HARRAP'S READERS OF TO-DAY
FOR THE CLASS-ROOM AND
SILENT READING

EPISODES FROM THE STORY OF MANKIND

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FOREWORD

REVIEWING the original complete edition of *The Story of Mankind*, Professor F. Clarke, of the University of Cape Town, wrote:

"We welcome such a book, not only because of its own attractiveness, and the fine mind and spirit that are expressed in it, but speaking for teachers we welcome it, since the teacher who studies it may set at rest once for all his worries about subject-matter in teaching history. Dr van Loon's book may not give a teacher *matter* enough to last over a whole school course in history, but it will give him *ideas* enough to last a lifetime. The whole pageant of humanity is here set forth with masterly skill. Or rather it is not so much a pageant as a drama, and a drama of which the author evidently feels himself no mere spectator, but an intensely living and active participant. Humour is in the book everywhere; imagination, sweeping in its reach, plays upon and dominates the obedient details, and abundance of knowledge is proclaimed on every page. But more than all these is

the strongly glowing *enthusiasm* of the book. The writer is intensely interested in humanity, lost in wonder both at its insignificance and at its vast achievements, and able to interpret its vicissitudes and strivings. . . .

"A book so full of ideas can throw new lights on things even for the trained historian. But for the hurried yet conscientious teacher, who is worried not so much by lack of matter as by difficulty in making his teaching *mean* something, this book should be an untold boon. To every teacher of history we would say, 'Sell some old clothes if necessary, but get this book.'

"It should also come sooner or later into the hands of all intelligent English-speaking children who are taught from the first to see the interest of the great human drama in which even they are already playing their little parts."

The episodes chosen for this book present a fairly continuous narrative of world-history from the dawn of civilization to the discovery of America. The concluding selections are concerned with the rise of the Russian Empire, the French Revolution, and the character of Napoleon. No doubt young readers will be eager for 'more'; their introduction to the

author's intriguing manner of telling his story will incite them to demand the complete book, which by this time is probably to be found in every fairly well equipped school library. Their enjoyment of this original work will be greatly enhanced by the illustrations, all 'done' by the author himself. These pen-and-ink sketches and colour drawings supplement the text in a remarkable way. They are just as suggestive as the letterpress, and teem with ideas, for all their apparent simplicity and crudity.

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I

THE NILE VALLEY

THE history of man is the record of a hungry creature in search of food. Wherever food was plentiful thither man has travelled to make his home.

The fame of the valley of the Nile must have spread at an early date. From the interior of Africa and from the desert of Arabia and from the western part of Asia people had flocked to Egypt to claim their share of the rich farms. Together these invaders had formed a new race which called itself "Remi," or "the Men," just as we often call the Hebrews "the Chosen People." They had good reason to be grateful to a Fate which had carried them to this narrow strip of land. In the summer of each year the Nile turned the valley into a shallow lake, and when the waters receded all the grain-fields and the pastures were covered with several inches of the most fertile clay.

In Egypt a kindly river did the work of a million men and made it possible to feed the teeming population of the first large cities of which we have any record. It is true that

all the arable land was not in the valley. But a complicated system of small canals and well-sweeps carried water from the river-level to the top of the highest banks, and an even more intricate system of irrigation trenches spread it throughout the land.

While man of the prehistoric age had been obliged to spend sixteen hours out of every twenty-four gathering food for himself and the members of his family, the Egyptian peasant or the inhabitant of the Egyptian city found himself possessed of a certain leisure. He used this spare time to make himself many things that were merely ornamental and not the least bit useful.

More than that. One day he discovered that his brain was capable of thinking all kinds of thoughts which had nothing to do with the problems of eating and sleeping and finding a home for the children. The Egyptian began to speculate upon many strange problems that confronted him. Where did the stars come from? Who made the noise of the thunder which frightened him so terribly? Who made the river Nile rise with such regularity that it was possible to base the calendar upon the appearance and the disappearance of the annual floods? Who was he himself, a strange little

creature surrounded on all sides by death and sickness, and yet happy and full of laughter?

He asked these many questions and certain people obligingly stepped forward to answer these inquiries to the best of their ability. The Egyptians called them 'priests,' and they became the guardians of the people's thoughts and gained great respect in the community. They were highly learned men, who were entrusted with the sacred task of keeping the written records. They understood that it is not good for man to think only of his immediate advantage in this world, and they drew his attention to the days of the future, when his soul would dwell beyond the mountains of the West and must give an account of his deeds to Osiris, the mighty God who was the Ruler of the Living and the Dead, and who judged the acts of men according to their merits. Indeed, the priests made so much of that future day in the realm of Isis and Osiris that the Egyptians began to regard life merely as a short preparation for the Hereafter, and turned the teeming valley of the Nile into a land devoted to the Dead.

In a strange way the Egyptians had come to believe that no soul could enter the realm of Osiris without the possession of the body which had been its place of residence in this

world. Therefore as soon as a man was dead his relatives took his corpse and had it embalmed. For weeks it was soaked in a solution of natron, and then it was filled with pitch. The Persian word for pitch was *mumiai*, and the embalmed body was called a 'mummy.' It was wrapped in yards and yards of specially prepared linen, and it was placed in a specially prepared coffin ready to be removed to its final home. But an Egyptian grave was a real home, where the body was surrounded by pieces of furniture and musical instruments to while away the dreary hours of waiting, and by little statues of cooks and bakers and barbers, that the occupant of this dark home might be decently provided with food and need not go about unshaven.

Originally these graves had been dug into the rocks of the western mountains, but as the Egyptians moved northward they were obliged to build their cemeteries in the desert. The desert, however, is full of wild animals and equally wild robbers, and they broke into the graves and disturbed the mummy or stole the jewellery that had been buried with the body. To prevent such unholy desecration the Egyptians used to build small mounds of stones on top of the graves. These little

mounds gradually grew in size, because the rich people built higher mounds than the poor, and there was a good deal of competition to see who could make the highest hill of stones. The record was made by King Khufu, whom the Greeks called Cheops, and who lived thirty centuries before our era. His mound, which the Greeks called a 'pyramid,' because the Egyptian word for 'high' was *pir-em-us*, was over five hundred feet high.

It covered more than thirteen acres of desert, which is three times as much space as that occupied by the church of St Peter, the largest edifice of the Christian world.

During twenty years over a hundred thousand men were busy carrying the necessary stones from the other side of the river, ferrying them across the Nile—how they ever managed to do this we do not understand—dragging them in many instances a long distance across the desert, and finally hoisting them into their correct position. But so well did the King's architects and engineers perform their task that the narrow passage-way which leads to the royal tomb in the heart of the stone monster has never yet been pushed out of shape by the weight of those thousands of tons of stone which press upon it from all sides.

II

THE RISE AND FALL OF EGYPT

THE river Nile was a kind friend, but occasionally it was a hard taskmaster. It taught the people who lived along its banks the noble art of 'team-work.' They depended upon each other to build their irrigation trenches and keep their dikes in repair. In this way they learned how to get along with their neighbours, and their mutual benefit association quite easily developed into an organized state.

Then one man grew more powerful than most of his neighbours, and he became the leader of the community and their commander-in-chief when the envious neighbours of Western Asia invaded the prosperous valley. In due course of time he became their king, and ruled all the land from the Mediterranean to the mountains of the West.

But these political adventures of the old Pharaohs—the word meant 'the Man who lived in the Big House'—rarely interested the patient and toiling peasant of the grain-fields. Provided he was not obliged to pay more taxes to his king than he thought just, he

accepted the rule of Pharaoh as he accepted the rule of mighty Osiris.

It was different, however, when a foreign invader came and robbed him of his possessions. After twenty centuries of independent life a savage Arab tribe of shepherds, called the Hyksos, attacked Egypt, and for five hundred years they were the masters of the valley of the Nile. They were highly unpopular, and great hate was also felt for the Hebrews, who came to the land of Goshen to find a shelter after their long wandering through the desert, and who helped the foreign usurper by acting as his tax-gatherers and his Civil Servants.

But shortly after the year 1700 B.C. the people of Thebes began a revolution, and after a long struggle the Hyksos were driven out of the country and Egypt was free once more.

A thousand years later, when Assyria conquered all of Western Asia, Egypt became part of the empire of Sardanapalus. In the seventh century B.C. it became once more an independent state, which obeyed the rule of a king who lived in the city of Saïs in the Delta of the Nile. But in the year 525 B.C. Cambyses, the King of the Persians, took possession

of Egypt, and in the fourth century B.C., when Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great, Egypt too became a Macedonian province. It regained a semblance of independence when one of Alexander's generals set himself up as king of a new Egyptian state and founded the dynasty of the Ptolemies, who resided in the newly built city of Alexandria.

Finally, in the year 39 B.C., the Romans came. The last Egyptian Queen, Cleopatra, tried her best to save the country. Her beauty and charm were more dangerous to the Roman generals than half a dozen Egyptian armies. Twice she was successful in her attacks upon the hearts of her Roman conquerors. But in the year 30 B.C. Augustus, the nephew and heir of Cæsar, landed in Alexandria. He did not share his late uncle's admiration for the lovely princess. He destroyed her armies, but spared her life that he might make her march in his triumph as part of the spoils of war. When Cleopatra heard of this plan she killed herself by taking poison, and Egypt became a Roman province.

III

MESOPOTAMIA

I AM going to take you to the top of the highest Pyramid, and I am going to ask you to imagine yourself possessed of the eyes of a hawk. Far, far off, in the distance, far beyond the yellow sands of the desert, you will see something green and shimmering. It is a valley situated between two rivers. It is the Paradise of the Old Testament. It is the land of mystery and wonder, which the Greeks called Mesopotamia—the 'country between the rivers.'

The names of the two rivers are the Euphrates, which the Babylonians called the Purattu, and the Tigris, which was known as the Diklat. They begin their course amidst the snows of the mountains of Armenia, where Noah's Ark found a resting-place, and slowly they flow through the southern plain until they reach the muddy banks of the Persian Gulf. They perform a very useful service. They turn the arid regions of Western Asia into a fertile garden.

The valley of the Nile had attracted people

because it had offered them food upon fairly easy terms. The 'land between the rivers' was popular for the same reason. It was a country full of promise, and both the inhabitants of the northern mountains and the tribes which roamed through the southern deserts tried to claim this territory as their own and most exclusive possession. The constant rivalry between the mountaineers and the desert nomads led to endless warfare. Only the strongest and the bravest could hope to survive, and that will explain why Mesopotamia became the home of a very strong race of men who were capable of creating a civilization which was in every respect as important as that of Egypt.

IV

MOSES

SOME time during the twentieth century before our era a small and unimportant tribe of Semitic shepherds had left its old home, which was situated in the land of Ur on the mouth of the Euphrates, and had tried to find new pastures within the domain of the Kings of Babylonia. They had been driven away by the royal soldiers, and they had moved westward looking for a little piece of unoccupied territory where they might set up their tents.

This tribe of shepherds was known as the Hebrews, or, as we call them, the Jews. They had wandered far and wide, and after many years of dreary peregrinations they had been given shelter in Egypt. For more than five centuries they had dwelt among the Egyptians, and when their adopted country had been overrun by the Hyksos marauders, as I told you in the story of Egypt, they had managed to make themselves useful to the foreign invader, and had been left in the undisturbed possession of their grazing-fields.

But after a long war of independence the Egyptians had driven the Hyksos out of the valley of the Nile, and then the Jews had come upon evil times, for they had been degraded to the rank of common slaves, and they had been forced to work on the royal roads and on the Pyramids. And as the frontiers were guarded by the Egyptian soldiers it had been impossible for the Jews to escape.

After many years of suffering they were saved from their miserable fate by a young Jew called Moses, who for a long time had dwelt in the desert, and there had learned to appreciate the simple virtues of his earliest ancestors, who had kept away from cities and city-life, and had refused to let themselves be corrupted by the ease and the luxury of a foreign civilization.

Moses decided to bring his people back to a love of the ways of the patriarchs. He succeeded in evading the Egyptian troops that were sent after him, and led his followers into the heart of the plain at the foot of Mount Sinai. During his long and lonely life in the desert he had learned to revere the strength of the great God of the Thunder and the Storm, Who ruled the high

heavens, and upon Whom the shepherds depended for life and light and breath. This God, one of the many divinities who were widely worshipped in Western Asia, was called Jehovah, and through the teaching of Moses He became the sole Master of the Hebrew race.

One day Moses disappeared from the camp of the Jews. It was whispered that he had gone away carrying two tablets of rough-hewn stone. That afternoon the top of the mountain was lost to sight. The darkness of a terrible storm hid it from the eye of man. But when Moses returned, behold! there stood engraved upon the tablets the words which Jehovah had spoken unto the people of Israel amidst the crash of His thunder and the blinding flashes of His lightning. And from that moment Jehovah was recognized by all the Jews as the Highest Master of their Fate, the only True God, Who had taught them how to live holy lives when He bade them follow the wise lessons of His Ten Commandments.

They followed Moses when he bade them continue their journey through the desert. They obeyed him when he told them what to eat and drink, and what to avoid, that they

might keep well in the hot climate. And finally after many years of wandering they came to a land which seemed pleasant and prosperous. It was called Palestine, which means the 'country of the Pilistu,' the Philistines, a small tribe of Cretans who had settled along the coast after they had been driven away from their own island. Unfortunately the mainland, Palestine, was already inhabited by another Semitic race, called the Canaanites. But the Jews forced their way into the valleys and built themselves cities and constructed a mighty temple in a town which they named Jerusalem, 'the Home of Peace.'

As for Moses, he was no longer the leader of his people. He had been allowed to see the mountain-ridges of Palestine from afar. Then he had closed his tired eyes for all time. He had worked faithfully and hard to please Jehovah. Not only had he guided his brethren out of foreign slavery into the free and independent life of a new home, but he had also made the Jews the first of all nations to worship a single God.

V

THE PHŒNICIANS

THE Phœnicians, who were the neighbours of the Jews, were a Semitic tribe which at a very early age had settled along the shores of the Mediterranean. They had built themselves two well-fortified towns, Tyre and Sidon, and within a short time they had gained a monopoly of the trade of the western seas. Their ships went regularly to Greece and Italy and Spain, and they even ventured beyond the Strait of Gibraltar to visit the Scilly Islands, where they could buy tin. Wherever they went they built themselves small trading stations, which they called colonies. Many of these were the origin of modern cities, such as Cadiz and Marseilles.

They bought and sold whatever promised to bring them a good profit. They were not troubled by a conscience. If we are to believe all their neighbours, they did not know what the words honesty or integrity meant. They regarded a well-filled treasure-chest as the highest ideal of all good citizens. Indeed, they were very unpleasant people and had

not a single friend. Nevertheless they have rendered all coming generations one service of the greatest possible value. They gave us our alphabet.

The Phœnicians had been familiar with the art of writing, invented by the Sumerians. But they regarded these symbols as a clumsy waste of time. They were practical business men, and could not spend hours engraving two or three letters. They set to work and invented a new system of writing, which was greatly superior to the old one. They borrowed a few pictures from the Egyptians and they simplified a number of the wedge-shaped figures of the Sumerians. They sacrificed the pretty looks of the older system for the advantage of speed, and they reduced the thousands of different images to a short and handy alphabet of twenty-two letters.

In due course of time this alphabet travelled across the Ægean Sea and entered Greece. The Greeks added a few letters of their own and carried the improved system to Italy. The Romans modified the figures somewhat, and in turn taught them to the wild barbarians of Western Europe.

VI

THE INDO-EUROPEANS

THE world of Egypt and Babylon and Assyria and Phœnicia had existed almost thirty centuries, and the venerable races of the fertile valley were getting old and tired. Their doom was sealed when a new and more energetic race appeared upon the horizon. We call this race the Indo-European race, because it conquered not only Europe, but also made itself the ruling class in the country which is now known as British India.

These Indo-Europeans were white men like the Semites, but they spoke a different language, which is regarded as the common ancestor of all European tongues with the exception of Hungarian and Finnish and the Basque dialects of Northern Spain. They are also known as Aryans, from the Sanskrit word *arya*, meaning 'noble.'

When we first hear of them they had been living along the shores of the Caspian Sea for many centuries. But one day they had packed their tents and they had wandered forth in search of a new home. Some of them had

moved into the mountains of Central Asia. Others had followed the setting sun, and they had taken possession of the plains of Europe, as I shall tell you when I give you the story of Greece and Rome.

For the moment we must follow the Aryans. Under the leadership of Zarathustra, or Zoroaster, who was their great teacher, many of them had left their mountain homes to follow the swiftly flowing Indus river on its way to the sea.

Others had preferred to stay among the hills of Western Asia, and there they had founded the half-independent communities of the Medes and Persians. In the seventh century before the birth of Christ the Medes had established a kingdom of their own called Media, but this perished when Cyrus, the chief of a clan known as the Anshan, made himself king of all the Persian tribes, and started upon a career of conquest which soon made him and his children the undisputed masters of the whole of Western Asia and of Egypt.

Indeed, with such energy did these Indo-European Persians push their triumphant campaigns in the west that they soon found themselves in serious difficulties with certain

other Indo-European tribes, which centuries before had moved into Europe and had taken possession of the Greek peninsula and the islands of the Ægean Sea.

These difficulties led to the three famous wars between Greece and Persia, during which King Darius and King Xerxes of Persia invaded the northern part of the peninsula. They ravaged the lands of the Greeks, and tried very hard to get a foothold upon the European continent.

But in this they did not succeed. The navy of Athens proved unconquerable. By cutting off the lines of supplies of the Persian armies the Greek sailors invariably forced the Asiatic invaders to return to their base.

It was the first encounter between Asia, the ancient teacher, and Europe, the young and eager pupil.

VII

THE ÆGEAN SEA

WHEN Heinrich Schliemann was a little boy his father told him the story of Troy. He liked that story better than anything else he had ever heard, and he made up his mind that as soon as he was big enough to leave home he would travel to Greece and "find Troy." That he was the son of a poor country parson in a Mecklenburg village did not bother him. He knew that he would need money, but he decided to gather a fortune first and do the digging afterward. As a matter of fact, he managed to amass a large fortune within a very short time, and, as soon as he had enough money to equip an expedition, he went to the north-west corner of Asia Minor, where he supposed that Troy had been situated.

In that particular nook of old Asia Minor stood a high mound covered with grain-fields. According to tradition it had been the home of Priamus, the King of Troy. Schliemann, whose enthusiasm was somewhat greater than his knowledge, wasted no time in preliminary

explorations. At once he began to dig. And he dug with such zeal and such speed that his trench went straight through the heart of the city for which he was looking and carried him to the ruins of another buried town which was at least a thousand years older than the Troy of which Homer had written. Then something very interesting occurred. If Schliemann had found a few polished stone hammers and perhaps a few pieces of crude pottery no one would have been surprised. Instead of discovering such objects, which people had generally associated with the prehistoric men who had lived in these regions before the coming of the Greeks, Schliemann found beautiful statuettes and very costly jewellery and ornamented vases of a pattern that was unknown to the Greeks. He ventured the suggestion that fully ten centuries before the great Trojan War the coast of the Ægean had been inhabited by a mysterious race of men who in many ways had been the superiors of the wild Greek tribes who had invaded their country and had destroyed their civilization or absorbed it until it had lost all trace of originality. And this proved to be the case. In the late seventies of the last century Schliemann visited the ruins of Mycenæ, ruins

which were so old that Roman guide-books marvelled at their antiquity. There again, beneath the flat slabs of stone of a small round enclosure, Schliemann stumbled upon a wonderful treasure-trove, which had been left behind by those mysterious people who had covered the Greek coast with their cities and who had built walls so big and so heavy and so strong that the Greeks called them the work of the Titans, those godlike giants who in very olden days had used to play ball with mountain-peaks.

A very careful study of these many relics has done away with some of the romantic features of the story. The makers of these early works of art and the builders of these strong fortresses were no sorcerers, but simple sailors and traders. They had lived in Crete and the many small islands of the Ægean Sea. They had been hardy mariners, and they had turned the Ægean into a centre of commerce for the exchange of goods between the highly civilized East and the slowly developing wilderness of the European mainland.

For more than a thousand years they had maintained an island empire, which had developed a very high form of art. Indeed, their most important city, Cnossus, on the

northern coast of Crete, had been entirely modern in its insistence upon hygiene and comfort. The palace had been properly drained and the houses had been provided with stoves, and the Cnossians had been the first people to make a daily use of the hitherto unknown bathtub. The palace of their king had been famous for its winding staircases and its large banqueting-hall. The cellars underneath this palace, where the wine and the grain and the olive-oil were stored, had been so vast, and had so greatly impressed the first Greek visitors, that they had given rise to the story of the 'labyrinth,' the name which we give to a structure with so many complicated passages that it is almost impossible to find our way out.

But what finally became of this great Ægean empire, and what caused its sudden downfall, I cannot tell.

The Cretans were familiar with the art of writing, but no one has yet been able to decipher their inscriptions. Their history therefore is unknown to us. We have to reconstruct the record of their adventures from the ruins which the Ægeans have left behind. These ruins make it clear that the Ægean world was suddenly conquered by a less

civilized race, which had recently come from the plains of Northern Europe. Unless we are very much mistaken the savages who were responsible for the destruction of the Cretan and the Ægean civilization were none other than certain tribes of wandering shepherds, who had just taken possession of the rocky peninsula between the Adriatic and the Ægean Seas, and who are known to us as Greeks.

VIII

THE GREEKS

THE Pyramids were a thousand years old and were beginning to show the first signs of decay, and Hammurabi, the wise King of Babylon, had been dead and buried several centuries, when a small tribe of shepherds left their homes along the banks of the river Danube and wandered southward in search of fresh pastures. They called themselves Hellenes, after Hellen, the son of Deucalion and Pyrrha. According to the old myths these were the only two human beings who had escaped the Great Flood, which countless years before had destroyed all the people of the world, when they had grown so wicked that they disgusted Zeus, the mighty God, who lived on Mount Olympus.

Of these early Hellenes we know nothing. Thucydides, the historian of the fall of Athens, describing his earliest ancestors, said that they "were not of much account," and this was probably true. They were very ill-mannered. They lived like pigs, and threw the bodies of their enemies to the wild dogs who guarded

their sheep. They had very little respect for other people's rights, and they killed the natives of the Greek peninsula, who were called the Pelasgians, and stole their farms and took their cattle, and made their wives and daughters slaves.

But here and there, on the tops of high rocks, they saw the castles of the Ægeans, and those they did not attack, for they feared the metal swords and the spears of the Ægean soldiers, and knew that they could not hope to defeat them with their clumsy stone axes.

For many centuries they continued to wander from valley to valley and from mountain-side to mountain-side. Then the whole of the land had been occupied and the migration had come to an end.

That moment was the beginning of Greek civilization. The Greek farmer, living within sight of the Ægean colonies, was finally driven by curiosity to visit his haughty neighbours. He discovered that he could learn many useful things from the men who dwelt behind the high stone walls of Mycenæ and Tiryns.

He was a clever pupil. Within a short time he mastered the art of handling those strange iron weapons, which the Ægeans had brought from Babylon and from Thebes. He came to

understand the mysteries of navigation. He began to build little boats for his own use.

And when he had learned everything the Ægeans could teach him he turned upon his teachers and drove them back to their islands. Soon afterward he ventured forth upon the sea and conquered all the cities of the Ægean. Finally in the fifteenth century before our era he plundered and ravaged Cnossus, and ten centuries after their first appearance upon the scene the Hellenes were the undisputed rulers of Greece, of the Ægean, and of the coastal regions of Asia Minor. Troy, the last great commercial stronghold of the older civilization, was destroyed in the eleventh century B.C. European history was to begin in all seriousness.

IX

THE GREEK CITY-STATES

WE modern people love the sound of the word 'big.' We pride ourselves upon the fact that we belong to the 'biggest' empire in the world and possess the 'biggest' navy, or grow the 'biggest' oranges and potatoes.

A citizen of ancient Greece, could he have heard us talk, would not have known what we meant. "Moderation in all things" was the ideal of his life, and mere bulk did not impress him at all. And this love of moderation was not merely a hollow phrase used upon special occasions: it influenced the life of the Greeks from the day of their birth to the hour of their death. It was part of their literature, and it made them build small but perfect temples. It found expression in the clothes which the men wore, and in the rings and the bracelets of their wives. It followed the crowds that went to the theatre, and made them hoot down any playwright who dared to sin against the iron law of good taste or good sense.

The Greeks even insisted upon this quality in their politicians, and in their most popular

athletes. When a powerful runner came to Sparta and boasted that he could stand longer on one foot than any other man in Hellas the people drove him from the city because he prided himself upon an accomplishment at which he could be beaten by any common goose.

"That is all very well," you will say, "and no doubt it is a great virtue to care so much for moderation and perfection, but why should the Greeks have been the only people to develop this quality in olden times?" For an answer I shall point to the way in which the Greeks lived.

The people of Egypt or Mesopotamia had been the 'subjects' of a mysterious Supreme Ruler, who lived miles and miles away in a dark palace, and who was rarely seen by the masses of the population. The Greeks, on the other hand, were 'free citizens' of a hundred independent little 'cities,' the largest of which counted fewer inhabitants than a large modern village. When a peasant who lived in Ur said that he was a Babylonian he meant that he was one of millions of other people who paid tribute to the king who at that particular moment happened to be master of Western Asia. But when a Greek said

proudly that he was an Athenian or a Theban he spoke of a small town, which was both his home and his country, and which recognized no master but the will of the people in the market-place.

To the Greek his fatherland was the place where he was born; where he had spent his earliest years playing hide-and-seek amidst the forbidden rocks of the Acropolis; where he had grown into manhood with a thousand other boys and girls, whose nicknames were as familiar to him as those of your own schoolmates. His fatherland was the holy soil where his father and mother lay buried. It was the small house within the high city walls where his wife and children lived in safety. It was a complete world, which covered no more than four or five acres of rocky land. Don't you see how these surroundings must have influenced a man in everything he did and said and thought? The people of Babylon and Assyria and Egypt had been part of a vast mob. They had been lost in the multitude. The Greek, on the other hand, had never lost touch with his immediate surroundings. He never ceased to be part of a little town where everybody knew every one else. He felt that his intelligent neighbours were watching him.

Whatever he did, whether he wrote plays or made statues out of marble or composed songs, he remembered that his efforts were going to be judged by all the free-born citizens of his home town who knew about such things. This knowledge forced him to strive after perfection, and perfection, as he had been taught from childhood, was not possible without moderation.

In this hard school the Greeks learned to excel in many things. They created new forms of government and new forms of literature and new ideals in art, which we have never been able to surpass. They performed these miracles in little villages that covered less ground than four or five modern city squares.

And look what finally happened!

In the fourth century before our era Alexander of Macedonia conquered the world. As soon as he had done with fighting Alexander decided that he must bestow the benefits of the true Greek genius upon all mankind. He took it away from the little cities and the little villages, and tried to make it blossom and bear fruit amidst the vast royal residences of his newly acquired empire. But the Greeks, removed from the familiar sight of their own temples, removed from the well-known sounds

and smells of their own crooked streets, at once lost the cheerful joy and the marvellous sense of moderation which had inspired the work of their hands and brains while they laboured for the glory of their old city-states. They became cheap artisans, content with second-rate work. The day the little city-states of old Hellas lost their independence and were forced to become part of a big nation, the old Greek spirit died. And it has been dead ever since.

In the beginning all the Greeks had been equally rich and equally poor. Every man had owned a certain number of cows and sheep. His mud-hut had been his castle. He had been free to come and go as he wished. Whenever it was necessary to discuss matters of public importance all the citizens had gathered in the market-place. One of the older men of the village was elected chairman, and it was his duty to see that everybody had a chance to express his views. In case of war, a particularly energetic and self-confident villager was chosen commander-in-chief, but the same people who had voluntarily given this man the right to be their leader claimed an equal right to deprive him of his job once the danger had been averted.

But gradually the village had grown into a city. Some people had worked hard, and others had been lazy. A few had been unlucky, and still others had been just plain dishonest in dealing with their neighbours and had gathered wealth. As a result the city no longer consisted of a number of men who were equally well off. On the contrary, it was inhabited by a small class of very rich people and a large class of very poor ones.

There had been another change. The old commander-in-chief who had been willingly recognized as headman or king because he knew how to lead his men to victory, had disappeared from the scene. His place had been taken by the nobles—a class of rich people who during the course of time had got hold of an undue share of the farms and estates.

These nobles enjoyed many advantages over the common crowd of freemen. They were able to buy the best weapons which were to be found on the market of the eastern Mediterranean. They had much spare time in which they could practise the art of fighting. They lived in strongly built houses, and they could hire soldiers to fight for them. They were constantly quarrelling among each other to decide who should rule the city. The victorious

nobleman then assumed a sort of kingship over all his neighbours, and governed the town until he in turn was killed or driven away by still another ambitious nobleman.

Such a king, by the grace of his soldiers, was called a 'tyrant,' and during the seventh and sixth centuries before our era every Greek city was for a time ruled by such tyrants, many of whom, by the way, happened to be exceedingly capable men. But in the long run this state of affairs became unbearable. Then attempts were made to bring about reforms, and out of these reforms grew the first democratic government of which the world has a record.

It was early in the seventh century that the people of Athens decided to do some house-cleaning and give the large number of freemen once more a voice in the government as they were supposed to have had in the days of their Achæan ancestors. They asked a man Draco to provide them with a set of laws that would protect the poor against the aggressions of the rich. Draco set to work. Unfortunately he was a professional lawyer, and very much out of touch with ordinary life. In his eyes a crime was a crime, and when he had finished his code the people of Athens discovered that these Draconian laws were so severe that they

could not possibly be put into effect. There would not have been rope enough to hang all the criminals under their new system of jurisprudence, which made the stealing of an apple a capital offence.

The Athenians looked about for a more humane reformer. At last they found some one who could do that sort of thing better than anybody else. His name was Solon. He belonged to a noble family, and he had travelled all over the world and had studied the forms of government of many other countries. After a careful study of the subject Solon gave Athens a set of laws which bore testimony to that wonderful principle of moderation which was part of the Greek character. He tried to improve the condition of the peasant without, however, destroying the prosperity of the nobles who were, or rather who could be, of such great service to the State as soldiers. To protect the poorer classes against abuse on the part of the judges, who were always elected from the class of the nobles because they received no salary, Solon made a provision whereby a citizen with a grievance had the right to state his case before a jury of thirty of his fellow-Athenians.

Most important of all, Solon forced the

average freeman to take a direct and personal interest in the affairs of the city. No longer could he stay at home and say, "Oh, I am too busy to-day," or "It is raining, and I had better stay indoors." He was expected to do his share; to be present at the meeting of the town council; and carry part of the responsibility for the safety and the prosperity of the State.

This government by the *demos*, the people, was often far from successful. There was too much idle talk. There were too many hateful and spiteful scenes between rivals for official honour. But it taught the Greek people to be independent and to rely upon themselves for their salvation, and that was a very good thing.

But how, you will ask, did the ancient Greeks have time to look after their families and their business if they were for ever running to the market-place to discuss affairs of State? I shall tell you.

In all matters of government the Greek democracy recognized only one class of citizens —the freemen. Every Greek city was composed of a small number of free-born citizens, a large number of slaves, and a sprinkling of foreigners.

At rare intervals—usually during a war,

when men were needed for the army—the Greeks showed themselves willing to confer the rights of citizenship upon the 'barbarians,' as they called the foreigners. But this was an exception. Citizenship was a matter of birth. You were an Athenian because your father and your grandfather had been Athenians before you. But however great your merits as a trader or a soldier, if you were born of non-Athenian parents you remained a 'foreigner' until the end of time.

The Greek city, therefore, whenever it was not ruled by a king or a tyrant, was run by and for the freemen, and this would not have been possible without a large army of slaves who outnumbered the free citizens at the rate of six or five to one, and who performed those tasks to which we modern people must devote most of our time and energy if we wish to provide for our families and pay the rent of our apartments.

The slaves did all the cooking and baking and candlestick-making of the entire city. They were the tailors and the carpenters and the jewellers and the school-teachers and the book-keepers, and they tended the store and looked after the factory while the master went to the public-meeting to discuss questions of

war and peace, or visited the theatre to see the latest play of Æschylus or hear a discussion of the revolutionary ideas of Euripides, who had dared to express certain doubts upon the omnipotence of the great god Zeus.

Indeed, ancient Athens resembled a modern club. All the free-born citizens were hereditary members and all the slaves were hereditary servants, and waited upon the needs of their masters, and it was very pleasant to be a member of the organization.

But when we talk about slaves we do not mean the sort of people about whom you have read in the pages of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It is true that the position of those slaves who tilled the fields was a very unpleasant one, but the average freeman who had come down in the world and who had been obliged to hire himself out as a farm-hand led just as miserable a life. In the cities, furthermore, many of the slaves were more prosperous than the poorer classes of the freemen. For the Greeks, who loved moderation in all things, did not like to treat their slaves after the fashion which afterward was so common in Rome, where a slave had as few rights as an engine in a modern factory and could be thrown to the wild animals upon the smallest pretext.

The Greeks accepted slavery as a necessary institution, without which no city could possibly become the home of a truly civilized people.

The slaves also took care of those tasks which nowadays are performed by the business men and the professional men. As for those household duties which take up so much of the time of your mother and which worry your father when he comes home from his office, the Greeks, who understood the value of leisure, had reduced such duties to the smallest possible minimum by living amidst surroundings of extreme simplicity.

To begin with, their homes were very plain. Even the rich nobles spent their lives in a sort of adobe barn, which lacked all the comforts which a modern workman expects as his natural right. A Greek home consisted of four walls and a roof. There was a door which led into the street, but there were no windows. The kitchen, the living-rooms, and the sleeping quarters were built round an open courtyard, in which there was a small fountain or a statue and a few plants to make it look bright. Within this courtyard the family lived in dry weather, or when it was not too cold. In one corner of the yard the cook, who was

a slave, prepared the meal, and in another corner the teacher, who was also a slave, taught the children the *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma* and the tables of multiplication, and in still another corner the lady of the house, who rarely left her domain, since it was not considered good form for a married woman to be seen in the street too often, was repairing her husband's coat with her seamstresses, who were slaves, and in the little office, just inside the door, the master was inspecting the accounts which the overseer of his farm, who was a slave, had just brought to him.

When dinner was ready the family came together, but the meal was a very simple one and did not take much time. The Greeks seem to have regarded eating as an unavoidable evil and not a pastime, which kills many dreary hours and eventually kills many dreary people. They lived on bread and on wine, with a little meat and some green vegetables. They drank water only when nothing else was available because they did not think it very healthy. They loved to call on each other for dinner, but our idea of a festive meal, where everybody is supposed to eat much more than is good for him, would

have disgusted them. They came together at the table for the purpose of a good talk and a good glass of wine and water, but as they were moderate people they despised those who drank too much.

The same simplicity which prevailed in the dining-room also dominated their choice of clothes. They liked to be clean and well groomed, to have their hair and beards neatly cut, to feel their bodies strong with the exercise and the swimming of the gymnasium, but they never followed the Asiatic fashion which prescribed loud colours and strange patterns. They wore long white cloaks, and they managed to look as smart as a modern Italian officer in his long blue cape.

They loved to see their wives wear ornaments, but they thought it very vulgar to display their wealth, or their wives, in public, and whenever the women left their home they were as inconspicuous as possible.

In short, the story of Greek life is a story not only of moderation, but also of simplicity.

At a very early stage of their history the Greeks had begun to collect the poems which had been written in honour of their brave ancestors, who had driven the Pelasgians out of Hellas and had destroyed the power of

Troy. These poems were recited in public, and everybody came to listen to them. But the theatre, the form of entertainment which has become almost a necessary part of our own lives, did not grow out of these recited heroic tales. It had, indeed, a very curious origin.

The Greeks had always been fond of parades. Every year they held solemn processions in honour of Dionysus, the god of the wine. As everybody in Greece drank wine—the Greeks thought water useful only for the purpose of swimming and sailing—this particular divinity was very popular, as you will readily imagine.

And because the wine-god was supposed to live in the vineyards, amidst a merry mob of satyrs, strange creatures who were half man and half goat, the crowd that joined the procession used to wear goatskins and to hee-haw like real billy-goats. The Greek word for goat is *tragos*, and the Greek word for singer is *oidos*. The singer who meh-mehed like a goat therefore was called a *tragos-oidos*, or goat-singer, and it is this strange name which developed into the modern word 'tragedy,' which means in the theatrical sense a piece with an unhappy ending, just as 'comedy'—which really means the singing of something

comos, or gay—is the name given to a play which ends happily.

But how, you will ask, did this noisy chorus of masqueraders, stamping round like wild goats, ever develop into the noble tragedies which have filled the theatres of the world for almost two thousand years?

The connecting link between the goat-singer and Hamlet is really very simple, as I shall show you in a moment.

The singing chorus was very amusing in the beginning, and attracted large crowds of spectators, who stood along the side of the road and laughed. But soon this business of hee-hawing grew tiresome, and the Greeks thought dullness an evil only comparable to ugliness or sickness. They asked for something more entertaining. Then an inventive young poet from the village of Icaria in Attica hit upon a new idea which proved a tremendous success. He made one of the members of the goat-chorus step forward and engage in conversation with the leader of the musicians, who marched at the head of the parade playing upon their pipes of Pan. This individual was allowed to step out of line. He waved his arms and gesticulated while he spoke—that is to say, he 'acted' while the others merely stood by

and sang—and he asked a lot of questions, which the bandmaster answered according to the roll of papyrus upon which the poet had written down the answers before the show began.

This rough and ready conversation—the dialogue—which told the story of Dionysus or one of the other gods, became at once popular with the crowd. Henceforth every Dionysian procession had an 'acted scene,' and very soon the 'acting' was considered more important than the procession and the meh-mehing.

Æschylus, the most successful of all 'tragedians,' who wrote no less than seventy plays during his long life, from 526 to 455, made a bold step forward when he introduced two 'actors' instead of one. A generation later Sophocles increased the number of actors to three. When Euripides began to write his terrible tragedies in the middle of the fifth century B.C. he was allowed as many actors as he liked, and when Aristophanes wrote those famous comedies in which he poked fun at everybody and everything, including the gods of Mount Olympus, the chorus had been reduced to the *rôle* of mere bystanders, who were lined up behind the principal performers

and who sang "this is a terrible world" while the hero in the foreground committed a crime against the will of the gods.

This new form of dramatic entertainment demanded a proper setting, and soon every Greek city owned a theatre, cut out of the rock of a near-by hill. The spectators sat upon wooden benches and faced a wide circle —our present orchestra stalls, where you sit to see the play or the opera. Upon this half-circle, which was the stage, the actors and the chorus took their stand. Behind them there was a tent where they made up with large clay masks, which hid their faces and which showed the spectators whether the actors were supposed to be happy and smiling or unhappy and weeping. The Greek word for tent is *skene*, and that is the reason why we talk of the 'scenery' of the stage.

When once the tragedy had become part of Greek life the people took it very seriously, and never went to the theatre to give their minds a vacation. A new play became as important an event as an election, and a successful playwright was received with greater honours than those bestowed upon a general who had just returned from a famous victory.

X

THE PERSIAN WARS

THE Greeks had learned the art of trading from the Ægeans, who had been the pupils of the Phœnicians. They had founded colonies after the Phœnician pattern. They had even improved upon the Phœnician methods by a more general use of money in dealing with foreign customers. In the sixth century before our era they had established themselves firmly along the coast of Asia Minor, and they were taking away trade from the Phœnicians at a fast rate. This the Phœnicians, of course, did not like, but they were not strong enough to risk a war with their Greek competitors. They sat and waited, nor did they wait in vain.

In a former chapter I have told you how a humble tribe of Persian shepherds had suddenly gone upon the warpath and had conquered the greater part of Western Asia. The Persians were too civilized to plunder their new subjects. They contented themselves with a yearly tribute. When they reached the coast of Asia Minor they insisted that the Greek colonies of Lydia recognize

the Persian kings as their overlords, and pay them a stipulated tax. The Greek colonies objected. The Persians insisted. Then the Greek colonies appealed to the home country, and the stage was set for a quarrel.

For, if the truth be told, the Persian kings regarded the Greek city-states as very dangerous political institutions and bad examples for all other people who were supposed to be the patient slaves of the mighty Persian kings.

Of course, the Greeks enjoyed a certain degree of safety because their country lay hidden beyond the deep waters of the Ægean. But here their old enemies, the Phœnicians, stepped forward with offers of help and advice to the Persians. If the Persian king would provide the soldiers the Phœnicians would guarantee to deliver the necessary ships to carry them to Europe. It was the year 492 before the birth of Christ, and Asia made ready to destroy the rising power of Europe.

As a final warning the King of Persia sent messengers to the Greeks asking for "earth and water," as a token of their submission. The Greeks promptly threw the messengers into the nearest well where they would find both "earth and water" in large abundance, and thereafter, of course, peace was impossible.

But the Gods of High Olympus watched over their children, and when the Phœnician fleet carrying the Persian troops was near Mount Athos, the Storm-god blew his cheeks until he almost burst the veins of his brow, and the fleet was destroyed by a terrible hurricane and the Persians were all drowned.

Two years later more Persians came. This time they sailed across the Ægean Sea and landed near the village of Marathon. As soon as the Athenians heard this they sent their army of ten thousand men to guard the hills that surrounded the Marathonian plain. At the same time they dispatched a fast runner to Sparta to ask for help. But Sparta was envious of the fame of Athens, and refused to come to her assistance. The other Greek cities followed her example, with the exception of tiny Platæa, which sent a thousand men. On the 12th of September of the year 490 Miltiades, the Athenian commander, threw this little army against the hordes of the Persians. The Greeks broke through the Persian barrage of arrows, and their spears caused terrible havoc among the disorganized Asiatic troops, who had never before been called upon to resist such an enemy.

That night the people of Athens watched

the sky grow red with the flames of burning ships. Anxiously they waited for news. At last a little cloud of dust appeared upon the road that led to the north. It was Pheidippides, the runner. He stumbled and gasped, for his end was near. Only a few days before had he returned from his errand to Sparta. He had hastened to join Miltiades. That morning he had taken part in the attack, and later he had volunteered to carry the news of victory to his beloved city. The people saw him fall, and they rushed forward to support him. "We have won," he whispered, and then he died, a glorious death which made him envied of all men.

As for the Persians, they tried, after this defeat, to land near Athens, but they found the coast guarded, and disappeared, and once more the land of Hellas was at peace.

Eight years they waited, and during this time the Greeks were not idle. They knew that a final attack was to be expected, but they did not agree upon the best way to avert the danger. Some people wanted to increase the army. Others said that a strong fleet was necessary for success. The two parties led by Aristides, for the army, and Themistocles, the leader of the men who wanted a larger navy,

fought each other bitterly, and nothing was done until Aristides was exiled. Then Themistocles had his chance, and he built all the ships he could, and turned the Piræus into a strong naval base.

In the year 481 B.C. a tremendous Persian army appeared in Thessaly, a province of Northern Greece. In this hour of danger all looked to Sparta, the bravest military state in Greece, to lead them. Some of the states would not lend their aid to the common cause through jealousy, but the states that agreed to stand together, after anxious consultations, as to the most effective place to give battle, decided to defend Thermopylæ, a mountainous district leading from Thessaly into the Southern provinces.

Leonidas, the King of Sparta, commanded the Greek army, some six thousand strong. It was an absurdly small force, but the Greeks intended to send reinforcements before the arrival of Xerxes. The Persians, however, arrived sooner than was expected, and the tiny Greek army was faced with annihilation. Some of the Greeks wanted to retreat, but Leonidas said: "Retreat if you wish to, but as for me and my Spartans, we have been sent to hold the pass, and here we will remain."

Then ensued a fight which will be remembered while the world lasts. For two days it raged, until on the evening of the second day a traitor by the name of Ephialtes, who knew the little byways of Malis, guided a force of Persians through the hills and made it possible for them to attack Leonidas in the rear.

The position of the Greeks was now desperate. Leonidas dismissed all his allies save four hundred Thebans and seven hundred Thespians, and with his three hundred Spartans prepared to die. He knew that his small force must eventually be overwhelmed, and so, casting all prudence aside, he sallied out from the narrower part of the pass and fell upon the oncoming host. When night came Leonidas and his faithful soldiers lay dead under the corpses of their enemies.

The pass had been lost, and the greater part of Greece fell into the hands of the Persians. They marched upon Athens, threw the garrison from the rocks of the Acropolis, and burned the city. The people fled to the island of Salamis. All seemed lost. But on the 20th of September of the year 480 Themistocles forced the Persian fleet to give battle within the narrow straits which separated the

island of Salamis from the mainland, and within a few hours he destroyed three-quarters of the Persian ships.

In this way the victory of Thermopylæ came to naught. Xerxes was forced to retire. The next year, so he decreed, would bring a final decision. He took his troops to Thessaly, and there he waited for spring.

But this time the Spartans understood the seriousness of the hour. They left the safe shelter of the wall which they had built across the isthmus of Corinth, and under the leadership of Pausanias they marched against Mardonius, the Persian general. The united Greeks, some hundred thousand men from a dozen different cities, attacked the three hundred thousand men of the enemy near Platæa. Once more the heavy Greek infantry broke through the Persian barrage of arrows. The Persians were defeated, as they had been at Marathon, and this time they left for good. By a strange coincidence, the same day that the Greek armies won their victory near Platæa the Athenian ships destroyed the enemy's fleet near Cape Mycale in Asia Minor.

Thus did the first encounter between Asia and Europe end. Athens had covered herself with glory and Sparta had fought bravely and

well. If these two cities had been able to come to an agreement, if they had been willing to forget their little jealousies, they might have become the leaders of a strong and united Hellas.

But, alas, they allowed the hour of victory and enthusiasm to slip by, and the same opportunity never returned.

Athens and Sparta were both Greek cities, and their people spoke a common language. In every other respect they were different. Athens rose high from the plain. It was a city exposed to the fresh breezes from the sea, willing to look at the world with the eyes of a happy child. Sparta, on the other hand, was built at the bottom of a deep valley, and used the surrounding mountains as a barrier against foreign thought. Athens was a city of busy trade. Sparta was an armed camp where people were soldiers for the sake of being soldiers. The people of Athens loved to sit in the sun and discuss poetry or listen to the wise words of a philosopher. The Spartans, on the other hand, never wrote a single line that was considered literature, but they knew how to fight, they liked to fight, and they sacrificed all human emotions to their ideal of military preparedness.

No wonder that these sombre Spartans viewed the success of Athens with malicious hate. The energy which the defence of the common home had developed in Athens was now used for purposes of a more peaceful nature. The Acropolis was rebuilt, and was made into a marble shrine to the goddess Athena. Pericles, the leader of the Athenian democracy, sent far and wide to find famous sculptors and painters and scientists to make the city more beautiful and the young Athenians more worthy of their home. At the same time he kept a watchful eye on Sparta, and built high walls which connected Athens with the sea and made her the strongest fortress of that day.

An insignificant quarrel between two little Greek cities led to the final conflict. For thirty years the war between Athens and Sparta continued. It ended in a terrible disaster for Athens.

During the third year of the war the plague had entered the city. More than half of the people and Pericles, the great leader, had been killed. The plague was followed by a period of bad and untrustworthy leadership. A brilliant young fellow called Alcibiades had gained the favour of the popular assembly.

He suggested a raid upon the Spartan colony of Syracuse in Sicily. An expedition was equipped and everything was ready. But Alcibiades got mixed up in a street brawl, and was forced to flee. The general who succeeded him was a bungler. First he lost his ships and then he lost his army, and the few surviving Athenians were thrown into the stone-quarries of Syracuse, where they died from hunger and thirst.

The expedition had killed all the young men of Athens. The city was doomed. After a long siege the town surrendered in April of the year 404 B.C. The high walls were demolished. The navy was taken away by the Spartans. Athens ceased to exist as the centre of the great colonial empire which it had conquered during the days of its prosperity. But that wonderful desire to learn and to know and to investigate which had distinguished her free citizens during the days of greatness and prosperity did not perish with the walls and the ships. It continued to live. It became even more brilliant.

Athens no longer shaped the destinies of the land of Greece. But now, as the home of the first great university, the city began to influence

the minds of intelligent people far beyond the narrow frontiers of Hellas.

When the Achæans had left their homes along the banks of the Danube to look for pastures new they had spent some time among the mountains of Macedonia. Ever since, the Greeks had maintained certain more or less formal relations with the people of this northern country. The Macedonians from their side had kept themselves well informed about conditions in Greece.

Now it happened, just when Sparta and Athens had finished their disastrous war for the leadership of Hellas, that Macedonia was ruled by an extraordinarily clever man called Philip. He admired the Greek spirit in letters and art, but he despised the Greek lack of self-control in political affairs. It irritated him to see a perfectly good people waste its men and money upon fruitless quarrels. So he settled the difficulty by making himself the master of all Greece, and then he asked his new subjects to join him on a voyage which he meant to pay to Persia in return for the visit which Xerxes had paid the Greeks one hundred and fifty years before.

Unfortunately Philip was murdered before he could start upon this well-prepared

expedition. The task of avenging the destruction of Athens was left to Philip's son, Alexander, the beloved pupil of Aristotle, wisest of all Greek teachers.

Alexander bade farewell to Europe in the spring of the year 334 B.C. Seven years later he reached India. In the meantime he had destroyed Phœnicia, the old rival of the Greek merchants. He had conquered Egypt, and had been worshipped by the people of the Nile Valley as the son and heir of the Pharaohs. He had defeated the last Persian king; he had overthrown the Persian Empire; he had given orders to rebuild Babylon; he had led his troops into the heart of the Himalayan mountains, and had made the entire world a Macedonian province and dependency. Then he stopped and announced even more ambitious plans.

The newly formed empire must be brought under the influence of the Greek mind. The people must be taught the Greek language—they must live in cities built after a Greek model. The Alexandrian soldier now turned schoolmaster. The military camps of yesterday became the peaceful centres of the newly imported Greek civilization. Higher and higher did the flood of Greek manners and

Greek customs rise, when suddenly Alexander was stricken with a fever and died in the old palace of King Hammurabi of Babylon in the year 323.

Then the waters receded. But they left behind the fertile clay of a higher civilization, and Alexander, with all his childish ambitions and his silly vanities, had performed a most valuable service. His empire did not long survive him. A number of ambitious generals divided the territory among themselves. But they too remained faithful to the dream of a great world brotherhood of Greek and Asiatic ideas and knowledge.

They maintained their independence until the Romans added Western Asia and Egypt to their other domains. The strange inheritance of this Hellenistic civilization, part Greek, part Persian, part Egyptian and Babylonian, fell to the Roman conquerors. During the following centuries it got such a firm hold upon the Roman world that we feel its influence in our own lives this very day.

XI

THE RISE OF ROME

THE Roman Empire was an accident. No one planned it. It 'happened.' No famous general or statesman or cutthroat ever got up and said, "Friends, Romans, citizens, we must found an empire. Follow me, and together we shall conquer all the land from the Gates of Hercules to Mount Taurus."

Rome produced famous generals and equally distinguished statesmen and cutthroats, and Roman armies fought all over the world. But the Roman empire-making was done without a preconceived plan. The average Roman was a very matter-of-fact citizen. He disliked theories about government. When some one began to declaim, "Eastward the course of Roman Empire," etc., etc., he hastily left the forum. He just continued to take more and more land because circumstances forced him to do so. He was not driven by ambition or by greed. Both by nature and inclination he was a farmer and wanted to stay at home. But when he was attacked he was obliged to defend himself, and when a dangerous enemy

came from over the sea the Roman was compelled in the end to carry the battle into his enemy's country, and when he had defeated the foe he stayed behind to administer his newly conquered provinces, lest they should fall into the hands of wandering barbarians and become themselves a menace to Roman safety. It sounds rather complicated, and yet to the contemporaries it was so very simple, as you shall see in a moment.

In the year 203 B.C. Scipio had crossed the African Sea and had carried the war into Africa. Carthage had called her general Hannibal back from his campaign in Italy to defend her. Badly supported by his mercenaries, Hannibal had been defeated near Zama. The Romans had asked for his surrender, and Hannibal had fled to get aid from the Kings of Macedonia and Syria.

The rulers of these two countries, remnants of the empire of Alexander the Great, just then were contemplating an expedition against Egypt. They hoped to divide the rich Nile Valley between themselves. The King of Egypt had heard of this, and he had asked Rome to come to his support. The stage was set for a number of highly interesting plots and counterplots. But the Romans, with their

lack of imagination, rang the curtain down before the play had been fairly started. Their legions completely defeated the heavy Greek phalanx, which was still used by the Macedonians as their battle formation. That happened in the year 197 B.C. at the battle in the plains of Cynoscephalæ, or Dogs' Heads, in central Thessaly.

The Romans then marched southward to Attica and informed the Greeks that they had come to "deliver the Hellenes from the Macedonian yoke." The Greeks, having learned nothing in their years of semi-slavery, used their new freedom in a most unfortunate way. All the little city-states once more began to quarrel with each other as they had done in the good old days. The Romans, who had little understanding and less love for these silly bickerings of a race which they rather despised, showed great forbearance. But tiring of these endless dissensions, they lost patience, invaded Greece, burned down Corinth, to "encourage the other Greeks," and sent a Roman governor to Athens to rule this turbulent province. In this way Macedonia and Greece became buffer states which protected Rome's eastern frontier.

Meanwhile right across the Hellespont lay

the kingdom of Syria, and Antiochus III, who ruled that vast land, had shown great eagerness when his distinguished guest, General Hannibal, explained to him how easy it would be to invade Italy and sack the city of Rome.

Lucius Scipio, a brother of Scipio the African fighter who had defeated Hannibal and his Carthaginians at Zama, was sent to Asia Minor. He destroyed the armies of the Syrian king near Magnesia, in the year 190 B.C. Shortly afterward Antiochus was killed by his own people. Asia Minor became a Roman protectorate, and the small city-republic of Rome was mistress of most of the lands which bordered upon the Mediterranean.

XII

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

WHEN the Roman armies returned from these many victorious campaigns they were received with great jubilation. Alas and alack! this sudden glory did not make the country any happier. On the contrary, the endless campaigns had ruined the farmers, who had been obliged to do the hard work of empire-making. It had placed too much power in the hands of the successful generals and their private friends, who had used the war as an excuse for wholesale robbery.

The old Roman Republic had been proud of the simplicity which had characterized the lives of her famous men. The new Republic felt ashamed of the shabby coats and the high principles which had been fashionable in the days of its grandfathers. It became a land of rich people, ruled by rich people, for the benefit of rich people. As such it was doomed to disastrous failure, as I shall now tell you.

Within less than a century and a half Rome had become the mistress of practically all the land round the Mediterranean. In those

early days of history a prisoner of war lost his freedom and became a slave. The Roman regarded war as a very serious business, and he showed no mercy to a conquered foe. After the fall of Carthage the Carthaginian women and children were sold into bondage together with their own slaves. And a like fate awaited the obstinate inhabitants of Greece and Macedonia and Spain and Syria when they dared to revolt against the Roman power.

And now behold the fate of the free-born farmer!

He had done his duty toward Rome, and he had fought her battles without complaint. But when he came home after ten, fifteen, or twenty years his lands were covered with weeds and his family had been ruined. But he was a strong man, and willing to begin life anew. He sowed and planted, and waited for the harvest. He carried his grain to the market, together with his cattle and his poultry, to find that the large landowners who worked their estates with slaves could underbid him all along the line. For a couple of years he tried to hold his own. Then he gave up in despair. He left the country and he went to the nearest city. In the city he was as hungry

as he had been before on the land. But he shared his misery with thousands of other disinherited beings. They crouched together in filthy hovels in the suburbs of the large cities. They were apt to get sick and die from terrible epidemics. They were all profoundly discontented. They had fought for their country, and this was their reward. They were always willing to listen to those plausible spell-binders, who gather round a public grievance like so many hungry vultures, and soon they became a grave menace to the safety of the State.

"We have our army and our policemen," they argued, "they will keep the mob in order."

Now it happened in the year 88 B.C. that the Senate of Rome was greatly disturbed by rumours that came from Asia. Mithridates, king of a country along the shores of the Black Sea, and a Greek on his mother's side, had seen the possibility of establishing a second Alexandrian empire. He began his campaign for world-domination with the murder of all Roman citizens who happened to be in Asia Minor, men, women, and children. Such an act, of course, meant war. The Senate equipped an army to march against the King of Pontus and punish him for his crime.

But who was to be commander-in-chief? "Sulla," said the Senate, "because he is Consul." "Marius," said the mob, "because he has been Consul five times, and because he is the champion of our rights."

Possession is nine points of the law. Sulla happened to be in actual command of the army. He went east to defeat Mithridates, and Marius fled to Africa. There he waited until he heard that Sulla had crossed into Asia. He then returned to Italy, gathered a motley crew of malcontents, marched on Rome, and entered the city with his professional highwaymen, spent five days and five nights slaughtering his enemies in the Senatorial party, got himself elected Consul, and promptly died from the excitement of the last fortnight.

There followed four years of disorder. Then Sulla, having defeated Mithridates, announced that he was ready to return to Rome and settle a few old scores of his own. He was as good as his word. For weeks his soldiers were busy executing those of their fellow-citizens who were suspected of democratic sympathies. One day they got hold of a young fellow who had been often seen in the company of Marius. They were going to hang him when some one interfered. "The

boy is too young," he said, and they let him go. His name was Julius Cæsar. You shall meet him again on the next page.

As for Sulla, he became Dictator, which meant sole and supreme ruler of all the Roman possessions. He ruled Rome for four years, and he died quietly in his bed, having spent the last year of his life tenderly raising his cabbages, as was the custom of so many Romans who had spent a lifetime killing their fellow-men.

It was necessary that the government of Rome should be placed in the hands of a strong man. Only a few months before the town had almost fallen into the hands of a good-for-nothing young aristocrat called Catiline, who had gambled away his money, and hoped to reimburse himself for his losses by a little plundering. Cicero, a public-spirited lawyer, had discovered the plot, had warned the Senate, and had forced Catiline to flee. But there were other young men with similar ambitions, and it was no time for idle talk.

Pompey, who had been a close friend of Sulla, and who had returned from a successful campaign in Western Asia, organized a triumvirate, which was to take charge of affairs. He became the leader of this Vigilant

Committee. Gaius Julius Cæsar, who had made a reputation for himself as Governor of Spain, was the second in command. The third was an indifferent sort of person called Crassus. He had been elected because he was incredibly rich, having been a successful contractor for war-supplies. Some time after he went upon an expedition against the Parthians and was killed.

As for Cæsar, who was by far the ablest of the three, he decided that he needed a little more military glory to become a popular hero. He crossed the Alps and conquered that part of the world which is now called France. Then he constructed a solid wooden bridge across the Rhine and invaded the land of the wild Teutons. Finally he took ship and visited Britain. Heaven knows where he might have ended if he had not been forced to return to Italy. Pompey, so he was informed, had been appointed Dictator for life. This, of course, meant that Cæsar was to be placed on the list of the 'retired officers,' and the idea did not appeal to him. He remembered that he had begun life as a follower of Marius. He decided to teach the Senators and their Dictator another lesson. He crossed the Rubicon river, which separated the pro-

vince of Cisalpine Gaul from Italy. Everywhere he was received as the friend of the people. Without difficulty Cæsar entered Rome, and Pompey fled to Greece. Cæsar followed him and defeated his followers near Pharsalus. Pompey sailed across the Mediterranean and escaped to Egypt. When he landed he was murdered by order of young King Ptolemy. A few days later Cæsar arrived. He found himself caught in a trap. Both the Egyptians and the Roman garrison, which had remained faithful to Pompey, attacked his camp.

Fortune was with Cæsar. He succeeded in setting fire to the Egyptian fleet. Incidentally the sparks of the burning vessels fell on the roof of the famous library of Alexandria, which was just off the water-front, and destroyed a great part of it. Next he attacked the Egyptian army, drove the soldiers into the Nile, drowned Ptolemy, and established a new Government under Cleopatra, the sister of the late king. Just then word reached him that Pharnaces, the son and heir of Mithridates, had gone on the warpath. Cæsar marched northward, defeated Pharnaces in a war which lasted five days, sent word of his victory to Rome in the famous sentence *Veni*, *vidi*, *vici*, which is

Latin for "I came, I saw, I conquered," and returned to Egypt, where he fell desperately in love with Cleopatra, who followed him to Rome when he returned to take charge of the government, in the year 46. He marched at the head of not less than four different victory processions, having triumphed in four different campaigns.

Then Cæsar appeared in the Senate to report upon his adventures, and the grateful Senate made him Dictator for ten years. It was a fatal step.

The new Dictator made serious attempts to reform the Roman State. He made it possible for freemen to become members of the Senate. He conferred the rights of citizenship upon distant communities, as had been done in the early days of Roman history. He permitted 'foreigners' to exercise influence upon the Government. He reformed the administration of the distant provinces, which certain aristocratic families had come to regard as their private possessions. In short, he did many things for the good of the majority of the people, but which made him thoroughly unpopular with the most powerful men in the state. Half a hundred young aristocrats formed a plot "to save the Republic." On

the Ides of March—the 15th of March, according to that new calendar which Cæsar had brought with him from Egypt—Cæsar was murdered when he entered the Senate. Once more Rome was without a master.

There were two men who tried to continue the tradition of Cæsar's glory. One was Antony, his former master of the horse. The other was Octavian, Cæsar's grand-nephew, and heir to his estate. Octavian remained in Rome, but Antony went to Egypt to be near Cleopatra, with whom he too had fallen in love, as seems to have been the habit of Roman generals.

A war broke out between the two. In the battle of Actium Octavian defeated Antony. Antony killed himself, and Cleopatra was left alone to face the enemy. She tried very hard to make Octavian her third Roman conquest. When she saw that she could make no impression upon this very proud aristocrat she killed herself, and Egypt became a Roman province.

As for Octavian, he was a very wise young man, and he did not repeat the mistake of his famous uncle. He knew how people will shy at words. He was very modest in his demands when he returned to Rome. He did

not want to be a Dictator. He would be entirely satisfied with the title of "the Honourable." But when the Senate a few years later addressed him as Augustus—the Illustrious—he did not object, and a few years later the man in the street called him Cæsar, while the soldiers, accustomed to regard Octavian as their commander-in-chief, referred to him as the Chief, the Imperator, or Emperor. The Republic had become an Empire, but the average Roman was hardly aware of the fact.

In A.D. 14 his position as the Absolute Ruler of the Roman people had become so well established that he was made an object of that divine worship which hitherto had been reserved for the gods. And his successors were true Emperors—the absolute rulers of the greatest empire the world had ever seen.

If the truth be told, the average citizen was sick and tired of anarchy and disorder. He did not care who ruled him, provided the new master gave him a chance to live quietly and without the noise of eternal street riots. Octavian assured his subjects forty years of peace. He had no desire to extend the frontiers of his domains. In the year A.D. 9 he had contemplated an invasion of the north-western wilderness, which was inhabited by the

Teutons. But Varus, his general, had been killed with all his men in the Teutoburg Woods, and after that the Romans made no further attempts to civilize these wild people.

They concentrated their efforts upon the gigantic problem of internal reform. But it was too late to do much good. Two centuries of revolution and foreign war had repeatedly killed the best men among the younger generations. It had ruined the class of the free farmers. It had introduced slave labour, against which no freeman could hope to compete. It had turned the cities into beehives inhabited by pauperized and unhealthy mobs of runaway peasants. It had created a large bureaucracy—petty officials, who were underpaid, and who were forced to take bribes in order to buy bread and clothing for their families. Worst of all, it had accustomed people to violence, to bloodshed, to a barbarous pleasure in the pain and suffering of others.

Outwardly the Roman State during the first century of our era was a magnificent political structure, so large that Alexander's empire became one of its minor provinces. Underneath this glory there lived millions upon millions of poor and tired human beings, toiling like

ants who have built a nest underneath a heavy stone. They worked for the benefit of some one else. They shared their food with the animals of the fields. They lived in stables. They died without hope.

It was the seven hundred and fifty-third year since the founding of Rome. Gaius Julius Cæsar Octavianus Augustus was living in the palace of the Palatine Hill, busily engaged upon the task of ruling his empire.

In a little village of distant Syria Mary, the wife of Joseph the Carpenter, was tending her little boy, born in a stable of Bethlehem.

This is a strange world.

Before long the palace and the stable were to meet in open combat.

And the stable was to emerge victorious.

XIII

THE FALL OF ROME

THE text-books of ancient history give the date 476 as the year in which Rome fell, because in that year the last Emperor was driven from his throne. But Rome, which was not built in a day, took a long time falling. The process was so slow and so gradual that most Romans did not realize how their old world was coming to an end. They complained about the unrest of the times—they grumbled about the high prices of food and about the low wages of the workmen—they cursed the profiteers, who had a monopoly of the grain and the wool and the gold coin. Occasionally they rebelled against an unusually rapacious governor. But the majority of the people during the first four centuries of our era ate and drank whatever their purse allowed them to buy, and hated or loved according to their nature, and went to the theatre whenever there was a free show of fighting gladiators, or starved in the slums of the big cities, utterly ignorant of the fact that their empire had outlived its usefulness and was doomed to perish.

Rome was, first and last and all the time, a city-state, as Athens and Corinth had been city-states in ancient Hellas. It had been able to dominate the Italian peninsula. But Rome as the ruler of the entire civilized world was a political impossibility, and could not endure. Her young men were killed in her endless wars. Her farmers were ruined by long military service and by taxation. They either became professional beggars, or hired themselves out to rich landowners, who gave them board and lodging in exchange for their services, and made them 'serfs,' those unfortunate human beings who are neither slaves nor freemen, but who have become part of the soil upon which they work, like so many cows or trees.

And so conditions grew worse as the centuries went by. The first Emperors had continued the tradition of leadership, which had given the old tribal chieftains such a hold upon their subjects. But the Emperors of the second and third centuries were barrack Emperors, professional soldiers, who existed by the grace of their bodyguards, the so-called Prætorians. They succeeded each other with terrifying rapidity, murdering their way into the palace, and being murdered out of it as soon as their

successors had become rich enough to bribe the guards into a new rebellion.

Meanwhile the barbarians were hammering at the gates of the northern frontier. As there were no longer any native Roman armies to stop their progress, foreign mercenaries had to be hired to fight the invader. As the foreign soldier happened to be of the same blood as his supposed enemy he was apt to be quite lenient when he engaged in battle. Finally, by way of experiment, a few tribes were allowed to settle within the confines of the Empire. Others followed. Soon these tribes complained bitterly of the greedy Roman tax-gatherers, who took away their last penny. When they got no redress they marched to Rome and loudly demanded that they be heard.

This made Rome very uncomfortable as an Imperial residence. Constantine, who ruled from 323 to 337, looked for a new capital. He chose Byzantium, the gateway for the commerce between Europe and Asia. The city was renamed Constantinople, and the Court moved eastward. When Constantine died his two sons, for the sake of a more efficient administration, divided the Empire between them. The elder lived in Rome and ruled in

the West. The younger stayed in Constantinople, and was master of the East.

Then came the fourth century and the terrible visitation of the Huns, those mysterious Asiatic horsemen who for more than two centuries maintained themselves in Northern Europe, and continued their career of bloodshed until they were defeated near Châlons-sur-Marne in France in the year 451. As soon as the Huns had reached the Danube they had begun to press hard upon the Goths. The Goths, in order to save themselves, were thereupon obliged to invade Rome. The Emperor Valens tried to stop them, but was killed near Adrianople in the year 378. Thirty-two years later, under their king, Alaric, these same West Goths marched westward and attacked Rome. They did not plunder, and destroyed only a few palaces. Next came the Vandals, and showed less respect for the venerable traditions of the city. Then the Burgundians. Then the East Goths. Then the Alemanni. Then the Franks. There was no end to the invasions. Rome at last was at the mercy of every ambitious highway-robber who could gather a few followers.

It is true that in the East Constantinople continued to be the centre of an empire for

another thousand years. But it hardly counted as a part of the European continent. Its interests lay in the East. It began to forget its western origin. Gradually the Roman language was given up for the Greek. The Roman alphabet was discarded, and Roman law was written in Greek characters and explained by Greek judges. The Emperor became an Asiatic despot, worshipped as the god-like Kings of Thebes had been worshipped in the valley of the Nile, three thousand years before. When missionaries of the Byzantine Church looked for fresh fields of activity they went eastward, and carried the civilization of Byzantium into the vast wilderness of Russia.

As for the West, it was left to the mercies of the barbarians. For twelve generations murder, war, arson, and plundering were the order of the day. One thing—and one thing alone—saved Europe from complete destruction, from a return to the days of cave-men and the hyena.

This was the Church—the flock of humble men and women who for many centuries had confessed themselves the followers of Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, who had been killed that the mighty Roman Empire might be saved the trouble of a street riot in a little city somewhere along the Syrian frontier.

XIV

RISE OF THE CHURCH

THE average intelligent Roman who lived under the Empire had taken very little interest in the gods of his fathers. A few times a year he went to the temple, but merely as a matter of custom. He looked on patiently when the people celebrated a religious festival with a solemn procession. But he regarded the worship of Jupiter and Minerva and Neptune as something rather childish, a survival from the crude days of the early Republic, and not a fit subject of study for a man who had mastered the works of the Stoics and the Epicureans and the other great philosophers of Athens.

This attitude made the Roman a very tolerant man. The Government insisted that all people, Romans, foreigners, Greeks, Babylonians, Jews, should pay a certain outward respect to the image of the Emperor, which was supposed to stand in every temple.

But this was merely a formality without any deeper meaning. Generally speaking, everybody could honour, revere, and adore what-

ever gods he pleased, and as a result Rome was filled with all sorts of queer little temples and synagogues, dedicated to the worship of Egyptian and African and Asiatic divinities.

When the first disciples of Jesus reached Rome and began to preach their new doctrine of a universal brotherhood of man nobody objected. The man in the street stopped and listened. Rome, the capital of the world, had always been full of wandering preachers, each proclaiming his own 'mystery.' Most of the self-appointed priests appealed to the senses —promised golden rewards and endless pleasure to the followers of their own particular god. Soon the crowd in the street noticed that the so-called Christians, the followers of the Christ or 'anointed,' spoke a very different language. They did not appear to be impressed by great riches or a noble position. They extolled the beauties of poverty and humility and meekness. These were not exactly the virtues which had made Rome the mistress of the world. It was rather interesting to listen to a 'mystery' which told people in the heyday of their glory that their worldly success could not possibly bring them lasting happiness.

This went on year after year, and the number of Christians continued to increase.

Presbyters or priests, the original Greek meant 'elder,' were elected to guard the interests of the small churches. A bishop was made the head of all the communities within a single province. Peter, who had followed Paul to Rome, was the first Bishop of Rome. In due time his successors, who were addressed as Father or Papa, came to be known as Popes.

The Church became a powerful institution within the Empire. The Christian doctrines appealed to those who despaired of this world. They also attracted many strong men who found it impossible to make a career under the Imperial Government, but who could exercise their gifts of leadership among the humble followers of the Nazarene Teacher. At last the State was obliged to take notice. The Roman Empire—I have said this before—was tolerant through indifference. It allowed everybody to seek salvation after his or her own fashion. But it insisted that the different sects keep the peace among themselves and obey the wise rule of "Live and let live."

The Christian communities, however, refused to practise any sort of tolerance. They publicly declared that their God, and their God alone, was the true ruler of heaven and

earth, and that all other gods were impostors. This seemed unfair to the other sects, and the police discouraged such utterances. The Christians persisted.

Meanwhile Rome continued to be invaded by the barbarians, and when her armies failed Christian missionaries went forth to preach their gospel of peace to the wild Teutons. They were strong men without fear of death. They spoke a language which left no doubt as to the future of unrepentant sinners. The Teutons were deeply impressed. They still had a deep respect for the wisdom of the ancient city of Rome. Those men were Romans. They probably spoke the truth. Soon the Christian missionary became a power in the savage regions of the Teutons and the Franks. Half a dozen missionaries were as valuable as a whole regiment of soldiers. The Emperors began to understand that the Christian might be of great use to them. In some of the provinces they were given equal rights with those who had remained faithful to the old gods. The great change, however, came during the last half of the fourth century.

Constantine—sometimes, it is difficult to know why, called Constantine the Great—was Emperor. He was a terrible ruffian, but

people of tender qualities could hardly hope to survive in that hard-fighting age. During a long and chequered career Constantine had experienced many ups and downs. Once, when almost defeated by his enemies, he thought that he would try the power of this new Asiatic deity of whom everybody was talking. He promised that he too would become a Christian if he were successful in the coming battle. He won the victory, and thereafter he was convinced of the power of the Christian God and allowed himself to be baptized.

From that moment onward the Christian Church was officially recognized, and this greatly strengthened the position of the new faith.

But the Christians still formed a very small minority of all the people, not more than five or six per cent., and in order to win they were forced to refuse all compromise. The old gods must be destroyed. For a short spell the Emperor Julian, a lover of Greek wisdom, managed to save the pagan gods from further destruction. But Julian died of his wounds during a campaign in Persia, and his successor Jovian re-established the Church in all its glory. One after the other the doors of the

ancient temples were then closed. Then came the Emperor Justinian, who built the church of St Sophia in Constantinople, and who discontinued the school of philosophy at Athens which had been founded by Plato.

That was the end of the old Greek world, in which man had been allowed to think his own thoughts and dream his own dreams according to his desires. The somewhat vague rules of conduct of the philosophers had proved a poor compass by which to steer the ship of life after a deluge of savagery and ignorance had swept away the established order of things. There was need of something more positive and more definite. This the Church provided.

During an age when nothing was certain the Church stood like a rock, and never receded from those principles which it held to be true and sacred. This steadfast courage gained the admiration of the multitudes and carried the Church of Rome safely through the difficulties which destroyed the Roman State.

There was, however, a certain element of luck in the final success of the Christian faith. After the disappearance of Theodoric's Roman-Gothic kingdom in the fifth century Italy was comparatively free from foreign invasion. The Lombards and Saxons and Slavs who

succeeded the Goths were weak and backward tribes. Under those circumstances it was possible for the bishops of Rome to maintain the independence of their city. Soon the remnants of the Empire, scattered throughout the peninsula, recognized the dukes of Rome, or bishops, as their political and spiritual rulers.

The stage was set for the appearance of a strong man. He came in the year 590, and his name was Gregory. He belonged to the ruling classes of ancient Rome, and he had been prefect or mayor of the city. Then he had become a monk and a bishop, and finally —much against his will, for he wanted to be a missionary and preach Christianity to the heathen of England—he had been dragged to the church of St Peter to be made Pope. He ruled only fourteen years, but when he died the Christian world of Western Europe had officially recognized the bishops of Rome, the Popes, as the head of the entire Church.

This power, however, did not extend to the East. In Constantinople the Emperors continued the old custom, which had recognized the successors of Augustus and Tiberius both as head of the Government and as high-priest of the established religion. In the year 1453 the Eastern Roman Empire was conquered

by the Turks. Constantinople was taken, and Constantine Palæologus, the last Roman Emperor, was killed on the steps of the church of the Holy Sophia.

A few years before Zoë, the daughter of his brother Thomas, had married Ivan III of Russia. In this way did the Grand Dukes of Moscow fall heir to the traditions of Constantinople. The double eagle of old Byzantium, reminiscent of the days when Rome had been divided into an eastern and a western part, became the coat of arms of modern Russia. The Tsar, who had been merely the first of the Russian nobles, assumed the aloofness and the dignity of a Roman Emperor, before whom all subjects, both high and low, were inconsiderable slaves.

The Court was refashioned after the Oriental pattern, which the eastern Emperors had imported from Asia and from Egypt, and which, so they flattered themselves, resembled the Court of Alexander the Great. This strange inheritance which the dying Byzantine Empire bequeathed to an unsuspecting world continued to live with great vigour for six more centuries amidst the vast plains of Russia.

XV

CHARLEMAGNE

THE battle of Poitiers saved Europe from the Mohammedans. But the enemy within—the hopeless disorder which had followed the disappearance of the Roman police officer—that enemy remained. It is true that the new converts of the Christian faith in Northern Europe felt a deep respect for the mighty Bishop of Rome. But that poor bishop did not feel any too safe when he looked toward the distant mountains. Heaven knew what fresh hordes of barbarians were ready to cross the Alps and begin a new attack on Rome. It was necessary—very necessary—for the spiritual head of the world to find an ally with a strong sword and a powerful fist who was willing to defend His Holiness in case of danger.

And so the Popes, who were not only very holy, but also very practical, cast about for a friend, and presently they made overtures to the most promising of the Germanic tribes who had occupied North-western Europe after the fall of Rome. They were called the Franks. One of their earliest kings, called

Merovech, had helped the Romans in the battle of the Catalaunian fields in the year 451, when they defeated the Huns. His descendants, the Merovingians, had continued to take little bits of Imperial territory until the year 486, when King Clovis—the old French word for Louis—felt himself strong enough to beat the Romans in the open. But his descendants were weak men, who left the affairs of State to their Prime Minister, the *major domus*, or master of the palace.

Pepin the Short, the son of the famous Charles Martel, who succeeded his father as master of the palace, hardly knew how to handle the situation. His royal master was a devout theologian, without any interest in politics. Pepin asked the Pope for advice. The Pope, who was a practical person, answered that the "power in the State belonged to him who was actually possessed of it." Pepin took the hint. He persuaded Childeric, the last of the Merovingians to become a monk, and then made himself king with the approval of the other Germanic chieftains. But this did not satisfy the shrewd Pepin. He wanted to be something more than a barbarian chieftain. He staged an elaborate ceremony at which Boniface, the great missionary of

North-west Europe, anointed him and made him a "king by the Grace of God." It was easy to slip those words, *Dei gratia*, into the coronation service. It took almost fifteen hundred years to get them out again.

Pepin was sincerely grateful for this kindness on the part of the Church. He made two expeditions to Italy to defend the Pope against his enemies. He took Ravenna and several other cities away from the Longobards and presented them to His Holiness, who incorporated these new domains into the so-called Papal State, which remained an independent country until half a century ago.

After Pepin's death the relations between Rome and Aix-la-Chapelle or Nymwegen or Ingelheim—the Frankish kings did not have one official residence, but travelled from place to place with all their ministers and Court officers—became more and more cordial. Finally the Pope and the king took a step which was to influence the history of Europe in a most profound way.

Charles, commonly known as Carolus Magnus, or Charlemagne, succeeded Pepin in the year 768. He had conquered the land of the Saxons in Eastern Germany, and had built towns and monasteries all over the

greater part of Northern Europe. At the request of certain enemies of Abd-er-Rahman he had invaded Spain to fight the Moors. But in the Pyrenees he had been attacked by the wild Basques and had been forced to retire. It was upon this occasion that Roland, the great Margrave of Brittany, showed what a Frankish chieftain of those early days meant when he promised to be faithful to his king, and gave his life and that of his trusted followers to safeguard the retreat of the royal army.

During the last ten years of the eighth century, however, Charles was obliged to devote himself exclusively to affairs of the South. The Pope, Leo III, had been attacked by a band of Roman rowdies and had been left for dead in the street. Some kind people had bandaged his wounds and had helped him to escape to the camp of Charles, where he asked for help. An army of Franks soon restored quiet, and carried Leo back to the Lateran Palace, which ever since the days of Constantine had been the home of the Pope. That was in December of the year 799. On Christmas Day of the next year Charlemagne, who was staying in Rome, attended the service in the ancient church of St Peter. When he arose from prayer the Pope placed a crown

upon his head, called him Emperor of the Romans, and hailed him once more with the title of Augustus, which had not been heard for hundreds of years.

Once more Northern Europe was part of a Roman Empire, but the dignity was held by a German chieftain, who could read just a little and never learned to write. But he could fight, and for a short while there was order and even the rival Emperor in Constantinople sent a letter of approval to his "dear Brother."

Unfortunately this splendid old man died in the year 814. His sons and his grandsons at once began to fight for the largest share of the Imperial inheritance. Twice the Carolingian lands were divided, by the Treaty of Verdun in the year 843 and by the Treaty of Mersen-on-the-Meuse in the year 870. The latter treaty divided the entire Frankish kingdom into two parts. Charles the Bold received the western half. It contained the old Roman province called Gaul, where the language of the people had become thoroughly Romanized. The Franks soon learned to speak this language, and this accounts for the strange fact that a Celtic and Germanic land like France should speak a Latin tongue.

The other grandson got the eastern part, the

land which the Romans had called Germania. Those inhospitable regions had never been part of the old Empire. Augustus had tried to conquer this "Far East," but his legions had been annihilated in the Teutoburg Wood in the year 9, and the people had never been influenced by the higher Roman civilization. They spoke the popular Germanic tongue. The Teuton word for people was *thiot*. The Christian missionaries therefore called the German language the *lingua theotisca* or the *lingua teutisca*, the 'popular dialect,' and this word *teutisca* was changed into *Deutsch*, which accounts for the name Deutschland.

As for the famous Imperial Crown, it very soon slipped off the heads of the Carolingian successors and rolled back on to the Italian plain, where it became a sort of plaything of a number of little potentates, who stole the crown from each other amidst much bloodshed, and wore it, with or without the permission of the Pope, until it was the turn of some more ambitious neighbour. The Pope, once more sorely beset by his enemies, sent north for help. He did not appeal to the ruler of the West Frankish kingdom this time. His messengers crossed the Alps and addressed themselves to Otto, a Saxon prince who was

recognized as the greatest chieftain of the different Germanic tribes.

Otto, who shared his people's affection for the blue skies and the gay and beautiful people of the Italian peninsula, hastened to the rescue. In return for his services the Pope, Leo VIII, made Otto Emperor, and the eastern half of Charles' old kingdom was henceforth known as the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.

This strange political creation managed to live to the ripe old age of eight hundred and thirty-nine years. In the year 1801—just as a new era of time was beginning—it was most unceremoniously relegated to the historical scrap-heap. The brutal fellow who destroyed the old Germanic Empire was the son of a Corsican notary public who had made a brilliant career in the service of the French Republic. He was ruler of Europe by the grace of his famous Guard regiments, but he desired to be something more. He sent to Rome for the Pope, and the Pope came and stood by while General Napoleon placed the Imperial crown upon his own head and proclaimed himself heir to the tradition of Charlemagne. For history is like life; the more things change, the more they remain the same.

XVI

CHIVALRY

We know very little about the origins of knighthood. But as the system developed it gave the world something which it needed very badly—a definite rule of conduct which softened the barbarous customs of that day, and made life more livable than it had been during the five hundred years of the Dark Ages. It was not an easy task to civilize the rough frontiersmen who had spent most of their time fighting Mohammedans and Huns and Norsemen. Often they were guilty of backsliding, and, having vowed all sorts of oaths about mercy and charity in the morning, they would murder all their prisoners before evening. But progress is ever the result of slow and ceaseless labour, and finally the most unscrupulous of knights was forced to obey the rules of his 'class,' or suffer the consequences.

These rules were different in the various parts of Europe, but they all made much of service and loyalty to duty. The Middle Ages regarded service as something very noble

and beautiful. It was no disgrace to be a servant, provided you were a good servant and did not slacken on the job. As for loyalty, at a time when life depended upon the faithful performance of many unpleasant duties it was the chief virtue of the fighting-man.

A young knight, therefore, was asked to swear that he would be faithful as a servant to God and as a servant to his king. Furthermore, he promised to be generous to those whose need was greater than his own. He pledged his word that he would be humble in his personal behaviour and would never boast of his own accomplishments, and that he would be a friend of all those who suffered, with the exception of the Mohammedans, whom he was expected to kill at sight.

Round these vows, which were merely the Ten Commandments expressed in terms which the people of the Middle Ages could understand, there developed a complicated system of manners and outward behaviour. The knights tried to model their own lives after the example of those heroes of Arthur's Round Table and Charlemagne's Court of whom the troubadours had told them. They hoped that they might prove as brave as Launcelot and as faithful as Roland. They carried them-

selves with dignity, and they spoke careful and gracious words that they might be known as true knights, however humble the cut of their coat or the size of their purse.

In this way the order of knighthood became a school of those good manners which are the oil of the social machinery. Chivalry came to mean courtesy, and the feudal castle showed the rest of the world what clothes to wear, how to eat, how to ask a lady for a dance, and the thousand and one little things of everyday behaviour which help to make life interesting and agreeable.

Like all human institutions, knighthood was doomed to perish as soon as it had outlived its usefulness.

The Crusades were followed by a great revival of trade. Cities grew overnight. The townspeople became rich, hired good schoolteachers, and soon were the equals of the knights. The invention of gunpowder deprived the heavily armed 'chevalier' of his former advantage, and the use of mercenaries made it impossible to conduct a battle with the delicate niceties of a chess tournament. The knight became superfluous. Soon he became a ridiculous figure, with his devotion to ideals that had no longer any practical value. It was

said that the noble Don Quixote de la Mancha had been the last of the true knights. After his death his trusted sword and his armour were sold to pay his debts.

But somehow or other that sword seems to have fallen into the hands of a number of men. Washington carried it during the hopeless days of Valley Forge. It was the only defence of Gordon, when he had refused to desert the people who had been entrusted to his care, and stayed to meet his death in the besieged fortress of Khartoum.

And I am not quite sure but that it proved of invaluable strength in winning the Great War.

XVII

THE CRUSADES

DURING three centuries there had been peace between Christians and Moslems except in Spain and in the Eastern Roman Empire, the two states defending the gateways of Europe. The Mohammedans, having conquered Syria in the seventh century, were in possession of the Holy Land. But they regarded Jesus as a great prophet, though not quite as great as Mohammed, and they did not interfere with the pilgrims who wished to pray in the church which St Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, had built on the spot of the Holy Grave. But early in the eleventh century a Tartar tribe from the wilds of Asia, called the Seljuks, became masters of the Mohammedan state in Western Asia, and then the period of tolerance came to an end. The Turks took all Asia Minor away from the Eastern Roman Emperors and they made an end to the trade between East and West.

Alexius, the Emperor, who rarely saw anything of his Christian neighbours of the West, appealed for help, and pointed to the danger

which threatened Europe should the Turks take Constantinople.

The Italian cities which had established colonies along the coast of Asia Minor and Palestine, in fear for their possessions, reported terrible stories of Moslem atrocities and Christian suffering. All Europe became excited.

Pope Urban II, a Frenchman from Reims, who had been educated at the same famous cloister of Cluny which had trained Gregory VII, thought that the time had come for action. The general state of Europe was far from satisfactory. The primitive agricultural methods of that day, unchanged since Roman times, caused a constant scarcity of food. There was unemployment and hunger, and these are apt to lead to discontent and riots. Western Asia in older days had fed millions. It was an excellent field for the purpose of immigration.

Therefore at the Council of Clermont-Ferrand in France in the year 1095 the Pope arose, described the terrible horrors which the Infidels had inflicted upon the Holy Land, gave a glowing description of this country which ever since the days of Moses had been overflowing with milk and honey, and exhorted the

knights of France and the people of Europe in general to leave wife and child and deliver Palestine from the paynims.

A wave of religious hysteria swept across the continent. All reason stopped. Men would drop their hammer and saw, walk out of their shop, and take the nearest road to the East to go and kill Saracens. Children would leave their homes to 'go to Palestine' and bring the terrible Saracens to their knees by the mere appeal of their youthful zeal and Christian piety. Fully 90 per cent. of those enthusiasts never got within sight of the Holy Land. They had no money. They were forced to beg or steal to keep alive. They became a danger to the safety of the highroads, and they were killed by the angry country people.

The First Crusade, a wild mob of honest Christians, defaulting bankrupts, penniless noblemen, and fugitives from justice, following the lead of half-crazy Peter the Hermit and Walter-without-a-Cent, began their campaign against the Infidels by murdering all the Jews whom they met by the way. They got as far as Hungary, and then they were all killed.

This experience taught the Church a lesson. Enthusiasm alone would not set the Holy Land free. Organization was as necessary as good-

will and courage. A year was spent in training and equipping an army of 200,000 men. They were placed under command of Godfrey of Bouillon, Robert, Duke of Normandy, Robert, Count of Flanders, and a number of other noblemen, all experienced in the art of war.

In the year 1096 this Second Crusade started upon its long voyage. At Constantinople the knights did homage to the Emperor. For, as I have told you, traditions die hard, and a Roman Emperor, however poor and powerless, was still held in great respect. Then they crossed into Asia, killed all the Moslems who fell into their hands, stormed Jerusalem, massacred the Mohammedan population, and marched to the Holy Sepulchre to give praise and thanks amidst tears of piety and gratitude. But soon the Saracens were strengthened by the arrival of fresh troops. Then they retook Jerusalem and in turn killed the faithful followers of the Cross.

During the next two centuries seven other crusades took place. Gradually the Crusaders learned the technique of crusading. The land voyage was too tedious and too dangerous. They preferred to cross the Alps and go to Genoa or Venice, where they took ship for the

East. The Genoese and the Venetians made this trans-Mediterranean passenger service a very profitable business. They charged exorbitant rates, and when the Crusaders, most of whom had very little money, could not pay the price these Italian profiteers kindly allowed them to work their way across. In return for a fare from Venice to Acre, the Crusader undertook to do a stated amount of fighting for the owners of his vessel. In this way Venice greatly increased her territory along the coast of the Adriatic and in Greece, where Athens became a Venetian colony, and in the islands of Cyprus and Crete and Rhodes.

All this, however, helped little in settling the question of the Holy Land. After the first enthusiasm had worn off a short crusading trip became part of the liberal education of every well-bred young man, and there never was any lack of candidates for service in Palestine. But the old zeal was gone. The Crusaders, who had begun their warfare with deep hatred for the Mohammedans and great love for the Christian people of the Eastern Roman Empire and Armenia, suffered a complete change of heart. They came to despise the Greeks of Byzantium, who cheated them and frequently betrayed the cause of

the Cross, and the Armenians and all the other Levantine races, and they began to appreciate the virtues of their enemies, who proved to be generous and fair opponents.

Of course, it would never do to say this openly. But when the Crusader returned home he was likely to imitate the manners which he had learned from his heathenish foe, compared with whom the average Western knight was still much of a country bumpkin. He also brought with him several new foodstuffs, such as peaches and spinach, which he planted in his garden and grew for his own benefit. He appeared in the flowing robes of silk or cotton which were the traditional habit of the followers of the Prophet, and were originally worn by the Saracens. Indeed, the Crusades, which had begun as a punitive expedition against the heathen, became a course of general instruction in civilization for millions of young Europeans.

From a military and political point of view the Crusades were a failure. Jerusalem and a number of cities were taken and lost. A dozen little kingdoms were established in Syria and Palestine and Asia Minor, but they were reconquered by the Saracens, and after the year 1244, when Jerusalem became definitely

Saracenic, the status of the Holy Land was the same as it had been before 1095.

But Europe had undergone a great change. The people of the West had been allowed a glimpse of the light and the sunshine and the beauty of the East. Their dreary castles no longer satisfied them. They wanted a broader life. Neither Church nor State could give this to them.

They found it in the cities.

XVIII

THE MEDIEVAL WORLD

In judging the good people of the Middle Ages it is wise to remember the terrible disadvantages under which they lived. They were really barbarians who posed as civilized people. Charlemagne and Otto the Great were called Roman Emperors, but they had as little resemblance to a real Roman Emperor —say Augustus or Marcus Aurelius—as 'King' Wumba Wumba of the Upper Congo has to the highly educated rulers of Sweden or Denmark. They were savages who lived amidst glorious ruins, but who did not share the benefits of the civilization which their fathers and grandfathers had destroyed. They knew nothing. They were ignorant of almost every fact which a boy of twelve knows to-day. They were obliged to go to one single book for all their information. That was the Bible. But those parts of the Bible which have influenced the history of the human race for the better are those chapters of the New Testament which teach us the great moral lessons of love, charity, and forgiveness. As a handbook of

astronomy, zoology, botany, geometry, and all the other sciences the venerable book is not entirely reliable. In the twelfth century a second book was added to the medieval library, the great encyclopædia of useful knowledge, compiled by Aristotle, the Greek philosopher of the fourth century before Christ. Why the Christian Church should have been willing to accord such high honours to the teacher of Alexander the Great, whereas they condemned all other Greek philosophers on account of their heathenish doctrines, I really do not know. But next to the Bible Aristotle was recognized as the only reliable teacher whose works could be safely placed in the hands of true Christians.

His works had reached Europe in a somewhat roundabout way. They had gone from Greece to Alexandria. They had then been translated from the Greek into the Arabic language by the Mohammedans, who conquered Egypt in the seventh century. They had followed the Moslem armies into Spain, and the philosophy of the great Stagirite—Aristotle was a native of Stagira in Macedonia—was taught in the Moorish universities of Cordova. The Arabic text was then translated into Latin by the Christian students who

had crossed the Pyrenees to get a liberal education, and this much-travelled version of the famous books was at last taught at the different schools of North-western Europe. It was not very clear, but that made it all the more interesting.

With the help of the Bible and Aristotle the most brilliant men of the Middle Ages now set to work to explain all things between heaven and earth in their relation to the expressed will of God. These brilliant men, known as the Schoolmen, were really very intelligent, but they had obtained their information exclusively from books, and never from actual observation. If they wanted to lecture on the sturgeon, or on caterpillars, they read the Old and New Testaments and Aristotle, and told their students everything these good books had to say upon the subject of caterpillars and sturgeons. They did not go out to the nearest river to catch a sturgeon. They did not leave their libraries and repair to the garden to catch a few caterpillars, and look at these animals and study them in their native haunts. Even such famous scholars as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas did not inquire whether the sturgeons in the land of Palestine and the

caterpillars of Macedonia might not have been different from the sturgeons and the caterpillars of Western Europe.

When occasionally an exceptionally curious person like Roger Bacon appeared in the council of the learned, and began to experiment with magnifying glasses and funny little telescopes, and actually dragged the sturgeon and the caterpillar into the lecturing-room and proved that they were different from the creatures described by the Old Testament and by Aristotle, the Schoolmen shook their dignified heads. Bacon was going too far. When he dared to suggest that an hour of actual observation was worth more than ten years with Aristotle, and that the works of that famous Greek might as well have remained untranslated for all the good they had ever done, the scholiasts went to the heads of the Franciscan Order to which Bacon belonged and said, "This man is a danger to the safety of the State. He wants us to study Greek that we may read Aristotle in the original. Why should he not be contented with our Latin-Arabic translation, which has satisfied our faithful people for so many hundred years? Why is he so curious about the insides of fishes and the insides of insects? He is prob-

ably a wicked magician trying to upset the established order of things by his black magic." And so well did they plead their cause that the frightened guardians of the Faith forbade Bacon to write a single word for more than ten years. When he resumed his studies he had learned a lesson. He wrote his books in a queer cipher which made it impossible for his contemporaries to read them, a trick which became common as the Church became more desperate in its attempts to prevent people from asking questions which would lead to doubts and infidelity.

This, however, was not done out of any wicked desire to keep people ignorant. The feeling which prompted the heretic-hunters of that day was really a very kindly one. They firmly believed—nay, they knew—that this life was but the preparation for our real existence in the next world. They felt convinced that too much knowledge made people uncomfortable, filled their minds with dangerous opinions, and led to doubt and hence to perdition. A medieval Schoolman who saw one of his pupils stray away from the revealed authority of the Bible and Aristotle that he might study things for himself, felt as uncomfortable as a loving mother who sees her

young child approach a hot stove. She knows that he will burn his little fingers if he is allowed to touch it, and she tries to keep him back, if necessary with force. But she really loves the child, and if he will only obey her she will be as good to him as she possibly can be. In the same way the medieval guardians of people's souls, while they were strict in all matters pertaining to the Faith, slaved day and night to render the greatest possible service to the members of their flock. They held out a helping hand whenever they could, and the Society of that day shows the influence of thousands of good men and pious women who tried to make the fate of the average mortal as bearable as possible.

A serf was a serf, and his position would never change. But the 'Good God' of the Middle Ages, who allowed the serf to remain a slave all his life, had bestowed an immortal soul upon this humble creature, and therefore he must be protected in his rights, that he might live and die as a good Christian. When he grew too old or too weak to work he must be taken care of by the feudal master for whom he had worked. The serf, therefore, who led a monotonous and dreary life, was never haunted by fear of to-morrow. He

knew that he was safe—that he could not be thrown out of employment, that he would always have a roof over his head—a leaky roof, perhaps, but a roof all the same—and that he would always have something to eat.

This feeling of stability and safety was found in all classes of society. In the towns the merchants and the artisans established guilds, which assured every member of a steady income. It did not encourage the ambitious to do better than their neighbours. Too often the guilds gave protection to the slacker, who managed to 'get by.' But they established a general feeling of content and assurance among the labouring classes, which no longer exists in our day of general competition. The Middle Ages were familiar with the dangers of what we modern people call 'corners,' when a single rich man gets hold of all the available grain or soap or pickled herring, and then forces the world to buy from him at his own price. The authorities, therefore, discouraged wholesale trading, and regulated the price at which merchants were allowed to sell their goods.

The Middle Ages disliked competition. Why compete and fill the world with hurry and rivalry, and a multitude of pushing men,

when the Day of Judgment was near at hand, when riches would count for nothing, and when the good serf would enter the golden gates of heaven while the bad knight was sent to do penance in the deepest pit of Inferno?

In short, the people of the Middle Ages were asked to surrender part of their liberty of thought and action, that they might enjoy greater safety from poverty of the body and poverty of the soul.

And with a very few exceptions they did not object. They firmly believed that they were mere visitors upon this planet—that they were here to be prepared for a greater and more important life. Deliberately they turned their backs upon a world which was filled with suffering and wickedness and injustice. They pulled down the blinds that the rays of the sun might not distract their attention from that chapter in the Apocalypse which told them of that heavenly light which was to illumine their happiness in all eternity. They tried to close their eyes to most of the joys of the world in which they lived, that they might enjoy those which awaited them in the near future. They accepted life as a necessary evil, and welcomed death as the beginning of a glorious day.

The Greeks and the Romans had never bothered about the future, but had tried to establish their Paradise here upon this earth. They had succeeded in making life extremely pleasant for those of their fellow-men who did not happen to be slaves. Then came the other extreme of the Middle Ages, when man built himself a Paradise beyond the highest clouds, and turned this world into a vale of tears for high and low, for rich and poor, for the intelligent and the dumb. It was time for the pendulum to swing back in the other direction.

XIX

THE RENAISSANCE

THE Renaissance was not a political or religious movement. It was a state of mind.

The men of the Renaissance continued to be the obedient sons of the Mother Church. They were subjects of kings and emperors and dukes, and murmured not.

But their outlook upon life was changed. They began to wear different clothes—to speak a different language—to live different lives in different houses.

They no longer concentrated all their thoughts and their efforts upon the blessed existence that awaited them in heaven. They tried to establish their Paradise upon this planet, and, truth to tell, they succeeded in a remarkable degree.

I have warned you against the danger that lies in historical dates. People take them too literally. They think of the Middle Ages as a period of darkness and ignorance. "Click," says the clock, and the Renaissance begins, and cities and palaces are flooded with the bright sunlight of an eager intellectual curiosity.

As a matter of fact it is quite impossible to

draw such sharp lines. The thirteenth century belonged most decidedly to the Middle Ages. All historians agree upon that. But was it a time of darkness and stagnation merely? By no means. People were tremendously alive. Great states were being founded. Large centres of commerce were being developed. High above the towers of the castle and the peaked roof of the town-hall rose the slender spire of the newly built Gothic cathedral. Everywhere the world was in motion. The high and mighty gentlemen of the city-hall, who had just become conscious of their own strength—by way of their recently acquired riches—were struggling for more power with their feudal masters. The members of the guilds, who had just become aware of the important fact that numbers count, were fighting the high and mighty gentlemen of the city-hall. The king and his shrewd advisers went fishing in these troubled waters and caught many a shining bass of profit, which they proceeded to cook and eat before the noses of the surprised and disappointed councillors and guild brethren.

To enliven the scenery during the long hours of evening, when the badly lighted streets did not invite further political and economic dispute, the troubadours and min-

singers told their stories and sang their songs of romance and adventure and heroism and loyalty to all fair women. Meanwhile youth, impatient of the slowness of progress, flocked to the universities, and thereby hangs a story.

The Middle Ages were 'internationally minded.' That sounds difficult, but wait until I explain it to you. We modern people are 'nationally minded.' We are Americans or Englishmen or Frenchmen or Italians, and speak English or French or Italian, and go to English and French and Italian universities, unless we want to specialize in some particular branch of learning which is only taught elsewhere, and then we learn another language, and go to Munich or Madrid or Moscow. But the people of the thirteenth or fourteenth century rarely talked of themselves as Englishmen or Frenchmen or Italians. They said, "I am a citizen of London, or Bordeaux, or Genoa." Because they all belonged to one and the same Church they felt a certain bond of brotherhood. And as all educated men could speak Latin they possessed an international language, which removed the stupid language barriers which have grown up in modern Europe, and which place the small nations at such an enormous disadvantage. Just as an example, take the case

of Erasmus, the great preacher of tolerance and laughter, who wrote his books in the sixteenth century. He was the native of a small Dutch village. He wrote in Latin, and all the world was his audience. If he were alive to-day he would write in Dutch. Then only five or six million people would be able to read him. To be understood by the rest of Europe and America, his publishers would be obliged to translate his books into twenty different languages. That would cost a lot of money, and most likely the publishers would never take the trouble or the risk.

Six hundred years ago that could not happen. The greater part of the people were still very ignorant, and could not read or write at all. But those who had mastered the difficult art of handling the goose-quill belonged to an international republic of letters which spread across the entire Continent, and which knew of no boundaries and respected no limitations of language or nationality. The universities were the strongholds of this republic. Unlike modern fortifications, they did not follow the frontier. They were to be found wherever a teacher and a few pupils chanced to be brought together by common aims and interests.

As an example let me tell you of something

that happened in the ninth century. In the town of Salerno near Naples there was a number of excellent physicians. They attracted people desirous of entering the medical profession, and for almost a thousand years, until 1817, there was a University of Salerno which taught the wisdom of Hippocrates, the great Greek doctor who had practised his art in ancient Hellas in the fifth century before the birth of Christ.

Then there was Abelard, the young priest from Brittany, who early in the twelfth century began to lecture on theology and logic in the cathedral school at Paris. Thousands of eager young men flocked to hear him. Other priests who disagreed with him stepped forward to explain their point of view. Paris was soon filled with a clamouring multitude of Englishmen and Germans and Italians, and students from Sweden and Hungary, and round the old cathedral, which stood on a little island in the Seine, there grew the famous University of Paris.

In Bologna in Italy a monk, Gratian by name, had compiled a text-book for those whose business it was to know the laws of the Church. Young priests and many laymen then came from all over Europe to hear Gratian explain his ideas. To protect them-

selves against the landlords and the innkeepers of the city they formed a corporation, or university, and behold the beginning of the University of Bologna.

Next there was a quarrel in the University of Paris. The non-French students were expelled. At the same time Henry II of England called back all English 'clerks' then studying in other lands. A group of expelled teachers and students from Paris formed the nucleus of the University of Oxford. In the same way, in the year 1222, there had been a split in the University of Bologna. The discontented teachers, again followed by their pupils, had moved to Padua, and their proud city thenceforward boasted of a university of its own. And so it went from Valladolid in Spain to Cracow in distant Poland, and from Poitiers in France to Rostock in Germany.

It is quite true that much of the teaching done by these early professors would sound absurd to our ears, trained to listen to logarithms and geometrical theorems. The point, however, which I want to make is this—the Middle Ages, and especially the thirteenth century, were not a time when the world stood entirely still. Among the younger generation, there was life, there was enthusiasm, and there was a restless if somewhat bashful asking of

questions. And out of this turmoil grew the Renaissance.

But just before the curtain went down upon the last scene of the medieval world a solitary figure crossed the stage, of whom you ought to know more than his mere name. This man was Dante. He was the son of a Florentine lawyer who belonged to the Alighieri family, and he saw the light of day in the year 1265. He grew up in the city of his ancestors, while Giotto was painting his stories of the life of St Francis of Assisi upon the walls of the Church of the Holy Cross, but often when he went to school his frightened eyes would see the puddles of blood which told of the terrible and endless warfare that raged for ever between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, the followers of the Pope and the adherents of the Emperors.

When he grew up he became a Guelph, because his father had been one before him, just as an English boy might become a Liberal or a Conservative, simply because his father had happened to be a Liberal or a Conservative. But after a few years Dante saw that Italy, unless united under a single head, threatened to perish as a victim of the disordered jealousies of a thousand little cities. Then he became a Ghibelline.

He looked for help beyond the Alps. He

hoped that a mighty emperor might come and re-establish unity and order. Alas! he hoped in vain. The Ghibellines were driven out of Florence in the year 1302. From that time until the day of his death amidst the dreary ruins of Ravenna, in the year 1321, Dante was a homeless wanderer, eating the bread of charity at the table of rich patrons whose names would have sunk into the deepest pit of oblivion but for this single fact, that they had been kind to a poet in his misery. During the many years of exile Dante felt compelled to justify himself and his actions when he had been a political leader in his home town, and when he had spent his days walking along the banks of the Arno that he might catch a glimpse of the lovely Beatrice Portinari, who died the wife of another man, a dozen years before the Ghibelline disaster.

He had failed in the ambitions of his career. He had faithfully served the town of his birth, and before a corrupt court he had been accused of stealing the public funds and had been condemned to be burned alive should he venture back within the realm of the city of Florence. To clear himself before his own conscience and before his contemporaries Dante then created an imaginary world, and with great detail he described the circum-

stances which had led to his defeat and depicted the hopeless condition of greed and lust and hatred which had turned his fair and beloved Italy into a battlefield for the pitiless mercenaries of wicked and selfish tyrants.

He tells us how on the Thursday before Easter of the year 1300 he had lost his way in a dense forest, and how he found his path barred by a leopard and a lion and a wolf. He gave himself up for lost, when a white figure appeared amidst the trees. It was Virgil, the Roman poet and philosopher, sent upon his errand of mercy by the Blessed Virgin and by Beatrice, who from high heaven watched over the fate of her true lover. Virgil then takes Dante through Purgatory and through Hell. Deeper and deeper the path leads them, until they reach the lowest pit where Lucifer himself stands frozen into the eternal ice, surrounded by the most terrible of sinners, traitors, and liars, and those who have achieved fame and success by lies and by deceit. But before the two wanderers have reached this terrible spot Dante has met all those who in some way or other have played a *rôle* in the history of his beloved city. Emperors and Popes, dashing knights and whining usurers, they are all there, doomed to eternal punishment or awaiting the day of

deliverance, when they shall leave Purgatory for Heaven.

It is a curious story. It is a handbook of everything the people of the thirteenth century did and felt and feared and prayed for. Through it all moves the figure of the lonely Florentine exile, for ever followed by the shadow of his own despair.

And behold! when the gates of death were closing upon the sad poet of the Middle Ages the portals of life swung open to the child who was to be the first of the men of the Renaissance. That was Francesco Petrarca, the son of the notary public of the little town of Arezzo.

Francesco's father had belonged to the same political party as Dante. He too had been exiled, and thus it happened that Petrarca—or Petrarch, as we call him—was born away from Florence. At the age of fifteen he was sent to Montpellier in France that he might become a lawyer like his father. But the boy did not want to be a jurist. He hated the law. He wanted to be a scholar and a poet—and because he wanted to be a scholar and a poet beyond everything else he became one. He made long voyages, copying manuscripts in Flanders and in the cloisters along the Rhine, and in Paris and Liëgé, and finally in Rome.

Then he went to live in a lonely valley of the wild mountains of Vaucluse, and there he studied and wrote, and soon he had become so famous for his verse and for his learning that both the University of Paris and the King of Naples invited him to come and teach their students and subjects. On the way he was obliged to pass through Rome. The people had heard of his fame as an editor of half-forgotten Roman authors. They decided to honour him, and in the ancient forum of the Imperial City Petrarch was crowned with the laurel wreath of the poet.

From that moment his life was an endless career of honour and appreciation. He wrote the things which people wanted most to hear. They were tired of theological disputations. Poor Dante could wander through Hell as much as he liked. But Petrarch wrote of love and of nature and the sun, and never mentioned those gloomy things which seemed to have been the stock in trade of the previous generation. And when Petrarch came to a city all the people flocked out to meet him, and he was received like a conquering hero. If he happened to bring his young friend Boccaccio, the story-teller, with him, so much the better. They were both men of their time, full of curiosity, willing to read everything

once, digging in forgotten and musty libraries that they might find still another manuscript of Virgil or Ovid or Lucretius, or any of the other old Latin poets. They were good Christians. Of course they were! Every one was. But there was no need to go round with a long face and wearing a dirty coat just because some day or other you were going to die. Life was good. People were meant to be happy. You desired proof of this? Very well. Take a spade and dig into the soil. What did you find? Beautiful old statues. Beautiful old vases. Ruins of ancient buildings. All these things were made by the people of the greatest empire that ever existed. They ruled all the world for a thousand years. They were strong and rich and handsome—just look at that bust of the Emperor Augustus! Of course, they were not Christians, and they would never be able to enter Heaven. At best they would spend their days in Purgatory, where Dante had just paid them a visit.

But who cared? To have lived in a world like that of ancient Rome was heaven enough for any mortal being. And, anyway, we live but once. Let us be happy and cheerful for the mere joy of existence.

Such, in short, was the spirit that had begun

to fill the narrow and crooked streets of the many little Italian cities.

In the fourteenth century the Italian people went crazy about the newly discovered beauties of the buried world of Rome. Soon their enthusiasm was shared by all the people of Western Europe. The finding of an unknown manuscript became the excuse for a civic holiday. The man who wrote a grammar became as popular as the fellow who nowadays invents a new sparking-plug. The humanist, the scholar who devoted his time and his energies to a study of *homo*, or mankind, instead of wasting his hours upon fruitless theological investigations, was regarded with greater honour and a deeper respect than was ever bestowed upon a hero who had just conquered all the Cannibal Islands.

In the midst of this intellectual upheaval an event occurred which greatly favoured the study of the ancient philosophers and authors. The Turks were renewing their attacks upon Europe. Constantinople, capital of the last remnant of the original Roman Empire, was hard pressed. In the year 1393 the Emperor, Manuel Palæologus, sent Manuel Chrysoloras to Western Europe to explain the desperate state of old Byzantium and to ask for aid. This aid never came. The Roman Catholic

world was more than willing to see the Greek Catholic world go to the punishment that awaited such wicked heretics. But however indifferent Western Europe might be to the fate of the Byzantines, they were greatly interested in the ancient Greeks, whose colonists had founded the city on the Bosporus five centuries after the Trojan War. They wanted to learn Greek that they might read Aristotle and Homer and Plato.

People were no longer contented to be the audience and sit still while the Emperor and the Pope told them what to do and what to think. They wanted to be actors upon the stage of life. They insisted upon giving expression to their own individual ideas. If a man happened to be interested in statesmanship, like the Florentine historian Nicolò Machiavelli, then he expressed himself in his books, which revealed his own idea of a successful state and an efficient ruler. If, on the other hand, he had a liking for painting he expressed his love for beautiful lines and lovely colours in the pictures which have made the names of Giotto, Fra Angelico, Raphael, and a thousand others household words wherever people have learned to care for those things which express a true and lasting beauty.

If this love for colour and line happened

to be combined with an interest in mechanics and hydraulics, the result was a Leonardo da Vinci, who painted his pictures, experimented with his balloons and flying-machines, drained the marshes of the Lombardian plains, and expressed his joy and interest in all things between heaven and earth in prose, in painting, in sculpture, and in curiously conceived engines. When a man of gigantic strength, like Michelangelo, found the brush and the palette too soft for his strong hands, he turned to sculpture and to architecture, and hacked the most terrific creatures out of heavy blocks of marble, and drew the plans for the church of St Peter, the most concrete expression of the glories of the triumphant Church. And so it went on.

All Italy—and very soon all Europe—was filled with men and women who lived that they might add their mite to the sum total of our accumulated treasures of knowledge and beauty and wisdom. In Germany, in the city of Mainz, Johann zum Gensfleisch, commonly known as Johann Gutenberg, had just invented a new method of copying books. He had studied the old woodcuts, and had perfected a system by which individual letters of soft lead could be placed in such a way that they formed words and whole pages. It is

true, he soon lost all his money in a lawsuit which had to do with the original invention of the press. He died in poverty, but the expression of his particular inventive genius lived after him.

Soon Aldus in Venice and Étienne in Paris and Plantin in Antwerp and Froben in Basel were flooding the world with carefully edited editions of the classics printed in the Gothic letters of the Gutenberg Bible, or printed in the Italian type which we use in this book, or printed in Greek letters, or in Hebrew.

Then the whole world became the eager audience of those who had something to say. The day when learning had been a monopoly of a privileged few came to an end. And the last excuse for ignorance was removed from this world when Elzevir of Haarlem began to print his cheap and popular editions. Then Aristotle and Plato, Virgil and Horace and Pliny, all the goodly company of the ancient authors and philosophers and scientists, offered to become man's faithful friends in exchange for a few paltry pennies. Humanism had made all men free and equal before the printed word.

XX

THE GREAT DISCOVERIES

THE Crusades had been a lesson in the liberal art of travelling. But very few people had ever ventured beyond the well-known beaten track which led from Venice to Jaffa. In the thirteenth century the Polo brothers, merchants of Venice, had wandered across the great Mongolian desert, and after climbing mountains as high as the moon they had found their way to the Court of the Great Khan of Cathay, the mighty Emperor of China. The son of one of the Polos, Marco by name, had written a book about their adventures, which covered a period of more than twenty years. The astonished world had gaped at his descriptions of the golden towers of the strange island of Zipangu, which was his Italian way of spelling Japan. Many people had wanted to go east, that they might find this gold-land and grow rich. But the journey was too far and too dangerous, and so they stayed at home.

Of course, there was always the possibility of making the voyage by sea. But the sea was very unpopular in the Middle Ages, and

for many very good reasons. In the first place, ships were very small. The vessels on which Magellan made his famous trip round the world, which lasted many years, were not as large as a modern ferryboat. They carried from twenty to fifty men, who lived in dingy quarters—too low to allow any of them to stand upright—and the sailors were obliged to eat poorly cooked food, as the kitchen arrangements were very bad, and no fire could be made whenever the weather was the least bit rough. The medieval world knew how to pickle herrings and how to dry fish. But there were no canned foods, and fresh vegetables were never seen on the bill of fare as soon as the coast had been left behind. Water was carried in small barrels. It soon became stale, and then tasted of rotten wood and iron rust, and was full of slimy growing things. As the people of the Middle Ages knew nothing about microbes—Roger Bacon, the learned monk of the thirteenth century, seems to have suspected their existence, but he wisely kept his discovery to himself—they often drank unclean water, and sometimes the whole crew died of typhoid fever. Indeed, the mortality on board the ships of the earliest navigators was terrible. Of the two hundred and fifty sailors who in the year 1519 left Seville to

accompany Magellan on his famous voyage round the world only eighteen returned. As late as the seventeenth century, when there was a brisk trade between Western Europe and the Indies, a mortality of 40 per cent. was nothing unusual for a journey from Amsterdam to Batavia and back. The greater part of these victims died of scurvy, a disease which is caused by lack of fresh vegetables, and which affects the gums and poisons the blood until the patient dies of sheer exhaustion.

Under those circumstances, you will understand that the sea did not attract the best elements of the population. Famous discoverers like Magellan and Columbus and Vasco da Gama travelled at the head of crews that were almost entirely composed of ex-jailbirds, future murderers, and pickpockets out of a job.

These navigators certainly deserve our admiration for the courage and the pluck with which they accomplished their hopeless tasks in the face of difficulties of which the people of our own comfortable world can have no conception. Their ships were leaky. The rigging was clumsy. Since the middle of the thirteenth century they had possessed some sort of a compass, which had come to Europe from China by way of Arabia and the Crusades, but they had very bad and incorrect maps.

They set their course by God and by guess. If luck was with them they returned after one or two or three years. In the other case their bleached bones remained behind on some lonely beach. But they were true pioneers. They gambled with luck. Life to them was a glorious adventure. And all the suffering, the thirst, and the hunger and the pain were forgotten when their eyes beheld the dim outlines of a new coast, or the placid waters of an ocean that had lain forgotten since the beginning of time.

Keep in mind that all during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the navigators were trying to accomplish just *one thing*—they wanted to find a comfortable and safe road to the empire of Cathay (China), to the island of Zipangu (Japan), and to those mysterious islands where grew the spices which the medieval world had come to like since the days of the Crusades, and which people needed in those days before the introduction of cold storage, when meat and fish spoiled very quickly, and could be eaten only after a liberal sprinkling of pepper or nutmeg.

The Venetians and the Genoese had been the great navigators of the Mediterranean, but the honour for exploring the coast of the Atlantic goes to the Portuguese. Spain and

Portugal were full of that patriotic energy which their age-old struggle against the Moorish invaders had developed. Such energy, once it exists, can easily be forced into new channels. In the thirteenth century King Alphonso III had conquered the kingdom of Algarve in the South-western corner of the Spanish peninsula, and had added it to his dominions. In the next century the Portuguese had turned the tables on the Mohammedans, had crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, and had taken possession of Ceuta, opposite the Arabic city of Ta'Rifa—a word which in Arabic means 'inventory,' and which by way of the Spanish language has come down to us as 'tariff'—and Tangiers, which became the capital of an African addition to Algarve.

They were ready to begin their career as explorers.

In the year 1415 Prince Henry, known as Henry the Navigator, the son of John I of Portugal and Philippa, the daughter of John of Gaunt, about whom you can read in *Richard II*, a play by William Shakespeare, began to make preparations for the systematic exploration of North-western Africa. Before this that hot and sandy coast had been visited by the Phœnicians and by the Norsemen, who remembered it as the home of the hairy "wild

man," whom we have come to know as the gorilla. One after another, Prince Henry and his captains discovered the Canary Islands—rediscovered the island of Madeira, which a century before had been visited by a Genoese ship, carefully charted the Azores, which had been vaguely known to both the Portuguese and the Spaniards, and caught a glimpse of the mouth of the Senegal river on the west coast of Africa, which they supposed to be the western mouth of the Nile. At last, by the middle of the fifteenth century, they saw Cape Verde, or the Green Cape, and the Cape Verde Islands, which lie almost half-way between Spain and Brazil.

But Henry did not restrict himself in his investigations to the waters of the ocean. He was Grand Master of the Order of Christ. This was a Portuguese continuation of the crusading Order of the Templars, which had been abolished by Pope Clement V in the year 1312 at the request of King Philip the Fair of France, who had improved the occasion by burning his own Templars at the stake and stealing all their possessions. Prince Henry used the revenues of the domains of his religious Order to equip several expeditions which explored the hinterland of the Sahara and of the coast of Guinea.

But he was still very much a son of the Middle Ages, and spent a great deal of time and wasted a lot of money upon a search for the mysterious "Prester John," the mythical Christian priest who was said to be the emperor of a vast empire situated somewhere in the East. The story of this strange potentate had first been told in Europe in the middle of the twelfth century. For three hundred years people had tried to find Prester John and his descendants. Henry took part in the search. Thirty years after his death the riddle was solved.

In the year 1486 Bartholomew Diaz, trying to find the land of Prester John by sea, had reached the southernmost point of Africa. At first he called it the Storm Cape, on account of the strong winds which had prevented him from continuing his voyage toward the east, but the Lisbon pilots who understood the importance of this discovery in their quest for the India water-route changed the name into that of the Cape of Good Hope.

One year later Pedro de Covilham, provided with letters of credit on the house of Medici, started upon a similar mission by land. He crossed the Mediterranean, and after leaving Egypt he travelled southward. He reached Aden, and from there, travelling through the waters of the Persian Gulf, which few white

men had seen since the days of Alexander the Great, eighteen centuries before, he visited Goa and Calicut on the coast of India, where he got a great deal of news about the Island of the Moon (Madagascar), which was supposed to lie half-way between Africa and India. Then he returned, paid a secret visit to Mecca and to Medina, crossed the Red Sea once more, and in the year 1490 he discovered the realm of Prester John, who was no one less than the Black Negus, or King, of Abyssinia, whose ancestors had adopted Christianity in the fourth century, seven hundred years before the Christian missionaries had found their way to Scandinavia.

These many voyages had convinced the Portuguese geographers and cartographers that while the voyage to the Indies by an eastern sea-route was possible it was by no means easy. Then there arose a great debate. Some people wanted to continue the explorations east of the Cape of Good Hope. Others said, "No, we must sail west across the Atlantic, and then we shall reach Cathay."

Let us state here that most intelligent people of that day were firmly convinced that the earth was not as flat as a pancake, but was round. The Ptolemean system of the universe, invented and duly described by Claudius

Ptolemy, the great Egyptian geographer, who had lived in the second century of our era, which had served the simple needs of the men of the Middle Ages, had long been discarded by the scientists of the Renaissance. They had accepted the doctrine of the Polish mathematician, Nicolas Copernicus, whose studies had convinced him that the earth was one of a number of round planets which revolved about the sun, a discovery which he did not venture to publish for thirty-six years—it was printed in 1543, the year of his death—from fear of the Holy Inquisition, a papal court which had been established in the thirteenth century, when the heresies of the Albigenses and the Waldenses in France and in Italy—very mild heresies of devoutly pious people, who did not believe in private property, and preferred to live in Christ-like poverty—had for a moment threatened the absolute power of the bishops of Rome. But the belief in the roundness of the earth was common among the nautical experts, and, as I said, they were now debating the respective advantages of the eastern and the western routes.

Among the advocates of the western route was a Genoese mariner, Cristoforo Colombo by name. He was the son of a wool-comber. He seems to have been a student at the

University of Pavia, where he specialized in mathematics and geometry. Then he took up his father's trade, but soon we find him in Chios in the eastern Mediterranean travelling on business. Thereafter we hear of voyages to England, but whether he went north in search of wool or as the captain of a ship we do not know. In February of the year 1477 Colombo, if we are to believe his own words, visited Iceland, but very likely he got only as far as the Faröe Islands, which are cold enough in February to be mistaken for Iceland by anyone. Here Colombo met the descendants of those brave Norsemen who in the tenth century had settled in Greenland, and who had visited America in the eleventh century, when Leif's vessel had been blown to the coast of Vinland, or Labrador.

What had become of those far western colonies no one knew. The American colony of Thorfinn Karlsefne, the husband of the widow of Leif's brother Thorstein, founded in the year 1003, had been discontinued three years later on account of the hostility of the Esquimos. As for Greenland, not a word had been heard from the settlers since the year 1440. Very likely the Greenlanders had all died of the Black Death, which had just killed half the people of Norway. However that

might be, the tradition of a vast land in the distant west still survived among the people of the Faröe Islands and Iceland, and Colombo must have heard of it. He gathered further information among the fishermen of the northern Scottish islands, and then went to Portugal, where he married the daughter of one of the captains who had served under Prince Henry the Navigator.

From that moment on—the year 1478—he devoted himself to the quest of the western route to the Indies. He sent his plans for such a voyage to the Courts of Portugal and Spain. The Portuguese, who felt certain that they possessed a monopoly of the eastern route, would not listen to his plans. In Spain Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, whose marriage in 1469 had made Spain into a single kingdom, were busy driving the Moors from their last stronghold, Granada. They had no money for risky expeditions. They needed every peseta for their soldiers.

Few people were ever forced to fight as desperately for their ideas as this brave Italian. But the story of Colombo or Columbus, as we call him, is too well known to bear repeating. The Moors surrendered Granada on the 2nd of January of the year 1492. In the month of April of the same year Columbus

signed a contract with the King and Queen of Spain. On Friday, the 3rd of August, he left Palos with three little ships and a crew of eighty-eight men, many of whom were criminals who had been offered indemnity of punishment if they joined the expedition. At two o'clock in the morning of Friday, the 12th of October, Columbus discovered land. On the 4th of January of the year 1493 Columbus waved farewell to the forty-four men of the little fortress of La Navidad, none of whom was ever again seen alive, and returned homeward. By the middle of February he reached the Azores where the Portuguese threatened to throw him into gaol. On the 15th of March, 1493, the admiral reached Palos, and together with his Indians—for he was convinced that he had discovered some outlying islands of the Indies, and called the natives Red Indians—he hastened to Barcelona to tell his faithful patrons that he had been successful, and that the road to the gold and the silver of Cathay and Zipangu was at the disposal of their most Catholic Majesties.

Alas, Columbus never knew the truth. Toward the end of his life, on his fourth voyage, when he had touched the mainland of South America, he may have suspected that all was not well with his discovery. But

he died in the firm belief that there was no solid continent between Europe and Asia, and that he had found the direct route to China.

Meanwhile the Portuguese, sticking to their eastern route, had been more fortunate. In the year 1498 Vasco da Gama had been able to reach the coast of Malabar and return safely to Lisbon with a cargo of spice. In the year 1502 he had repeated the visit. But along the western route the work of exploration had been most disappointing. In 1497 and 1498 John and Sebastian Cabot had tried to find a passage to Japan, but they had seen nothing but the snowbound coasts and the rocks of Newfoundland, which had first been sighted by the Northmen, five centuries before. Amerigo Vespucci, a Florentine who became the Pilot Major of Spain, and who gave his name to the new continent, had explored the coast of Brazil, but had found not a trace of the Indies.

In the year 1513, seven years after the death of Columbus, the truth at last began to dawn upon the geographers of Europe. Vasco Nuñez de Balboa had crossed the Isthmus of Panama, had climbed the famous peak in Darien, and had looked down upon a vast expanse of water which seemed to suggest the existence of another ocean.

Finally in the year 1519 a fleet of five small Spanish ships under command of the Portuguese navigator, Ferdinand Magellan, sailed westward—and not eastward, since that route was absolutely in the hands of the Portuguese, who allowed no competition—in search of the Spice Islands. Magellan crossed the Atlantic between Africa and Brazil, and sailed southward. He reached a narrow channel between the southernmost point of Patagonia, the "land of the people with the big feet," and the Fire Island, so named on account of a fire, the only sign of the existence of natives, which the sailors watched one night. For almost five weeks the ships of Magellan were at the mercy of the terrible storms and blizzards which swept through the straits. A mutiny broke out among the sailors. Magellan suppressed it with terrible severity, and sent two of his men on shore, where they were left to repent of their sins at leisure. At last the storms quieted down, the channel broadened, and Magellan entered a new ocean. Its waves were quiet and placid. He called it the Peaceful Sea, the Mare Pacifico. Then he continued in a western direction. He sailed for ninety-eight days without seeing land. His people almost perished from hunger and thirst and ate the rats that infested the ships, and when

these were all gone they chewed pieces of sail to still their gnawing hunger.

In March of the year 1521 they saw land. Magellan called it the land of the Ladrones, which means robbers, because the natives stole everything they could lay hands on. Then farther westward to the Spice Islands!

Again land was sighted. A group of lonely islands. Magellan called them the Philippines, after Philip, the son of his master Charles V, the Philip II of unpleasant historical memory. At first Magellan was well received, but when he used the guns of his ships to make Christian converts he was killed by the aborigines, together with a number of his captains and sailors. The survivors burned one of the three remaining ships and continued their voyage. They found the Moluccas, the famous Spice Islands; they sighted Borneo and reached Tidor. There one of the two ships, too leaky to be of further use, remained behind with her crew. The *Vittoria*, under Sebastian del Cano, crossed the Indian Ocean, missed seeing the northern coast of Australia, which was not discovered until the first half of the seventeenth century, when ships of the Dutch East India Company explored this flat and inhospitable land, and after great hardships reached Spain.

This was the most notable of all voyages. It had taken three years. It had been accomplished at a great cost both of men and money. But it had established the fact that the earth was round, and that the new lands discovered by Columbus were not a part of the Indies, but a separate continent. From that time onward Spain and Portugal devoted all their energies to the development of their Indian and American trade. To prevent an armed conflict between the rivals Pope Alexander VI, the only avowed heathen who was ever elected to this most holy office, had obligingly divided the world into two equal parts by a line of demarcation which followed the fiftieth degree of longitude west of Greenwich, the so-called division of Tordesillas of 1494. The Portuguese were to establish their colonies to the east of this line, the Spaniards were to have theirs to the west. This accounts for the fact that the entire American continent with the exception of Brazil became Spanish and that all of the Indies and most of Africa became Portuguese, until the English and the Dutch colonists, who had no respect for papal decisions, took these possessions away in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

When news of the discovery of Columbus reached the Rialto of Venice, the stock ex-

change of the Middle Ages, there was a terrible panic. Stocks and bonds went down 40 and 50 per cent. After a short while, when it appeared that Columbus had failed to find the road to Cathay, the Venetian merchants recovered from their fright. But the voyages of da Gama and Magellan proved the practical possibilities of an eastern water-route to the Indies. Then the rulers of Genoa and Venice, the two great commercial centres of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, began to be sorry that they had refused to listen to Columbus. But it was too late. Their Mediterranean became an inland sea. The overland trade to the Indies and China dwindled to insignificant proportions. The old days of Italian glory were gone. The Atlantic became the new centre of commerce, and therefore the centre of civilization. It has remained so ever since.

The westward exploration was accompanied by a steady increase in the size of ships, and a broadening of the knowledge of the navigators. The flat-bottomed vessels of the Nile and the Euphrates were replaced by the sailing vessels of the Phœnicians, the Ægeans, the Greeks, the Carthaginians, and the Romans. These in turn were discarded for the square-rigged vessels of the Portuguese and the Spaniards. And the latter were driven from

the ocean by the full-rigged craft of the English and the Dutch.

At present, however, civilization no longer depends upon ships. Aircraft has taken and will continue to take the place of the sailing vessel and the steamer. The next centre of civilization will depend upon the development of aircraft and water-power. And the sea once more shall be the undisturbed home of the little fishes, who once upon a time shared their deep residence with the earliest ancestors of the human race.

XXI

THE RISE OF RUSSIA

In the year 1492, as you know, Columbus discovered America. Early in the same year, a Tyrolese, by name Schnups, travelling as the head of a scientific expedition for the Archbishop of Tyrol, and provided with the best letters of introduction and excellent credit, tried to reach the mythical town of Moscow. He did not succeed. When he reached the frontiers of this vast Moscovite state, which was vaguely supposed to exist in the extreme eastern part of Europe, he was firmly turned back. No foreigners were wanted. And Schnups went to visit the heathen Turk in Constantinople, in order that he might have something to report to his clerical master when he came back from his explorations.

Sixty-one years later Richard Chancellor, trying to discover the North-eastern Passage to the Indies, and blown by an ill-wind into the White Sea, reached the mouth of the Dwina and found the Muscovite village of Kholmogory, a few hours' journey from the spot where in 1584 the town of Archangel was founded. This time the foreign visitors were

requested to come to Moscow and show themselves to the Grand Duke. They went, and returned to England with the first commercial treaty ever concluded between Russia and the Western world. Other nations soon followed, and something became known of this mysterious land.

Geographically Russia is a vast plain. The Ural mountains are low, and form no barrier against invaders. The rivers are broad, but often shallow. It was an ideal territory for nomads.

While the Roman Empire was founded, grew in power, and disappeared again Slav tribes, who had long since left their homes in Central Asia, wandered aimlessly through the forests and plains of the region between the Dniester and Dnieper rivers. The Greeks had sometimes met these Slavs, and a few travellers of the third and fourth centuries mention them.

Unfortunately for the peace of these primitive peoples a very convenient trade-route ran through their country. This was the main road from Northern Europe to Constantinople. It followed the coast of the Baltic until the Neva was reached. Then it crossed Lake Ladoga and went southward along the Volkhov river. Then through Lake

Ilmen and up the small Lovat river. Then there was a short portage until the Dnieper was reached. Then down the Dnieper into the Black Sea.

The Norsemen knew of this road at a very early date. In the ninth century they began to settle in Northern Russia, just as other Norsemen were laying the foundations of independent states in Germany and France. But in the year 862 three Norsemen, brothers, crossed the Baltic and founded three small dynasties. Of the three brothers only one, Rurik, lived for a number of years. He took possession of the territory of his brothers, and twenty years after the arrival of this first Norseman a Slav state had been established with Kiev as its capital.

From Kiev to the Black Sea is a short distance. Soon the existence of an organized Slav state became known in Constantinople. This meant a new field for the zealous missionaries of the Christian faith. Byzantine monks followed the Dnieper on their way northward, and soon reached the heart of Russia. They found the people worshipping strange gods who were supposed to dwell in woods and rivers and in mountain caves. They taught them the story of Jesus. There was no competition from the side of Roman missionaries.

These good men were too busy educating the heathen Teutons to bother about the distant Slavs. Hence Russia received its religion and its alphabet and its first ideas of art and architecture from the Byzantine monks, and as the Byzantine Empire, a relic of the Eastern Roman Empire, had become very Oriental. and had lost many of its European traits, the Russians suffered in consequence.

Politically speaking, these new states of the great Russian plains did not fare well. It was the Norse habit to divide every inheritance equally among all the sons. No sooner had a small state been founded than it was broken up among eight or nine heirs, who in turn left their territory to an ever-increasing number of descendants. It was inevitable that these small competing states should quarrel among themselves. Anarchy was the order of the day. And when the red glow of the eastern horizon told the people of the threatened invasion of a savage Asiatic tribe the little states were too weak and too divided to render any sort of defence against this terrible enemy.

It was in the year 1224 that the first great Tartar invasion took place, and that the hordes of Jenghiz Khan, the conqueror of China, Bokhara, Tashkent, and Turkestan, made their first appearance in the West. The Sla-

mies were beaten near the Kalka river, and Russia was at the mercy of the Mongolians. As suddenly as they had come they disappeared. Thirteen years later, in 1237, however, they returned. In less than five years they conquered every part of the vast Russian plains. Until the year 1380, when Dmitry Donskoi, Grand Duke of Moscow, beat them on the plains of Kulikovo, the Tartars were the masters of the Russian people.

All in all, it took the Russians two centuries to deliver themselves from this yoke. For a yoke it was, and a most offensive and objectionable one. It turned the Slav peasants into miserable slaves. No Russian could hope to survive unless he was willing to creep before a dirty little Mongolian who sat in a tent somewhere in the heart of the steppes of Southern Russia and spat at him. It deprived the mass of the people of all feeling of honour and independence. It made hunger and misery and maltreatment and personal abuse the normal state of human existence. Until at last the average Russian, were he peasant or nobleman, went about his business like a neglected dog who has been beaten so often that his spirit has been broken and he dare not wag his tail without permission.

There was no escape. The horsemen of

the Tartar Khan were fast and merciless. The endless prairie did not give a man a chance to cross into the safe territory of his neighbour. He must keep quiet and bear what his yellow master decided to inflict upon him, or run the risk of death. Of course, Europe might have interfered. But Europe was engaged upon business of its own, fighting in the quarrels between the Pope and the Emperor, or suppressing this, that, or the other heresy. And so Europe left the Slav to his fate, and forced him to work out his own salvation.

The final saviour of Russia was one of the many small states, founded by the early Norse rulers. It was situated in the heart of the Russian plain. Its capital, Moscow, was upon a steep hill on the banks of the Moskwa river. This little principality, by dint of pleasing the Tartar when it was necessary to please, and opposing him when it was safe to do so, had during the middle of the fourteenth century made itself the leader of a new national life. It must be remembered that the Tartars were wholly deficient in constructive political ability. They could only destroy. Their chief aim in conquering new territories was to obtain revenue. To get this revenue in the form of taxes, it was necessary to allow certain remnants of the old political organization to

continue. Hence there were many little towns, surviving by the grace of the Great Khan, that they might act as tax-gatherers and rob their neighbours for the benefit of the Tartar Treasury.

The state of Moscow, growing fat at the expense of the surrounding territory, finally became strong enough to risk open rebellion against its masters, the Tartars. It was successful, and its fame as the leader in the cause of Russian independence made Moscow the natural centre for all those who still believed in a better future for the Slav race. In the year 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turks. Ten years later, under the rule of Ivan III, Moscow informed the Western world that the Slav state laid claim to the worldly and spiritual inheritance of the lost Byzantine Empire, and such traditions of the Roman Empire as had survived in Constantinople. A generation afterward, under Ivan the Terrible, the Grand Dukes of Moscow were strong enough to adopt the title of Cæsar, or Tsar, and to demand recognition by the Western powers of Europe.

In the year 1598, with Feodor the First, the old Muscovite dynasty, descendants of the original Norseman Rurik, came to an end. For the next seven years a Tartar half-breed,

by name Boris Godunov, reigned as Tsar. It was during this period that the future destiny of the large masses of the Russian people was decided. This empire was rich in land, but very poor in money. There was no trade and there were no factories. Its few cities were dirty villages. It was composed of a strong central Government and a vast number of illiterate peasants. This Government, a mixture of Slav, Norse, Byzantine, and Tartar influences, recognized nothing beyond the interest of the state. To defend this state it needed an army. To gather the taxes, which were necessary to pay the soldiers, it needed civil servants. To pay these many officials it needed land. In the vast wilderness on the east and west there was a sufficient supply of this commodity. But land without a few labourers to till the fields and tend the cattle has no value. Therefore the old nomadic peasants were robbed of one privilege after the other, until finally, during the first year of the sixteenth century, they were formally made a part of the soil upon which they lived. The Russian peasants ceased to be free men. They became serfs or slaves, and they remained serfs until the year 1861, when their fate had become so terrible that they were beginning to die out.

In the seventeenth century this new state, with its growing territory which was spreading quickly into Siberia, had become a force with which the rest of Europe was obliged to reckon. In 1613, after the death of Boris Godunov, the Russian nobles had elected one of their own number to be Tsar. He was Michael, the son of Feodor, of the Moscow family of Romanov, who lived in a little house just outside the Kremlin.

In the year 1672 his great-grandson Peter, the son of another Feodor, was born. When the child was ten years old his stepsister Sophia took possession of the Russian throne. The little boy was allowed to spend his days in the suburbs of the national capital, where the foreigners lived. Surrounded by Scottish innkeepers, Dutch traders, Swiss apothecaries, Italian barbers, French dancing-teachers, and German schoolmasters, the young prince obtained a first but rather extraordinary impression of that far-away and mysterious Europe where things were done differently.

When he was seventeen years old he suddenly pushed Sister Sophia from the throne. Peter himself became the ruler of Russia. He was not contented with being the Tsar of a semi-barbarous and half-Asiatic people. He must be the sovereign head of a

civilized nation. To change Russia overnight from a Byzantine-Tartar state into a European empire was no small undertaking. It needed strong hands and a capable head. Peter possessed both. In the year 1698 the great operation of grafting modern Europe upon ancient Russia was performed. The patient did not die. But he never got over the shock, as the events of the last few years have shown very plainly.

XXII

THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

BEFORE we talk about a revolution it is just as well that we explain just what this word means. In the terms of a great Russian writer—and Russians ought to know what they are talking about in this field—a revolution is a "swift overthrow, in a few years, of institutions which have taken centuries to root in the soil, and seem so fixed and immovable that even the most ardent reformers hardly dare to attack them in their writings. It is the fall, the crumbling away in a brief period, of all that up to that time has composed the essence of social, religious, political, and economic life in a nation."

Such a revolution took place in France in the eighteenth century, when the old civilization of the country had grown stale. The king in the days of Louis XIV had become EVERYTHING, and was the State. The Nobility, formerly the Civil Servant of the federal State, found itself without any duties, and became a social ornament of the royal Court.

This French State of the eighteenth century,

however, cost incredible sums of money. This money had to be produced in the form of taxes. Unfortunately the kings of France had not been strong enough to force the nobility and the clergy to pay their share of these taxes. Hence the taxes were paid entirely by the agricultural population. But the peasants living in dreary hovels, no longer in intimate contact with their former landlords, but victims of cruel and incompetent land-agents, were going from bad to worse. Why should they work and exert themselves? Increased returns upon their land merely meant more taxes and nothing for themselves, and therefore they neglected their fields as much as they dared.

A wealthy middle class, closely connected with the nobility, by the usual process of the rich banker's daughter marrying the poor baron's son, and a Court composed of all the most entertaining people of France, had brought the polite art of graceful living to its highest development. As the best brains of the country were not allowed to occupy themselves with questions of political economics they spent their idle hours upon the discussion of abstract ideas.

As fashions in modes of thought and personal behaviour are quite as likely to run to

extremes as fashion in dress, it was natural that the most artificial society of that day should take a tremendous interest in what they considered "the simple life." The King and the Queen, the absolute and unquestioned proprietors of France, and all its colonies and dependencies, together with their courtiers, went to live in funny little country houses all dressed up as milkmaids and stable-boys, and played at being shepherds in a happy vale of ancient Hellas. Around them their courtiers danced attendance, their Court musicians composed lovely minuets, their Court barbers devised more and more elaborate and costly headgear, until from sheer boredom and lack of real jobs this whole artificial world of Versailles, the great show-place which Louis XIV had built far away from his noisy and restless city, talked of nothing but those subjects which were farthest removed from their own lives, just as a man who is starving will talk of nothing except food.

When Voltaire, the courageous old philosopher, playwright, historian, and novelist, and the great enemy of all religious and political tyranny, began to throw his bombs of criticism at everything connected with the Established Order of Things, the whole French world applauded him, and his theatrical pieces

played to standing room only. When Jean Jacques Rousseau waxed sentimental about primitive man, and gave his contemporaries delightful descriptions of the happiness of the original inhabitants of this planet—about whom he knew as little as he did about the children, upon whose education he was the recognized authority—all France read his *Social Contract*, and this society in which the king and the State were one wept bitter tears when they heard Rousseau's appeal for a return to the blessed days when the real sovereignty had lain in the hands of the people and when the king had been merely the servant of his people.

When Montesquieu published his *Persian Letters*, in which two distinguished Persian travellers turn the whole existing society of France topsy-turvy and poke fun at everything from the king down to the lowest of his six hundred pastrycooks, the book immediately went through four editions, and assured the writer thousands of readers for his famous discussion of the *Spirit of the Laws*, in which the noble Baron compared the excellent English system with the backward system of France, and advocated instead of an absolute monarchy the establishment of a state in which the executive, the legislative, and the judicial

powers should be in separate hands and should work independently of each other. When Lebreton, the Parisian bookseller, announced that Messieurs Diderot, d'Alembert, Turgot, and a score of other distinguished writers were going to publish an encyclopædia, which was to contain "all the new ideas and the new science and the new knowledge," the response from the side of the public was most satisfactory, and when after twenty-two years the last of the twenty-eight volumes had been finished the somewhat belated interference of the police could not repress the enthusiasm with which French society received this most important but very dangerous contribution to the discussions of the day.

Here, let me give you a little warning. When you read a novel about the French Revolution, or see a play dealing with it, you will easily get the impression that the Revolution was the work of the rabble from the Paris slums. It was nothing of the kind. The mob appears often upon the revolutionary stage, but invariably at the instigation and under the leadership of those middle-class professional men who used the hungry multitude as an efficient ally in their warfare upon the king and his Court. But the fundamental ideas which caused the Revolution were

invented by a few brilliant minds, and they were at first introduced into the charming drawing-rooms of the *ancien régime* to provide amiable diversion for the much-bored ladies and gentlemen of his Majesty's Court. These pleasant but careless people played with the dangerous fireworks of social criticism until the sparks fell through the cracks of the floor, which was old and rotten just like the rest of the building. Those sparks unfortunately landed in the basement, where age-old rubbish lay in great confusion. Then there was a cry of fire. But the owner of the house, who was interested in everything except the management of his property, did not know how to put the small blaze out. The flame spread rapidly and the entire edifice was consumed by the conflagration, which we call the great French Revolution.

For the sake of convenience we can divide the French Revolution into two parts. From 1789 to 1791 there was a more or less orderly attempt to introduce a constitutional monarchy. This failed, partly through lack of good faith and stupidity on the part of the monarch himself, partly through circumstances over which nobody had any control.

From 1792 to 1799 there was a republic, and a first effort to establish a democratic form

of Government. But the actual outbreak of violence had been preceded by many years of unrest and many sincere but ineffectual attempts at reform.

When France had a debt of 4000 million francs, and the Treasury was always empty and there was not a single thing upon which new taxes could be levied, even good King Louis, who was an expert locksmith and a great hunter, but a very poor statesman, felt vaguely that something ought to be done. Therefore he called for Turgot, to be his Minister of Finance. Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Baron de l'Aulne, a man in the late forties, a splendid representative of the fast disappearing class of landed gentry, had been a successful governor of a province, and was an amateur political economist of great ability. He did his best. Unfortunately he could not perform miracles. As it was impossible to squeeze more taxes out of the ragged peasants it was necessary to get the necessary funds from the nobility and clergy, who had never paid a centime. This made Turgot the best hated man at the Court of Versailles. Furthermore, he was obliged to face the enmity of Marie Antoinette, the Queen, who was against everybody who dared to mention the word 'economy' within her hearing.

Soon Turgot was called an "unpractical visionary" and a "theoretical professor," and then of course his position became untenable. In the year 1776 he was forced to resign.

After the 'professor' there came a man of Practical Business Sense. He was an industrious Swiss by the name of Necker, who had made himself rich as a grain speculator and the partner in an international banking-house. His ambitious wife had pushed him into the Government service that she might establish a position for her daughter, who afterward as the wife of the Swedish minister in Paris, Baron de Staël, became a famous literary figure of the early nineteenth century.

Necker set to work with a fine display of zeal, just as Turgot had done. In 1781 he published a careful review of the French finances. The King understood nothing of this *Compte Rendu*. He had just sent troops to America to help the colonists against their common enemies, the English. This expedition proved to be unexpectedly expensive, and Necker was asked to find the necessary funds. When, instead of producing revenue, he published more figures and made statistics, and began to use the dreary warning about "necessary economies," his days were num-

bered. In the year 1781 he was dismissed as an incompetent servant.

After the professor and the practical business man came the delightful type of financier who will guarantee everybody 100 per cent. per month on their money if only they will trust his own infallible system. He was Charles Alexandre de Calonne, a pushing official, who had made his career both by his industry and his complete lack of honesty and scruples. He found the country heavily indebted, but he was a clever man, willing to oblige everybody, and he invented a quick remedy. He paid the old debts by contracting new ones. This method is not new. The result since time immemorial has been disastrous. In less than three years more than 800,000,000 francs had been added to the French debt by this charming Minister of Finance who never worried and smilingly signed his name to every demand that was made by his Majesty and by his lovely Queen, who had learned the habit of spending during the days of her youth in Vienna.

At last even the Parliament of Paris, a high court of justice and not a legislative body, although by no means lacking in loyalty to their sovereign, decided that something must be done. Calonne wanted to borrow another

80,000,000 francs. It had been a bad year for the crops, and the misery and hunger in the country districts were terrible. Unless something sensible were done France would go bankrupt. The King as always was unaware of the seriousness of the situation. Would it not be a good idea to consult the representatives of the people? Since 1614 no States-General had been called together. In view of the threatening panic there was a demand that the Estates be convened. Louis XVI, however, who never could take a decision, refused to go as far as that.

To pacify the popular clamour he called together a meeting of the Notables in the year 1787. This merely meant a gathering of the best families, who discussed what could and should be done, without touching their feudal and clerical privilege of tax exemption. It is unreasonable to expect that a certain class of society shall commit political and economic suicide for the benefit of another group of fellow-citizens. The 127 Notables obstinately refused to surrender a single one of their ancient rights. The crowd in the street, being now exceedingly hungry, demanded that Necker, in whom they had confidence, be reappointed. The Notables said "No." The crowd in the street began to smash

windows and do other unseemly things. The Notables fled. Calonne was dismissed.

A new colourless Minister of Finance, the Cardinal Loménie de Brienne, was appointed, and Louis, driven by the violent threats of his starving subjects, agreed to call together the old States-General "as soon as practicable." This vague promise of course satisfied no one.

No such severe winter had been experienced for almost a century. The crops had been either destroyed by floods, or had been frozen to death in the fields. All the olive-trees of Provence had been killed. Private charity tried to do something, but could accomplish little for eighteen million starving people. Everywhere bread riots occurred. A generation before these would have been put down by the army. But the work of the new philosophical school had begun to bear fruit. People began to understand that a shotgun is no effective remedy for a hungry stomach, and even the soldiers, who came from among the people, were no longer to be depended upon. It was absolutely necessary that the King should do something definite to regain the popular goodwill, but again he hesitated.

Here and there in the provinces little independent republics were established by

followers of the new school. The cry of "No taxation without representation"—the slogan of the American rebels a quarter of a century before—was heard among the faithful middle classes. France was threatened with general anarchy. To appease the people and to increase the royal popularity the Government unexpectedly suspended the former very strict form of censorship of books. At once a flood of ink descended upon France. Everybody, high or low, criticized and was criticized. More than 2000 pamphlets were published. Loménie de Brienne was swept away by a storm of abuse. Necker was hastily called back to placate, as best he could, the nation-wide unrest. Immediately the stock market went up 30 per cent. And by common consent people suspended judgment for a little while longer. In May of 1789 the States-General were to assemble, and then the wisdom of the entire nation would speedily solve the difficult problem of recreating the kingdom of France into a healthy and happy state.

This prevailing idea, that the combined wisdom of the people would be able to solve all difficulties, proved disastrous. It lamed all personal effort during many important months. Instead of keeping the Government in his own hands at this critical moment,

Necker allowed everything to drift. Hence there was a new outbreak of the acrimonious debate upon the best ways to reform the old kingdom. Everywhere the power of the police weakened. The people of the Paris suburbs, under the leadership of professional agitators, gradually began to discover their strength, and commenced to play the *rôle* which was to be theirs all through the years of the great unrest, when they acted as the brute force which was used by the actual leaders of the Revolution to secure those things which could not be obtained in a legitimate fashion.

As a sop to the peasants and the middle class, Necker decided that they should be allowed a double representation in the States-General. Upon this subject the Abbé Sieyès then wrote a famous pamphlet, "To what does the Third Estate Amount?" in which he came to the conclusion that the Third Estate, a name given to the middle class, ought to amount to everything, that it had not amounted to anything in the past, and that it now desired to amount to something. He expressed the sentiment of the great majority of the people who had the best interests of the country at heart.

The States-General came together on the

5th of May, 1789. The King was in a bad humour. The Clergy and the Nobility let it be known that they were unwilling to give up a single one of their privileges. The King ordered the three groups of representatives to meet in different rooms and discuss their grievances separately. The Third Estate refused to obey the royal command. They took a solemn oath to that effect in a tennis-court —hastily put in order for the purpose of this illegal meeting—on the 20th of June, 1789. They insisted that all three Estates, Nobility, Clergy, and Third Estate, should meet together, and so informed his Majesty. The King gave in.

As the National Assembly, the States-General began to discuss the state of the French kingdom. The King got angry. Then again he hesitated. He said that he would never surrender his absolute power. Then he went hunting, forgot all about the cares of the State, and when he returned from the chase he gave in. For it was the royal habit to do the right thing at the wrong time in the wrong way. When the people clamoured for A the King scolded them and gave them nothing. Then, when the Palace was surrounded by a howling multitude of poor people, the King surrendered and gave his subjects

what they had asked for. By this time, however, the people wanted A plus B. The comedy was repeated. When the King signed his name to the royal decree, which granted his beloved subjects A and B, they were threatening to kill the entire royal family unless they received A plus B plus C. And so on, through the whole alphabet and up to the scaffold.

Unfortunately the King was always just one letter behind. He never understood this. Even when he laid his head under the guillotine he felt that he was a much-abused man, who had received a most unwarrantable treatment at the hands of people whom he had loved to the best of his limited ability.

Historical 'ifs,' as I have often warned you, are never of any value. It is very easy for us to say that the monarchy might have been saved 'if' Louis had been a man of greater energy and less kindness of heart. But the King was not alone. Even 'if' he had possessed the ruthless strength of Napoleon his career during these difficult days might have been easily ruined by his wife, who was the daughter of Maria Theresa of Austria, and who possessed all the characteristic virtues and vices of a young girl who had been brought up at the most autocratic and medieval Court of that age.

She decided that some action must be taken, and planned a counter-revolution. Necker was suddenly dismissed, and loyal troops were called to Paris. The people, when they heard of this, stormed the fortress of the Bastille prison, and on the 14th of July, of the year 1789, they destroyed this familiar but much-hated symbol of autocratic power, which had long since ceased to be exclusively a political prison, and was now used as a city lock-up like other Paris prisons. Many of the nobles took the hint, and left the country. But the King as usual did nothing. He had been hunting on the day of the fall of the Bastille, and he had shot several deer and felt very much pleased.

The National Assembly now set to work, and on the 4th of August, with the noise of the Parisian multitude in their ears, they abolished all privileges. This was followed on the 27th of August by the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, the famous preamble to the first French Constitution. So far so good, but the Court had apparently not yet learned its lesson. There was a widespread suspicion that the King was again trying to interfere with these reforms, and as a result on the 5th of October there was a second riot in Paris. It spread to Versailles, and the people were not

pacified until they had brought the King back to his palace in Paris. They did not trust him in Versailles. They liked to have him where they could watch him and control his correspondence with his relatives in Vienna and Madrid and the other Courts of Europe.

Meanwhile in the Assembly, Mirabeau, a nobleman who had become leader of the Third Estate, was beginning to put order into chaos. But before he could save the position of the King he died, on the 2nd of April of the year 1791. The King, who now began to fear for his own life, tried to escape on the 21st of June. He was recognized from his picture on a coin, was stopped near the village of Varennes by members of the National Guard, and was brought back to Paris.

In September of 1791 the first Constitution of France was accepted, and the members of the National Assembly went home. On the 1st of October, 1791, the Legislative Assembly came together to continue the work of the National Assembly. In this new gathering of popular representatives there were many extremely revolutionary elements. The boldest among these were known as the Jacobins, after the old Jacobin cloister in which they held their political meetings. These young men, most of them belonging to the pro-

fessional classes, made very violent speeches, and when the newspapers carried these orations to Berlin and Vienna the King of Prussia and the Emperor decided that they must do something to save their good brother and sister. They were very busy just then dividing the kingdom of Poland, where rival political factions had caused such a state of disorder that the country was at the mercy of anybody who wanted to take a couple of provinces. But they managed to send an army to invade France and deliver the King.

Then a terrible panic of fear swept throughout the land of France. All the pent-up hatred of years of hunger and suffering came to a horrible climax. The mob of Paris stormed the Palace of the Tuileries. The faithful Swiss bodyguards tried to defend their master, but Louis, unable to make up his mind, gave order to cease firing just when the crowd was retiring. The people, drunk with blood and noise and cheap wine, murdered the Swiss to the last man, then invaded the Palace, and went after Louis, who had escaped into the meeting-hall of the Assembly, where he was immediately suspended from his office, and from where he was taken as a prisoner to the old castle of the Temple.

But the armies of Austria and Prussia con-

tinued their advance, and the panic changed into hysteria and turned men and women into wild beasts. In the first week of September of the year 1792 the crowd broke into the jails and murdered all the prisoners. The Government did not interfere. The Jacobins, headed by Danton, knew that this crisis meant either the success or the failure of the Revolution, and that only the most brutal audacity could save them. The Legislative Assembly was closed, and on the 21st of September of the year 1792 a new National Convention came together. It was a body composed almost entirely of extreme revolutionists. The King was formally accused of high treason, and was brought before the Convention. He was found guilty, and by a vote of 361 to 360—the extra vote being that of his cousin the Duke of Orleans—he was condemned to death. On the 21st of January of the year 1793 he quietly and with much dignity suffered himself to be taken to the scaffold. He had never understood what all the shooting and the fuss had been about. And he had been too proud to ask questions.

Then the Jacobins turned against the more moderate element in the convention, the Girondists, called after their Southern district, the Gironde. A special revolutionary tribunal

was instituted and twenty-one of the leading Girondists were condemned to death. The others committed suicide. They were capable and honest men, but too philosophical and too moderate to survive during these frightful years.

In October of the year 1793 the Constitution was suspended by the Jacobins "until peace should have been declared." All power was placed in the hands of a small Committee of Public Safety, with Danton and Robespierre as its leaders. The Christian religion and the old chronology were abolished. The Age of Reason, of which Thomas Paine had written so eloquently during the American Revolution, had come, and with it the Terror, which for more than a year killed good and bad and indifferent people at the rate of seventy or eighty a day.

The autocratic rule of the king had been destroyed. It was succeeded by the tyranny of a few people who had such a passionate love for democratic virtue that they felt compelled to kill all those who disagreed with them. France was turned into a slaughter-house. Everybody suspected everybody else. No one felt safe. Out of sheer fear a few members of the old Convention, who knew that they were the next candidates for the scaffold, finally turned against Robespierre, who had

already decapitated most of his former colleagues. Robespierre, "the only true and pure Democrat," tried to kill himself, but failed. His shattered jaw was hastily bandaged, and he was dragged to the guillotine. On the 27th of July of the year 1794—the 9th Thermidor of the year II, according to the strange chronology of the Revolution—the Reign of Terror came to an end, and all Paris danced with joy.

The dangerous position of France, however, made it necessary that the Government remain in the hands of a few strong men, until the many enemies of the Revolution should have been driven from the soil of the French fatherland. While the half-clad and half-starved revolutionary armies fought their desperate battles on the Rhine and in Italy and Belgium and Egypt, and defeated every one of the enemies of the great Revolution, five Directors were appointed, and they ruled France for four years. Then the power was vested in the hands of a successful general called Napoleon Bonaparte, who became First Consul of France in the year 1799. And during the next fifteen years the old European continent became the laboratory of a number of political experiments, the like of which the world had never seen before.

XXIII

NAPOLEON

WHEN we study the character of the Emperor we begin to understand those anxious British mothers who used to drive their children to bed with the threat that "Bonaparte, who ate little boys and girls for breakfast, would come and get them if they were not very good." And yet, having said many unpleasant things about this strange tyrant, who looked after every other department of his army with the utmost care, but neglected the medical service, and who ruined his uniforms with eau-de-Cologne because he could not stand the smell of his poor sweating soldiers; having said all these unpleasant things, and being fully prepared to add many more, I must confess to a certain lurking feeling of doubt.

Here I am sitting at a comfortable table loaded heavily with books, with one eye on my typewriter and the other on Licorice the cat, who has a great fondness for carbon paper, and I am telling you that the Emperor Napoleon was a most contemptible person. But should I happen to look out of the window, down upon Seventh Avenue, and should the

endless procession of trucks and carts come to a sudden halt, and should I hear the sound of the heavy drums and see the little man on his white horse, in his old and much-worn green uniform, then I don't know, but I am afraid that I would leave my books and the kitten and my home and everything else to follow him wherever he cared to lead. My own grandfather did this, and heaven knows he was not born to be a hero. Millions of other people's grandfathers did it. They received no reward, but they expected none. They cheerfully gave legs and arms and lives to serve this foreigner, who took them a thousand miles away from their homes, and marched them into a barrage of Russian or English or Spanish or Italian or Austrian cannon, and stared quietly into space while they were rolling in the agony of death.

If you ask me for an explanation, I must answer that I have none. I can only guess at one of the reasons. Napoleon was the greatest of actors, and the whole European continent was his stage. At all times and under all circumstances he knew the precise attitude that would impress the spectators most, and he understood what words would make the deepest impression. Whether he spoke in the Egyptian desert, before the

majesty of the Sphinx and the Pyramids, addressed his shivering men on the dew soaked plains of Italy, made no difference. At all times he was master of the situation. Even at the end, an exile on a little rock in the middle of the Atlantic, a sick man at the mercy of a dull and intolerable British governor, he held the centre of the stage.

If you want an explanation of this strange career, if you really wish to know how one man could possibly rule so many people for so many years by the sheer force of his will, do not read the books that have been written about him. Their authors either hated the Emperor or loved him. You will learn many facts, but it is more important to 'feel' history than to know it. Don't read, but wait until you have a chance to hear a good artist sing the song called *The Two Grenadiers*. The words were written by Heine, the great German poet who lived through the Napoleonic era. The music was composed by Schumann, a German who saw the Emperor, the enemy of his country, whenever he came to visit his imperial father-in-law. The song therefore is the work of two men who had every reason to hate the tyrant.

Go and hear it. Then you will understand what a thousand volumes could not possibly tell you.