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Rome under Augustus and
Britain under Victoria
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The institution of such a comparison as the above title denotes, implies at the outset the confronting of a difficulty of a nature such that no amount of talent nor research will entirely remove. In this year of our Lord 1904, one peers down through the vista of long ages to catch a glimpse of the nature and structure of the fabric held and welded together in the hands of the mighty mistress of the world of nineteen centuries ago: a trace, aye, and more than a trace of her authority yet remains affecting men as they stand in this or that relationship one to another: countless books have been scattered throughout the world, the result of endeavors to depict in true colors the scenes of the past, and many expeditions entered upon to explore the ruins of Rome's mighty temples, fortresses and cities. Thus, to us of today is furnished an opportunity of contemplating the empire of Augustus of such a kind that our eyes are not blinded by prejudice nor is our vision distorted by lack of historical perspective. But no man can so advantageously gaze on the British Empire under Victoria. In the first place (and this is particularly true in the case of Britain) prejudice, warping his judgment as he is a Briton or a foreigner, must necessarily play a strong part: in the second place, there is of course, an utter lack of perspective for the days of the Empire of Britain under Victoria are scarcely yet history at all. Still, in spite of those considerations, it has been a pleasurable occupation to endeavor to determine how parallel or how divergent are the elements, the fabric and the destination of these two Empires.

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To trace the growth of Rome and Britain during any extended period is not the purpose of this thesis: but the writer feels that in order justly to appreciate any comparison which may be drawn, it is necessary to consider to some degree the human type who in each case formed the essential element in the development of the constitution, that man who was in fact the "headstone of the corner". First, as to Rome. The story of the founding of Rome, shrouded in mystery, is not utterly devoid of an historical background, and we may venture to consider what manner of man was he who, some eight centuries before the birth of Christ, dwelt amid the hills near the banks of the Tiber. We find him the inhabitant of a region which certainly could be called the most attractive portion of Italia's soil. The ground was by no means remarkably fertile, the surface was hilly and the dread malaria held sway along the low-lying parts. But these very features created an environment bound to produce a strong type of man; for the struggle for existence there was the more severe and, as the early man viewed tracts where nature was more propitious both to the North and to the South, a spirit of aggrandizement was rapidly developed together with a strong bond of union. But they appear to have been no lawless depredators but to have enjoyed a system ~~of~~ highly patriarchal and to have been imbued with religious sentiments of the deepest nature. This spirit of aggrandizement, this sense of unity, this form of government, this depth of religion, all combined to produce the essential element in the mighty Empire of future days.

As regards the unit which forms the essential element of the British peoples, we have at hand a much more definite type. As the able historian Green points out, the basis of the former common wealth in early German society, was the free-man with his rights and privileges, but, as the "blood-bond" demanded, with corresponding responsibilities on behalf of his wronged neighbor. Pressed by invaders from the

plains of Eastern Europe they became rovers of the most daring type: yet amid all their plundering, butchering and ruthless destroying, they never lost that imbued love of justice and equity, at any rate, in the narrow range of the application of those qualities by which their moral vision was limited.

These then, are the essential elements from which was developed in each case the two mighty fabrics, the comparing of which forms the task of the writer. To trace by stages the growth in each would be aside from the purpose: but it remains to be noted that as Mommsen says in his first volume of his "History of Rome" the institution of citizenship was "altogether of a moral-religious nature": the citizens formed an organization protected by, and according to tradition, sprung from certain deities: outsiders could not claim equal privileges with the citizen-band, not on account of a mere national conservative jealousy, but because the "covenant" was not for them. But our citizenship is based upon a contract between man and man: by the time Victoria had ascended the throne, religious consciousness was a matter for the individual, - what he believed and practiced stood in a quite secondary relation to his status as a citizen.

Having now considered the Empires with regard to their diversities of origin, we shall now proceed to consider the fabric and administration as it appears in each case. And first what of the two rulers whom we now watch take their respective places among the enthroned of the world, each taking the ruling place in Empires within which totally different influences and forces had worked out a totally different order of things? Notwithstanding the obvious dissimilarity resulting from living in widely removed eras, from the peculiar training of each towards far separated ideals, we note many common personal characteristics. Augustus appealed to the old Italian bourgeoisie, (not entirely obliterated in the many tumults and divisions which rent Italy asunder): Victoria,

beloved by all, but especially adored by our own middle classes, was the idol of the sturdy British yeoman: and in both rulers this effect resulted from the simplicity of life, the thrift, the moral vigor which characterized them both.

Having now considered the Empires with regard to their diversities of origin, we shall now proceed to consider the fabric and administration as it appears in each case. One invaluable key to the comparison may be found in the words of Mr. Pelham which I quote from his "Outlines of Roman History" page 276: "in direct contrast to the modern maxim that 'the king never dies' it has been well said that the Roman 'principate' died with the death of each princeps": and in a foot-note he remarks that the institution of the interregnum did not apply to the principate. In his later years Augustus had to face a problem which can never perturb the mind of a British ruler;- whom should he appoint or recommend to succeed him? , for on his decease the principate for the time being came to an end. But with us, the sovereign is a corporation sole,- an artificial person created by law, who never dies, though the natural body must suffer dissolution. At this point in Roman History we perceive an attempt, and all things considered, a fairly successful attempt, at a compromise: the great need of the hour when Augustus took the reins of government was a firm, well-planned policy of consolidation; yet the ancient republican traditions were not to be rudely shaken; there must still be the consuls, the magistrates, the senate, the comitia; the formula must be pronounced as of old, "Videant consules ne quid respublica detrimenti capiat". Thus we have a spectacle of a common-wealth forming into a monarchy, and a monarchy in fact, if not in name. As for the legislative bodies, they, as has just been intimated, must remain, but though actually acquiring greater splendor and more outward dignity, were by degrees emasculated, as Tacitus plainly gives us to understand in the last chapter of his Annals Book I.- "De comitiis consularibus, quae tum primum illo principe ac deinceps fuere, vix quicquam firmare ausim: adeo diversa non

modo apud auctores sed in ipsius orationibus reperiuntur. Modo subtractis candidatorum nominibus originem cuiusque et vitam et stipendia descripsit, ut qui forent intellexeretur: aliquando ea quoque significatione subtracta, candidatos hortatus ne ambitu comitia turbarent, suam ad id curam pollicitus est. Plerumque eos tantum apud se professos disseruit, quorum nomina consulibus edidisset: posse et alios profiteri, si gratiae aut meritis confiderent. Speciosa verbis, re inania aut subdola, quantoque maiore libertatis imagine tegebantur, tanto eruptura ad infensius servitum." And the further restricted influence ~~upon~~ imposed upon the senate is well seen upon consideration of the fact that only about two years after the death of Augustus, "Gallus, quia speciem libertatis Piso praeceperat, nihil satis illustre aut ex dignitate populi Romani nisi coram et sub oculis Caesaris, eoque conventum Italiae et affluentes provinciis praesentiae ejus servanda dicebat." Compare what has been said thus far with regard to our own Empire. Little by little the powers of the sovereign have been transferred to the legislative bodies: a real, not a merely hypothetical contract subsists between the monarch and the people so that to use the words of the historian Richard Green, "the King is as much a creature of Parliament as the pettiest tax-gatherer in the realm". It is not however, that the British Monarchs' occupation is gone, but that the sovereign's sphere of influence is shifted from the world of law giving and administration to that of an unofficial moral censorship and diplomacy, the value of which powers undefined though they be, but appertaining to one unapproachable by rival political factions, can not be held in too high an estimation. In this connection, though far too early to pronounce judgment, the writer would remark that in his opinion history will hereafter prove how much shall have been accomplished by our own King's well planned visits to the heads of the various continental powers.

Vigorous centralization of the control of imperial administration was an essential factor in the carrying out of the mission of Augustus' life. What are called "the Provinces of Caesar" had been allotted as rewards to the chief supporters of the prevailing coterie at Rome, and, though subject to a nominal control on the part of consuls and senate, each favourite ruled his province in an almost independent fashion, and there being no restraining influence from the masses below, and a little-exercised power from those above, the lack of unity, the gross corruption, and the consequent frequent and latent privy conspiracy and rebellion, showed plainly the need of a master-hand, the only remedy in fact, for the silent-spreading disease which threatened the very vitals of the Empire. Men whose career Augustus had for years closely scrutinized were set at the head of his own ^{Provinces} ~~property~~, and over the public Provinces were men carefully selected as Caesar felt his supervision gradually but surely extending. Within Rome itself, during his lifetime, the management of affairs concerning the supply of corn and water, the construction of roads, and the maintaining of a body of city police, became a Department under the Emperor's direct control. In short, ~~the~~ every branch of public interest even including the directing of religious ceremonies, felt the guidance of his powerful hand. And all this rebounded, at any rate for the time being, to the prestige, puissance and glory of mighty Rome.

But in the British Empire the same result- leadership among the nations- was in Victoria era reached by a converse developement. Beyond seas, the colonies, properly so called, at the beginning of the reign, present the view, not of decayed portions of formerly mighty states parcelled out as rewards to men for their services (praiseworthy and otherwise), but of sparsely settled regions, where a few hardy pioneers had faced awful dangers, from both nature and man, and where after many years a new Britain had been founded, struggling while yet almost too feeble to stand alone, to enjoy what they and their fathers had won at home "Government of the people, for the

people and by the people". Therefore, not centralization but decentralization is the line of development along which the Dominions beyond seas formed their progression in the Victorian era. During the years of Augustus, governors of Provinces beyond the seas upon whose shoulders rested a mere traditional responsibility, were replaced by men subjected long before to the careful scrutiny of their head, answerable to their head: it is within the lifetime of Victoria that we find at least three important colonies outgrow their infancy, to take upon themselves the rights and responsibilities of a self-governing race. Practically they are independant of the rule of imperial authority, except in matters effecting relation with foreign powers. And in the home-island, each county, each parish, has continued to increase its hold on its own particular administration by means of councils and local boards. With regard to the subject of taxation, more will be said at a later stage, but a contrast in one particular especially, cannot escape notice at this juncture. I refer to the fact that the Italians had always cherished and acted upon the tradition that the Provinces should bear the burden of taxation while they themselves should enjoy exemption therefrom, at least, to a very great extent: but Augustus at length forced those at home to take some share in contributing to the imperial treasury. On the contrary, that colonies should^{not} raise money to support any fund but those controlled absolutely by and for themselves, is a principal hitherto stoutly upheld throughout Greater Britain, a principle the violation of which has brought in the past anything but credit or glory to the Imperial statesmen: but it is interesting to note in this connection that towards the close of Victoria's long reign, a feeling has arisen by no means confined to insular minds, that something-as yet a vague something- ought to be done which would result in the giving of systematic assistance towards that defense and guardianship in the benefits of which we all have participated. But of course the deciding influence must flow in our case, not from the central regal authority, but from loyal hearts to

as they respond
that authority/ from the remotest bounds of our wide-spread
territories.

To look again at the fabric as a whole: Rome was a
military, Britain is a naval power. But to stop at this
would betoken a very superficial criticism. When we say
"Rome was a military power, but Britain is a naval one",
our phraseology in each case is similar, but, if we are to
draw at all near the truth, quite dissimilar ideas must be
called up before the gaze of our mental vision. For
militarism was the framework of Roman society; their land
tenure, their holding of slaves, their very ideals of moral
and religious conduct are but a reflex, showing clearly their
political doctrine, that, whereas Mars had, by the very out-
come of things, declared them to be the fittest^t to survive,
all others might think themselves well provided for if only
they were permitted to exist. But Britain is a naval power;
not that this particular form of militarism is at all the
basis of British society, but that physical force may some-
times be necessary as an aid to the placing of the individual
in a self-regulating position; and for geographical reasons
it is upon sea, more than upon land, that this manifestation
of physical force must be employed. Britain has, of course,
enjoyed both a military and a naval prestige, but not milit-
arism but commerce has long been the animus actuating her
movements; and next I proceed to deal with a comparison
between the two Empires as regards commerce.

Ancient history can afford us no spectacle the parallel
of Britain commercial supremacy. The reasons of this want
are partly physical and partly sociological. In the first
place, there was a serious lack of means of transportation:
the sea was never regarded with very favorable eyes by the
ancients of the civilized world as a medium of travel, - the
art of navigation had been tardy in developement, and the
following lines of Horace show us the existence of another
obstacle, - a subjective one:

Pars inclusa caloribus

mundi nec Boreae finitimum latus

Durataeque solo nives

mercatores abigunt, horrida callidi

vincunt eaquora navitae,

The land in turn presented barriers of mountains, deserts, and fens, and further more, the problem of speedy locomotion was unsolved. It is true that the Greek merchant had settled in the South of the Narbonensis, that the Phoenicians roamed even to Lands End, that "they of Tyre and Sidon" displayed their wares in Italy, that the now-forsaken Palmyra reared her head as the Syrian Queen; but all this fell far short of what we understand to be a commercial power. We see Britain the manufacturer and producer for a vast section of humanity, and the banker, financier, and carrier for all. With the enormous resources within the confines of the realms of Augustus, why this contrast? The answer lies here:- under the vigorous militarism of Caesar, and other princes of the ancient world, lasting security and unfettered individual action, so necessary to the existence of commerce, were impossible. The fine arts have most frequently flourished under the rule of tyrants (as in Greece); but there must be the least possible interference on the part of the State with men's persons, property and action, in order that such an intricate commercial system as we behold today may develop, and having developed, thrive. For so long as men know not at what moment their lands and goods may be confiscated, and they themselves bodily removed, if not put to death, there is slight encouragement for them to invest time, talent, and substance in what may be theirs only for the briefest period. Again, experiment and invention are the handmaidens of commerce; but attempts in the direction of obtaining power over Nature by mastering her secrets were anciently regarded as savouring of impiety and sorcery. We remember the picture ~~of~~ drawn for us in Lytton's "Last of the Barons", of the persecuted seeker after Nature's truths, though, the scene there depicted is represented as having taken place as lately as the reign of our Edward the Fourth, when feudalism in England was on the verge of decline. No, we have only

to cast a hurried glance over the ancient world to see that in such an Empire as that of Augustus commerce could never reach a high development. So, long, for instance, as Carthage, Corinth, or the towns of Syria were out-side of the pale of ~~the~~ advanced militarism, they enjoyed commercial prosperity; but just as soon as it became necessary that these states should form part of the great Roman system, they saw the decay of their trading; for after Rome had included them under her dominion, they gradually ceased to stand out pre-eminently as great industrial centres.

Something was said above with regard to lack of security as being an hindrance to the development of commerce in the ancient world upon that vast scale as we see it face to face today. It must not, however, be supposed that absolutely no form of security existed in the far off days of Augustus: on the contrary we find a class of men known as the argentarii, whose functions closely resemble those of our modern banker. They received money for deposit, and banker's profits arose then, as now, from the fact of their borrowing money at a certain rate of interest, and lending at a higher rate. We frequently read in the ancient records how that these argentarii were rapacious, and enjoyed in fact a reputation similar to that borne by Jews in later days; ~~a~~ still, the people appear to have reposed great confidence and trust in their maligned money-dealers, and it must be remembered in all fairness that in times when the State afforded so little protection to commercial and military interests, it would be necessary to exact a much more advanced rate of interest than is thought equitable in an age when even the Government itself lends and borrows and has itself stepped into the arena of commercial warfare.

One of the most remarkable contrasts to be found in a consideration of the characters of the Empires of Augustus and Victoria is presented to us on a review of the fiscal policy of which the two Governments respectively made use.

With all their national endowments, their deep researches into many sciences and arts, and the excellencies they obtained in some of the most important branches of human knowledge, neither the men of the Greek nor Roman civilizations, ever gave what is known as Political Economy, as systematic or rational study. This being the case, it is no wonder that the administration of Roman financial affairs had no solid foundation, and ~~and~~ was the source of endless perplexities, embarrassments and corruptions. The revenue of Rome was derived in the main from the following sources: taxes in kind or money, levied chiefly on the Provinces outside of Italy, - corn and fruit from Sicily, Egypt, and Asia Minor: the salt tax; the levying of tolls at city gates; the payment of customs as merchandise was conveyed from one political division to another; important export duties on slaves and cattle; later, a fee was demanded on legacies. In case of emergency, a special tax might be levied as thought expedient upon cities, districts or provinces. Enough has been said to show that the system of taxation was quite unscientific and consequently arbitrary, but it was none the less rigorous. For not only was the whole fiscal fabric unsound, but the mode of its operation was iniquitous. The actual collecting was left in the hands of a strong and united order of men, the well known publicans, who had a central office at Rome, and who wielded a mighty influence there, from the very fact of their having such a hold upon the finances. The "Farming" and sub-letting of the right to call in the taxes of the various divisions of the Empire rendered it an easy matter for one man, in the space of a very few years, to become a veritable Croesus; while the people, ground down by oppression, sapped of their virility, deserted the once populous and flourishing cities until finally the report would be returned to the Imperial City that the required levy could not be raised, from sheer want of the necessary number of inhabitants. It is quite true that Augustus, by his vigorous policy of

centralization, kept a watchful eye over every branch of the officialdom; thus to a large extent checking the flagrant abuses rampant under the latter days of the Republic: but the fact remains that there was no radical change of system, that what reform he may have accomplished resulted chiefly if not altogether, from his own personal abilities and force of character, and that consequently the accession afterwards of a less capable ruler would mean the breaking out again of the vilest corruption and direst oppression.

As a set off to all this, what do we find to be the condition of the financial affairs in our own Empire under Victoria? The ideal reached in fiscal policy? By no means: but we do see a system containing the rudiments of a far sounder basis of administration. A glance at the preceding paragraph will remind the reader that the heaviest and most assured tax was derived from the necessities of life and from the essential relationship of man to man in matters of trade and commerce: also that it bore with greatest weight upon those least able to bear it. In this way that freedom from restraint of action over a wide-spread ~~area~~ area, so necessary to sound commercial development, was cramped and artificially crushed. But within the British Empire there has been for over two hundred years a science of finance. Upon the advent of William of Orange, it was determined that henceforth the sovereign must be entirely dependant for his supplies upon Parliament. This resolution has necessitated the growth of statesmanlike knowledge of the principles of administration in this particular department; until now the following broad principles generally actuate British statesman in the providing for the country's revenue. Not necessarily for living nor for manufacturers, nor for the natural commercial intercourse, must furnish the means for filling the coffers of the State; but it is luxuries that must bear these burdens; and the amount to be levied on these will vary according to whether the particular articles under

consideration be innocent, or whether they possess dangerous tendencies when used in excess. An example of the former is ~~tea~~; that of the latter, brandy. Again, the tendency during Victoria's reign was to abolish tolls and like levies upon the continuously actions of men, but to retain them upon what may be called their occasional offices, such as the making of wills and the executing of sundry other documents. We have also a tax assessed upon property, for property is in conjunction with human activity, the producer of wealth; then for the meeting of exigences we have an income tax which may be varied according to need. These remarks apply in their entirety to Britain, but the broad principles are acted upon throughout the Empire; and they stand out in clear relief against the illogical and ill-conceived policy of the Romans.

Turning aside from these somewhat weighty considerations, let us now take a peep at the Roman in social life, at least the Roman of the higher type. As we approach his dwelling we see that, fronting the street is a line of shops; the gentleman does not however, live above them as is often the case in our day. Passing through the entrance a covered way between the shops, we enter the Atrium; doors lead off from this into various rooms. As we advance, leaving shops and servants quarters behind us, the surroundings become all the time more and more enchanting and artistic; we now reach the impluvium surrounded by the peristyle: on past the fountain, with the womens apartments leading off on either hand, we arrive at the portico and through that we proceed into the garden. All this time we have been from the moment we entered the passage between the shops entirely surrounded by stone buildings and walls. We watch the people around us; as with ourselves, though to a much more marked degree, their costum varies according to their rank and to the occasion. The distinctive Roman dress is of course the toga, made of ~~thin~~ thin wool, and in the case of the ordinary cit-

citizen, it is white: but with high dignitaries, (those above the people's tribunes), stripes of purple mark the proud wearer as one rightly to be honored; he is clothed in the toga praetexta. He will lay it aside on his retirement from office, but the stripe on his tunic he will retain. The white, graceful toga, variegated with purple and sometimes with gold, stands out vividly in contrast with the sombre garb which a British gentleman dons- and the more festive the occasion, the more gloomy his dress. Our Roman friend wears perhaps leather shoes, or more commonly sandals. The braccæ, or trousers, were not worn until Rome's legions had penetrated into the chilly climes of the North, and then only by soldiers: the legs are protected by bands wound about them. If it rains, ^{the Roman wears} ~~we find that~~ the paenula corresponding to our overcoat.

The ladies in the time of Augustus had learnt much from their Greek sisters in the way of apparel. The chiton and himation clothed the body, and on the feet were sandals often with leather soles. The Greeks in many ways were to the Romans what the French have been to the British as regards matters of taste and fashion: and ladies in the days of Augustus, as now, made frequent and strenuous efforts to enhance their natural beauty by means of jewellery and pigments, and with probably the same degree of success.

These then, are some of the external features of the home of the typical Roman during the era under consideration; and, when compared with the similar features of our own times, differences are easily accounted for on remembering what the Italian climate is, and what nations had set Rome an example in these things. From the soldiers standpoint, Rome's legions advanced upon the Grecian cities, long bereft of their ancient spirit,- castles, theatres, forts, statues, ay, even the very temples of the Gods, are laid in ruins: Greece is subdued. Do but give the fugitives from wasted

homes, and the legions from fields of conquest, time to reach Italy's shore, and commingle with her sturdy inhabitants, and the student of history sees how, in manners and morals, once again *"captivity is led captive"*.

It has never yet been Britain's lot to subjugate a people far better versed in Arts and amusements than herself; consequently we do not, as we contemplate Britain under Victoria, gaze upon a people whose vigor, soft luxury, too often the mother of vice, is slowly sapping away.

The Roman felt himself born to command; in the home as well as in the camp; wife and children, clients, and slaves, all were accustomed to look to him as absolute in the governing of his own little realm. The mother of the household knew nothing beyond her duties as such; a chaste Roman matron regarded the acquisition of a knowledge of literature and music as the natural concomitants of a departure from the path of virtue: therefore the women mixed little with their lords in the pursuit of amusements, neither did they busy themselves at all with the problems of his avocation or of his politics. During Victoria's reign, we can see that very rapid steps have been taken towards enabling the sexes to meet in the social and business world on a common level. For as regards a general education, women can with us become the rivals of the men: the legal disabilities under which they formerly labored, as for instance in the matter of the holding of real property, have now become almost altogether removed, and the day seems not far distant when we shall read in our morning papers, without the slightest shock, that such-and-such a constituency has returned Mrs. John Smith M.P. to the House of Commons. And of course every young lady must be competent to give an analysis of Wagner's Harmonies and to discuss the works of Browning, or the theories of Karl Marx.

The principle of State education, familiar enough to the Briton of the latter half of the Victorian era, was

unheard of by the Roman. Children were taught at home, and from the first taken to the forum and the senate: to speak was the lesson to which he devoted a lifetimes study. Of course, as a result of Grecian conquest in the Roman world of thought, that comprehensive training included under the terms "Music and Gymnastics" formed by the time Augustus ruled the training also of the well-born son of Rome. But the children were committed to the care of Greek slaves and hirelings, whose culture was not founded upon a strong ethical basis, and who had lost sight of the doctrine taught by their great predecessors ^{when they placed in juxtaposition} ~~in the phrase~~ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ὠφέλιμον. We might well, however, copy the Roman in his desire to express himself fluently and forcibly: in this particular the British child, highly trained in many departments, receives no systematic instruction nor practice, and is as a result comparatively deficient in this respect.

The Roman gentleman of the Augustan age kept alive the account of a mythology which he did not believe, and loved to boast of an ancient national code of morals which he did not practice. The writers of the Golden Age did their best, in epic and satire to remind their countrymen of an avenging, omnipotent Deity, who, in the puer days, had lent his strong arm to preserve Rome. But Virgil, born on 70 B.C., Horace in 53 B.C. and Livy in 59 B.C., together with their great patron Maecenas, were men of another generation; and if what they said could have been said (had there been peace and pleasure) fifty years before, the doom of Rome might have been longer averted. Such religious devotions as the Romans then practiced were not the result of a good life, but were looked upon as charms to prevent the befalling of evil. The philosophy of Epicurus was the school that represents his attitude towards moral questions; at least, this was the general rule, for the laxity of this system was its commending feature. But the religious ideas of the modern Briton point in an altogether different direction. He is not so devoted nor punctilious in his performance of ceremonial

devotions as his brethern of the Latin races, but he does insist upon the adoption of a sound moral basis as the foundation of his daily life. In the third book of Odes, Horace shows how lightly the marriage ~~firm~~ bond was regarded in those days.

"sed iussa coram non sine conscio
surgit marito, seu vocat institor
seu navis Hispanae magister,
dedecorum pretiosus emptor.

non his iuventus orta parentibus
infecit aequor sanguine Punico,
Pyrrhumque et ingentem cecidit
Antiochum Hannibalemque dirum;

Sed rusticorum mascula militum
proles,etc.

We cannot but admire the second stanza and the beginning of the third stanza of my quotation. Yet we cannot express surprise at the first one; what else could result from a people filled with lust of power and riches, whose chief problem in life was how to amuse oneself, all useful labor being performed by slaves, a people whose legions reduced to slavery whole tribes and nations, for whom now mere existence, even at the sacrifice of all else save their bodies was a privilege and not a right. In contrast to this, it is most gratifying to observe how much moral progress there has been in the reign of Victoria. By the constant contributions, individual voluntary, that have kept pouring in to the maintenance of churches, chapels, hospitals, schools, and missions, by the formation of societies to promote almost every phase of the moral life and by the general up-lifting of the tone of public life, have Britains shown an unequalled desire to preserve and even to raise the standard of national living.

Many of the prominent characteristics of a nation's life may be seen from a view of their distinctive games. Under Augustus, games, for the populace of Rome, had become one of the two necessities of human subsistence. Now one great distinction between the games of the ancients and the sports of the moderns is that, in the former case, public athletics formed part of the worship of the Gods: a procession wound its way from the Senate-House to the Circus Maximus, in which priests took an important part, swinging censers and bearing images. On the contrary, our pastimes of the great Church feasts are regarded rather in the light of relaxation from religious duties. The diversions of which Romans never seemed to tire, consisted of watching the chariot races, the ludus Troiae, and contests between wild beasts one with another, or with men; gymnastic exhibitions played a minor part. Of the games I have mentioned, only the ludus Troiae was participated in by Roman youths of quality; the chariots were driven mostly by professionals, and the fighting of wild beasts and the struggles of gladiators fell to the lot of criminals and other stigmatized members of society. And herein we see another strong contrast. The British public do not encourage professionalism in sports, and certainly popular sentiment is against brutal conduct in games: what we look for in sport is that which calls forth the exercise of the judgment, and adroit muscular movement, without any element tending to arouse the base passions of the spectators. That the Romans were absolutely inured to the sight of the most brutal and revolting contests is shown by the fact that, whereas duels and bull-fights are tolerated only here and there in the civilized world of today, the inhabitants of Italy of nineteen hundred years ago could gloat by the hour over the sickening scenes of the arena, and nowhere in their literature do we find any expression of disgust. The public conscience had long been lulled, and the general conditions of the Empire gave no promise of an

awakening. The advent of the Augustan age meant for the Roman world as a whole, adroitness of policy, imperial consolidation, after years of turmoil, and therefore a renewal of national vigor and an increase of prestige: but for the individual it was the confining of his activities, the loss of self-reliance, which are fatal to the quickening of moral discernment.

These latter reflections lead us to view in a broad way the social conditions of ancient Rome, as compared with our own, with which considerations this thesis shall close: our thoughts naturally revert to the problem of slavery. It is one of the most astounding spectacles which greet the eye of the student of ancient history, that into the highest ~~high~~ types of civilization of the old days was interwoven what is most repulsive to our minds. Our own Empire has long stood for the total suppression of the nefarious trafficking in human lives, and has led the way in this direction till the British flag is the terror of slave traders and the hope of the enslaved. Yet Rome, our equal in many things, and perhaps our superior in others, whose poets sang of deities who punished the liar and wrongdoer, whose philosophers, many of them, hold up for our admiration an ascetic type of morality, was the upholder of slavery. Not only did the Romans enslave peoples admittedly their inferiors in natural talents, but also their own neighbors, of the same stock as themselves; of this we have in our day amongst races of our own degree of culture, no parallel. Now slavery is a relic of barbarism; still, when Rome had, as was the case in the Augustan era, long ago left behind most other traces of her earliest days, she still kept alive, and very much alive, this revolting feature of her social fabric.

Rome had learnt, since her founding, many things, and had likewise forgotten many things; but what she had burnt deep in her heart was that her mission was to command. Caesar's famous "Veni, vidi, vici" sums up Rome's conception of herself.

She conquered the races of the world, and when they had learnt the lessons of citizenship which she taught, reluctantly admitted them to a greater or less enjoyment of her liberties and privileges: but, in the conquering, a subdued people was the property of the conquerors; their proper fate was destruction; slavery therefore, meant not a degradation, but rather a commutation of the death sentence. This stands out in strong contrast to the Britons view in Victoria's age; that a vanquished race is to be treated with as much humanity as the rights of self preservation on the part of the victor will admit. We see then that so long as there were races to be conquered, fresh supplies of slaves must follow as a consequence. "I have conquered these; they have therefore forfeited their right to exist". That men outside the pale of the Roman fabric were entitled to any love or ^{respect} ~~restraint~~ on the part of those of that family, was a doctrine at that time beyond man's conception.

The terrible effects, the moral sphere, of this system so utterly abhorred by us all, are quite apparent in the light of our further moral developement, though ^{they} ~~it~~ seems never to have been perceived of old. First, it is impossible for one, knowing that he exercises absolute right over the lives of perhaps hundreds of his fellow-creatures, to hold a proper estimate of the sacredness of a human life. Further, the institution of the baneful system of concubinage, results directly from the ancient doctrine of the right to enslave. Again, the carrying out of burdensome or disagreeable tasks could be shouldered upon the slaves, and thus useful and necessary labor be brought into disrepute. It is hard to say just in what proportion the slaves and the freemen stood one to the other, but probably half the population were enslaved: accordingly the free class could be ministered to without their necessarily putting forth any useful energies at all. There is one bright side to this exemption from material cares: those of the leisured class might use all their powers in the direction of self-culture, and thus produce monuments of human

greatness. But this ray of brightness quickly disappears when we consider at what a tremendous sacrifice such results were gained:- blight^{ed} hopes, the despair of degradation, tortures, death. But "we enjoy the blessing of Christianity, which accounts for our superiority in this regard" some one will instantly say. Now, in comparing a heathen nation with a Christian one, where the former fails to contrast favorably with the latter, it is the fashion merely to mention the name "Christianity", and then to consider the problem solved; very often such reasoning, if reasoning it can be called, is fallacious: this time, however, the guess happens to be correct. One of the greatest lessons that our religion has to teach is doubtless, that our ^{most} ~~parallel~~ interests are to be found not in the present, but in the future: hence whatever is prejudicial to the evolution of a single human soul, is to be condemned. In the ancient systems, on the contrary, the present is all-absorbing: the future is not denied, but is left to be regulated by the Fates who controlled even the Gods themselves: the idea of self-abnegation as a condition of future onward developement, gains no popular hold, whether as applicable to the individual or to the nation: the abolition of slavery was not contemporaneous with the introduction of Christianity. But we have today mastered to some extent, the lesson, and consequently violations of its precepts at any rate in the most hideous form, have disappeared.

But we are not yet in a position to do nothing but look back upon the Augustan era with a shudder and calmly congratulate ourselves on what we have attained. Our own order of society is such that we still see men who on the one hand, have no need of exerting themselves in any useful direction, being masters of the situation, owing the means of production of wealth: while others must accept from their hands the privilege of performing what is necessary and useful to sustain the existence of the whole fabric. Struggles between owners and workers abound and increase; neither this nor that particular set of men are to shoulder the whole blame for this; but let

us remember that the brilliant Empire of which Augustus was the first recognized ruler, contained within itself, I repeat, within itself, the beginnings of decay. No hasty overturning of society, no striking down of supposed enemies with dagger or poison, will avail anything, but rather render confusion worse confounded. But the fact that society, within our own Empire also, is in an unbalanced state, demands the attention of every ~~thing~~ thinking man. We have not yet reached that stage where every member of society can, if he will, develop himself to the utmost. So long as the Roman populace was pampered with games and distributions of bread, all was safe for the time being; but when they became for any reason so discontented as not to be readily appeased, they were the masters of Rome knowing not how to handle that power which they suddenly found within their grasp. Men who have watched with interest the feeding of hundreds of thousands of the poor of our great cities on occasions of national festivity, have ~~often~~ often remarked that were it not for the fact that the motley crowds assembled display their energies in good humored though boisterous fashion, there might be much to fear should these be roused as a class, stung with a sense, whether mistaken or not, of injustice. For the majority are cramped in their activities by an economic conditions of things still highly artificial, and rendered complex by modern commercial developments where credit, speculation, and fabulous values play so important a part. But as we look around us and perceive a steadily developing morality, popular education, responsible government, and above all, the high ideals set forth by our Christian religion, with its cry of "Onward ever Onward" we cannot despair; but we see gradually unfolding before us, if we only have eyes to see, a higher type of human society, towards the attainment of which by both precept and example, so much was effected by the lady who most truly could say "Exegi monumentum aere perennius" and who bore no such proud name as "Augustus", but the simple title "Victoria the Good".