the lapse of time, however, even outward forms more and more came into line with actual reality. A regularly graded Civil Service dependent upon the will of the Emperor took the place of the elected magistracy. The Senate was practically superseded by a Privy Council of great officials. From top to bottom the government of the Empire was entirely carried on by one man with the help of a dependent bureaucracy. Under such a system a certain uniformity prevailed all over the Empire. Law, taxation, and citizenship tended to be



the same everywhere. Before the days of her decline commenced, that is during the first two centuries of her imperial history, Rome rendered the most conspicuous services to human civilisation. In the words of Professor Hearnshaw : " She established a world-peace ; she linked her vast dominions together by a network of splendid roads ; she maintained an unparalleled system of law and justice ; she developed an extensive commerce ; she erected in all her provinces magnificent public works ; she preserved the culture of the Hellenic East ; she educated the barbarians of the Celtic West. The subject peoples accepted her beneficent rule with gratitude, rejoiced in the tranquillity and security which she bestowed, and came to regard Roman citizenship and imperial office as the supreme goal of their ambition. Following the example of Alexander, she broke down the barriers of race and religion which hitherto had divided men ; fused Greek and barbarian into a single polity ; brought East and West together, and impressed upon the civilised world a consciousness of unity which even to the present day has never been wholly lost."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *A First Book of World History*, p. 102.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE LEGACY OF ROME

Alike in literature, in art, in philosophy, and in religion, Rome built the bridge over which many of the best thoughts and the finest models of antiquity found their way into the Medieval and thence into the Modern World.—H. H. ASQUITH

In the rapid sketch presented in the previous chapter we concentrated on giving a fair idea of the rise and growth of Rome as a *republic* and as an *empire*. Though a distinction is often made by historians between the two, really Rome was an Empire while yet she was a Republic. But imperialism and republicanism could go ill together and she had gradually to give up the latter for the sake of the former. How this came about more markedly after the death of Julius Cæsar we have already witnessed. From Augustus to Diocletian was a process of transformation in which the Roman Republic became the Roman Empire. Another feature in this, which is worthy of notice, is the development of a city-state into a vast dominion. Athens had made an attempt in that direction, but failed. The success of Rome is to be explained with reference to the character of the Romans. In this chapter we shall make a closer study of those people and their civilisation.

The Romans were unlike the Greeks in most respects. But though they lacked the versatility of the Hellenes, they had a genius for construction and organisation. Hence they

were content to develop such virtues as were useful in building up a great society, and for the rest borrowed from their more gifted neighbours. In art, science, philosophy, the Romans made few contributions of any distinctive merit; but in law, military organisation, government of different peoples, and other practical matters there have been few to equal them. Consequently, we shall find that the Romans, though lacking in intellectual and imaginative faculties, particularly in that grace which lends charm to life, made their own contributions to civilisation as men of action. Mr. H. G. Wells is a little too uncharitable to them (his lack of sympathy being born of his socialistic bias) when he roundly declares, "The reputation of Rome has flourished through the prosperity of her heirs. The tradition of Rome looms far greater than the reality." 'The defects of any people should not blind us to their virtues. 'The evil that men do lives long after them; and the good is oft interred with their bones.' But the duty of the historian is to present both aspects in their true proportions.

The transformation of the Republic, or rather the City-State, into the Empire of Rome, indeed, shares this double character. In its capacity to outgrow itself the City of the Seven Hills revealed its greatness; in its inability to preserve its democratic constitution, while Rome expanded into an empire, the republic betrayed its limitations. In the gradual extension of Roman citizenship to the non-Roman Italians at first, and then to the non-Italian provincials, irrespective of race, the Romans proved their essential statesmanship; but, in the perpetuation of slavery and their incapacity to prevent the tyranny of the rich over the poor, they were no more successful than most other people including the modern. In creating the conditions which made *Pax Romana* almost universal over their world the Romans

gave us the first lessons in efficient imperial organisation ; while in their failure to make those conditions secure for all time, they demonstrated the inherent weaknesses of dynastic rule. Thus the Romans were both an example to be copied and a warning to be noted by future imitators. Good emperors and bad succeeded each other at Rome with almost the sequence of day and night ; but with one marked tendency, namely, that as winter approached the nights became longer.

We acquainted ourselves a little, in the last chapter, with the long summer days of the Augustan Principate. Here we shall note the character of the longer winter nights of the evil rule of some of the worst emperors as well. The glory of the reign of Octavian, with its many-sided achievements, was hardly shared by the other emperors who followed. During the first half-century of the Principate flourished the Golden Age of Latin literature. Under the patronage of Augustus and his great minister Maecenas lived Virgil, the Homer of Italy, who composed the immortal *Aeneid*, Horace who wrote his famous odes, Livy his inimitable history, and Ovid his charming *Metamorphoses*. In architecture, Augustus found Rome brick and left it marble. He built temples, theatres, baths and aqueducts some of which have survived to this day. But the greatest event of his reign, though unnoticed at the moment, was the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. The glory of this obscure child was soon to eclipse all the grandeur of all the Roman emperors for all time. But for the nonce, during the three hundred years after Augustus (14 B.C. to 213 A.D.) Emperor worship was supreme, and the followers of Jesus had to suffer continued persecution. This dark tale began with the crucifixion of Jesus himself by order of the Roman governor Pontius Pilate in the Roman province of

Judaea, in the reign of Tiberius, the adopted son and successor of Augustus (14-37 A.D.). This is not the place to dwell upon the personal history of Christ, as Jesus came to be called after his martyrdom at Calvary. He was born in the year 4 B.C. on 25th December which day is still being celebrated every year by Christians all over the world to commemorate the birth of the Son of God. He was executed in his thirty-third year on a Friday which is now annually celebrated as Good Friday. To this we need here add no more than the fact that while both Pilate and Tiberius are hardly known to any but the readers of Roman history, Christ is not merely remembered but worshipped by millions to this day in various parts of the world.

Tiberius was followed by even worse successors,—perhaps worse men have not been rulers anywhere. Caligula (37-41 A.D.) was depraved to the point of insanity. Claudius (41-54 A.D.), his successor, was great as a ruler, though he was personally subject to the rule of wicked women and was finally murdered by his own wife, Agrippina, the mother of the notorious Nero. He is remembered for his conquest of Britain and the admission of Gallic nobles to the Roman Senate and other high offices. In defence of his generous policy towards the provincials he asked, "What other cause was there of the downfall of Sparta and of Athens, states once powerful in arms, save this,—that they closed their gates against the conquered as aliens?"

The less said about Nero (54-68 A.D.) the better. In spite of having for his tutor a philosopher like Seneca, he turned out to be the vilest of tyrants. He murdered both his mother, Agrippina, and his tutor, Seneca, and finally himself committed suicide. But before doing this he lighted his gardens with live human beings for candles, and setting fire to his own capital city, fiddled in evident pleasure over the

bonfires singing a song of his own composition entitled the *Sack of Troy*.

“The day shall be when holy Troy shall fall  
And Priam, lord of spears, and Priam’s folk.”

(*Iliad*, vi. 448.)

Nero was the last of the Julian emperors, so named after Julius Cæsar. After a short interlude of inglorious emperors, followed the Flavian Age (69-96 A.D.), during which Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus, son of Vespasian. More than a million Jews are said to have perished in this destruction. The reign of Titus (79-81 A.D.) was marked by the eruption of the Vesuvius resulting in the destruction of the famous cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum. Pliny the naturalist lost his life here. Recent excavations have revealed the wonderful treasures buried under lava and ashes nearly 1800 years ago. We have two remarkable letters extant, written by a nephew of Tacitus, and still another by the younger Pliny, containing graphic accounts of eye-witnesses to the calamity.<sup>1</sup> The debris, being now cleared, has yielded to the archæologist whole villas, amphitheatres, paintings, and sculptures in a marvellous state of preservation. Professor Amedeo Maiuri, carrying on the work for Sr. Mussolini’s government, discovered at Herculaneum, in May 1927, many a building with “the objects and household utensils that form the natural equipment of a dwelling. In this way, a cupboard in a humble room still has on its shelves the modest domestic vessels which used to be kept in it, and the platter with a few dates and a few nuts which a careful housewife had put on one side for the frugal meal of the next day; in the shade of an *atrium* there is still standing the portrait-bust of the owner of the dwelling;

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1. See *Wonders of the Past*, I, 352-71.

in the *tabernae* and in the storage *cellae* are still the remains of goods unsold or unconsumed—grain, barley, lentils, beans, bread and biscuits.”<sup>1</sup> The layer of mud, lava and ashes varied from 39 to 92 feet in depth.

Titus was followed by Domitian (81-96 A.D.) whose reign was marked by ‘the second persecution of the Christians’, the first having taken place under Nero. Domitian was so detested for his wickedness that the Senate ordered his infamous name to be erased from the public monuments. Then came the Five Good Emperors,—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the two Antonines, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius (96-180 A.D.). Of these, Trajan, who was a Spaniard, is remembered for his conquests of Dacia (Roumania), Armenia, Assyria and Mesopotamia. Under him the Roman Empire extended to its widest reach, and enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity that lasted till the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 A.D. Hadrian spent more than fifteen years of his reign in making tours of inspection in all parts of the Empire, particularly fixing and fortifying its frontiers. The massive wall that he built in North Britain (between the firths of the Tyne and the Solway) to keep off the Picts and Scots, still forms an imposing landmark in that country. The last dispersion of the unfortunate Jews from Jerusalem also took place in the time of Hadrian (135 A.D.). More than half a million of ‘the chosen people of the God of Israel’ perished in the struggle and the survivors were driven into exile. The reign of the two Antonines (138-180 A.D.) was felt to be too short on account of its happiness and prosperity. If there was fighting and pestilence it was confined to the northern and eastern frontiers. Indeed, as Myers writes,

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1. *Ibid.*, II, 787-93.

"It is probably true that, embracing in a single view all the countries included in the Roman Empire, the second century of the Christian era marks the happiest period in their history.... The cities of the Eastern countries, as well as hundreds of similar communities in Spain, in Gaul, in Britain, and in other lands of the West, were enjoying, under the admirable municipal system developed by the Romans, a measure of local self-government probably equal to that enjoyed today by the municipalities of the most advanced of the countries of modern Europe. This wise system had preserved or developed the sentiment of local patriotism and civic pride. The cities vied with one another in the erection of theatres, amphitheatres, baths, temples, and triumphal arches, and in the construction of aqueducts, bridges, and other works of a utilitarian nature. In these undertakings they were aided not only by liberal contributions made by the emperors from the imperial treasury but by the generous gifts and bequests of individual citizens.... Scores of majestic ruins scattered throughout the lands once forming the ancient Empire of Rome bear impressive testimony not only as to the populousness, culture, and enterprise of the urban communities of the Roman dominions but also as to the generally wise, fostering and beneficent character of the earlier imperial rule."

After Aurelius, the Empire fell on evil days. The emperors became more and more dependent on the rabble and the army. For nearly a century after Commodus (192-284 A.D.) they were chosen by the military and are hence described as the "Barrack Emperors." The army went even to the extent of offering the Empire to the highest bidder. We need not follow the dark annals through all their records of crime and shame. Out of this turmoil only three names are worthy of being rescued; they are Caracalla, Diocletian, and Constantine. The first (211-217 A.D.) for granting full Roman citizenship to all freemen in the Empire; the second (284-305 A.D.) for making one last and heroic effort

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1. *General History*, pp. 291-93.



to save the Empire by converting it into an absolute monarchy ; and the third (306-337 A.D.) for terminating the era of persecuting the Christians by giving them state recognition and himself becoming the first imperial convert to the Cross.

Here it is convenient to say a few words about the persecution of the Christians in the Roman Empire. The original religion of the Romans was a sort of nature and spirit worship, especially the spirits of the ancestors. They looked upon *Jupiter* as the special protector of Rome, upon *Juno* as the guardian of women, upon *Minerva* as the goddess of wisdom, and upon *Mars* as their favourite god of war. They also worshipped household deities like *Vesta*, the goddess of the hearth, and *Lares* or spirits of the ancestors. In course of time they admitted Eastern gods and goddesses, like *Mithra* and *Isis*, into their pantheon. Religious matters were managed by a college of pontiffs of whom the head was the *Pontifex Maximus*. This office was later conferred upon the Emperors who misused their power to institute Emperor-worship as the national religion. The Jews, who believed in 'the one and only God,' were peculiarly opposed to this Roman faith ; hence their persecution. Christianity being born among the Jews also came to share their fate. But in an Empire where many suffered on account of the oppression of the richer classes the new teachings of Christ found a ready appeal, and consequently spread rapidly. This alarmed the Roman governors who looked upon the novel creed as a "contagious superstition that had seized not cities only but the lesser towns also, and the open country," as Pliny reported. The considerate Emperor, Trajan, from whom Pliny sought a declaration of policy towards the Christians sent him the following advice :—

"You have adopted the right course in investigating the

charges made against the Christians who were brought before you. It is not possible to lay down any general rule for all such cases. Do not go out of your way to look for them. If they are brought before you and the offence is proved you must punish them, but with this restriction, that when the person denies that he is a Christian, and shall make it evident that he is not by invoking the gods, he is to be pardoned, notwithstanding any former suspicion against him. Anonymous informations ought not to be received in any sort of prosecution. It is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and is quite foreign to the spirit of our age."

But not all Emperors were so lenient towards the Christians as Trajan was. They were persecuted even by the philosopher Emperor Marcus Aurelius. While they suffered most perhaps under wicked Emperors like Nero, Tacitus has the following illuminating commentary upon the state of affairs :—

"The emperor inflicted the most exquisite tortures on these men, who under the vulgar appellation of Christian, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked; but again it burst forth, and not only spread itself over Judaea, the first seat of the mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confession of those who were seized, discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city (of which they had been accused by Nero) as for their hatred of humankind. They died in torment, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses, others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were chosen for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse race and honoured

with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress and attitude of a charioteer. The guilt of the Christians deserved indeed the most exemplary punishment, but the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration from the opinion that these unhappy wretches were sacrificed not so much to the public welfare as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant."

The Romans were at all times 'Pagans suckled in a creed outworn'. 'Getting and spending' they 'laid waste their powers'. Though 'virtue' is a Roman word, the Romans were no less sinful than the 'Oriental Carthaginians' against whom they sinned. In their best days their ideal in life was *vir fortis et strenuus*—a man of strong courage and active energy; at their worst they were both brutal and effeminate. When Cato was censor, in the second century B.C., a Senator was dismissed for kissing his wife in the presence of their daughter, during daytime; in the years of imperial luxury they preferred a licentious life and evaded the responsibilities and restraints of marriage. 'A race of hardy breed,' Virgil wrote, 'we carry our children to the streams and harden them in the bitter, icy water; as boys they spend wakeful nights over the chase, and tire out the whirlwind, but in manhood, unwearied by toil and trained to poverty, they subdue the soil with their mattocks, or shake towns in war.' In those Spartan days they worshipped *virtus, pietas, gravitas, continentia, industria* and *diligentia*. But it is essential to note, as Warde-Fowler has pointed out, that this hard and practical turn of the Roman mind was in some ways curiously limited. It cannot be said that they excelled either in industrial or commercial pursuits. Agriculture was their original occupation, and trade-guilds existed at Rome very early in her history; but the story of their agriculture is rather a sad one, and Rome has never become a great industrial city.† Their first book about husbandry was translated from the Carthaginian, and their

methods of commerce they learnt chiefly from the Greeks." Like that of the Assyrians theirs was a parasitical and not a productive economy. Though the Romans were more constructive than the Assyrians, internally Rome battened like Nineveh and earned the wages of sin.

In the second century a.c. Paulus, who conquered Macedon, brought nearly two millions into the Treasury, and enabled Rome to dispense with a property tax. In the last century of the Republic, the East and the Mediterranean were rifled more systematically; every general or politician in difficulties turned to Asia or Egypt. All the vast treasures that had been hoarded in palaces and temples in Syria, Palestine, Pontus, Sicily, and the rich countries of the East, tumbled into the lap of Rome. Besides the bullion she received from these conquests, Rome acquired the mines of Spain, the territory of Carthage in Africa, the Crown lands of the King of Macedon; she drew tithes from Sicily, and tribute from her other provinces.<sup>2</sup> Besides, she had a rich world commerce. We learn from Gibbon that the most remote countries of the world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome:

The forests of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought overland from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube, and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. There was a considerable demand for Babylonian carpets and other manufactures of the East; *but the most important branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India.* Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of a hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar or the

1. *Rome*, pp. 13-14.

2. J. L. Hammond, *The Rise of Modern Industry*, pp. 7-8.

land of Ceylon was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet to Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January, and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported, on the backs of camels, from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured without delay into the capital of the empire.'

This wealth which poured in from all quarters was not put to any productive use, but expended in barbarous entertainment or effeminate luxury. The number of days which were annually given up to games and spectacles at Rome was sixty-six in the reign of Augustus. They were 135 under the Stoic Marcus Aurelius; and rose to 175 or more in the fourth century A.D. Under Augustus 3,500 wild beasts were killed at the public shows; under Trajan their number was 11,000, tame and wild. Nero had Roman ships loaded with sand for his wrestling grounds at a time when they should have been utilised for bringing corn for the famished. He also got roses worth thousands of Rupees for his bouquets, from Alexandria; while his queen, Poppaea, required the milk of 500 asses for her daily bath. "The failure to develop production," as Hammond has said, "involved, in the long run, the ruin of the Empire, for Roman civilization was not a light or an easy burden. The social life of Rome was pitched on a plane that demanded an exhausting expenditure. Every one knows the pictures of extravagance painted by the violent rage of Juvenal and the cold contempt of Tacitus. Lucullus, who first showed Rome what easy and defenceless prizes lay in the East, is forgotten as a general and remembered only as the prince of spendthrifts. Pliny's statement that Rome paid nearly a million a year in specie for the Eastern luxuries needed by great ladies has often been cited. The debauching of the populace has

filled the imagination of all later ages ; corn is distributed first at a low price, then free ; wine is added, then oil. Public games begin when the Republic has its first taste of plunder ; rival politicians vie with each other in their display ; the animals brought to be slaughtered come from a wider and wider area ; presents are flung to the spectators ; an ambitious general or politician makes his gladiators fight with silver swords. The achievements and habits of the Republic left to the Empire, that emerged from a long spell of exhausting civil war, the fatal legacy of this mass of extravagance. The Empire had to maintain a capital that was devouring its resources and municipal towns that copied the capital in their taste for rich display."<sup>1</sup> All this was but the demonstration of Cato's wise saying : " Adversity tames us, and teaches us our true line of conduct, while good fortune is apt to warp us from the way of prudence." The Romans, indeed, began as Stoics and ended as Epicureans. But the rare combination of these two philosophies enabled them for a time to enjoy life like Titans and to achieve great things,—things that have endured though their creators died nearly two thousand years ago. A few glimpses of the 'Grandeur that was Rome' might appropriately close this brief account of Roman civilisation.

Hadrian's Empire had 20,000 walled towns with sewers, aqueducts, baths, paved streets, open squares, basilicas, temples, hippodromes, and theatres. There were more than a score of cities with over 100,000 population. Of these Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Carthage, Capua, Aquilea and Trèves were the chief. Rome itself possessed the most gorgeous baths, basilicas, squares and porticoes ; and a dual

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1. *The Rise of Modern Industry*, pp. 13-14.

population of living people and bronze or marble statues. Of this latter class there were about 400,000. There were in Rome also a number of museums, of which five were of jewellery alone. Nevertheless, the Romans were not creative artists. As Dorsey has put it, "The Romans did not have to create art, literature, or the drama; the Greeks had done it for them." In these matters the vanquished Greeks took their captors captive. The cultured Romans acquired their accomplishments from their Greek slaves who also served as their teachers. Greek was as much appreciated in the Empire as Latin. Even the legendary founders of Rome were somehow connected with the heroes of Homer. The greatest of Latin epics, Virgil's *Aeneid*, traced the lineage from one of the *Trojan* supermen, Aeneas. Marcus Aurelius, their greatest philosopher king, chose to write his *Meditations* in Greek.

Not until the first century B.C. did the Romans have any literature of their own comparable with that of Greece. That unique century, however, produced nine-tenths of the Latin literature that has come down to modern times. Cicero and Cæsar, Horace and Virgil, Livy, Ovid, Catullus and Lucretius lived and wrote in the first century B.C. It saw the close of the Republic and the beginning of the Empire. "It was the time of Rome's greatest prosperity and glory. Her legions had marched east and west, north and south, carrying their eagles into Asia, to the borders of the African desert, to the banks of the Danube, through Spain, Italy, and England. Rome was the first world-empire, and it was when Rome was at the very apex of her glory that her literature was produced."

It is impossible, in this brief sketch, to give an adequate idea of all the positive achievements of the Roman genius. For this, the least that we can recommend to the reader is

they inscribed the following lines :—

'Chaeronean Plutarch, to thy deathless praise  
Does martial Rome this grateful statue raise,  
Because both Greece and she thy fame have shared,  
(Their heroes written, and their lives compared).  
But thou thyself could never write thy own ;  
Their lives have parallels, but thine has none.'

Among the philosophers of Rome the greatest were Seneca (Nero's teacher), Epictetus (Nero's slave), and Marcus Aurelius (the Emperor). They were all influenced by the Hellenised Phoenician philosopher Zeno, the founder of Stoicism (4th century B.C.). According to him 'the whole Universe was only one Substance, one *Physis*, in various states, and that one Substance was Reason, was God.' Reason, God, Nature were all synonyms for the intelligible and homogeneous essence of the Universe. *Omnes homines natura aequales sunt*, before the law of Nature all men have an equal status. This was the basic ideal of the Roman State, the Eternal City.

'What else is Nature but God,' asked Seneca, 'a divine, being and reason, which by his searching assistance resideth in the world, and all the parts thereof?' 'Never say in reply to the question, To what country do you belong,' said Epictetus, 'that you are an Athenian, or a Corinthian, but that you are a citizen of the world. . . . He who has observed with intelligence the administration of the world, and has learnt that the greatest and the supreme and the most comprehensive community is that which is composed of men and God, . . . why should not such a man call himself a citizen of the world, why not a son of God, and why should he be afraid of anything which happens among men?' And Marcus Aurelius declared, 'If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything else to distract thee, but keeping thy divine part pure, as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately ; if thou holdest to this, expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity according



to nature, and with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou wilt live happy. And there is no man who is able to prevent this.'

In the field of education, the *Institutio Oratoria* of Quintilian will ever rank as a great classic. "It was the rediscovery of this work in the fifteenth century," says Mackail, "which opened the age of the great educational movement of the later Renaissance; and to Quintilian modern educational theorists, as modern teachers might well do likewise, perpetually turn for restatement of first principles, for analysis of educational methods and planning of school courses, and, above all, for a sane and high view of the meaning and function of education."<sup>1</sup>

We have before referred to the great poets of the Augustan Age. Here we might add a few illustrations from their writings. First comes Virgil of course. Even to the great Dante he was 'the master.' He added a new music to the Latin language in his *Eclogues*. Dryden describes his *Georgics* as 'the best poem of the best poet.' It is a piece of consummate art, a pastoral of surpassing merit, in which the poet presents 'in language of liquid and faultless beauty, the picture of a Golden Age attainable in the actual world, the ideal of a life at peace with itself, with mankind, and with Nature.' From his *Aeneid*, Virgil's masterpiece, we shall only quote his famous prophecy of the coming of Christ:

Come are those last days that the Sibyl sang:  
The ages' mighty march begins anew.  
Now comes the Virgin, Saturn reigns again:  
Now from high heaven descends a wondrous race.  
Thou on the newborn babe—who first shall end  
That age of iron, bid a golden dawn  
Upon the broad world—chaste Lucian, smile: etc.

1. *The Legacy of Rome*, p. 335.

Horace in his *Odes*, *Satires*, and *Epistles* has bequeathed to the world a great handbook of 'good sense, good temper, and practical wisdom.' His art is as exquisite as his appeal is wide. A few lines will make this clear to any reader :

Happy the man, and he alone,  
 Who master of himself can say,  
 Today at least has been my own,  
 For I have clearly liv'd today :  
 Then let tomorrow's clouds arise,  
 Or purer suns o'erspread the skies.

.. .. .

Far wiser is it to endure  
 Those ills of life we cannot cure.

.. .. .

Fill high the goblet ! Envious Time  
 Steals, as we speak, our fleeting prime.  
 Away with hope ! Away with sorrow !  
 Snatch thou today, nor trust Tomorrow.

.. .. .

Dare to be wise ; begin, for, once begun,  
 Your task is easy ; half the work is done.  
 And sure the man, who has it in his power  
 To practise virtue, and protracts the hour,  
 Waits like the rustic, till the river dried :  
 Still glides the river and will ever glide.

.. .. .

Hold fast, contented evermore,  
 The way of Peace, the Golden Mean :  
 That bounded space which lies between  
 The sordid hut and palace hall.

We must be content with only one more reference, and that about *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius. In this unique poem the poet has attempted with great success the gigantic task of comprehending the whole system of the universe in verse of enduring value. "It is the work," writes Mackail, "of an intellect and imagination of the first order, of a scientific

insight and an ethical elevation unequalled in the ancient world and hardly reached afterwards by any single writer. Lucretius wrote with a direct moral purpose, to disburden mankind of fear, to dispel the darkness of superstition and ignorance by the light of truth which is also the source of goodness and the soul of beauty. The scientific laws of the material universe are to him one with the laws of life and conduct. He is abreast of modern thought in his grasp of the principles and function of science. He anticipates some of the most important discoveries of the nineteenth century and of our own day in physics, in chemistry, in the theory of light and the doctrine of atoms: most remarkably perhaps in anthropology, and the history of the process by which civilization was created, and will finally—so he teaches—run its course and be resumed into the elements out of which it was built up. The prehistoric world and primitive man are to him an open book. But it is in his moral temper that he is greatest and of most enduring value. No nobler ideal of a pure and simple life, no higher message of strength and consolation, has ever been conceived and uttered. He may be called the Roman Milton, and the Epicurean philosophy takes in his hands the austere beauty and grave nobility which Milton gave, once for all, to our own Puritan theology. Both have a majesty unsurpassed in poetry, and a fire of genius which fuses intractable material; and if Milton is more consummate in the technique of his art, Lucretius is unequalled in his poignant humanity."<sup>1</sup>

In Science and Art, as pointed out before, the Romans borrowed and adapted more than they created. Nevertheless their work in these directions was not negligible. Here,

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1. *The Legacy of Rome*, pp. 341-42.

as in all other things, the Romans emphasised the practical and utilitarian rather than the purely intellectual and aesthetic. They were great lovers of nature and the countryside which figure prominently in their literature, science and art ; but, even here, their accomplishment was rather poor. Of Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, Gibbon rightly observed that it was but a register in which he 'deposited the discoveries, the arts and the errors of mankind.' Seneca confused philosophy with science. Yet the two were considered indispensable during the Middle Ages. In medicine the Romans availed themselves of the great gifts of Hellas. They cared much for hygiene and sanitation. The *Law of the Twelve Tables*, for instance, forbade burial within the city walls. Their advanced sanitary arrangements are still to be seen even in distant outstations like Tingad in Algeria. A fine monument to the Roman care of public health and its organisation is found in the remains of the fourteen aqueducts of Rome which supplied the citizens with 300,000,000 gallons of potable water daily. Julius Cæsar conferred citizenship on all who practised medicine in Rome 'to make them more desirous of living in the city and to induce others to resort to it.' Under the Empire a definite public medical service was constituted. A statute of Antoninus (160 A.D.) laid down that the smallest towns may have five physicians who were to enjoy immunity from taxation. The larger towns were to have as many as ten doctors. Their duty was particularly to attend to the needs of the poor. The code of Justinian urges them to give this service cheerfully rather than the more subservient attendance on the rich. The army medical department was equally well organised. Trajan's column in Rome represents the actual administration of first-aid by Roman military surgeons. "The great contribution of Rome to medicine—and it is a very great one," writes Mr.

Charles Singer, "is the hospital system."<sup>1</sup>

The same practical genius showed itself in the field of architecture. The great buildings, aqueducts, and bridges erected by Roman engineers bear testimony to their technical knowledge. The structural stability of much of their work still surviving has impressed even modern engineers and architects from all parts of the world. Their greatest achievements were the 'arch' and 'vault' which enabled them to span large openings and enclosed spaces. "It is hardly too much to say," writes Mr. Rushforth, "that Rome was the first city in the world to have a great secular architecture." It is also, he points out, "the architecture of humanism, the source from which our secular public building has sprung." The two outstanding features of Roman architecture which have most influenced later builders are solidity of construction and magnificence of conception. "The new government palaces at Delhi, the latest public buildings in London such as the County Council Hall and the Port of London Offices, and, we may add, no less those of America, have alike been faithful to the precepts of Roman architecture."<sup>2</sup>

But neither science nor architecture, however, were the peculiar creations of the Romans. Their most distinctive and lasting contributions to European civilisation have been in the realms of law and language. The *Corpus Juris Civilis* compiled under Justinian (527-565 A.D.) has supplied the foundations to the legal systems of Italy, Spain, France, Germany and the other European countries.

"Even the Common Law of England, which has been adopted by the United States, owes some of its principles to the *Corpus*

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1. For interesting details read *The Legacy of Rome*, pp. 292-96.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 396.

*Juris Civilis*. The law of Rome, because of this widespread influence, is justly regarded as one of her most important gifts to the world. The Romans carried their language to the barbarian countries of the West, as they had carried it throughout Italy. The Latin spoken by Roman colonists, merchants, soldiers, and public officials was eagerly taken up by the natives who tried to make themselves as much like their conquerors as possible. This provincial Latin became the basis of the so-called Romance languages—French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and Rumanian—which arose in the Middle Ages. Our English language, though in the main derived from the speech of the Teutonic invaders of Britain, contains so many words of Latin origin that we can scarcely write a sentence without using some of them. The language of Rome, as well as the law of Rome, has enriched the intellectual life of mankind.”<sup>1</sup>

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1. Webster, *History of Mankind*. pp. 163-64.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### BÚDDHIST ASIA

If to this day, from Kandy in Ceylon to Kamakura in Japan, the placid face of Gautama bids men be gentle to one another and love peace, it is partly because a dreamer, perhaps a saint, once held the throne of India.

--WILL DURANT

In an earlier chapter we noted the rise of Buddhism in India. Though that faith was not destined to be the religion of more than a bare one per cent. of people in the land of its birth, its conquests over the rest of Asia were both wide and permanent. It now embraces millions in Burma, Ceylon, Tibet, Siam, China and Japan. "The story of Buddhism," as Kenneth Saunders has observed, "is one of the greatest chapters in human history. It has done more to civilize mankind than any other movement except Christianity, and it numbers more adherents to-day than any other religion." In this chapter we shall briefly trace its fortunes in India, China and Japan, principally, since Aśoka helped convert a local sect into an international and universal faith. When the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang visited India in the time of Harsha (630-645 A.D.) Buddhism had already fallen on evil days. But before that it had had a thousand years of glorious achievement. To a large extent this was due to the work of the Great Aśoka (273-232 B.C.).

Aśoka was the grandson of the well known founder of the

Maurya Empire, Chandragupta, the contemporary of Alexander the Great. Chandragupta Maurya deserves to be remembered with grateful reverence as the first great Indian nation builder who successfully kept the foreigners out and established a strong and well governed empire in our country. The foreigner whom he kept out was Seleucus Nicator, Alexander the Macedonian's viceroy in the East ; the good and strong government that Chandragupta created is testified to by Greek witnesses like Nearchus and Megasthenes (302 B.C.). For a detailed appreciation of the high political acumen of Indians in that age the reader must also acquaint himself with the *Artha Śāstra* written by Chandragupta's gifted minister Chānakya or Kautilya.

Chandragupta was a great organiser and never spared himself in laying the foundations of one of the most unique empires in history. While his justice was stern and his army numbered 600,000 (elephants, chariots, cavalry and infantry), his measures to ensure the prosperity and stability of his dominions were a source of admiration for all. The empire was divided into three provinces which were governed by viceroys from the three provincial capitals, Taxila, Ujjain, and Tosali. The imperial capital was Pātaliputra (Patna) on the northern bank of the Son, a town well planned and protected with massive fortifications, with meeting-halls for guilds and religious councils, and theatres, gaming-houses, inns, and race-courses. " There were handsome bazaars where indigenous and foreign goods were displayed for sale. The streets were crowded with a busy and many-coloured throng of men and animals. The houses were two or three storeys high, and as they were mostly wooden, elaborate precautions were taken against an outbreak of fire. In the heart of the city was the royal palace, which stood in the midst of a walled-in park, with ornamental trees, tame pea-



cocks and pheasants, and lakes full of sacred fish." But the real glory of Chandragupta was his imperial organisation.

Under the viceroys there were divisional commissioners with district officers under them. The main source of revenue was land, and the assessment was one-fourth of the crops. The greater part of the country was well irrigated, and, according to Megasthenes, famines were almost unknown. Towns were numerous and flourishing, and the whole empire was connected up by an excellent road system. Milestones and rest-houses punctuated the highways and a postal service was maintained by couriers. Peasants were unmolested even in times of war. Though the civil administration was bureaucratically organised it made for efficiency. Pātalīputra, and probably every other city as well, was governed by a municipality consisting of six boards of five members each. "The first dealt with trade. It fixed rates of wages and safeguarded the rights of artisans who enjoyed the special protection and patronage of the state. The second did the work of a Foreign Office, or Consulate. It examined carefully all visitors leaving and entering the capital, stamped their passports, saw that they were properly accommodated, and provided medical attendance when they were sick. If they died, the board provided for their burial (cremation) and forwarded their effects to their relatives. The third board was concerned with the registration of births and deaths, and maintained a census for taxation purposes. The fourth, fifth and sixth boards were in charge of commerce. The fourth regulated sales and stamped weights and measures. Merchants had to purchase a licence from it in order to trade. The fifth board saw that old goods were not palmed off as new, while the sixth was concerned with the collection of a tax of one-sixth on all sales. Any evasions of the tax, if detected, were drastically punished. Be-

sides these committees, the municipality as a whole was responsible for public works of all kinds. They had to see that refuse was not left on the roads, and that the drains were kept clean. They were charged with the duty of ensuring that the fire-brigade was in constant readiness and the curfew duly sounded and observed.”<sup>1</sup>

The tradition which records that the creator of this system ended his days at Sravana Belgola, in Mysore, as a Jain ascetic only indicates how strong was the appeal of the reforming religions. A greater illustration of this is found in Chandragupta's grandson, Aśoka. He ruled over an empire which extended over the whole of India, including Afghanistan but excluding the peninsula south of Mysore. He was master of all the resources and power of Chandragupta enriched by his son Bindusara. And yet, after a single campaign (because it involved much slaughter), Aśoka, though victorious, cried halt to political ambition and turned a saint. There is no parallel to this in all history. The story of his conversion is thus dramatically told in the Thirteenth Edict of Aśoka :

“Directly after the annexation of the Kalingas began His Sacred Majesty's zealous protection of the Law of Piety, his love of that Law, and his giving instruction in that Law (*Dharma*). Thus arose His Sacred Majesty's remorse for having conquered the Kalingas, because the conquest of a country, previously unconquered, involves the slaughter, death, and carrying away captive of the people. That is a matter of profound sorrow and regret to His Sacred Majesty.

“There is, however, another reason for His Sacred Majesty's feeling still more regret, inasmuch as in such a country dwell Brahmins or ascetics, or men of various denominations, or householders, upon whom is laid this duty of hearkening to superior— hearkening to father and mother, hearkening to teachers, and

1. H. G. Rawlinson, *India, a Short Cultural History*, p. 70.

proper treatment of friends, acquaintances, comrades, relatives, slaves, and servants, with fidelity of attachment. To such people in such a country befalls violence, or slaughter, or separation from their loved ones... All these several happenings to men are matter of regret to His Sacred Majesty...

"His Sacred Majesty desires that all animate beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind, and joyousness. And this is the chiefest conquest in the opinion of His Sacred Majesty—the conquest by the Law of Piety—and this again has been won by His Sacred Majesty both in his own dominions and in all the neighbouring realms as far as six hundred leagues—where the Greek (Yona) King named Antiochos dwells, and north of that Antiochos to where dwell the four kings severally named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas, and Alexander; and in the south the (realms of the) Cholas and Pandyas, with Ceylon likewise—and here, too, in the King's dominions, among the Yonas, and Kambojas, and Pitinikas, among the Andhras and Pulindas,—everywhere men follow His Sacred Majesty's instruction in the Law of Piety."

This conquest of the Law of Piety Aśoka hoped would penetrate even where his envoys did not reach, and desired that "my sons and grandsons, who may be, should not regard it as their duty to make new conquests. If, perchance, they become engaged in a conquest of arms they should take pleasure in patience and gentleness, and regard as (the only true) conquest the conquest won by piety. That avails for both this world and the next. Let all joy be in effort, because that avails for both this world and the next." This was no mere pietism or quietism of a dreamer. It was the bedrock of an enlightened humanism which found expression in active service of humanity. In Aśoka's empire special attention was paid to the comfort of travellers by the provision of wells, rest-houses, and trees planted along the roads to supply both shade and fruit. Arrangements for the healing of both man and beast alike were made, not only within the limits of the empire, but also in the territories of

friendly independent kingdoms.' In the sphere of art and architecture also Aśoka made invaluable contributions. The definite history of Indian art, according to V. A. Smith still begins with Aśoka. The great Stupa of Sanchi was begun in the days of Aśoka ; but the Lion Capital of Sarnath is considered the best specimen of Aśokan art. In the estimation of Sir John Marshall it is a masterpiece of both style and technique, and contains "The finest carvings, indeed, that India has yet produced, and unsurpassed, I venture to think, by anything of their kind in the ancient world."<sup>1</sup>

The oft quoted panegyric of Mr. H. G. Wells is the only adequate description of Aśoka that we can give within a short compass ; "For eight-and-twenty years Aśoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Aśoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and even India, though it has left his doctrine, preserve the tradition of his greatness. More living men cherish his memory to-day than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne." Mr. H. G. Rawlinson also observes : "He has been compared at various times to Marcus Aurelius, Saint Paul and Constantine. But no Christian ruler has even attempted to apply to the government of a great empire the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, or to announce, in a public edict addressed to his subjects, that 'although a man does him injury, His Majesty holds that it must be patiently borne, as far as it possibly can be

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1. *The Oxford History of India*, p. 113.

borne.' Two hundred and fifty years before Christ, Aśoka had the courage to express his horror and remorse at the results of a successful campaign, and deliberately to renounce war as a means of policy, in spite of the fact that his dominions included the unsubdued tribes of the north-west frontier, and was able in practice to put an end to cruelty to man and beast, and establish complete religious toleration throughout India. Aśoka fulfilled Plato's ideal of the state in which 'kings are philosophers, and philosophers kings.'"<sup>2</sup>

The far-reaching effects of Aśoka's Buddhist missions may be gauged, not only from the conversion to the Law of Piety of a large part of India, Burma and Ceylon (the last two are still Buddhist together with Tibet), but also from its effects upon foreigners. Though the Buddhist empire of Aśoka in India was overthrown by the Brahmanical reaction under Pushyamitra Sunga (185-149 B.C.), Buddhism continued to show its influence by the conversion of the Greek Menander, the Kushan Kanishka, and the Hindu Harsha. The last, though not a convert to Buddhism, was a great patron of its followers. Menander (180-160 B.C.), though he tried to reconquer India for the Greeks, was himself taken captive by the religion of India. We learn from the *Questions of Mūlinda* how, when the Buddhist monk Nāgasena appeared with his disciples in Sagala (Sailkot), 'lighting up the city with their yellow robes like lamps, and bringing down upon it the breezes from the heights where the sages dwell,' Menander (himself a great scholar and 'a disputant hard to equal') was converted at the end of a vigorous argument.

Kanishka was the next great foreigner to be a Buddhist, in fact he was the greatest among the foreign converts. He

1. H. G. Rawlinson, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

was a Central Asian and belonged to the Kushan clan of the Yueh-chi. Being driven from their homelands by the Huns, these nomadic tribes had settled in Bactria during the second century B.C. About the middle of the first century A.D. they found their way into India. Kanishka, who ruled from c. 120-162 A.D., was their greatest king. He had his capital at Purushapura or Peshawar, and his empire extended over a large part of Hindustan, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan including Kashgar, Yarkhand and Khotan.

"The Kushans were on excellent terms with Rome. In the first century A.D. the boundaries of the two empires were less than 600 miles apart, and the Romans were anxious to cultivate their friendship, hoping to capture the silk trade with China from their rivals, the Parthians. When Trajan became Emperor in A.D. 99 a Kushan monarch (probably Kadphises II) sent an embassy to Rome to congratulate him. The ambassadors had a flattering reception, and were given the high compliment of senator's seats in the theatre. The Kushan ruler struck gold coins in imitation of those of the Roman Emperors of the same weight and fineness as the Roman *aureus*. They kept up a brisk trade with the Roman colonies in Asia-Minor, which went on almost uninterruptedly for the next two centuries: the goods went partly by the overland route through Bactria, and partly by sea from the port of Barygaza (Broach at the mouth of Narbadā River). From Barygaza travellers would go to the head of the Persian Gulf, up the Euphrates to Tapsacus and then across the desert to Antioch. A caravan route running through the famous city of Palmyra (Tadmor in the Wilderness) connected Antioch with the port of Berenice on the Red Sea. An Alexandrian sea-captain who visited the Indian coast about A.D. 80 wrote an interesting guide-book entitled *Periplus Maris Erythraei* in which he speaks of the immense volume of trade in condiments, spices, unguents and silks which left the ports of Gujarat and Sind, in exchange for Roman *aurei*. Greek wines and 'choice girls' for the royal harems."

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

The greatest event of Kanishka's reign was his conversion to Buddhism. This was due to the efforts of the great Buddhist scholar Āsvaghosha. 'He was extremely versatile, a philosopher, writer, dramatist and musician, and did much to reconcile Buddhism and Hinduism by writing on Buddhist themes in polished Sanskrit.' He was the author of *Buddha Charita*, a poetical history of the Buddha, and one of the earliest examples of Sanskrit *Kāvya* of great beauty. Kanishka convened a Great Council of the Buddhists which was attended by the followers of that faith from all parts of India and Ceylon, among whom was Nāgārjuna the founder of *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. The Council compiled an encyclopædia of Buddhism, the *Mahā Vibhāsa*, which, Hiuen Tsang informs us, was 'engraven on sheets of red copper' by order of Kanishka Rāja. 'He enclosed them in a stone receptacle and, having sealed them, he raised over it a *stūpa* with the scriptures in the middle.'

"Kanishka's Council at Kashmir," Rawlinson observes, "marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Buddhism. This was the rise of the Mahāyāna or Northern Church, which differs as much from the Hinayāna, or the Little Vehicle of the South, as Medieval Catholicism does from the simple creed of the Christians of the first century. The change was partly due to attempts of learned Brahmin converts like Asvaghosha to reconcile Buddhism with Hinduism. But it was due still more to the fact that in North-Western India a number of new influences—Greek, Christian, Zoroastrian and Central Asian—had crept in. When Buddhism became the religion of the foreign invaders from the northern steppes, it entirely lost its original character. Buddha ceased altogether to be a dead teacher, and became a living Saviour, God incarnate, like Rama or Krishna, for the salvation of the human race. The theory of Ava-

was a Central Asian and belonged to the Kushan clan of the Yueh-chi. Being driven from their homelands by the Huns, these nomadic tribes had settled in Bactria during the second century B.C. About the middle of the first century A.D. they found their way into India. Kanishka, who ruled from c. 120-162 A.D., was their greatest king. He had his capital at Purushapura or Peshawar, and his empire extended over a large part of Hindustan, Kashmir, Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan including Kashgar, Yarkhand and Khotan.

"The Kushans were on excellent terms with Rome. In the first century A.D. the boundaries of the two empires were less than 600 miles apart, and the Romans were anxious to cultivate their friendship, hoping to capture the silk trade with China from their rivals, the Parthians. When Trajan became Emperor in A.D. 99 a Kushan monarch (probably Kadphises II) sent an embassy to Rome to congratulate him. The ambassadors had a flattering reception, and were given the high compliment of senator's seats in the theatre. The Kushan ruler struck gold coins in imitation of those of the Roman Emperors of the same weight and fineness as the Roman *aureus*. They kept up a brisk trade with the Roman colonies in Asia-Minor which went on almost uninterruptedly for the next two centuries: the goods went partly by the overland route through Bactria, and partly by sea from the port of Barygaza (Broach at the mouth of Narmadā River). From Barygaza travellers would go to the head of the Persian Gulf, up the Euphrates to Thapsacus and then across the desert to Antioch. A caravan route running through the famous city of Palmyra (Tadmor in the Wilderness) connected Antioch with the port of Berenice on the Red Sea. An Alexandrian sea-captain who visited the Indian coast about A.D. 80 wrote an interesting guide-book entitled *Periplus Maris Erythraei* in which he speaks of the immense volume of trade in condiments, spices, unguents and silks which left the ports of Gujarat and Sind, in exchange for Roman *aurei*, Greek wines and 'choice girls' for the royal harems."

1. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.



The greatest event of Kanishka's reign was his conversion to Buddhism. This was due to the efforts of the great Buddhist scholar Āśvaghosha. 'He was extremely versatile, a philosopher, writer, dramatist and musician, and did much to reconcile Buddhism and Hinduism by writing on Buddhist themes in polished Sanskrit.' He was the author of *Buddha Charita*, a poetical history of the Buddha, and one of the earliest examples of Sanskrit *Kāvya* of great beauty. Kanishka convened a Great Council of the Buddhists which was attended by the followers of that faith from all parts of India and Ceylon, among whom was Nāgārjuna the founder of *Mahāyāna Buddhism*. The Council compiled an encyclopædia of Buddhism, the *Mahā Vibhāsa*, which, Hiuen Tsang informs us, was 'engraved on sheets of red copper' by order of Kanishka Rāja. 'He enclosed them in a stone receptacle and, having sealed them, he raised over it a *stūpa* with the scriptures in the middle.'

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lated, then the matter is clearly sifted and the offenders punished. There is no infliction of corporal punishment; they are simply left to live and die, and are not counted among men. When the rules of morality and justice have been violated, or a man is dishonest or wanting in filial love, his nose or ears are cut off and he is expelled from the city to wander in the jungle till he dies. For other faults besides these, a small fine is exacted in lieu of punishment. In investigating crimes, the rod is not used to extort proofs of guilt. In questioning the accused, if he answers frankly, his punishment is proportioned accordingly, but if he obstinately denies his fault, in order to probe the truth to the bottom, trial by ordeal is resorted to.

'As the administration of the government is founded on benign principles, the executive is simple. The families are not entered on registers, and the people are not subjected to forced labour. The crown-lands are divided into four parts. The first is for carrying out the affairs of state; the second, for paying the ministers and officers of the crown; the third, for rewarding men of genius; the fourth, for giving alms to religious communities. In this way, the taxes on the people are light, and the services required of them are moderate. Everyone keeps his worldly goods in peace, and all till the soil for their subsistence. Those who cultivate the royal estates pay a sixth part of their produce as tribute. The merchants who engage in commerce travel to and fro in pursuit of their calling. Rivers and toll-bars are opened for travellers on payment of a small sum. When the public works require it, labour is exacted but paid for. The payment is in strict proportion to the work done.'

These observations of Hiuen Tsang are the more remarkable because he came to India at a time when his own country was passing through one of her most glorious epochs under T'ai Tsung (627-650 A.D.). Most writers agree in describing China at that time as "without doubt the greatest and most civilized power in the world." T'ai Tsung was an enlightened and humane ruler like Aśoka and Harsha. He mitigated the criminal law and believed in the essential goodness of men: "If I diminish expenses, lighten

the taxes, employ only honest officials," he said, "so that the people have clothing enough, this will do more to abolish robbery than the employment of the severest punishments." He laid it down that no ruler should ratify a sentence of death until he had fasted for three days. Under the influence of his equally humane wife he is said to have released 3,000 women from the luxurious imprisonment of his royal seraglio. It was the desire of this noble queen that when she died she should not be decked in jewels, but should be laid in her grave with a tile for her pillow and wooden pins in her hair. T'ai Tsung invited to his court at Ch'ang-an (Hsi-an in Shensi) visitors from all countries and provided for them. He instituted a system of government which remained a model for centuries. He fostered learning, founded an imperial library with 200,000 manuscript books, and encouraged trade and international relations, and left a domain unequalled till then in extent, power, or culture. It was during this epoch that Japan and Korea from the East and Annam and other nations from the South, sent envoys to China to enrich their own cultures. Hiuen Tsang returned to his country laden with Buddhist manuscripts and images, sometime before the death of T'ai Tsung (650 A.D.).

Buddhism, however, had reached China long before. The traditional date of its official acceptance is 64 A.D. It was the Emperor Ming-ti (58-76 A.D.) who became a convert as the result of a dream in which he saw a golden image of the Buddha. Soon images, manuscripts and monks began to pour into China from India. "The advent of Buddhism, with other forms of Indian culture," says Soothill, "is almost the only kind of cross-fertilization which has benefited China until modern times."<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of Dr. Hu Shih,

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1. W. E. Soothill, *A History of China*, p. 20.

China's leading modern historian, Buddhism "broke down the fatalism of both Confucianism and Taoism." Neither Confucianism nor Taoism, he points out, maintained the importance of personal salvation: "it was Buddhism which brought home to the Chinese the indestructibility of the soul." This was mainly the work of the great Indian missionary Bodhidharma (called by the Chinese, Putitama) who went to China by sea in the sixth century (c. 520 A.D.). He was a great mystic and kept silence for nine years! His teachings were a blend of Buddhism and Vedant. He called China from confusion and multiplicity to the fundamental unity and simplicity of Buddhist meditation.<sup>1</sup>

Just as India influenced China, so China influenced the rest of Asia; for under her great Han dynasty (206 B.C. to 221 A.D.), particularly under Wu-ti and Wang Mang, China had become mistress over Asia. She had pushed back the barbarians and extended her sway over Korea, Manchuria, Annam, Indo-China and Turkestan. Wu-Ti (140-87 B.C.) was a very progressive ruler and a practical socialist far ahead of his times. To prevent private individuals from 'reserving to their sole use the riches of the mountains and the sea in order to gain a fortune, and from putting the lower classes into subjection to themselves,' he established national ownership of natural resources. To break the power of middlemen and speculators, 'those who buy on credit and make loans, those who buy to heap up in the towns, those who accumulate all sorts of commodities,' Wu-Ti created a national system of transport and exchange, and sought to control trade in such a way as to prevent sudden variations in price. "State working-men made all the means of transportation and delivery in the empire. The state

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1. Kenneth Saunders, *Buddhism*, pp. 50-54.

stored surplus goods, selling them when prices were rising too rapidly, buying them when prices were falling. . . . All incomes had to be registered with the government, and had to pay an annual tax of five per cent. In order to facilitate the purchase and consumption of commodities the Emperor enlarged the supply of currency by issuing coins of silver alloyed with tin. Great public works were undertaken in order to provide employment for the millions whom private industry had failed to maintain ; bridges were flung across China's streams, and innumerable canals were cut to bind the rivers and irrigate the fields." This system added immensely to the resources and prosperity of China.

Wang Mang, who came eighty-four years after Wu-Ti, followed a similar policy. He abolished slavery and like Solon and the Gracchi tried to reduce inequalities of wealth by redistributing lands equally among the peasants and forbidding the sale or purchase of land thereafter. "Like Wu-Ti he tried to protect the cultivator and the consumer against the merchant by fixing the prices of commodities."<sup>1</sup> After these two great monarchs China suffered from one of her periodical lapses into chaos. Not until the Tang dynasty, of whom T'ai Tsung was the greatest, did she recover her eclipsed prosperity and glory. Then once more she became the teacher of the Far East. During this Golden Age of Tang rule Korea and Japan received from China her splendid legacy of culture.

Though legend antedates Japanese history by nearly one thousand years, the authentic annals of Japan do not begin until about the sixth century A.D. Civilisation, we might truly say, entered Japan (Yamato or Nippon or the Land of the Rising Sun) together with Buddhism, through Korea (540-571 A.D.). "What is the cause, what the magic power

1. Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization*, II, 698-701.

which has worked so remarkable a change?" asks Anesaki, a leading Japanese Buddhist, and answers, "The most important factor is certainly the introduction of Buddhism, with its teachings and its literature, its art and its ritual, which had come to Japan by way of China and Korea. The teachings of Confucius and the culture of China are another factor, but this influence is far inferior to that of the universal gospel of Buddhism which has won almost all Asia." The Aśoka of Japan was Shotoku Taishi (593-622 A.D.). He united the warring clans of his country under the banner of Buddhism and put Japan on the map of civilized Asia. The Yumedono or Hall of Dreams where he meditated is still preserved as a sacred spot, and the whole group of buildings in which he founded his Buddhist Institute at Horiuji is now used as a museum of Asiatic art. "Here frescoes like those of Ajanta, graceful bronzes from Korea, and others which are of Chinese origin, have been preserved, and here may be traced the beginnings of Japanese arts and crafts." Shotoku also drew up the D<sup>ai</sup>ho legal code which aimed at humanising the judiciary and improving the lot of the submerged masses. This had a far-reaching effect upon the government and civilisation of Japan. Personal merit and ability now took precedence over family prestige in officialdom.

The Japanese begin their national history with their first emperor Jimmu Tenno who is said to have died in 585 B.C. But the fact that this is recorded in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonji*, both compiled early in the eighth century A.D., and also that these were even at that late date written in Chinese characters, shows how much backward the Japanese were to begin with. The conquest of Korea by their empress Jingu (c. 200-270 A.D.) may be taken as the first step in the rise of jingoism in Japan. Korea proved a veritable

stepping-stone to China, both for civilising Japan and also later for Japanese imperialism. Buddhism first entered Japan in the reign of Kinmei (540-571 A.D.). Under Emperor Bidastu (572-585) Buddhist image-makers, nuns, priests, and temple-builders came from Korea. Then followed the great regime of Shotoku (593-628). The Golden Age was attained in 794 A.D. when the Japanese capital was shifted from Nara to, at first Nagaoka, and thence to Kyoto the "Capital of Peace." Under Daigo (898-930) Japan continued to absorb, and even rival, the culture and luxury of China. 'Having taken their religion from the Middle Kingdom, the Japanese proceeded to take from the same source their dress and their sports, their cooking and their writing, their poetry and their administrative methods, their music and their arts, their gardens and their architecture; even their handsome capitals, Nara and Kyoto, were laid out in imitation of Ch'ang-an.'

Though virtually exiled from the land of its birth, Buddhism has profoundly influenced both India and the rest of non-Muslim Asia. In the words of Kenneth Saunders: "It seems clear today that there is a revival of Buddhism, and that certainly in the Far East and probably also in Southern Asia it will yet do much to keep alive the spirit of idealism and to foster peace. Wherever it is true to the spirit of its Founder, it promotes the difficult art of meditation and kindles the compassionate spirit. By its teaching of the unity of all life it stimulates art and makes for union. And if its emphasis be not too exclusively monastic, it may yet take its part as in the days of Asoka and Shotoku in building great civilizations. However this may be, its record of achievement is a great and notable one, and calls for much more general study in the Western World."

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE DARK AGE IN EUROPE

"It was at first my wish to destroy the Roman name, and erect in its place a Gothic empire ... But when experience taught me that the untamable barbarism of the Goths would not suffer them to live beneath the sway of law ... I chose the glory of renewing and maintaining by Gothic strength the fame of Rome, desiring to go down to posterity as the restorer of that Roman power which it was beyond my power to supersede."—ATHAULF

*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is the subject of a monumental work by Edward Gibbon which has been very highly appreciated ever since it was written in the eighteenth century. According to Freeman, "That wonderful man monopolised, so to speak, the historical genius and the historical learning of a whole generation, and left little, indeed, of either for his contemporaries ... Whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too." We have described in two earlier chapters the great doings of the Roman people and their legacy to the modern world. But that glory did not endure in all its parts more than five hundred years since Julius Caesar and Augustus. The causes of its decline and fall were both internal and external to the Roman Empire. In the words of Gibbon, in the later centuries, "The limits of the Roman empire still extended from the Western Ocean to the Tigris, and from



Mount Atlas to the Rhine and the Danube. . . . The form was still the same, but the animating health and vigour were fled. The industry of the people was discouraged and exhausted by a long series of oppressions. The discipline of the legions, which alone, after the extinction of every other virtue, had propped the greatness of the state, was corrupted by the ambition, or relaxed by the weakness, of the emperors. The strength of the frontiers, which had always consisted in arms rather than in fortifications, was insensibly undermined; and the fairest provinces were left exposed to the rapaciousness or ambition of the barbarians, who soon discovered the decline of the Roman empire."

The earliest of the barbarians from whom the Romans had to protect themselves were the Gauls. They had invaded Italy from across the Alps as early as 390 B.C. and sacked the city of Rome after having routed the Romans in the battle of Allia. "It would be impossible," says one writer, "to picture the consternation and despair that reigned at Rome when the fugitive brought to the city intelligence of the terrible disaster. It was never forgotten, and the day of the battle of the Allia was ever after a black day in the Roman calendar. The sacred vessels of the temples were buried; the eternal fires of Vesta were hurriedly borne by their virgin keepers to a place of safety in Etruria; and a large part of the population fled in dismay across the Tiber." Though the situation was retrieved for the time being by the bravery of the patrician general Camillus, Rome was yet to see the worst of the barbarian invasions. Such was the terror that the first sack of Rome by the Gauls caused among the Romans, that for a long time they believed in a prophecy, declared in the Sibylline Books, that a portion of Roman territory must needs be occupied by the barbarians. Hoping that thereby the pre-

diction would be sufficiently fulfilled to satisfy Fate they caught hold of two Gauls and buried them alive in a public square of the city. But the Gauls, nevertheless, came again in larger numbers in 225 B.C. However, the Romans succeeded in beating off their attacks and even pursuing them into the plains of the Po where they also captured the city of Milan. Beyond the Alps other barbarians, the Teutons and the Cimbri, were pressing even the Gauls. Between 113 and 101 B.C. they boiled over into northern Italy, but were annihilated by Marius who thus became the "Saviour of his country." Nearly fifty years later (58-51 B.C.) Julius Cæsar carried Roman arms into the very homes of the barbarians and conquered them. So glorious were his victories that the Romans declared, as pointed out earlier, "Let the Alps sink; the gods raised them to shelter Italy from the barbarians; they are now no longer needed." Yet, even the Alps could not keep away the barbarians for all time. Before we proceed further with their story we might have a glimpse of the barbarians as described by Cæsar in his account of the Gallic Wars.

"Their whole life," he writes, "consists in hunting and the pursuits of war; from their childhood they devote themselves to toil and hardihood. Those who are slowest to outgrow their boyhood receive the greatest praise among their friends; they think that this fosters growth and develops strength and sinews. . . They do not occupy themselves with agriculture, and live chiefly on milk, cheese and flesh.

"No one has any definite amount of land or private boundaries, but the magistrates and chief men meet together yearly and assign to families and clans as much land as they think fit, and where they think fit, and a year after compel them to move on to another place. . . .

"They think it the greatest glory to states that their boundaries should be waste, and that they should have wildernesses around them as widely as possible. They think it is a sign

of valour that their neighbours should be driven out and retire from their lands and that no one should dare to settle in their vicinity; and that at the same time this renders them safer, as the fear of sudden inroads is removed. When a state goes to war, either on the defensive or offensive, magistrates are chosen to preside over that war with the power of life and death. In peace they have no common magistrates, but the chief men of the districts and cantons administer justice among their fellows and settle disputes. Robbery has no discredit attached to it when it is done outside the boundaries of each state, and they declare that it is practical with a view to exercising the young men and making them less slothful...

"There was a time in the former days when the Gauls surpassed the Germans in valour, invaded them unprovoked, and, owing to pressure of population and want of land, sent colonies across the Rhine... Nowadays the Germans continue in the same state of need and endurance as of old, and live and dress in the same way, while the Gauls have grown accustomed to be overcome in battle, and now that they have frequently been vanquished do not put themselves on a level with the Germans in valour."

Even in the best days of the Empire the strength of the Germans was so great that Augustus had to lose ten Roman legions fighting against them on the Rhine. With the decline of imperial power, the barbarians, in addition to their occasional raids, also steadily effected a peaceful penetration of the provinces. In spite of the improvement of the defences and the better organisation of the Empire under Trajan and Hadrian (both of non-Roman origin) the barbarian incursions continued. Trajan, a Spaniard, was a warlike emperor. Taking the offensive against the German tribes he created a military outpost in the province of Decia across the Danube. Nevertheless Marcus Aurelius, the Stoic Emperor, had to die fighting against the barbarians. When the Empire fell on evil days, and Roman Emperors became puppets in the hands of the army or scheming women, the

Germans took advantage of the increasing chaos. By an irony of fate at the same time the "Edict of Caracalla" bestowed the Roman citizenship on everyone within the Empire, including the barbarians who had settled within its borders. This made the Empire more vulnerable, and under Aurelian (270-305 A.D.) it was found necessary to refortify Rome itself against the inundation. In his struggle against a rival, Septimius Severus (an African from near Carthage) had destroyed the fortifications of Byzantium and thereby opened the floodgates in the East to the torrent of barbarian invasions (193-211 A.D.). In the reign of Decius, who was proclaimed Emperor by the Eastern legions (249-251 A.D.), the Goths adopted a forward policy, crossed the Danube with two huge armies, and laid waste the Balkans, Thrace and Macedonia. The Emperor Decius himself was killed while trying to stem the barbarian tide. Aurelian (270-275), his successor, was an Illyrian peasant and a soldier of some ability. He drove the Vandals beyond the Danube, cleared Lombardy of the Alemanni, and defeated the Goths on the Danube. Diocletian (284-305 A.D.) appointed two *Augusti* and *Cæsars*, one each in the West and in the East, for the better defence and government of the vast Empire, and Constantine (306-337 A.D.) rebuilt Byzantium (rechristening it Constantinople). The last of the Emperors of ability was Theodosius (379-395 A.D.). He reduced the Goths to submission for the time being, but found it necessary to divide the unwieldy Empire between his two sons, Honorius and Arcadius, after him.

However, nothing could save the Roman Empire permanently. The expedient of division proved a remedy worse than the disease. Hard pressed by still other barbarians (the Huns), the Visigoths (Western Goths) on the Lower Danube begged for admission into the Empire for

protection. Their request was granted on the condition of their accepting Christianity. Within a few years the Ostrogoths (Eastern Goths) made a similar demand, and soon the Empire was flooded with the barbarians. They were even admitted to high office both civil and military. For instance, the great general Stilicho, in the reign of Honorius, was a Vandal. For a time he valiantly fought against his own tribesmen and other barbarians and won great victories for the Empire. Yet he was suspected of collusion and barbarously executed together with the wives and children of 30,000 barbarian soldiers in the legions. Rome had soon to pay for this heavily, as the Goths under their famous leader Alaric ravaged the country and sacked the imperial city (410 A.D.). The sudden death of Alaric alone saved the other parts of the Empire from a like fate, for the nonce. But another threat came from Attila the Hun (known as "the Scourge of God") in 452 A.D. Deflected from China by the building of the Great Wall the Mongolian hordes had found their way into India and Europe. "Their numbers, their ferocity, their horsemanship, their archery, the fury of their onslaughts, made them terrible and for a time irresistible." Diverted from Gaul (France) by their defeat at the battle of Chalons in 451 A.D. the Huns turned into Italy. There they freely despoiled and destroyed cities like Verona, Milan and Padua; and Rome was just saved on account of the bold appeal of Pope Leo I. Attila then left Italy only to die in Hungary a year later (453). The proud barbarian who boasted that grass never grew where his horse's hooves had trod was buried in a triple coffin of gold, silver, and lead, though "the place of his sepulture no man knoweth to this day." Here it is interesting to note the following description of the Huns as they appeared to Ammianus Marcellinus, a

contemporary Roman soldier :—

“The people called the Huns, barely mentioned in ancient records, live beyond the Sea of the Azof, on the border of the Frozen Ocean, and are a race savage beyond all parallel. . . . They all have closely knit and strong limbs and plump necks; they are of great size, and low legged, so that you might fancy them two-legged beasts, or the stout figures which are hewn out in a rude manner with an axe on the posts at the end of bridges.

“They are certainly in the shape of men, however uncouth, and are so hardy that they neither require fire nor well savoured food, but live on the roots of such herbs as they get in the fields, or on the half-raw flesh of any animal, which they merely warm rapidly by placing it between their own thighs and the backs of their horses. They never shelter themselves under roofed houses, but avoid them, as people ordinarily avoid sepulchres as things not fit for common use. Nor is there even to be found among them a cabin thatched with reeds; but they wander about, roaming over mountains and the woods, and accustom themselves to bear frost and hunger and thirst from their very cradles. . . .

“There is not a person in the whole nation who cannot remain on his horse day and night. On horse back they buy and sell, they take their meat and drink, and there they remain on the narrow neck of their steed, and yield to sleep so deep as to indulge in every variety of dream. And when any deliberation is to take place on any weighty matter, they all hold their common council on horseback. They are not under kingly authority but are contented with the irregular government of their chiefs and under their lead they force their way through all obstacles.

“None of them plough, or even touch a plough handle, for they have no settled abode, but are homeless and lawless, perpetually wandering with their waggons, which they make their homes; in fact they seem to be people always in flight.”

After Attila, the Hun, Rome had to suffer from the depredations of the less considerate Vandal, Genseric, in 455 Pope Leo once again appealed to the invader to spare the city, but in vain. For fourteen days and nights the city was rifled of its treasures, including the golden candlestick

that Titus had taken from the Temple of Jerusalem, and in the Vandal ships that carried away the spoil 30,000 Roman citizens were borne into slavery.' Twenty-one years later (476) Romulus Augustulus (the Little Augustus), the last of the Western Roman Emperors, was driven out by another German leader, Odoacer, and Italy became a barbarian kingdom. The principal Nordic kingdoms that arose out of the ruins of the Western Roman Empire were (1) of the Visigoths in Spain (410 A.D.); (2) of the Vandals in North Africa (439 A.D.); (3) of the Lombards and Ostrogoths in Italy (493 A.D.); (4) of the Franks in France under Clovis (481-511 A.D.); (5) of the Burgundians in the Rhone valley; and (6) of the Angles, Saxons and Jutes in England (455 A.D.). Of their monarchs, the greatest, on the continent of Europe, were Theodoric the Great, King of the Ostrogoths, and Clovis, King of the Franks.

Acting nominally in the name of the Eastern Roman Emperor, Theodoric defeated Odoacer in three battles (489-490 A.D.) and set himself up as the "King of Italy" with Ravenna as his capital. In five years Theodoric had made himself the most powerful man in the world, though the tasks before him were enormous. There were a quarter of a million Goths in Italy amongst people of a different race and religion; internal peace was to be restored, the country reconstructed, and trade and industry resuscitated. Moreover, Theodoric's hostile neighbours were to be taught to recognize and respect the new kingdom. All these things Theodoric did well, and proved himself a great and just ruler as well as a valiant soldier. Lands in north Italy ravaged by invaders were repopulated, their inhabitants ransomed from captivity in foreign lands and restored to their homes which were rebuilt for them. Estates were taken and divided among the Goths and Romans in such a way that quarrels rarely broke

out. His taxation was just and considerate and a careful watch was kept on all tax-gatherers so that nobody was overcharged. When the people of Pavia had their crops destroyed in 496 by flood, Theodoric remitted two-thirds of their taxation.

In addition to caring for the well-being of the country people, Theodoric also tried to restore some of the splendours and shows of ancient Rome. Gifts of bread were made to the poor, so that crowds again congregated at the circuses to see the games and shows. Rome once more became gay, and the old privations were almost forgotten. Old works of art were restored to their original places, and rewards were offered to those who could reveal the hiding-places of those which had been stolen. Builders, sculptors, and artists were encouraged, and other Italian cities, like Verona and Ravenna, became almost as splendid as Rome itself.

Theodoric also made Italy prosperous by fostering trade and industry. Iron mines were opened in Dalmatia and gold mines in the South of Italy. People were encouraged to drain marshes and valuable and fertile tracts were created. Transport was improved by the building and improvement of roads, and security given to the merchant by the restoration of a sound system of coinage and a uniform standard of weights and measures. Theodoric forbade the export of corn from Italy, and speculators who bought and sold at enhanced prices were severely punished. In this way Italy became once more a land of plenty.

Though himself a Christian, Theodoric allowed people of all religions to worship as they pleased. Though he himself belonged to the Arian sect of Christianity, he did not persecute members of the Orthodox Church, believing that persecution could make many hypocrites, but no sincere believers. His treatment of the Jews was most considerate. In



those days the Jews were persecuted because of their religion and nationality, but Theodoric forbade this and punished with death all who were guilty of it. Those who destroyed the synagogues had to rebuild them at their own expense, and in Ravenna, Christians who could not pay for the damage they had done were publicly whipped. "Theodoric well deserves the name of a statesman," writes Mr. Priestley, "for in thirty years he built up in Italy the most glorious state since the days of the Emperor Augustus. Within Italy it was said that a gold piece might be left for a year and a day by the roadside without being stolen, and beyond its confines the name of Theodoric carried honour with it to the very edges of civilized Europe where the Livonians and Scanzians on the Baltic shores still traded in amber and sables as the Goths had done of old."<sup>1</sup>

Of Clovis and his successors we shall read in another chapter. Here we should say something about the Eastern Empire of Constantinople. We have already noted how the vast and unwieldy Roman Empire was split into two after Theodosius the Great (379-395) A.D., and how also the Western Empire was extinguished by the barbarians under Odoacer in 476 A.D. Constantinople had been founded by Constantine in 330 A.D. Arcadius and Theodosius II, successors of Theodosius the Great, ruled from this city from 395 to 450 A.D. Though the Western Roman Empire was overthrown by the barbarians, both Odoacer and Theodoric were content to rule as Kings of Italy nominally subordinate to the Eastern Emperors. We need not follow the history of all the weak rulers of Constantinople, who, as in the last days of Rome, were puppets of the army and

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1. E. Priestley, *Builders of Europe : The Middle Ages*, p. 34.

intriguing women. The only noteworthy achievement of this period was the codification of the Roman Law undertaken by Theodosius II and completed under the great Justinian (527-565 A.D.). It is important because from it we derive our knowledge of the legislation of the early Christian Emperors, and also because the *Corpus Juris Civilis* or the Justinian Code became the basis for medieval law including that of some of the barbarians like the Burgundians, the Ostrogoths and the Visigoths. Justinian also attempted to consolidate his Empire by strengthening its defences in the East as well as by subduing Italy. Though he appeared to succeed in both these directions, especially with the help of his great generals Balisarius, Mundo and Narses, the Byzantine Empire could not hold Italy for long. Even on its own Eastern borders new dangers soon began to appear. The Avars, another Asiatic people like the Huns, burst into Europe, and for over two hundred years after the death of Justinian terrorised both Central Europe and the Byzantine Empire; wars with Persia continued from disaster to disaster; the Bulgarians broke down every barrier and flooded the Balkans; finally, the anemic Empire could not hold its own against the frenzied followers of the new faith which had appeared in Arabia, viz. Islam. But with varying power and prosperity the Empire of Constantinople continued until its fall in 1453 A.D. "The long life of the Byzantine Empire," observes Professor Webster, "is one of the marvels of history. Its vitality seems the more remarkable, when one considers that it had no easily defensible frontiers, contained many different people with little in common, and on all sides faced hostile states. The empire lasted so long, because of its vast wealth and resources, its despotic, centralized government, the strength of its army, and the almost impregnable position occupied by Constantinople, the capital

city...By resisting the advance of the invaders, the old empire protected the young states of Europe until they had become strong enough to meet and repulse the hordes of Asia. This service was not less important than that which had been performed by Greece and Rome in the contests with the Persians and the Carthaginians."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Hutton Webster, *History of Mankind*, pp. 241-242.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### THE GOLDEN AGE OF HINDU CULTURE

✓ The Age of the early Imperial Guptas is generally regarded as the Augustan Age of Indian culture in the mediæval period.—R. D. Banerji

We traced in an earlier chapter the history of India during the Buddhist Age. That period deserves to be remembered for all times if only because it produced an Indian monarch—the greatest on this account in the history of humanity—who had the courage and nobility to forever renounce war in the hour of victory. The world has produced no second Aśoka. Even in India the great ideal of Aśoka was soon superseded by others. Buddhism itself vanished from the land of its birth. A Hindu renaissance followed in the wake of the Maurya Empire, and it lasted nearly a thousand years. This revival of Hinduism was first marked by the *Aśvamedha* (horse sacrifice) performed by Pushyamitra Sunga in the second century B.C. It endured till Hindustan was engulfed by waves of Islamic conquests from the eighth century A.D. The highest crest of this cultural wave was witnessed in the Golden Age of the Guptas (320-490 A.D.), though the waters of its flood continued to leaven Hindu society long after. It was during this period that Hindu culture assumed its permanent character. It consolidated its past achievements, assimilated them to new experiences, crystallised its peculiar traits, and acquired its personality, in

short. The far flung empire of Hindu culture, in the Eastern Archipelago and elsewhere, was also established in the course of this remarkable epoch. . The period being too vast for detailed treatment we shall here attempt only a brief survey of some of its salient features.

The political history of this millennium may be summarily told. The Mauryas counted eight rulers in all, of whom the first three ruled from 322-232 B.C. The last five reigned from 232-185 B.C. Under Aśoka, as we have seen, the Empire extended over the whole of India (excluding the extreme end of the peninsula) and stretched, in the North-West, almost to the natural boundary of the Hindukush. Its internal organisation and administration were the best ever witnessed within the country and even outside in that age. For humanity there were few governments that could even approach that of Aśoka. Even when the Maurya Empire vanished the high standards it had created never disappeared from the land. They continued to be the aspirations of all their successors. They were embodied in the *Arthaśāstra* of Kautilya, the political testament of Hindu India. "In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness, in their welfare his welfare, whatever pleases himself he shall consider as not good, but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider as good" was the ideal set before the monarch. Aśoka accordingly held himself always ready for public duties and declared, "at all times and at all places, whether I am dining or in the ladies' apartments, in my bedroom or in my closet, in my carriage or in my palace gardens, the official reporters should keep me informed of the people's business."

Pushyamitra Sunga and his successors held sway over Hindustan during 112 years (185-73 B.C.). They were followed by the Kanvas who fell within less than half a century (73-28 B.C.). The outstanding features of this period were

(1) the revival of Brāhmanism and (2) foreign invasions. The invaders at first embraced Buddhism, then came under the rising influence of Hinduism. The former reached its zenith under Menander and Kanishka ; the latter revealed its power under the Guptas. The principal foreign invaders were the Indo-Bactrians (175-25 B.C.), the Indo-Parthians (138 B.C.), and the Indo-Scythians (100 B.C.-226 A.D.). The Śakas and Kushans were the chief among these. Kanishka, about whom we have read already, was the greatest of the Kushans. He was the Aśoka of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and the link between India and central Asia. Mahāyāna revealed the influence of the foreigners as well as of Brāhmanism. In the words of E. B. Havell, "The extent to which Brāhman thought was penetrating into the growth of Buddhism is shown in the gradual Sanskritising of its old literary language, Pali, which comes into evidence after the first century A.D. With the spread of Mahāyāna doctrines, of which the Brāhman Nāgārjuna was a famous protagonist in the second or third century A.D., Sanskrit came to be used by northern Buddhists both in their texts and in oral disputations. The change in the form of expression connoted a subtle change in thought. When the Mahāyānists restated the doctrines of the Buddha in terms of their mystic philosophy they gave away the logical position of the Great Teacher and prepared the way for a religious reaction in favour of orthodox Brāhmanism which was accelerated by the trend of political events."

For over three centuries the foreigners flooded the country from across the North-West frontiers. For about a hundred years after the break up of the Kushan Empire and its Andhra contemporary in the Deccan (i.e. 220-320 A.D.) chaos prevailed in India. From this emerged the great Gupta dynasty founded by Chandragupta I (320-33 A.D.). The next

four rulers of this gifted family raised their own as well as their country's fortunes to a height never reached before. Samudragupta (330-375 A.D.), often described as 'the Napoleon of India,' extended Gupta dominion over the major portion of the country, and celebrated his triumphs by performing *Aśvamedha* and putting up an inscription on the *Aśoka* pillar at Allahabad. In the opinion of Professor Radhakumud Mookerji, Samudragupta represents the "Indian type of militarism": he "conquered only to liberate," but "stood boldly for the traditional Kṣatriya ideal for a king, that he must extend his authority up to the limits of his country, so that it may attain political unification under the 'umbrella' of one paramount sovereign." He was followed (after a short interlude) by Chandragupta II *Vikramāditya* (380-414 A.D.) who though great in war was even greater in peace. Regarding his reign we have the testimony of the celebrated Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian, and Vincent Smith writes, "Probably India has never been governed better, after the Oriental manner, than it was during the reign of Vikramāditya." Though the Empire of the Guptas continued to flourish for nearly a century after *Vikramāditya* it could never maintain the glory and prosperity of his reign. Foreign invaders (the Hūṇas) once again came and seemed to destroy the native fabric for a time. But they too were soon absorbed beyond recognition by the powerful Hindu society. The last great ruler of Hindu India, in the North, was Harshavardhana of Kanouj. He ruled from c. 606-647 A.D. Hiuen Tsang visited India during his reign. Much of our knowledge regarding this period is derived from the interesting observations of this most famous of Chinese pilgrims (631-645 A.D.). Before we proceed to describe the civilisation of this epoch, however, we must not fail to point out that, during the period of North Indian history traced above, powerful dyna-

sties like the Satavahanas. (220 B.C.—320 A.D.), the Pallavas (226-500 A.D.) and the Chalukyas (550-754 A.D.) ruled over the southern parts of the country. But the importance of this epoch lies more in its cultural achievements than in its dynastic doings.

✓ The spirit and character of Hindu culture are nowhere better represented than in the Mahābhārata. Indeed, an Indian adage declares that what is not found in the great epic or *Itihāsa* is not to be found anywhere else in the world. Though originally composed very much earlier, it took its final form during the period of the great Hindu renaissance dealt with here. Hence in its encyclopædic contents is to be found reflected the accumulated experience of Hindu society as it was shaping itself in the Golden Age of the Guptas. "The *Mahābhārata* is," in the words of Dr. Raychaudhuri, "Next to the *Rig-Veda Samhitā*, perhaps, the most remarkable work in Sanskrit literature. It is the biggest of the world's epics. Since the commencement of the sixth century A.C., it is known to have consisted of 100,000 *ślokas* or verses, that is, about eight times the size of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together. From the beginning it has enjoyed exceptional popularity. Heroes of the great poem find prominent mention in the works of grammarians, theologians, political thinkers, poets and dramatists almost uninterruptedly from about the fifth century B.C. Precepts culled from the epic are quoted by a Greek envoy as early as the second century B.C., while the prowess of its principal heroes is mentioned with admiration by royal personages in the Deccan already in the second century A.C. The whole poem is known to have been recited in temples in far-off Cambodia as early as the sixth century A.C. In the next century we find the Turks of Mongolia reading in their own idiom thrilling episodes like the *Hidimbāvadhā*. The work



was translated into their own vernacular by the people of Java before the end of the tenth century."<sup>1</sup>

A part of the *Mahābhārata* which has most influenced the Hindu mind is the *Bhagavad-Gīta*. But the most important of the normative works of the past that has supplied the hinges to Hindu society, as it were, is the *Manusmṛiti* or *dharmaśāstra*. Next to these are the *Purāṇas* which have given colour and shape to popular Hinduism. The cults of Śiva and Vishnu have drawn their substance from them, while the *Rāmāyaṇa* has been the most popular of all the epic poems of Hindu India. Produced, undoubtedly, in different ages these great works together form a body of literature that undoubtedly represents the interests, and therefore the mind and outlook, of the age which forms the subject of this chapter. It is beyond our scope to deal with the vast and versatile Sanskrit literature in all its branches. But we may note in passing that Classical Sanskrit literature was at its best in this age. It was the age above all of Kālidāsa. While the great German poet Goethe went into raptures over his *Śakuntala*, a modern English critic says, "His superiority is in refinement, moderation, and reserve." With characteristic genius Kālidāsa describes the Himālayas as the 'massed laughter' of Śiva.

In their universities such as those of Nalanda, Benares, Taxila, the savants of this age pursued literary as well as scientific studies. The traditions indeed were older. As Mr. W. E. Clark has pointed out, "Among the scientific achievements of the Hindus their work on grammar occupies a high place. In the systematic analysis of language they reached a much higher point than any other people of antiquity. The date of Pāṇini is uncertain, but it cannot

1. *The Cultural Heritage of India*, I, 98.

be later than the fourth century B.C. His grammar is the earliest scientific grammar in the world, the earliest extant grammar of any language, and one of the greatest ever written." The same writer points out, how in the field of astronomy as well, the Hindus made great progress during this epoch. Āryabhata (499 A.D.) and Varāhamihira (c. 505 A.D.) lived in this age. 'The Greeks,' they said, 'are Mlecchas, but amongst them this science is duly established; therefore even they are honoured as Rishis; how much more then an astrologer who is a Brāhman.' According to Mr. Clark, "Even if the impetus toward a new astronomy was received by India from Greece by the acceptance of certain general ideas, these were clearly adopted to the older Indian cosmography and modes of reckoning. What had been borrowed was thoroughly Hinduized and completely assimilated into Indian culture." In medicine, "By the fourth century A.D. the *Saṁhitās* of Charaka and Suśruta had already become standard works."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to deal adequately with the art and architecture of the period in a brief volume like this. Moreover, chronological and sectarian limits cannot be rigidly applied to an elastic subject like art. Hence the reader must be content here with a few general observations. In point of time we must take a wide sweep from the Mauryas to the eve of the Muslim invasions. Geographically, we must envisage the country as a whole, though our illustrations may be provincial. We must likewise take notice of Buddhist and Jain art no less than Śiva and Vaiṣṇava art as equally representing the genius of the age. Although

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<sup>1</sup> Read the chapter on Science in *The Legacy of India*, pp. 335-338.

the Buddhists and Jains were perhaps the first to initiate art activity, particularly iconographic, and to imbibe and assimilate foreign influences (Greek and Central Asian), the art of the Gupta age was its own and unique. As Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has said, "The sum of Indian culture in the Gupta period, already essentially Hindu rather than Buddhist, is so rich, so fully organised, and so conscious, that we can hardly fail to regard the preceding half millennium as the period of highest creative activity in the whole development of Hindu civilisation—an activity to be regarded as the formal and material embodiment of the Great Enlightenment." He further states, "In the art of the Gupta period all earlier tendencies converge: an identical quality appears not only in art of diverse sectarian application, but in the art of every province, from the Himalayas to Ceylon. We no longer meet with primitive qualities or *naïveté*, in Indian art—its character is self-possessed, urbane, at once exuberant and formal. All foreign influences have been absorbed and Indianised.<sup>1</sup> The consummation of this art is to be found in the cave-paintings of Ajanta no less than in the marvellous excavations of the Kailas temple at Ellura. They reflect respectively the minds of Buddhist and Hindu India in religion, but are equally representative of the artistic soul of creative India. The same impulse finds expression at Amaravati, Badami, Sigririya and Belur, widely separated as they are in time as well as space. They breathe the spirit of the Hindu Renaissance which also included the best of the Buddhistic legacy. The representation of Pauranic subjects with marvellous dexterity in execution is the outstanding characteristic of the art of this age.

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1. *Introduction to Indian Art*, pp. 30-31 and 59.

On account of our geographical and other natural conditions we have been looked upon as an essentially stay-at-home people. That this is only a superficial reading of Indian national character is proved both by the vigour of our modern settlers abroad as well as by the colonial enterprises of the period we are now considering. Not only did India carry on a rich commerce with Rome and the Western world, but, under the impulse of Buddhism, she also penetrated into all parts of Asia. While on the one hand Chinese pilgrims like Fa-Hian and Hiuen Tsang came to India in search of Buddhist knowledge, Indian monks and teachers like Kumārajīva and Bodhidharma went to China to spread Indian enlightenment there. But this enterprise was confined neither to individuals nor to the Buddhists. The Hindu renaissance carried whole communities from all parts of India particularly into the countries of South-Eastern Asia, for purposes of trade and settlement, and cultural expansion necessarily followed in their wake. The principal centres of Indian culture in that quarter were Cambodia, Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Bali. Here were founded Buddhist as well as Brāhmanical kingdoms. The great monastery of Borobudur in Java and the great Vishnu temple of Angkor Vat, both magnificent monuments, proclaim to this day the glory of bygone times. On the walls of the latter are splendid bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Mahābhārata*, and *Harivaṃśa*. There are inscriptions in these colonies, composed in Sanskrit and written in Nāgari, South Indian, and local scripts. There was such close contact between these centres and India that movements in the home-country immediately affected the colonists of Greater India. "For the Javanese masses even of to-day, Rāma and the Pāṇḍavas are national heroes born and brought up in the isle of Java! Puppet shows

(*wayang* or shadow-show), representing scenes from the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*, are still the most popular of entertainments, whether in the palaces of Javanese princes or in the humble abodes of the poor."<sup>1</sup>

The establishment of the first Indian kingdom (that of Fu-nan) in Indo-China is attributed, in Chinese records, to a prince named Kaundinya. Under one of his successors named Jayavarman, the kingdom of Fu-nan reached its zenith in the fifth century A.D. He sent an embassy to the Chinese imperial Court, in 484 A.D., asking for help in the conquest of Champa, another Indian state in Annam. The Chinese Emperor conferred upon Jayavarman the title of 'General of the Pacific South, King of Fu-nan.' "But to us the greatest interest in Fu-nan," writes Dr. Wales, "lies in the fact that here, at least during the fifth and first half of the sixth centuries, was a rich and highly civilized Indian state whose art and culture must have been at the base of all the glorious development of subsequent centuries."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, for want of space, we cannot give here a fuller account of the fascinating history of Indians in these distant lands. That must be read in the captivating pages of Dr. Wales' book. "Khmer (Cambodian) culture," he says, "is essentially based on the inspiration of Indian culture, without which the Khmers at best might have produced nothing greater than the barbaric splendour of the Central American Mayas." But, he also adds, "here, more than any-

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1 For further enlightenment on this subject read "The Hindu Kingdoms of Indo-China and Java" in *The Cultural Heritage of India*, III, 97-115. Also the excellent accounts given by H. G. Quaritch Wales in *Towards Angkor* (Harraps).

2. *Towards Angkor*, pp. 89-90.

where else in Greater India, this inspiration fell on fertile soil. . . . And, above all, it is in Cambodia, alone of all the Indian cultural colonies, that we find a clear comprehension of all the ideas inculcated by the Indian *gurus*, and an ability not merely to apply but also to develop them."<sup>1</sup>

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 228.

CHRONOLOGY  
SECTION TWO

B.C.	
3600—2100	Early Minoan Age.
2100—1600	Middle Minoan Age.
1600—1200	Late Minoan Age.
1500—700	Bronze Age in the Aegean.
753	Foundation of Rome.
625	Thales (first Greek geometer).
621	Draco.
600—500	Age of Tyrants in Greece.
594	Solon.
585	Jimmu Tenno (first Emperor of Japan).
560—527	Peisistratus (tyrant of Athens).
530	Pythagoras.
525—456	Aeschylus.
509	Rome becomes Republic.
500	Revolt of the Asiatic Greeks against Persia.
496—480	Persian Wars.
496—406	Sophocles.
494	First Secession from Rome.
490	Marathon.
484—425	Herodotus.
480	Salamis. Carthage defeated by Syracuse.
480—406	Euripides.
479	Battles of Plataea and Mycale.
471	Thucydides (born).
469—399	Socrates.
460—429	Greece attains the highwater level under Themistocles and Pericles.
451	Second Secession from Rome.
446—385	Aristophanes.
434—354	Zenophon.
431—404	Peloponnesian War.
427—347	Plato.
413	Syracusan Expedition of Athens.
405	Athens defeated at Aegospotami.

## B.C.

- 405— 396 Romans conquer Etruria.  
 390 First Gaul attack on Rome.  
 387 Peace of Antalcidas.  
 385— 322 Aristotle.  
 367 Licinian Law.  
 359— 323 Rise of Macedon under Philip and Alexander.  
 340— 290 Samnite Wars.  
 333 Battle of Issus.  
 326 Alexander in India.  
 323 Death of Alexander.  
 322— 185 The Maurya Emperors.  
 300 Euclides.  
 287— 212 Archimedes.  
 280— 275 Pyrrhus's expedition to Italy.  
 273— 232 Asoka.  
 264— 241 First Punic War.  
 225 Second Gaul attack on Rome.  
 219— 202 Second Punic War.  
 216 Battle of Cannæ.  
 206 Han Dynasty founded in China (—211 A.D.).  
 204— 122 Polybius (Roman historian).  
 202 Battle of Zama.  
 197 Battle of Cynoscephalæ.  
 185— 73 Pushyamitra Sunga and successors.  
 185— 149 Pushyamitra.  
 180— 160 Menander.  
 175— 25 Indo-Bactrians.  
 146 Corinth destroyed.  
 140— 87 Wu-ti (Emperor of China).  
 138 Indo-Parthians.  
 133 - 123 Gracchi brothers (Tribunes).  
 133 Pergamum conquered by Romans.  
 113— 101 Gauls defeated in N. Italy by Marius  
 100 Indo-Scythians (—226 A.D.).  
 91— 89 Social War.  
 87— 82 Rivalry of Marius and Sulla.  
 73— 28 The Kanvas.  
 73— 71 War of the Gladiators.



## B.C.

- 70 Tyranny of Verres in Sicily.  
 67 Roman conquest of Crete.  
 64 Roman conquest of Syria.  
 60 Triumvirate of Cæsar, Crassus and Pompey.  
 58— 50 Julius Cæsar's northern campaigns.  
 58— 51 Julius Cæsar's campaign among the Barbarians.  
 48 Battle of Pharsalus.  
 47 Julius Cæsar in Egypt.  
 44 Julius Cæsar murdered.  
 42 Battle of Philippi.  
 31 Battle of Actium.  
 31 Augustus (Octavian) becomes Emperor (—14 A.D.).  
 Birth of Jesus Christ.

## A.D.

- 14— 37 Tiberius (Emperor at Rome). Crucifixion of Jesus.  
 37— 41 Caligula.  
 41— 54 Claudius.  
 54— 68 Nero.  
 58— 76 Ming-ti (Emperor of China).  
 64 Buddhism enters China.  
 69— 96 The Flavian Emperors at Rome.  
 79— 81 Titus; destruction of Jerusalem; eruption of Vesuvius.  
 81— 96 Domitian; persecution of Christians.  
 96— 180 The Five Good Emperors at Rome.  
 120— 162 Kanishka.  
 135 Last Dispersion of the Jews from Palestine.  
 180 Death of Marcus Aurelius.  
 192— 284 The "Barrack Emperors" at Rome.  
 193— 211 Byzantium destroyed by Septimius Severus: facilitates Barbarians.  
 200— 270 Empress Jingu of Japan conquers Korea.  
 211— 217 Caracalla.  
 220— 326 Andhras (Satavahanas) rule over Deccan.  
 226— 500 Pallavas.  
 234— 305 Diocletian's measures against Barbarians.  
 249— 251 Decius proclaimed by Eastern Legions: Goths cross the Danube.

## A.D.

- 270— 275 Aurelian fortifies Rome, drives Barbarians across the Danube.
- 306— 337 Constantine becomes Christian, builds Constantinople (330).
- 320—490 The Golden Age of the Guptas : Chandragupta I (320-30) ; Samudragupta (330-75) ; Chandragupta II Vikramaditya (380-414).
- 330 Eastern Roman Empire founded.
- 379— 395 Theodosius, last of the great Roman emperors.
- 395— 450 Arcadius and Theodosius II.
- 401— 410 Fa Hian in India.
- 410 Alaric the Goth in Rome.
- 439 Vandal kingdom in N. Africa.
- 451 Battle of Chalons : Huns driven out of France.
- 452 Attila the Hun in Italy.
- 455 Genseric the Vandal destroys Rome. The Angles, Saxons and Jutes settle in England.
- 476 Romulus Augustulus, last Roman emperor (Western) deposed by Odoacer.
- 476 Barbarian kingdom founded in Italy.
- 481— 511 Frankish kingdom in France.
- 484 Jayavarma of Fu-nan (Indo-China) sends embassy to Chinese emperor.
- 489— 490 Odoacer defeated by Theodoric.
- 493 Lombard and Ostrogothic kingdoms in Italy.
- 499 Aryabhata.
- 500 Barbarian kingdoms founded in Africa, Spain, Gaul, etc.
- 506 Varahamihira.
- 520 Bodhidarma (Indian missionary in China).
- 527— 565 Justinian.
- 540— 571 Buddhism enters Japan.
- 550— 754 Western Chalukyas.
- 593— 628 Shotoku (the Aśoka of Japanese Buddhism).
- 606— 647 Harsha of Kanouj.
- 627— 650 T'ai Tsung (great Emperor of China).
- 630— 645 Hiuen Tsang in India.

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