

ART. VI.—*Slavery in Rome.*

The Influence of Slavery on the Political Revolutions in Rome. A Lecture, delivered before a Society of Young Men in Massachusetts. pp. 41. Northampton. 1834.

WHEN Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, on his way to Spain, to serve in the Roman army before Numantia, travelled through Italy, he was led to observe the evils, which slavery had entailed on the provinces of his country. The great body of the Roman citizens were impoverished. Instead of little farms, studding the country with their pleasant aspect, and nursing an independent race, he beheld nearly all the lands of Italy engrossed by large proprietors; and the plough was in the hands of slaves. In the early periods of the State, agriculture and war had been the labor and the office of freemen; but the great mass of the Roman citizens had now, by the institution of bondmen and its necessary tendency to accumulate all possessions in the hands of a few, been excluded from employment; the palaces of the wealthy towered in the landscape in solitary grandeur: the freemen hid themselves in miserable hovels. Deprived of the dignity of proprietors, they could not even hope for occupation; for the opulent landholder preferred rather to make use of his slaves, whom he could not but maintain, and who constituted his family. Excepting the small number of the immeasurably rich, and a feeble and constantly decreasing class of independent husbandmen, poverty was extreme. The king of Syria had revered the commands of Roman envoys, as though they had been the commands of Heaven; the rulers of Egypt had exalted the Romans above the Immortal Gods; and from the fertile fields of Western Africa, Massinissa had sent word that he was but a Roman overseer. And yet a great majority of the Roman citizens, now that they had become the conquerors of the world, were poorer than their forefathers, who had extended their ambition only to the plains round Rome.

The elder Gracchus, when his mind began to brood over the disasters, that were fast gathering in heavy clouds round

his country, was in the bloom of manhood. Sprung from an honorable family, independent though not of the most opulent, by the intermarriages of his nearest kinsmen connected with the families of the most haughty patricians, the son of a hero who had been censor, and had twice been consul, and twice had enjoyed the honors of a triumph, grandson of the elder Scipio, the victor of Hannibal, the brother-in-law of the younger Scipio, the destroyer of Carthage, he might have entered the career of ambition with every assurance of success. Possessed, by the kindness of Heaven, of admirable genius, he had also enjoyed an education superior to that of any of his contemporaries. His excellent mother, whom the unanimous testimony of antiquity declares to have been the first woman of her times, had gathered round his youth the best instructors in the arts and in letters; what then was a rare thing in Rome, he had learned to rest his head on the bosom, and enjoy the confidence, of the Grecian Muse. Nor were the qualities of his heart, and the nature of his passions, inferior to his talents and his nurture. His first appearance in the Roman army was in the last war against Carthage, under the command of his brother-in-law; and when Carthage was at last taken by storm, he, the impetuous soldier of eighteen, led the onset, and was the first to ascend the walls of the burning city. And yet he was gentle in all his dispositions; a maidenly modesty, and a peaceful composure distinguished his character; his purity obtained for him in youth the unusual distinction of a seat among the augurs. Nor was his truth nor his moderation less remarkable or less celebrated. The city of Numantia, a city within the limits of the modern kingdom of Castile, had resisted the Roman arms with an invincible fortitude, which the companions of Palafox could imitate, but not equal. But no sooner was it announced in the besieged city, that Tiberius Gracchus had appeared as a messenger before its ramparts, than the gates opened, the natives of Spain thronged round his steps, hung on his arms, and clung to his hands. They bade him take from their public stores whatever treasures he desired: he took but a handful of incense, and offered it to the Gods. They requested him to establish the basis of a peace, and he framed a treaty on principles of mutual independence.

But, in the vain attempt to give peace to Spain, Tiberius Gracchus did not forget the miseries of Italy. Who, that has

reflected on the history of nations, has not perceived how slow is the progress of change in the condition of the laboring class of society? It is now three centuries since the eloquent and disinterested Calvin first attempted, in the language and on the soil of France, to infuse into its peasantry an ameliorating principle; and in all that period, how little improvement has taken place in the physical condition and the intellectual culture of the humbler classes of the French! If it was true, in the reign of Elizabeth, that millions of her English subjects could not write nor read, it was hardly less true of millions during the reign of George IV. History has consisted chiefly of the personal achievements of a few individuals, the victories of armies, the scandals of courts, the intrigues of the palace; on the character, rights, and progress of the great mass of the people, it has been silent. The Greatest Number has been forgotten by the annalist, as its happiness has been neglected by the lawgiver.

Human nature was the same of old; but Gracchus, in hoping to improve the condition of the impoverished majority of his countrymen, refused to indulge in the vain desires of an idle philanthropy. With the enlarged philosophy of an able statesman, he sought to understand the whole nature of the evil, to devise measures for its remedy, and to find a powerful support, capable of giving efficacy to his benevolence.

He found the inhabitants of the Roman State divided into three distinct classes. The few wealthy nobles; the many indigent citizens; the still more numerous class of slaves. Reasoning correctly on the subject, he perceived that it was slavery, which crowded the poor freeman out of employment, and barred the way to his advancement. It was the aim of Gracchus not so much to mend the condition of the slaves, as to lift the brood of idle persons into dignity; to give them land, to put the plough into their hands, to make them industrious and useful, and so to repose on them the liberties of the state. With the fixedness of an iron will, he resolved to increase the number of the landed proprietors of Italy. He resolved to create a ROMAN YEOMANRY. This was the basis of his radical reform.

The means were at hand. The lands in Italy were of two classes; private estates, and public domains. With private estates, Gracchus refused to interfere. The public domains, even though they had long been usurped by the patricians,

were to be reclaimed as public property, and to be appropriated to the use of the people, under restrictions, which should prevent their future concentration in the hands of the few. To effect this object required no new order; the proper decree was already engraved among the tablets of the Roman laws. It was necessary only to revive the law of Licinius, which had slumbered for two centuries unrepealed.

In a republic, he that will execute great designs, must act with an organized party. Gracchus took counsel with the purest men of Rome; with Appius Claudius, his father-in-law, a patrician of the purest blood; with the great lawyer Mutius Scævola, a man of consular dignity, and with Crassus, the leader of the priesthood; men of the best learning and character, of unimpeachable patriotism, and friends to the new reform. But his supporters at the polls could be none other than the common people, composed of the impoverished citizens, and the very few husbandmen, who had still saved some scanty acres from the grasp of the aristocracy.

The people rallied to the support of their champion; and Gracchus, being elected their tribune, was able to bring forward his Agrarian Law. 'The wild beasts in your land,' it was so he addressed the multitude, 'have their dens; but the soldiers of Italy have only water and air. Without houses or property, they, with their wives and children, are vagabonds. Your commanders deceive you, when they bid you fight for your hearths, and your gods; you have no hearths, you have no household gods. It is for the insolence and luxury of others, that you shed your blood. You are called lords of the world, and you do not possess a square foot of soil.'

The famed Agrarian Law, relating only to the public domain, was distinguished by mitigating clauses. To each of those who had occupied the land without a right, it generously left five hundred acres; to each of their minor children two hundred and fifty more; and it also promised to make from the public treasury further remuneration for improvement. To every needy citizen it probably allotted not more than ten acres; perhaps less. Thus it was designed to create in Italy a yeomanry: instead of planters and slaves, to substitute free laborers; to plant liberty firmly in the land; to perpetuate the Roman Commonwealth, by identifying its principles with the culture of the soil. *Omnium rerum ex quibus aliquid acquiritur*—such were long the views of intel-

ligent Romans—*nihil est agriculturá melius, nihil uberius, nihil dulcius, nihil homine*, NIHIL LIBERO DIGNIUS. No pursuit is more worthy of the freeman, than agriculture. Gracchus claimed it for the free.

Philanthropy, when it contemplates a slave-holding country, may have its first sympathies excited for the slaves ; but it is a narrow benevolence which stops there. The indigent freeman is in a worse condition. The slave has his task, and also his home and his bread. He is the member of a wealthy family. The indigent freeman has neither labor, nor house, nor food ; and, divided by a broad gulf from the upper class, he has neither hope, nor ambition. The poor freeman claims sympathy ; he is so abject, that often even the slave despises him. For the interest of the slaveholder is diametrically opposite to that of the free laborer. The slaveholder is the competitor of the free laborer, and by the lease of slaves, takes the bread from his mouth. The wealthy Crassus, the richest man in Rome, was the competitor of the poorest free carpenter. The Roman patricians took away the business of the sandal-maker. The existence of slavery made the opulent owners of bondmen the rivals of the poor ; greedy after the profits of their labor, and monopolizing those profits through their slaves. In every community where slavery is tolerated, the poor freeman will always be found complaining of hard times. Would you abolish slavery ? Imitate Gracchus, and pass a law in spirit like his ; that none but the free shall till the soil. Let the plough, the spade, and the hoe be safe from the touch of a bondman, and bondage will cease. Are you afraid to abolish slavery, and would you yet mitigate the severe action of slavery upon the impoverished free ? Enact a law, ensuring the exclusive exercise of the mechanic arts, to the free portion of the population. If the laws secure to the master his slaves, let them secure to the freeman his labor.

The laws of Gracchus cut the patricians with a double edge. Their fortunes consisted in land and slaves ; it questioned their titles to the public territories, and it tended to force emancipation, by making their slaves a burden. In taking away the soil, it took away the power that kept their live machinery in motion.

The moment was a real crisis in the affairs of Rome ; not a crisis, such as precedes the eve of every annual election ;

but a crisis, such as hardly occurs to a nation in the progress of many centuries. Men are in the habit of proscribing Julius Cesar as the destroyer of the Commonwealth. The civil wars, the revolutions of Cesar, the miserable vicissitudes of the Roman emperors, the avarice of the nobles and the rabble, the crimes of the forum and the palace, all have their germ in the ill success of the reform of Gracchus.

It is our object to state results, not to narrate. We pass over the proofs of moderation which the man of the people exhibited, by appearing in the Senate, where he had hoped to obtain from the justice of the patricians some reasonable compromise ; and where he was received, very much as O'Connell was received in the English Parliament, when he pleaded for Ireland. The attempt of the aristocracy to check all procedures in the assembly of the people, by instigating another tribune to interpose his veto, was defeated by the prompt decision of the people to depose the faithless representative ; and the final success of Gracchus seemed established by the unanimous decision of the commons in favor of his decree.

But such delays had been created by his opponents, that the year of his tribuneship was nearly passed ; his re-election was needed in order to carry his decree into effect. But the evil in Rome was already too deep to be removed. The election day for tribunes was in mid-summer ; the few husbandmen, the only shadow of a Roman yeomanry, were busy in the field, gathering their crops, and failed to come to the support of their champion. He was left to rest his defence on the rabble of the city ; and though early in the morning great crowds of the people gathered together, and though, as Gracchus appeared in the forum, a shout of joy rent the skies, and was redoubled as he ascended the steps of the Capitol, yet when the aristocracy, determined at every hazard to defeat the assembly, came with the whole weight of their adherents in a mass, the timid flock, yielding to the sentiment of awe rather than of cowardice, fled like sheep before wolves ; and left their defender, the incomparable Tiberius, to be beaten to death by the clubs of senators. Three hundred of his more faithful friends were left lifeless in the market-place. In the fury of triumphant passion, the corpse of the tribune was dragged through the streets, and thrown into the Tiber.

The deluded aristocracy raised the full chorus of victory and joy. They believed that the Senate had routed the demo-

cracy ; when it was but the avenging spirit of slavery, that struck the first deadly wound into the bosom of Rome. When a funeral pyre was kindled to the manes of Tiberius Gracchus, the retributive Nemesis, indignant at the evils which followed in the train of slavery, lighted the torch, which, though it burned secretly for a while, at last kindled the furies of social war, and involved the civilized world in the conflagration.

The murder of Gracchus proved the weakness of the Senate ; they could defeat the people only by violence. But the blood of their victim, like the blood of other martyrs, cemented his party. It was impossible to carry the Agrarian Law into execution ; it was equally impossible to effect its repeal.

Gracchus had interceded for the unhappy indigent freeman, whose independence was crushed by the institution of slavery. The slaves themselves were equally sensible of their wrongs ; and in the island of Sicily they resolved on an insurrection. Differing in complexion, in language, in habits, the hope of liberty amalgamated the heterogeneous mass. Eunus, their wise leader, in the spirit of the East, employed the power of superstition to rally the degraded serfs to his banner, and, like Mahomet, pretended a revelation from heaven. Sicily had been divided into a few great plantations ; and now the voice of a leader, joining the fanaticism of religion to the enthusiasm for freedom, with the hope of liberty awakened the slaves, not in Sicily only, but in Italy, to the use of arms. What need of dwelling on the horrors of a servile war ? Cruel overseers were stabbed with pitchforks ; the defenceless were cut to pieces by scythes ; tribunals, hitherto unheard of, were established, where each family of slaves might arraign its master, and, counting up his ferocities, adjudge punishment for every remembered wrong. Well may the Roman historian blush as he relates the disgraceful tale. *Quis aequo animo ferat in principe gentium populo bella servorum ?* The Romans had fought their allies, yet had fought with freemen ; let the queen of nations blush, for she must now contend with victorious slaves. Thrice, nay, four times, were the Roman armies defeated ; the insurrection spread into Italy ; four times were even the camps of Roman praetors stormed and taken ; Roman soldiers became the captives of their bondmen. The army of the slaves increased to 200,000. It is said, that in this war a million of lives were lost ; the statement is exaggerated ; but Sicily suf-

ferred more from the devastations of the servile, than of the Carthaginian, war. Twice were Roman consuls unsuccessful. At length, after years of defeat, the benefits of discipline gave success to the Roman forces. The last garrison of the last citadel of the slaves disdained to surrender, and could no longer resist; they escaped the ignominy of captivity by one universal suicide. The conqueror of slaves, a new thing in Rome, returned to enjoy the honors of an ovation.

The object of Tiberius Gracchus, continued by his eloquent and equally unhappy brother, who moreover was the enlightened and energetic advocate of a system of internal improvement in Italy, aimed at ameliorating the condition of the indigent freeman. The great servile insurrection was designed to effect the emancipation of slaves; and both were unsuccessful. But God is just and his laws are invincible. Slavery next made its attack directly on the patricians, and following the order of Providence in the government of the moral world, began with silent but sure influence to corrupt the virtue of families, and even to destroy domestic life. It is a well ascertained fact, that slavery diminishes the frequency of marriages in the class of masters. In a state where emancipation is forbidden, the slave population will perpetually gain upon the numbers of the free. We will not stop to develop the three or four leading causes of this result, pride and the habits of luxury, the facilities of licentious indulgence, the circumscribed limits of productive industry; some of which causes operate exclusively, and all of them principally, on the free. The position is certain and is universal; no where was the principle more amply exemplified than in Rome. The rich slaveholders preferred luxury and indulgence to marriage; and celibacy became so general, that the aristocracy was obliged by law to favor the institution, which, in a society where all are free, constitutes the solace of labor and the ornament of life. A Roman censor could, in a public address to the people, stigmatize matrimony as a troublesome companionship, and recommend it only as a patriotic sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty. The depopulation of the upper class was so considerable, that the waste required to be supplied by emancipation; and repeatedly there have been periods, when the majority of the Romans had once been bondmen. Emancipation was essential to the preservation of a class of freemen, who might serve as a balance to the slave population. It was this extensive celibacy and the consequent

want of succession, that gave a peculiar character to the Roman laws, relating to adoption.

The continued and increasing deleterious effects of slavery on Roman institutions, may be traced through the changes in the character of that majority of the citizens, whom it left without the opportunity or the fruits of industry. Even in the time of the younger Gracchus, they retained dignity enough to hope for an amelioration of their condition by the action of laws, and the exercise of their own franchises. Failing in this end through the firmness of the nobles, the free middling class was entirely destroyed; society soon became divided into the very rich and the very poor; and slaves, who performed all the labor, occupied the intermediate position between the two classes.

The first step in the progress of degradation constituted the citizens, by their own vote, a class of paupers. They called on the State to feed them from the public granaries. But mark the difference between the pauper system of England, or America, and that of Rome. We cheerfully sustain in decent competence the aged, the widow, the cripple, the sick and the orphan; Rome supplied the great body of her citizens. England, who also feeds a large proportion of her laboring class, entrusts to her paupers no elective franchises. Rome fed with eleemosynary corn, the majority of her citizens, who retained, even in their condition of paupers, the privileges of electing the government, and the right of supreme, ultimate legislation. Thus besides the select wealthy idlers, here was a new class of idlers, a multitudinous aristocracy, having no estate but their citizenship, no inheritance but their right of suffrage. Both were a burden upon the industry of the slaves; the Senate directly from the revenues of their plantations, the commons indirectly, from the coffers of the Commonwealth. It was a burden greater than the fruits of slave industry could bear; the deficiency was supplied by the plunder of foreign countries. The Romans, as a nation, became an accomplished horde of robbers.

This first step was ominous enough; the second was still more alarming. A demagogue appeared, and gaining office and the conduct of a war, organized these pauper electors into a regular army. The demagogue was Marius; the movement was a revolution. Hitherto the Senate had exercised an exclusive control over the brute force of the Commonwealth; the

mob was now armed and enrolled, and led by an accomplished chieftain. Both parties being thus possessed of great physical force, the civil wars between the wealthy slaveholders, and the impoverished freemen, the select and the multitudinous aristocracy of Rome, could not but ensue. Marius and Sylla were the respective leaders; the streets of Rome and the fields of Italy became the scenes of massacre; and the oppressed bondmen had the satisfaction of beholding the jarring parties, in the nation which had enslaved them, shed each other's blood, as freely as water.

This was not all. The slaves had their triumph. Sylla selected ten thousand from their number, and to gain influence for himself at the polls, conferred on them freedom, and the elective franchise.

Of the two great leaders of the opposite factions, it has been asserted that Sylla had a distinct purpose, and that Marius never had. The remark is true, and the reason is obvious. Sylla was the organ of the aristocracy; to the party which already possessed all the wealth, he desired to secure all the political power. This was a definite object, and in one sense was attainable. Having effected a revolution, and having taken vengeance on the enemies of the Senate, he retired from office. He could not have retained perpetual authority; the forms of the ancient republic were then too vigorous, and the party on which he rested for support, would not have tolerated the usurpation. He established the supremacy of the Senate, and retired into private life. Marius, as the leader of the people, was met by insuperable difficulties. The existence of a slave population rendered it impossible to elevate the character of his indigent constituents; nor were they possessed of sufficient energy to grasp political power with tenacity. He could therefore only embody them among his soldiers, and leave the issue to Providence. His partisans suffered from evils, which it required centuries to ripen and to heal; Marius could have no plan.

Thus the institution of slavery had been the ultimate cause of two political revolutions. The indigence to which it reduced the commons, had led the Gracchi to appear as the advocates of reform, and had encouraged Marius to become their military leader. In the murder of the former, the Senate had displayed their success in exciting mobs, and in resistance to the latter, they had roused up a defender of their usurpations.

The slaves, also, who had found in Eunus an insurgent leader, were now near obtaining a liberator. The aristocracy was satisfied with its triumphs; the impoverished majority, now accustomed to their abjectness, made only the additional demand of amusements at the public expense; and were also ignobly satisfied. The slaves alone murmured, and in Spartacus, one of their number, they found a man of genius and courage, capable of becoming their leader. Roman legislation had done nothing for them; the legislation of their masters had not assuaged one pain, nor interposed the shield of the law against cruelty. The slaves determined upon a general insurrection, to be followed by emigration. The cry went forth from the plains of Lombardy, and reached the rich fields of Campania, and was echoed through every valley among the Appennines. The gladiators burst the prisons of their keepers; the field-servant threw down his manure-basket; Syrian and Scythian, the thrall from Macedonia and from Carthage, the wretches from South Gaul, the Spaniard, the African, awoke to resistance. The barbarian, who had been purchased to shed his blood in the arena, remembered his hut on the Danube; the Greek, not yet indifferent to freedom, panted for release. It was an insurrection, as solemn in its object, as it was fearful in its extent. Rome was on the brink of ruin. Spartacus pointed to the Alps; beyond their heights were fields, where the fugitives might plant their colony; there they might revive the practice of freedom; there the oppressed might found a new state on the basis of benevolence, and in the spirit of justice. A common interest would unite the bondmen of the most remote lineage, the most various color, in a firm and happy republic. Already the armies of four Roman generals had been defeated; already the immense emigration was on its way to the Alps.

If the mass of slaves could, at any moment, on breaking their fetters, find themselves capable of establishing a liberal government, if they could at once, on being emancipated or on emancipating themselves, appear possessed of civic virtue, slavery would be deprived of more than half its horrors. But the circumstance, which more than any other renders the institution execrable, is this; that while it binds the body, it corrupts the mind. The outrages which men commit, when they first regain their freedom, furnish the strongest argument against the system of bondage. The horrible inhumanity of

civil war, and slave insurrection, are the topics of the loudest appeal against the condition, which can render human nature capable of committing such crimes. Idleness and treachery and theft, are the vices of slavery. The followers of Spartacus, when the pinnacles of the Alps were almost within their sight, turned aside to plunder; and the Roman army, which could not conquer in open battle the defenders of their personal freedom, was able to gain the advantage, where the fugitive slave was changed, from a defender of liberty, into a plunderer.

The struggle took place precisely at a moment, when the Roman State was most endangered by foreign enemies. But for the difficulties in the way of communication, which rendered a close coalition between remote armies impossible, the Roman State would have sunk beneath the storm; and from the shattered planks of its noble ruins the slaves alone would have been able to build themselves a little bark of hope, to escape from the desolation. Slaves would have occupied by right of conquest the heritage of the Cesars. They finally became lords; but it was in a surer, and to human nature and Roman pride, in a more humiliating manner.

The suppression of the great insurrection of Spartacus brings us to the age of the triumvirs, and the approaching career of Julius Cesar. To form a proper judgment of his designs, and their character, we must endeavor to gain some distinct idea of the condition of the inhabitants of Italy during his time, as divided into the classes of the nobles, the poorer citizens, and the slaves.

The vast capacity for reproduction, which the laws of society secure to capital in a greater degree than to personal exertion, displays itself no where so clearly as in slave-holding states, where the laboring class is but a portion of the capital of the opulent. As wealth consists chiefly in land and slaves, the rates of interest are, from universally operative causes, always comparatively high; the difficulty of advancing with borrowed capital proportionably great. The small land-holder finds himself unable to compete with those, who are possessed of whole cohorts of bondmen; his slaves, his lands, rapidly pass, in consequence of his debts, into the hands of the more opulent. The large plantations are constantly swallowing up the smaller ones; and land and slaves soon come to be engrossed by a few. Before Cesar passed the Rubicon, this condition

existed in its extreme in the Roman State. The ARISTOCRACY owned the soil and its cultivators. A free laborer was hardly known. The large proprietors of slaves not only tilled their immense plantations, but also indulged their avarice in training their slaves to every species of labor, and letting them out, as horses from a livery stable, for the performance of every conceivable species of work. Four or five hundred slaves were not an uncommon number in one family; fifteen or twenty thousand sometimes belonged to one master. The wealth of Crassus was immense, and consisted chiefly in lands and slaves; on the number of his slaves we hardly dare hazard a conjecture. Of joiners and masons he had over five hundred. Nor was this the whole evil. The nobles, having impoverished their lands, became usurers, and had their agents dispersed over all the provinces. The censor Cato closed his career by recommending usury, as more productive than agriculture by slave labor; and such was the prodigality of the Roman planters, that, to indulge their fondness for luxury, many of them also mortgaged their estates to the money-lenders. Thus the lands of Italy, at best in the hands of a few proprietors, became virtually vested in the hands of a still smaller number of usurers. No man's house, no man's person, was secure. *Nulli est certa domus, nullum sine pignore corpus.* Hence corruption readily found its way into the Senate; the votes of that body, not less than the votes of the poorer citizens, were a merchantable commodity. *Venalis Curia patrum.* The wisdom and the decrees of the Senate were for sale to the highest bidder.

Thus there was in all Italy no yeomanry, no free labor; no free manufacturing class; and thus the wealth of the great landed proprietors was wholly unbalanced. The large plantations, cultivated by slave labor, had already ruined Italy. *Verum confitentibus, latifundia Italiam perdiderunt.*

The FREE CITIZENS, who still elected tribunes and consuls, and were still sometimes convened in a sort of town-meeting, were poor and abject. But the right of suffrage ensured them a maintenance. The petty offices in the Commonwealth were filled from their number, and such as retained some capacity for business found many a lucrative job, in return for their influence and their votes. The custom houses, the provinces, the internal police, offered inviting situations to moderate ambition. The rest clamored for bread from the pub-

lic treasury, for tickets for the theatre at the national expense, for gladiatorial shows, where men were butchered at the cost of the office-seeking aristocracy, for the amusement of the majority. But there existed no free manufacturing establishments, no free farmers, no free laborers, no free mechanics. The State possessed some of the forms of a democracy; but the life-giving principle of a democracy, prosperous free labor, was wanting.

The third class was the class of SLAVES. It was three times as numerous as both the others; though, as we have already observed, the whole body belonged almost exclusively to the few very wealthy. Their numbers excited constant apprehension; but care was taken not to distinguish them by a peculiar dress. Their ranks were recruited in various ways. The captives in war were sold at auction. The good Cicero, in the little wars in which he was commander, sold men enough to produce at half price about half a million dollars. When it was told in Rome, that Cesar had invaded Britain, the people, in the true spirit of robbers, could not but ask one another, what plunder he could hope to find there. 'There is not a scruple of silver,' said they, 'in the whole island;' *neque argenti scrupulum in illa insula*. 'Yes,' it was truly answered, 'but he will bring slaves.'

The second mode of supplying the slave market was by commerce; and this supply was so uniform and abundant, that the price of an ordinary laborer hardly varied very much for centuries. The reason is obvious. The slave merchant gets his cargoes from kidnappers, and the first cost, therefore, is inconsiderable. The great centres of this traffic were in the harbors bordering on the Euxine; and Scythians were often stolen. Caravans penetrated the deserts of Africa; and made regular hunts for slaves. Blacks were in high value; they were somewhat rare, and therefore both male and female negroes were favorite articles of luxury among the opulent Romans. At one period, Delos was most remarkable as the emporium for slavers. It had its harbors, chains, prisons, every thing so amply arranged to favor a brisk traffic, that ten thousand slaves could change hands and be shipped in a single day; an operation, which would have required thirty-three or thirty-four ships of the size of the vessel in which Paul was wrecked. There was hardly a port in the Roman empire, convenient for kidnapping foreigners, in which the

slave-trade was not prosecuted. In most heathen countries, also, men would sell their own children into bondage. The English continued to do so, even after the introduction of Christianity. In modern times, when men incur debts, it has been common for them to mortgage their own bodies; the ancients mortgaged their children. Kidnapping, and the sale of one's offspring were so common, as to furnish interesting incidents to the writers of novels.

Besides these sources, the offspring of every female slave was also a slave. The father of a natural child, by his bond-woman, was thus the master of his own offspring.

The legal condition of the slaves was extremely abject. No protection was afforded his limb or his life, against the avarice or rage of a master. Nay, worse; the female had no defence for her virtue and her honor. Instances have occurred, where the young female convert to Christianity was punished by being exposed to public and legalized insults, the most odious to female purity. A remnant of the abuse forms the plot of Shakspeare's play of *Pericles*.

No marriages could take place among slaves; they had no property; they could make no valid compact; they could hardly give testimony, except on the rack. The ties of affection and blood were disregarded. In the eye of the law a slave was nobody.

The manner in which the laborers on the great plantations were treated, resembled the modern state-prison discipline. They were sent out by day to labor in chains, and at night were locked up in prisons. The refractory were confined in subterranean dungeons. Old slaves were sold off, like old cattle from a farm. The sick were often exposed and left to die.

To enforce industry, the hand, the lash, and the rod, were the readiest instruments. The tire-women of a lady of fashion were slaves; and suffered dreadfully for every unbecoming curl. Or domestic slaves were sent to various workshops, established on purpose to tame the refractory. Sometimes a fork, something like the yoke on a goose, was put round their necks; they were placed in the stocks; they were chained. Every expedient, that human cruelty could devise, was employed to ensure the industry and docility of the wretched slave. The runaway, if retaken, was branded, or crucified; or punished by the loss of a leg; or compelled to fight wild

beasts ; or sold for a gladiator. The slave was valued only as property, and it was a question for ingenious disputation, whether, in order to lighten a vessel in a storm at sea, a good horse or a worthless slave should be thrown overboard.

If we examine the avocations of slaves, we shall find, that they occupied every conceivable station, from the delegate superintending and enjoying the rich man's villa, to the meanest office of menial labor, or obsequious vice ; from the foster-mother of the rich man's child, to the lowest condition of degradation, to which woman can be reduced. The public slaves handled the oar in the galleys, or labored on the public works. Some were lictors ; some were jailors. Executioners were slaves ; slaves were watchmen, watermen, and scavengers. Slaves regulated the rich palace in the city ; and slaves performed all the drudgery of the farm. Nor was it unusual to teach slaves the arts. Virgil made one of his a poet ; and Horace himself was the son of an emancipated slave. The Merry Andrew was a slave. The physician, the surgeon, were often slaves. So too the preceptor and the pedagogue ; the reader and the stage player ; the clerk and the amanuensis ; the buffoon and the mummer ; the architect and the smith ; the weaver and the shoemaker ; the undertaker and the bearer of the bier ; the pantomime and the singer ; the rope-dancer and the wrestler, all were bondmen. The *armiger* or squire was a slave. You cannot name an occupation, connected with agriculture, manufacturing industry, or public amusements, but it was the patrimony of slaves. Slaves engaged in commerce ; slaves were wholesale merchants ; slaves were retailers ; slaves shaved notes ; and the managers of banks were slaves.

Educated slaves exercised their profession for the emolument of their masters. Of course the value of slaves varied with their health, their beauty, or their accomplishments. The common laborer was worth from seventy-five to one hundred dollars, the usual price of a negro in the West Indies, when the slave-trade was in vogue. A good cook was worth almost any price. An accomplished play actor could not be valued at less than \$8000. A good fool was cheap, at less than \$800. Beauty was a fancy article, and its price varied. Mark Antony gave \$8000 for a pair of beautiful youths. And much higher prices have been paid. About as much was paid for an illustrious grammarian. A handsome actress was worth far more ; her annual salary might sometimes be

\$13,000. The law valued a physician at \$240. Lucullus, having once obtained an immense number of prisoners of war, sold them for sixty-five cents a head; probably the lowest price for which a lot of able-bodied men was ever offered.

Such was the character of the Italian population, over which a government was to be instituted, at the time when Cesar appeared with his army on the borders of the Rubicon. In the contest which followed, it was the object of Pompey to plunder, to devastate, and to revenge. 'Should Pompey be successful, not one single tile will be safe in an Italian roof;' says Cicero. And again, 'I know right well,' says the same writer, 'he desires a government like that of Sylla.' There did not exist any armed party in favor of a democratic republic. The spirit of the democracy was gone: and its shade only moved, with powerless steps, through the forum and the temples, which had once been the scenes of its glory.

It was in the service of his country, that Cesar carried his eagles beyond the Rubicon. The Genius of Humanity stood by the stream, and commanded her avengers to advance. The republican poet, who represents Rome appearing to the conqueror in a vision,

'Turrigero canos effundens vertice crines,'

and demanding of Cesar the occasion of his appearance in arms on her borders, with equal propriety describes him as replying,

'Roma, fave cœptis! Non te furialibus armis
Persequor; en adsum,
ubique tuus.'

In seasons of violence, despotism is the child of anarchy. Men rush to any strong arm for protection. Such despotism, like that of Cromwell or of Napoleon, is transitory. Permanent despotism can grow only out of fixed relations of society. Julius Cesar was a great statesman, not less than a great soldier. His ambition was in every thing gratified; the noise of his triumphs had filled the shores of England, the swamps of Belgium, and the forests of Germany. Any distinction in the Roman State was within his reach. He was childless; and therefore his ambition hardly seemed to require a subversion of the Roman Commonwealth. And yet, with all this, he deliberately perceived that the continuance of popular liberty was impossible, in the actual condition of the Roman State;

that a wasting, corrupt, and most oppressive aristocracy was preparing to assume the dominion of the world; that this aristocracy threatened ruin to the provinces, perpetual cruelty to the slaves, and hereditary, intolerant contempt to the people. Democracy had expired; and the worst form of aristocracy, like that of the Venetian nobles of a later day, could be prevented only by a monarchy. Julius Cesar coolly resolved on the establishment of a monarchy. This was the third great revolution prepared by slavery.

Slavery having impoverished, but not wholly corrupted the free citizens, Gracchus had endeavored to restore the democracy by creating an independent yeomanry, and had failed from the opposition of the nobles. The nobles, perceiving the increase of the evils, the great degradation of the electors, and the multiplication of slaves, and being firmly resolved on maintaining the system of slave labor, endeavored to effect a revolution, by substituting a strong aristocracy for the democracy. The plan failed, owing to the strength of the democratic forms, which had survived the democratic spirit. Cesar came, and finding the evil excessive, could devise no cure; but he clearly saw, that a monarchical form of government was the only one which would endure in Rome. Had Cesar possessed the virtues of Washington, the democracy of Jefferson, the legislative genius of Madison, he could not have changed the course of events. The condition of the Roman population demanded monarchy.

Despotism, in the regular order of Divine Providence, is the punishment of a nation for the institution of slavery, and is the consolation or the cure of hereditary bondage. The slave wears his chains with composure, when he sees his owner also in chains. The laborer felt less humiliation, when he beheld his master cringing at the feet of a master. The despot has no interest to invent charges of treason against any but the very rich; the peaceful poor man, the humble slave, has nothing to fear from his rapacity. When, at a later day in Roman history, a tyrant emperor made his horse his consul, the slave could glory in the humiliation of his owners; the people could laugh at the degradation of their oppressors; and the appointment, after all, was probably a popular one. 'That the condition of a slave is better under an arbitrary, than under a free government, is supported by the history of all ages and nations.' It is common to say, that the democracy

introduces despotism, and a strong executive. It is true, that despotism is brought in by the majority ; it is true, that when great inequalities of fortune exist, it is the clear and well-understood interest of the rich to prevent a despotism. But it is false, that despotism is the child of democracy. Despotism cannot take place, until the spirit of democracy is extinct. When, by the progressive increase of inequalities in the condition of men, society is so changed into the few immensely rich and the many indigent and poor ; when the people can, from their humble condition and the operation of the laws of property, no longer exercise a regular influence on government ; when they are bowed under the yoke of an oppressive aristocracy of a few wealthy families, then the people cure the evil which grew out of the inequality of fortunes, by pushing that inequality to the extreme ; and, in order to put down an insolent and oppressive aristocracy, they, by a spasmodic effort, create, or, obeying the natural course of events, submit to a despotism. Thus it is the aristocracy which creates the unjust inequalities, for which despotism is the remedy. The usurpations of a strong government, with the assent of the people, imply previous usurpations in the aristocracy. Witness the despotism of Denmark, established by the people for their protection against the nobility. Witness the policy of Louis XIV., and his predecessor ; witness Henry VII. and Henry VIII., in England, absolute monarchs, tolerated in their extravagant usurpations, that so the power of the great landed aristocracy might be restrained, and the authority of the church subjected. Witness the present constitution of the Russian empire, brought about, in like manner, by the act of the nation, to restrain the ambition of the nobles.

There remained no mode of establishing a fixed government in Rome, but by vesting all power in the hands of one man. In Italy, no opposition whatever was made to Cesar, on the part of the people or of the slaves. The only opposition proceeded from the aristocracy, and they could offer resistance only in the remoter subjected districts, with the aid of hireling troops, sustained by the revenues of the provinces, which were still under the control of the Senate. The people conferred on Cesar all the power, which he could desire ; he was created dictator for a year, that he might subdue his enemies, and consul for five years, that he might confirm his authority. The inviolability of his person was secured by his election as tribune for life.

What would have been the policy of Julius Cesar, had he remained in power, cannot be safely conjectured. To say that he had no plan is absurd; every step in his progress was marked by consistency. The establishment of monarchy was already an alternative to slavery. Cesar did more. He issued an ordinance, not indeed of immediate abolition, but commanding that one third part of the labor of Italy should be performed by free hands. The command was rendered inoperative by the assassination of Cesar, the greatest misfortune that could have happened to Rome. For who were his murderers? Not the people; not the insurgent bondmen; but a portion of the aristocracy, to whom the greatest happiness of the greatest number was a matter of supreme indifference.

The great majority of the conspirators have never found a eulogist. Every ancient writer speaks of them with reprobation and contempt. Cassius, one of the chief leaders, was notoriously selfish, violent, and disgracefully covetous, not to say dishonest. He is universally represented as envying injustice rather than abhorring it, and his conduct has ever been ascribed to personal malevolence, and not to patriotism. But Brutus!—History never manufactured him into a hero, till he had made himself an assassin. Of a headstrong, unbridled disposition, he never displayed coolness of judgment in any part of his career. It was his misfortune to have been the son of an abandoned woman, and to have been bred in a home, which adultery and wantonness had defiled. The vices of early indulgence may be palliated by his youth and the licentiousness of his time; but Brutus, while yet young, was notorious as a merciless and exorbitant usurer, at the rate of four per cent. a month, or forty-eight per cent. a year. When his debtors grew unable to pay, he obtained for his agent an appointment to a military post, and extorted his claims by martial law. The town of Salamis, in the isle of Cyprus, owed him money on the terms we have mentioned. He caused the members of its bankrupt municipal government to be confined in their town-hall, in the hope that hunger would quicken their financial skill; and some of them were starved to death. Such was Brutus at that ingenuous period of life, when benevolence is usually most active. Brutus hated Pompey, yet after deliberating, he joined the party of that leader, and remained true to it, so long as it seemed to be the strongest; but no

sooner was the battle of Pharsalia won, than Brutus gave in his adhesion to Cesar, and to confer a value on his conversion, he betrayed the confidence of the fugitive, whose cause he had abandoned! In the plot against Cesar, Brutus was the dupe of more sagacious men. The admirer transfers his own enthusiasm for liberty to those who claimed to be the champions of the republic; and reverences the crime of inconsiderate passion, as the exercise of righteous vengeance.

Cesar had received the Senate sitting; this insult required immediate vengeance. They murdered Cesar, not from public spirit, but from mortified vanity and angry discontent. The people, who had been pleased with the humiliation of their oppressors, were indignant at the assassination, and the assassins themselves had no ulterior plan.

Slavery had poisoned the Roman State to the marrow; and though the conspirators had no fixed line of policy, yet the condition of the population of Italy led immediately to monarchy. The young Octavian owed his elevation, not to his talents, but to the state of the times. Nothing but monarchy was tolerable. The evils that followed servitude made Augustus emperor.

Thus slavery, by impoverishing the majority of the citizens, rendered the reform of Gracchus necessary to the preservation of the democracy, and at the same time rendered that reform impossible. In a word, slavery subverted the Roman democracy. The same cause, corrupting the citizens, occasioned the attempt of Sylla, which Pompey would have renewed, to found an aristocratic government, where there already existed an aristocratic class; a result, which the combined interests of the slaves and the people defeated. Slavery was the moving cause of the third revolution; and monarchy was established by the common consent of the people, and to the sure benefit of the slave. In the emperor the slave would have a friend.

Slavery prepared one more revolution, before it expired. It introduced Oriental despotism into Europe; not by force of arms, but by the sure results of causes, that were perpetually in action.

Slavery impoverished the soil of Italy. The careless culture wore out even the rich fields of Campania. Large districts were left waste; other large tracts were turned into pastures; and grazing was substituted for tillage. The average crops of Italy hardly ever returned fourfold increase. *Nam frumenta majore quidem parte Italiae, quando cum quarto res-*

ponderint, vix meminisse possumus. It is the confession of the eulogist and the teacher of agriculture. Italy was naturally a very fertile country ; but slave labor could hardly wring from it a return one half, or even one third so great, as free labor gets from the hills and vales of New England. This impoverishment of the soil impoverished the spirit of its inhabitants. The owners of slaves, disdaining the use of the sickle and the plough, crept within the walls of Rome, abandoning the cares of agriculture to the vilest of their bondmen.

Slavery prepared the way for Oriental despotism by encouraging luxury. The genius of the Romans was inventive ; but it was only to devise new pleasures of the senses. The retinue of servants was unexampled ; and the caprices, to which men and women were subjected, were innumerable. The Roman writers are so full of it, that it is unnecessary to draw the picture, which would indeed represent humanity degraded by the subserviency of slaves, and by the artificial desires and vices of their masters. This detestable excess extended through the whole upper class. Women ceased to blush for vices which, in other times, render men infamous. *Beneficium sexus sui vitis perdiderunt, et quia foeminam exuerunt, damnatae sunt morbis virilibus.* At Rome, the gout was a common disease in the circles of female dissoluteness and fashion. The rage of luxury extended also, in some sort, to the people. For them, tens of thousands of gladiators were sacrificed without concern ; for them the enslaved Jews raised the gigantic walls of the Coliseum, the most splendid monument of human infamy ; for them actual navies engaged in actual contests ; and the sailors, as they prepared for battle, received only an *AVETE*, on their way to death.

In like manner, the effect of slavery became visible on public morals. Among the slaves there was no such thing as the sanctity of marriage ; dissoluteness was almost as general as the class. The slave was ready to assist in the corruption of his master's family. The virtues of self-denial were unknown. But the picture of Roman immorality is too gross to be exhibited. Its excess can be estimated from the extravagance of its remedy. When the Christian religion made its way through the oppressed classes of society, and gained strength by acquiring the affections of the miserable, whose woes it solaced, the abandoned manners of the cities could be forcibly reprov'd, only by the voice of fanaticism. When domestic life had almost

ceased to exist, the universal lewdness could be checked only, by the most exaggerated eulogies of absolute chastity. Convents and nunneries grew up, when more than half the world were excluded from the rites of marriage, and condemned by the laws of the empire to promiscuous indulgence. Vows of virginity were the testimony, which religion bore against the enormities of the times. Spotless purity could alone put to blush the shamelessness of artificial excess. As in raging diseases, the most violent and unnatural remedies need to be applied for a season, so the transports of enthusiasm and the revolution of fanaticism sometimes appear necessary, to stay the infection of a moral pestilence. Thus riot produced asceticism; and monks, and monkish eloquence, and monastic vows grew out of the general depravity of manners. The remedy was demanded, since public vice was threatening the Southern world with depopulation.

The gradual decay of the class of ingenuous freemen had ever been a conspicuous result of slavery. The corruptions of licentiousness spared neither sex of the Roman people; and the consequence was so certain, that emancipation alone could supply the void. Nor was it long before the majority of the cohorts, of the priesthood, of the tribes, of the people, nay of the Senate itself, came to consist of emancipated slaves. But the sons of slaves could have no capacity for defending freedom; and despotism was at hand when, besides the sovereign, there were few who were not bondmen or the children of bondmen. Freedom, to exist securely, must be locked fast in hereditary affections, and confirmed as a mortmain inheritance from long generations.

The government of Rome was sufficiently degraded, when the makers of an emperor, stumbling upon Claudius, the wisest fool of the times, proclaimed him the master of the Roman empire. Slavery now enjoyed its triumph, for a slave became prime minister. *Io Saturnalia*, shouted the cohorts, as Narcissus attempted to address them. But the consummation of evil had not arrived. The husband of Messalina had, naturally enough, taken up a prejudice against matrimony; but the governors of the weak emperor, who managed him as absolutely as Buckingham managed James I., insisted upon his marrying Agrippina. He did so; and Agrippina, assisted by freedmen and slaves, disinherited his son, murdered her husband, and placed Nero on the throne. Slaves gave Nero the purple.

The accession of Nero is the epoch of the virtual establishment of the fourth revolution. The forms of ancient Rome still continued, but Nero was the incarnation of tyranny ; the triumph of human depravity ; the very name by which men are accustomed to express the fury of unrestrained malignity. Bad as he was, Nero was not worse than Rome. Rome had no right to complain ; Rome had but her due. Nay, when he died, the rabble and the slaves crowned his statues with garlands, and scattered flowers over his grave. And why should they not ? Nero never injured the rabble, never oppressed the slave. He murdered his mother ; his brother ; his wife. But Nero was only the tyrant of the wealthy ; the terror of the successful. He rendered poverty sweet, for poverty alone was secure ; he rendered slavery tolerable, for slaves alone, or slavish men, were promoted to power. In honoring his tomb, they honored their avenger. The reign of Nero was the golden reign of the populace, and the holiday of the bondman. The death of Gracchus was now avenged on the descendants of his murderers. The streams in Heaven, it is truly said, run up hill ; and slavery, in producing its perfect results, had brought the heaviest curse on the heads of its supporters.

Despotism now became the government of the Roman empire. Yet there was such a vitality in the forms of liberty, that they were still in some degree preserved. Two centuries passed away, before the last vestiges of republican simplicity disappeared ; two centuries elapsed, before the Eastern diadem could be introduced with the slavish customs of the East. Up to the reign of Diocletian, a diadem had never been endured in Europe. Hardly had this emblem of servility become tolerated, when language also began to be corrupted ; and, within the course of another century, the austere purity of the Greek and Roman tongues, the languages of Demosthenes and of Gracchus, became for the first time familiarized to the forms of Oriental adulation. Your imperial Highness, your Grace, your Excellency, your Immensity, your Honor, your Majesty, then first became current in the European world ; men grew ashamed of a plain name ; and one person could not address another without following the custom of the Syrians, and calling him Rabbi, Master.

It is a calumny to charge the devastation of Italy upon the barbarians. We say again, the large Roman plantations, tilled

by slave labor, were the ruin of Italy. *Verum contentibus, latifundia Italiam perdidere.* From the days of Gracchus, morals, courage, force of character, and agriculture had been declining. The productiveness of the country was constantly diminishing; Italy for centuries had not produced corn enough to meet the wants of its inhabitants. Rome was chiefly supplied from Sicily and Africa, and the largest number of its inhabitants had for centuries been fed from the public magazines.

The Barbarians did not ruin Italy. The Romans themselves ruined it. Slavery had made it a waste and depopulated land, before a Scythian or a Scandinavian had crossed the Alps.

When Alaric led the Goths into Italy, even after the conquest of Rome, he saw, that he could not sustain his army in the beautiful but desert territory, unless he could also conquer Sicily and Africa, whence alone daily bread could be obtained. His successor was, therefore, easily persuaded to abandon the unproductive region, and invade the happier France.

Attila had no other object, than a roving pilgrimage after plunder; and as his cupidity was little excited, and the climate was ungenial, the wild, unlettered Calmuck was easily overawed by the Roman priesthood, and diverted from the indigent Italy to the more prosperous North. Rome still remained an object for plunderers, but none of the barbarians were tempted to make Italy the seat of empire, or Rome a metropolis. Slavery had destroyed the democracy, had destroyed the aristocracy, had destroyed the empire; and now at last it left the traces of its ruinous power deeply furrowed on the face of nature herself.

ART. VII.—*Coleridge's Poems.*

The Poetical Works of S. T. COLERIDGE. Complete in one Volume. Philadelphia. 1831.

PROBABLY NO writings of the present day have been more variously estimated, than those of Coleridge. They have been ridiculed by some, and cherished with the warmest admiration by others. But, whether good or bad, they should be looked upon with peculiar interest, coming as they do from the pen of one, who has long been distinguished in many of the highest branches of literature.