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## A Study of Some of the Effects of the Punic Wars Upon the Roman Familia

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A STUDY  
OF SOME OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PUNIC WARS  
UPON THE ROMAN FAMILIA

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Loyola University.

JULY 1936

### Vita Auctoris

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Throughout the course of history, warfare has had a pronounced influence upon the development of individuals, families and nations. We of the present generation are still witnessing the international chaos consequent upon the great World War; and it is but natural that our attention should be turned from the present to the distant past, to see whether we can discover any parallel to modern conditions. In the history of "Eternal Rome", such a parallel presents itself, though, of course, the immense difference in time and circumstances necessarily makes the similarity imperfect.

The long years of warfare between Rome and Carthage mark the most critical period in the history of these two nations. For Carthage they spelled annihilation; for Rome, the beginnings of a world-empire and the incipient decay of the noblest qualities of the Roman character. In spite of the heroic traits which were made manifest during the long struggle, we see that the stern simplicity, the simple faith, the submission to authority, which had hitherto marked the Roman people and made them truly great, were now being supplanted by characteristics which were progressively to weaken the nation even while it increased in material strength by extensive conquest. It is the object of this thesis to examine the influence of the Punic

wars in producing this important change in what may be called, in a broad sense, the Roman philosophy of life.

An exhaustive study of the effects of the Punic wars, investigating all the remote and proximate conditions and tracing the development of the various changes into imperial times, would fill volumes. Therefore a strict limitation of our subject is imperative. Prescinding from such important issues as governmental, educational, and strictly economic changes, we shall concentrate our attention upon a few points which had a direct effect upon the individual Roman, coloring his whole attitude toward life. First we shall trace the origin and growth of the latifundia system which so radically affected the lives of a predominantly agricultural people. Following this point still further, we shall inquire what became of the independent small farmer after the extensive slave-plantations necessitated a change in his occupations. A further development follows in the question of "race-suicide", brought on by the increasing prominence of foreigners and freedmen who changed the quality of the Roman familia. Tendencies toward the formation of luxurious habits, as well as the consequent decline in morality, are topics which next concern us. The discussion closes with an examination of the fundamental religious changes introduced through contact with foreign lands. In the entire treatment of our subject, we make no pretence at an exhaustive investigation of the facts, but are content to study the various changes in

the hope that they will shed a little light upon our understanding of subsequent Roman history, and help us to realize the enormous influence of war upon nations therein engaged.

As a further limitation of our subject, we shall neglect the wider aspects of the various topics under consideration, as seen in their national, political and legal character, and confine our discussion to their sociological importance as manifested in the fundamental unit of social life - the family. The Roman familia, as we shall treat it, includes the immediate members of the household (parents and children) and the slaves, who formed an integral part of Roman society. We shall try to discover the effects of the various changes upon the mode of life, the personal character, and the attitude towards life of the individual Roman citizen.

## CHAPTER II

### Growth of the Latifundia System of Agriculture

Perhaps the most immediate and apparent result of Rome's dearly-bought victory over Carthage was her establishment as the dominant power in Italy, and, subsequently, of the entire Mediterranean world; an effect, we might say, which served as the basis for all her future economic, social, cultural, and religious development (or deterioration), since it is a general rule among mankind that no momentous change ever occurs among a people but that it has a profound and enduring influence upon their entire lives and habits and mental outlook. Hence, in attempting to depict some of the manifold changes induced either directly or indirectly by the Punic wars, it is necessary first to sketch the background and the outline of our picture, since the remainder of our task will consist merely in supplying the details and adding the finishing touches to the scene.

Like an octopus, Rome began to stretch her tentacles in all directions, as she became conscious of her great power. By the end of the first Punic war she was mistress of Sicily; a short time later, of Sardinia and Corsica as well. At the end of the Hannibalic struggle her power in Spain, in the valley of the Rhone, and in the whole of Italy was secure; while the sea was hers from Malta to the Pillars of Hercules, the ancient Gibraltar. She had fought for existence, but had won world-



dominion. In the West no rival remained, though unorganized barbarians were to keep her men in fighting condition for many a year. In the East, within eleven years after the close of the second Punic war, she had set up a virtual protectorate over all the realms of Alexander's successors; and though the results of Eastern expansion were not so immediately evident, gradually the effects of Oriental contact were to revolutionize the Roman standards and manners of living. That this inroad of Asiatic culture was due, at least indirectly, though by no means remotely, to the Punic wars, can readily be understood when we consider that the wars in the East "were unavoidable after Rome had once entered the arena of world politics" (1), especially after Philip of Macedon had sided with Hannibal against Rome and her allies. (2)

At home in Italy, at this time, Rome's enormous expansion was one of the factors which produced almost immediately the widespread growth of the latifundia system, which was, perhaps, the chief cause for the ruin of the free peasant.

"The introduction of the plantation system, that is, of the cultivation of large estates (latifundia) by slave labor, was the result of several causes: the Roman system of administering the public domain, the devastation of the rural districts of South Italy in the Hannibalic War, the abundant supply of cheap slaves taken as prisoners of war, and the inability of the small proprietors to maintain themselves in the face of the demands of military service abroad and the competition of imported grain as well as that of the latifundia themselves." (3)

The accretion of the public lands was due primarily to the de-

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vastation of southern Italy during Hannibal's prolonged but unsuccessful campaign up and down the length and breadth of the land, from the Alps to the Mediterranean, even to the gates of Rome herself. Year after year during that frightful period (218-201 B.C.) the crops were destroyed and the fields, when not left fallow, either were used as battle-grounds or were ravaged by the Romans and their foes alike, lest either side should profit by their possession. Towns were taken - and lost; were destroyed in revenge for defections, or were razed to the ground, when they could not be protected, lest the enemy should establish strongholds too close for security. Southern Italy, in particular, became a vast no-man's land, where neutrality and security were impossible for many a year.

"The havoc wrought in southern Italy was irreparable. For twelve years the Romans and Carthaginians had driven each other over this region, both sides storming cities and laying waste fields as the best methods of tiring and weakening their opponents. The inhabitants who did not enroll in one army or the other were captured or driven to other lands. When the war ended much of the territory south of Beneventum was a waste tract, and most of the famous Greek cities on the coast were reduced to a mere handful of poor creatures who huddled together in any corner of their city walls that happened to be left standing." (4)

Some four hundred towns (5) were wiped out by this awful series of attacks and counter-attacks, in which Rome took stern measures in an attempt to stop defections, while Hannibal was continually seeking to protect his allies and to find food and quarters for his troops. Even Capua, the principal city of Italy, except for Rome herself, and Rome's only peninsular

rival, as well as Tarentum, the second large city which had passed over to Hannibal, were visited by the wrath of the Roman armies; and by blood, the confiscation of property, and slavery for many of their inhabitants (6), paid the penalty for having sheltered the Carthaginian invader. In the northern territories also, vast tracts of land had been laid waste,- a punishment inflicted on the Gallic tribes that had aided Hannibal and had proved so treacherous to Rome.

This widespread destruction of towns and villages, the ravaging of fields hitherto fertile and now become a barren no-man's land, caused the disappearance of the country population in those regions, and left deserted thousands of acres of war-scarred, desolate land. Beloch's careful estimate of purely Roman acreage as

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acres</u>	
203 B.C.	6,700,000	
193 B.C.	9,200,000	
173 B.C.	13,700,000	(7)

shows that in the thirty years after Zama (202 B.C.) the Roman acreage in Italy had increased over one-hundred percent. The first increase, about 2,500,000 acres, resulted from the State's appropriation of the South-Italian country which was thoroughly devastated by the last years of the war. (8)

Upon her acquisition of Sicily in the first Punic war, Rome had adopted a new policy of sovereignty (which was to prove her first step towards imperial power) by which the lands

were forfeited in title to the conqueror; and this policy she now applied to the Italian lands wrested from Hannibal's allies. For in these large tracts of land, perhaps half of which were still arable, she saw the possibility of a rich source of revenue;- and the State treasury certainly was exhausted after those seventeen years of persistent, costly warfare. Hence it was that, in the towns razed by the Roman soldiers, the Senate confiscated most of the land and declared it ager publicus, and in the towns which were deserted because they lay in the path of the advancing armies or were within the fighting-zone or because the enemy had devastated the region, Rome took possession of all lands which were without claimants. (9)

The obvious question now arose: what can be done with this immense territory of devastated farm-land? It was too extensive for all of it to be distributed among the soldiers who survived the wars; and most of it was too far removed from Rome (which was fast becoming the center of attraction) for the soldiers to care about settling there. Besides, as we shall see later, the majority of the veterans either could not or would not settle down to the quiet life and wearying toil of a farmer, - there were far more attractive prospects for them now. To colonize the entire region was even more out of the question; for if the acreage had been more than doubled, the population of Italy had been woefully decimated. In the decade from 218 to 208 B.C. the number of Roman citizens enrolled had dropped from 270,000 to 137,108, and by 204 B.C. two years after Han-

nibal's defeat at Zama, it had risen only to 214,000. (10) True, as a protective military measure, small colonies had been founded along the borders, especially in the north, where defense against the raids of the Gauls in the Po region was imperative; but this took care of only a small portion of the land. The solution to the whole problem was not at all characteristic of the Rome which the world had known previous to this time; it marked a departure from her pristine spirit, and, as both people and State were to realize within a century or so, it was a mistake which later was to cause serious trouble throughout the land.

Up to this period the backbone of the Roman power was the class of small farmers, each of whom was quite content with a few jugera of land, a modest home, a few slaves, and a small number of live-stock necessary for the management of the farm. A spirit of rustic simplicity, frugality, and independence characterized the farmer-soldier of Rome; though he had to skimp and save in order to gain a living, he preferred this poverty to ease and luxury, if only he might, by means of it, retain his independence. Farming was an honorable occupation in which anyone could engage; nor did it prove a hindrance to the acquisition of high offices of state. Though there be much legend in the accounts of the good old farmer-heroes such as Cincinnatus in the fifth century, Curius and Fabricius in the first half of the third century, and Marcus Atilius Regulus, hero of the first Punic war, still the relation of these men

to the agricultural situation of their times seemed credible to the Romans of a later age, and deserves some consideration. The period of the second Punic war, which gives us a fuller and less legendary record of agricultural conditions, clearly points out the important fact that the small farmer was predominantly in control of the land; and though large-scale farming may have been introduced after the Pyrrhic war, it was not at all widespread or popular.

But the period of warfare with Carthage had introduced Rome to an agricultural system of quite a different character. Punic agriculture was more industrial: that is, conducted rather for profit on a large scale and directed by purely economic considerations. (11) Cheap production, and hence, of necessity, mass production was the farmer's aim; and with the latifundia system in operation in the fertile regions close to Carthage, was intimately connected the system of extensive slavery with its manifold evils. Altogether, the picture of north Africa under this agricultural and slave system must have been very similar to the traditional picture of our own southern plantations prior to the Civil War. It was by the introduction and development of the latifundia system in Italy that Rome was to solve the problem of the waste-lands she had claimed as state-domain.

It must be borne in mind that in the time of the second Punic war the practice of employing contractors for various

state services had been greatly developed. Companies of publicani were only too eager to make their fortunes at the State's expense, while they took little or no risk of losing by the venture. As an example of their methods the following incident may be cited. In 215 B.C. when the Scipios, who were fighting in Spain, asked for supplies of food and clothing for their troops, the corporations of publicans (those who farmed the public taxes) were urged to furnish temporary loans to the State and to contract for the supplying of the soldiers' necessities, on the promise of receiving the first payments to be made when the treasury should have been supplied with money. Representatives of three corporations signed the contract on the condition that they should be exempt from military service during the transaction of that business, and that the State should bear any loss suffered by storms or from the enemy. (12) Such contracts for the supplying of necessities to the armies were eagerly signed, even at the low ebb of Rome's fortunes; nor did such contractors hesitate to defraud the government by shameless deceits. (13) These companies or corporations "represented a purely industrial and commercial view of life, the 'economic' as opposed to the 'national' set of principles. (14) With such men patriotism took a place second to private gain, just as it does today in the industrial world, and after the easy profits of war-time they now looked ahead for lucrative investments. A field was opened to their speculations in the real-estate business which prospered by the land situation

created by the wars.

A rather significant incident reveals how some Roman citizens managed to draw profit from their patriotism. At the critical period (210 B.C.) of the second Punic war, when Rome's treasury was drained and the people were unable to pay the taxes, a very large contribution was made, by private individuals, of voluntary loans to the government. Six years later the Senate drew up a plan for repayment in three installments. In 200 B.C., the year in which the third installment fell due, the government delayed payment because new resources were needed for the second Macedonian war which had just been entered upon. Since the creditors were becoming anxious about their money, while the State, on the other hand, was unable to pay, a compromise satisfactory to both sides was agreed upon.

"Many of the applicants had stated that there was land everywhere for sale and they wanted to become purchasers; the senate accordingly made a decree that they should have the option of taking any part of the public domain-land within fifty miles of the City. The consuls would value the land and impose a nominal tax of one as per jugerum as acknowledgment of its being public land, and when the State could pay its debts any of them who wished to have his money rather than the land could have it and restore the land to the people." (15)

This offer was gladly accepted, and the land taken over on these terms was called trientabulum, since it was given in lieu of a third of the money lent out. The valuation must have been so made as to give the creditor a good margin of security over and above the amount due him, for the reference to these lands



10.  
in the agrarian law of 111 B.C. seems to indicate that the creditors preferred the land to the money which it represented. Evidently, too, these lands grew in value as the population increased and fields became less available, so there was no probability that the holders would surrender them. This use of public land to discharge public debts undoubtedly tended to promote the formation of large estates (latifundia) which were the ruin of the old land system in a great part of Italy. (16)

A third class of Romans eager to profit by this golden opportunity of building up their fortunes, was composed of the senators and nobles. According to consistent tradition, land-grabbing was from early times a passion of the Roman nobles; and the senators, in particular, since the Claudian law of 218 B.C., were especially eager to acquire large estates. Under the provisions of this law, proposed and carried through by Gaius Claudius, tribune of the people, "no senator nor anyone whose father had been a senator, was allowed to possess a vessel of more than 300 amphorae capacity." (17) The law and the reason added by Livy: "This was considered quite large enough for the conveyance of produce from their estates, all profit made by trading was regarded as dishonourable for the patricians" (ibid), clearly indicate that this measure effectively prevented them from becoming ship-owners and engaging in commerce. Besides this, the senator was forbidden by law to engage in tax-collecting or to undertake state contracts (redemptiones). (18) The effect of this legislation was to concentrate their

enterprise on the acquisition of extensive landed estates. Even in Cato's time (234-149 B.C.)

"the formation of great landed estates, made easy by the ruin of many peasant farmers in the second Punic war, was in full swing. The effective government of Rome was passing more and more into the hands of the Senate, and the leading nobles did not neglect their opportunities of adding to their own wealth and power. Sharing the military appointments, they enriched themselves with booty and black-mail abroad, particularly in the eastern wars: and, being by law excluded from open participation in commerce, they invested a good part of their gains in Italian land." (19)

Some of the southern land was sold outright; for instance, in 205 B.C., when money was urgently needed to continue the war, a district of Campanian territory which had been taken over by Rome at the fall of Capua a few years before was ordered to be sold by the quaestors. (20) But this was not the common procedure, for the number of those who were wealthy enough to buy outright extensive tracts of land was not large; the more usual method of disposing of the territory was by leasing large estates. Hence it was that wealthy landlords, not necessarily nobles, who could afford to engage in farming or grazing on a large scale, were able to profit by the flooding of the real-estate market (from about 200-160 B.C.) with its consequent low prices; and during these years most of the available capital was invested in real-estate. (21) Due to the scarcity of colonists and buyers the state was quite willing to rent the lands that had not been bought outright, fixing the rent at the exceedingly low amount of a tithe on grain and a fifth on

various other products of the soil. (22) The larger part of the southern lands, then, was probably leased to the Romans who had sufficient capital to engage in the raising of cattle and sheep on a large scale, or to manage an extensive plantation.

At the moment, this method of disposing of the land seemed quite imperative to the State. It had to be redeemed in some way or other,- that was certain; and with the scarcity of colonists and the lack of available capital to buy it immediately, the only alternative would have been continued desolation and consequent lawlessness and brigandage. On the other hand, the advantages, to the State as well as to the farmer, of leasing large tracts of land on easy terms, were quite evident. If impoverished resources, lack of skilled labor, or even the agricultural unfitness of much of the devastated soil precluded the possibility of re-establishing intensive farming to any great degree, at least for the immediate present, these leaseholds might be used for the raising of cattle and sheep. Since extensive ranches would be needed by the graziers, this seemed to be the wisest method of putting to use the greatest number of acres possible. Besides, ranches required but a few skilled hands for their management, at least in comparison with farming, the products were more easily marketed than was grain, and the rent from extensive leaseholds would bring a considerable, regular income to the governmental treasury from property otherwise useless.

By law, public lands could be leased in blocks of five-hundred jugera (about 330 acres) per holder, and even of a thousand jugera in the case of those having two children. (23) The rental was moderate - only a tenth of the grain and a fifth of the fruit; and from the graziers, a small percentage of the animals, both oxen and small cattle. (24) It is quite obvious that on these reasonable terms much of the land was disposed of; in fact, there is much evidence to prove that this proposition was a real temptation for some of the wealthier citizens to exceed the limits established by legislation. Cattle-grazing, sheep-raising, and the cultivation of the vine or of the olive tree were frequently, if not usually, undertaken on a large scale and called for extensive tracts of land; and the landed proprietors were not the men to be over-scrupulous about legal restrictions when personal profit allured them. Since, even on the easy terms which had been offered, much land found no renters, the State found it advantageous to connive at the enterprise of some lessees who began to exceed the usual allotments of land, and even tacitly to permit the theory of squatter's rights to be exercised in practice; and her carelessness in this regard encouraged the people to presume permission to extend the limits of their holdings.

"Since the state could find no buyers or renters for them [the southern public lands], she simply permitted chance squatters and ranchers to use them, asked no uncomfortable questions, and even neglected the records. Some cattle-grazers who had gone through the formality of leasing the five hundred jugera allowed by law

gradually increased their holdings when they discovered that the adjacent lands were still unoccupied. It will be remembered how in Gracchan days the descendents of these same squatters were compelled to surrender the surplusage despite their appeal to vested rights, and how the democrats who then wanted lands for colonization could not understand why the senate had ever pursued such a reckless policy as to disregard the state's titles to its public lands. The explanation, of course, lies in the fact that from 200 to about 160 the land market was so enormously glutted that the senate saw no reason for asserting its titles." (25)

Though this carefree policy of the State seemed, at the time, to be the wisest method of utilizing the otherwise unproductive and useless territory to promote the development of the natural resources, nevertheless it proved to be a shortsighted and hasty policy which only too soon was to reveal its defects. It led to the irremediable evils of the plantation system with its necessary complement, the extensive use of slave labor; it caused the ruin of the small farmer and prevented the healthy development of more productive farming when Rome's population began to increase rapidly,- thus depriving the nation of sturdy yeomen, the backbone of the Roman power; and it contained within itself the germ of the Gracchan revolution. Rome seemed too inexperienced to realize that her population would soon reach its normal proportions; that the land which would be demanded by the rising generations would with difficulty be recovered for colonization; that the landlord system would become so firmly rooted in the Italian soil as to alter completely the agricultural system of the people; and,

finally, that she was soon to gain control of many foreign provinces which could be consolidated and kept unified only by her own farmer-soldiers. The problem of reconstruction after the Punic wars was too complicated for a people unused to extensive operations requiring great foresight, and before she could comprehend the situation aright the harm was beyond repair.

The first consequence of this state policy in dealing with the land situation was that the rich, gaining possession of the greater part of the land, came to cultivate vast tracts instead of single estates. (26) Not content with the amount of land permitted them by law, they encroached upon adjacent strips of unused property and gradually absorbed them into their own tracts, at first through their relatives or by means of fictitious personages, and later quite openly. At times, even, their poorer neighbors were subjected to a form of petty persecution, aimed to persuade or to force them to sell their plots of land, at a low price, to these plutocratic land-grabbers. The result was that, while the wealthy few were enabled to engage in mass production, by means of extensive farming or large scale grazing investments, the small farmer was ruined through his inability to compete with the lower prices which the latifundia system was able to offer. A more specific inquiry into the causes and results of the poor farmer's ruin will enable us to understand better the consequent changes effected thereby.

The soil of central Italy, especially in Latium and Cam-

pania, was very rich, but much of it was too thin to endure for long the process of soil-exhaustion which had been carried on there. When the early settlers saw the possibilities of agricultural wealth in the remarkably fertile land and in a warmth and humidity that produced abundant harvests, they had peopled the land with a numerous agricultural population. But owing to the unusually intensive methods of cultivation, necessitated by the limited extent of arable land, the necessary chemicals were soon well-nigh exhausted; and even before the time of Cato the need of fertilization of the fields and the rotation of crops was found to be imperative. But another factor augmented the agricultural difficulties. A glance at the topographical map of the country (27) will show why little of central Italy is suited for cereal cultivation. For there are extensive ridges of lava whose surface is so hard that soil-formation has been almost impossible. Since the soil in such places had not had a long time to accumulate, the lava was covered with only a thin layer of earth. Much of this top-soil was washed away by heavy rains. As early as the sixth and fifth centuries B.C. the intensive efforts to save small plots of eroding land by drawing off the rain-water by means of drains, tunnels and dams (28) give evidence of the dangerous drain on the productive qualities of the soil. Deforestation, resulting from the pressing demands for land in the earlier days, had turned many districts into bare and semi-arid rocky regions, (29) for, once the turf and forest had been stripped from the surface, the thin soil was easily

washed away. It was due to this thinness of soil that the farmer had to use a wooden plow which could slip harmlessly along the surface of the ground. Such a plow could not turn the soil; hence cross-plowing, hand work with the mattock, and reharrowing were necessary, and much precious time was consumed by spading, hoeing, and cradling the grain by hand. Now all this,- the fertilization of the fields, the care needed to prevent the thin soil from being washed away, and the necessity of doing almost all the work by hand,- meant that in the several processes of soil conservation and preparation a considerable expenditure of time and an abundance of labor was entailed. As a result, when the latifundia system introduced large scale cultivation and substituted a crowd of slaves for the free laborer, the small farmer was unable to compete with the great landlords, and for him the raising of grain became unprofitable.

Besides facing competition from the lower prices of grain made possible by the latifundia system of agriculture, the small farmer also had to face opposition from the importation of cheap grain from other countries. When Rome had gained possession of Sicily in the first Punic war, she inherited from Carthage the grain-tribute of that island, consisting of tithes on cultivated land. The exact amount of the grain-tithe is uncertain, but a reasonable estimate places it at about 2,000,000 modii (about 500,000 bushels). (30) This probably cared for about a tenth of Rome's needs at this time. Later, Sardinia paid tribute to Rome, again in accordance with the tithe system. During the



second Punic war, when Rome was hard pressed for wheat and barley, special requisitions for grain were laid on Sicily and Sardinia, and more was obtained from Egypt and Spain.

"Italian agriculture saw its very existence endangered by the proof, first afforded in this war, that the Roman people could be supported by grain from Sicily and from Egypt instead of that which they reaped themselves." (31)

The realization of this fact was to have an important influence on the agricultural life of Italy. Rome continued to import large quantities of grain from Sicily and Sardinia, Egypt and Spain, and later even from Africa; and the prices at Rome dropped considerably whenever an over-supply of imported grain accumulated in the warehouses. Although this imported grain was not thrown upon the open market at Rome save in the exceptional case of a super-abundance which had accumulated, yet it was applied by the government to the maintenance of the Roman official staff and of the Roman armies on the spot. Though the low prices tended to the benefit of the Roman exchequer, they cut off the Italian farmer from an important field of consumption for his produce. Even when the transmarine corn did not accumulate in such abundance as to glut the market and slash the prices to ruinously low rates, it injuriously affected Italian agriculture. In the provinces, particularly in Sicily, the price of production was generally lower than in Italy, due to the fertile soil and to the great extent to which plantation-farming and slave-labor had long been conducted. Besides, transportation from Sicily or Sardinia was as cheap as, if not cheaper

than, the transport of grain from Etruria, Campania, or even northern Italy, where the mountainous character of the peninsula made transportation by land difficult and expensive. It was only natural, then, that the transmarine corn should be sought, particularly when the rapid growth of Rome raised the problem of feeding a large and ever-increasing urban population. Even in Cato's time Sicily was called the granary of Rome, a title which was later to be claimed by Egypt. And though a protective tariff against foreign grain might have enabled Italian farmers to compete with transmarine imports, it seems quite evident that the importation of corn was rather encouraged. For a prohibitive system seems to have been applied in the provinces, whereby the exportation of grain was free only in regard to Italy. (32) As a result, while the landlord was better able to maintain himself because of his extensive production with cheap slave-labor, the small farmer found the cultivation of grain an unprofitable business.

Since the exaction of tribute in kind from Sicily and Sardinia continued and, apparently, no effort was made to prevent the importation of transmarine grain, it is evident that much grain was really needed in Italy. Hence we can infer that central Italy had already, in some measure, turned from the raising of grain to the more profitable production of grape and olive and to pasturage, and this process must have been stimulated by the importation of grain. It has already been mentioned how the thinness of the soil and the abrasion of much of the

earth in central Italy had influenced the agricultural life of the people. But the farmers soon discovered that while the weak roots of plants like wheat and barley could not thrive on the soil, grape-vines and olive-trees could find sufficient nourishment even in the tufa and ash that was so common.

"All that is necessary is to hack out and crush the tufa and plant the roots deep with a handful of loam for the plant to feed upon when young. When the plant grows strong it finds its own nourishment where grain fails in the struggle." (33)

It would seem, then, that here was a profitable form of agriculture for the small farmer. But here again the landlord ruined the farmer's hopes, crowding him out of another profitable industry and discouraging him from engaging in agricultural production to any great extent. For the secret of success in agriculture is said to be close personal attention; and

"it was the attempt of Roman landlords in Italy to evade this necessity, by devolving the management of latifundia and control of slave-gangs upon slave-stewards, that rendered the working of great estates economically unprofitable. Their system was able to ruin and drive off the land thousands of small peasant free-holders, but it was not able to furnish the close attention that personal interest alone could insure and that intensive cultivation requires." (34)

For this reason many of the great landlords found it more profitable to cultivate vineyards and olive orchards; and grapes, olives and figs soon became the best products of Italian soil. Seeking the highest possible return for his investments, the landlord found it in these branches of husbandry which, though they involved the largest initial layout and the most expensive

plant, were most independent of temporary fluctuations in prices; for under the favorable climate of Italy the production of oil and wine was not endangered by foreign competition. Obviously this industry could most successfully be developed by men of wealth who could afford to wait several years for their first vintage and an even longer period for their first returns from the olive groves.

Yet another form of rural industry was practically monopolized by the wealthy latifundia owners, namely, pastoral husbandry, which was practiced on a larger scale than agriculture. Italy is so situated in respect to climate that the summer pasture in the mountains and the winter pasture on the plains supplement each other, making sheep and cattle raising a profitable year-round enterprise. Horses, oxen, asses and mules were raised, chiefly to supply the animals required by landowners, carriers, soldiers, and the like; and herds of swine and goats were not neglected. But the prevalent custom of wearing woolen garments gave a greater independence and development to the raising of sheep.

The devastation of much arable land during the period of the Punic wars stimulated pastoral husbandry, both by offering large tracts of cheap land which was no longer fit for agriculture, and by making the latifundia system of large-scale industry so common. The land, if good for nothing else, could at least produce sufficient fodder and herbage for sheep and cattle;

and these animals could be marketed with greater ease than grain. Large ranches and cheap labor were an essential part of this industry; but this was cared for with ease, since extensive acreage was offered at low prices and moderate rent when the land-market was glutted during the war period, and the building up of the landlord system with its concomitant slave-labor furnished an abundance of cheap help. The management of the ranches was attended to by slaves directed by the cattle-master (magister pecoris). Such a system suited the landlord very well, for tending the flocks or herds required no great skill or direction, and did not necessitate the owner's frequent inspection or personal care. The latifundia owners were quick to see the advantages of engaging in this industry on a large scale, and to seize the opportunity of finding a profitable use for the wastelands. Grazing was found to be more profitable than tillage; and it soon became evident that pasturage was increasing, while agriculture was on the decline. Soon, not content with their own tracts of land, some ranchers even permitted their cattle to graze on public lands, and according to Livy (35) this occurred to such an extent that the fines collected from transgressors were quite considerable in amount. The earliest record we have (36) which would indicate extensive grazing near Rome on the landlord-slave system, dates from the second Punic war. The extensive adoption of pastoral husbandry by the latifundia owners had serious consequences for the poorer farmers. If sheep and cattle raising were to be engaged in for profit, consider-

able capital would be required, especially if good pastures were to be provided in two regions to insure a plentiful supply of rich grass and herbage during summer and winter. This was often beyond the limited means of the small farmer. Besides, since tending to a hundred or more sheep or cattle required little more labor than the care of half a dozen, the small farmer could not very well compete with the more wealthy.

"Thus the small farmers gradually yielded ground to the master who could command the capital of large-scale ranching; and a general "enclosure" movement began at the expense of the grain fields. Again, since little skill was required, slaves were bought to care for the herds, and henceforth an area of a thousand acres, which in the days of profitable tillage had supported a hundred peasant families, now fell to the charge of a few foreign slaves living at random." (37)

This may seem to be a rather gloomy picture of Italian rural life about the time of the Punic wars and immediately after. It may tend to give the impression that the poor farmer was entirely driven from his humble occupation; but such a view is not altogether correct. We have attempted to give a rather general view of the situation effected by the wars, and accordingly have passed over the things that continued unchanged. We have tried to focus our attention on the foreground of the rural scene, rather than on the less prominent but brighter background. Behind the Italy of vast estates and extensive slave-labor, depressing enough to patriotic moralists, one can catch occasional glimpses of the simpler characteristics of true pea-

sant life.

"There is no reason to think that latifundia ever swallowed up all Italy, and it seems certain that in the hill country, among the dalesmen, small farming and simple virtues were still at home." (38)

Though some historians quote the statement of L. Marcius Philippus, tribune in 104 B.C., that there were not at that time two thousand men in the State who owned property, apparently as evidence of the extent to which the great landowners ruled the country, this seems to be an exaggeration adduced to strengthen the proposal of his agrarian bill, which he failed to have passed. And Suetonius, in speaking of "day-laborers who come regularly every year from Umbria to the Sabine district, to till the fields" (39), refers to gangs of farm-hands, apparently in the last days of the Republic, who hardly could have been slaves. In spite of the latifundia system some poor farmers continued to maintain themselves throughout the republican period, persisting especially in the inexhaustible districts of the Po valley, in some mountain valleys where only small plots were available, and on the southern coasts where the Greek inhabitants clung to their old methods. (40)

### CHAPTER III

#### What Became of the Small Farmer

Thus far we have attempted to trace the rise and progress of Italy's new agricultural system - the slave-worked latifundia. What lasting effects the introduction of the new farming methods had upon the Roman familia can readily be imagined, if it be remembered that the early Romans were essentially, almost exclusively, an agricultural people. Hence any noticeable change in agricultural conditions must have affected the entire population, penetrating even into the sanctuary of home life. Keeping in mind this general outline of the really fundamental change wrought by the Punic wars, let us now turn our attention more directly to the farmer himself, and consider the personal effects to him both of the wars and of the new agricultural system which was enabled by post-bellum conditions to develop so rapidly and on so large a scale.

It is hardly possible to question the fact that Rome's manhood was sapped by the almost continual warfare, and especially by the frightful carnage of the second Punic war. The flower of her army fell in the prime of life at lake Trasimene (217 B.C.) and at Cannae (216 B.C.), while each year saw thousands fall before the Carthaginian host. A glance at the census statistics (of adult male citizens) tells a sorrowful tale. (1) When Rome entered upon her first struggle with Carthage in 264 B.C. the



census showed a total of 292,234; by 246 it had dropped to 241,212; and in 240, a full year after the end of the first Punic war, the number had risen only to 260,000. When Hannibal invaded Italy in 218 B.C. the number of citizens enrolled was about 270,000 (2); but ten years later the census reached the low figure of 137,108, and this rose only as high as 214,000 by 204 B.C., three years before the end of the Hannibalic struggle. The second war with Carthage, which is thought to have consumed a third of the citizens of Rome in the seventeen years of its duration, "was a greater drain upon man power, in proportion to population, than was the drain upon any power which participated in the great world war" (3); and this exhausting war was followed by others - in Macedonia, Greece and Asia - which were unavoidable after Rome had entered upon her conquest of the world.

But what is of more importance than the figures would at first indicate, is the fact that the loss fell chiefly upon the burgess population, which, in fact, furnished the nucleus and the mass of the combatants. At this period of the Republic the Roman army was still essentially composed of citizens possessing a certain minimum of property, who bore the double role of farmer-soldier. The stories of Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, Manius Curius Dentatus, and Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, represent to us types of the strenuous, patriotic, and frugal lives of the farmer-soldiers of the early Republic; and the tradition is carried on to the time of the Punic wars

by Marcus Atilius Regulus. But there is more than tradition to rely upon for this view of the Roman as farmer-soldier; this was the very essence of Rome's military system, and, incidentally, the reason for her success in war. By law, only those who had a property assessment of 4,000 asses or more were liable to military service, and since up to this time the majority of Roman citizens were engaged in agricultural occupations, the Roman armies were chiefly recruited from the rural population. The army had not as yet admitted pauper adventurers who preferred a life of excitement with hopes of booty and license to hard and monotonous toil. The very poor were not enlisted, but the ranks were filled with men who had something to lose by defeat, - men to whom war meant the defence of their homes and families, rather than daring adventure and prospects of rich plunder.

To these farmer-soldiers wartime brought great hardships, and the long-drawn-out wars with Carthage, especially the second Punic war, brought ruin. For with Hannibal in Italy, ravaging the country-side and threatening the towns with his sudden, daring attacks, every able-bodied man had to be, if not under arms for the entire year or a great part of it, at least ready to put aside the plow for the sword at a minute's notice. Such conditions obviously were not conducive to careful or extensive farming, especially when a sudden raid by the enemy might destroy in a single night the results of weeks of toil. But this was not the most disheartening feature of the wars. The typical small farmer was entirely dependent on a few

jugera of land for his livelihood; his food-supply depended on the success of the crops, the clothes he wore were spun from the wool of his own sheep, and the few coins he might have stored away for an emergency were saved by careful economy after selling what produce he did not require for personal consumption. When war or a poor crop consumed his small reserve, he was forced into debt for the necessities of life, while continued need put him at the mercy of the money-lender within a very short time. Hence it was that many discharged soldiers returned home to learn that their lands had been mortgaged during their absence for the support of their families or had already been swallowed up by debt. Thousands of farms had been laid waste, heads of families had fallen in battle, wives and children had sought refuge in Rome or other towns, and many of the surviving men had lost the desire to return to the monotonous habits and hard toil of rustic life after the excitement of military service. Above all, it was painfully evident that the restoration of wasted, weed-grown farms to their former productiveness would be a long and trying process, requiring new capital and stock. No wonder, then, that men refused to take up again this life of hard toil, when it meant starting life over from the beginning, handicapped as they were with debt. Unable or unwilling to gain a livelihood by struggling against such odds, they let their small estates pass into the hands of their wealthier neighbors or the money-lenders. The land-market was glutted, and men with money bought farms cheaply; while the dis-

couraged small farmer sadly turned his steps away from the old homestead to seek a livelihood elsewhere.

"The great war certainly marked a stage in the decay of the small-farm agriculture, the healthy condition of which had hitherto been the soundest element of Roman strength." (4)

Many of the soldiers, unable or unwilling to return to the plow, and having no other interests to hold them, returned to military service to give tone and steadiness to the half-hearted armies in the new wars with the East. There were two reasons which helped them in their choice. The first was the laxity and depravity of camp life to which they had become accustomed. For war, arousing the lowest animal passions in man, ever has its demoralizing effects, and given the occasion for easy living man finds it difficult to restrain his lower nature. The second motive was the lure of booty. The Punic wars had been very costly, and the Hannibalic struggle in particular had taxed the public and private resources to the utmost. And while the war-indemnities from Carthage might enable the State to discharge its public obligations to contractors and other creditors, it did little to alleviate the poverty of the peasants. But the Eastern wars were far more lucrative; and the new generals, led on by the example of Scipio Africanus, were lavish in distributing among their troops both the money sent out from Rome and the spoils which followed victory. The veterans of the second Macedonian and the Asiatic war were returning home rich with booty,- many of them really wealthy men; while the general

from whose camp not a few men returned with gold and silver in their pockets, was commended even by the more conservative class. This was a radical departure from the spirit of former days, for moveable spoil had been considered the property of the State (5), and the old burgess militia were quite satisfied with some small gift as a memento of victory. But now, when a liberal distribution of plunder among the soldiers was being introduced, many whose term of military service was over volunteered for the new wars in the hope of easy gain.

The newly acquired provinces, too, required the presence of many war veterans, for once conquered and occupied, they had to be kept in subjection and defended from hostile nations. Since the Roman government would not rely upon armies raised in the provinces, it had to meet the increasing military obligations with its own troops. Spain, in particular, presented a serious military problem, because of the continual internal disorders. A Roman army of four strong legions (6) or about 40,000 men had constantly to be maintained there year after year, and the military service acquired a permanent character in contrast with the former pro tempore custom. Not all the Romans in the provinces, however, belonged to the standing army. The generation that grew up after the Punic wars, seeing the sad state of the small farmer at home, emigrated in large numbers to the newly opened provinces in Spain, Asia, Africa, and northern Italy. The years 200-180 B.C. saw the foundation of nineteen new colonies (7), some of which were settled for the

definite purpose of protecting Italy from invasion,- on the north from the Gauls, who had been a source of much trouble during the second Punic war, and on the south from any hostile Eastern power possessing a large fleet. There was a constant flow of sturdy peasants from Italy to the subject regions, and soon the Roman governors found enough Roman citizens residing in such provinces as Spain, Asia and northern Africa, to levy a legion of them in time of need. (8) The extremely slight increase per annum in the citizens' rolls for forty years after the second Punic war, and the annual decrease thereafter for thirty years, gives plain evidence of the loss to Rome's citizen body. (9) These emigrant peasants became traders, petty officials and soldiers, as well as farmers; they prospered amid new surroundings, but their strength was lost to Italy and to Rome.

As was previously mentioned, the Romans were essentially an agricultural people; hence the number of towns was quite small, while few cities could be called really large. Rome herself was crowded only when the farmers with their families, flocks and herds, took refuge within the city walls at the threatening appearance of an enemy. Now, however, all was rapidly changing; and the new state of affairs was due in large measure to the wars. There was a natural tendency to seek the protection of walls and defences which a city like Rome could afford the people, while the proximity to the capital of the defensive army served as an opiate to the racked nerves of the harassed

people during the long struggle. After Hannibal had been driven from the fatherland, many people found it hard to leave the city and to return, even if they could, to the monotonous life of agriculture. For during the years of strife they had come to love the city, and their natural attraction for a pleasant social life free from hard toil, with various convenient resorts and amusements at hand, served to retain many and to allure others, especially the veteran soldiers. By the time of Cicero an enormous population (for that age) had gathered at Rome, - probably half a million or more. (10) In time they lost their peasant character. Loath as they became to give up the games of the circus, the amphitheater, the free corn-doles with which they were courted by politicians and generals, it became almost impossible, after some generations, to make peasants of them again. The agricultural life of the Italian small farmer became largely a thing of the past.

As early as 187 B.C. there was serious complaint made to the senate that Rome was attracting people from other parts of Italy, to the detriment of those regions. A delegation of Latins complained of the migration of their citizens to Rome and their enrollment on her censor's lists; and as a result of investigation, twelve thousand were forced to return to their native towns. Yet ten years had not passed before a similar protest had to be made, for so many flocked to Rome that, it was said, at the present rate the Latin towns would soon be deserted and the abandoned farms would no longer supply the sturdy sol-

diers upon whom Rome's success essentially depended. (11)

It is easy to understand the peasant's view of the situation. He saw, on the one hand, a darkening shadow covering the land that but yesterday belonged to him and his forefathers. He saw the black menace of extensive slave-labor on immense latifundia, which was rapidly eating the heart out of the old agricultural system he knew so well. The decay of the yeoman class, due in the first instance to the waste of the war, was hastened by the growing monopoly of the land by the wealthy, the competition of imported grain, and the growth of slave-manned plantations. On the other hand, the increase of urban opportunity for livelihood and pleasure combined with the effects of the wars to drive the people from the soil to the city. The small tradesman and artisan faced practically the same situation and turned, discouraged, to lose himself in the crowded capital.

In tracing somewhat further the effects of the Punic wars upon the people of Rome, one witnesses a not uncommon result of such abnormal times,- the dissolution of former class distinctions and the creation of a new division of the populace. Even in our own country, youthful as it is in comparison with the nations of Europe, we have witnessed the transformation from an aristocracy of blood and intelligence to an aristocracy of wealth. We have seen the shackles of slavery removed from the negro only to be replaced by the bonds of an economic slavery that has gripped both white and black. We have witnessed, to our regret and



shame, the return of intelligent citizens of good position from the World War to face a life of poverty and unemployment. We have learned but recently, from Senate investigation, how some grasping individuals have made war itself a means of gratifying their insatiable greed for power and wealth, while they left the masses of the people to bear in silence the burdens imposed by the conflict. Rome, it is true, had no munitions-makers who could heap up vast fortunes over night, but she had her contractors who found a lucrative business in supplying food and clothing to the armies. She had her aristocracy of wealth in the great landed gentry. Many of her soldiers, undaunted by the horrors of the long struggle, became discouraged and broken in spirit by the effects of the wars. In place of a Civil War over the question of slavery, she had an unbloody Revolutionary War by which the newly introduced agricultural system overturned the economic order of ante-bellum days.

During the period of expansion following the Punic wars, there was effected a new division of the population made on the basis of wealth. (12) The century of wars had gradually caused the middle class, composed chiefly of the Italian small farmer, practically to disappear; and there remained side by side with a growing plutocracy an impoverished proletariat.

"Wealth based on plunder and speculation, on war prices and fraudulent contracts, and on the exploitation of the state domains, contrasted vividly with the poverty of the ruined farmers, who flocked to swell the mob of pauper clients, or worked as serfs on the bloated estates of the great proprietors." (13)

100.  
A prosperous middle class cannot co-exist with slavery, as both ancient and more recent history amply testify; for after the initial cost of the slaves little expense is incurred by the owner, who does little more than keep soul and body together (if he should admit that slaves have souls!), while even a moderate wage paid regularly to free laborers is, in comparison, quite an item of expense. When there is a conflict between the two labor systems, either the cheap slave-labor deprives the free laborer of employment, or else it forces him to accept lower wages and longer hours, making of him an economic slave though he be legally free. So it was in Rome. Large numbers of the bourgeois, forced from their occupations by the new economic conditions and enticed by the attractions of the capital, became a dangerous crowd of city idlers, easily bribed, despised yet feared, the tool of the agitator, a power for evil, a mob to whom logic was nothing, bread and amusement their all.

"This proletariat had no patriotism, no feeling for country, and was naturally a menace to free institutions. It was ready to follow the man who bid the highest and it showed devotion and attachment to a man rather than to a principle."  
(14)

The old aristocracy which, with all its faults, had been, on the whole, an aristocracy of merit, gradually gave way to a new nobility of wealth who were more self-seeking and less public-spirited than their predecessors. To them, executive power and authority was no longer, as it had been in earlier generations, its own reward; but it came to be valued for what it brought to the individual. High office lost much of its

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dignity when it was won, not by merit, but by a lavish display of wealth, or was used merely as a means of acquiring greater riches and honor. And now that the Italian yeomen were beginning to swell the city rabble, which was rapidly rising in importance, those in power did not scruple to use the people as a tool to further their own personal interests. Largesses of corn, circus entertainments and other popular spectacles came to be used even during the Punic war period as a means of keeping the masses in good humor. For five hundred years only one festival and one circus had been permitted; but now Gaius Flaminius, the first professional demagogue of Rome, added a second festival and a second circus, by which means it is probable that he obtained his commission to engage the enemy at lake Trasimene. (15)

Once this way to power was opened to the wealthy, the evil made rapid progress. The city rabble sold their votes for the bread and amusements - panem et circenses - which liberal hands offered in the hope of gaining favor and power. The issue of the elections from this time forward indicates clearly how powerful the dependent rabble had already become shortly after the Hannibalic struggle, and how strongly it counteracted the influence of the independent middle class whose ranks were greatly thinned by the wars. Neither the nobility nor the demagogues can be acquitted from the reproach of having systematically corrupted the old public spirit of the multitude, the effects of which were to grow until they reached their climax under the Empire.

To summarize in conclusion: perhaps the most noticeable

and important effect of the Punic wars upon the Roman people was the radical change wrought in their daily lives and occupations. Their essential character - the role of farmer-soldier - had been, for the most part, lost; the yeoman class as such was rapidly dying out, and the citizen-soldier soon ceased to exist as the bulwark of the Roman army. As a result of the severe strain of the wars, the extensive devastation of homes and farms, the introduction and rapid growth of the new agricultural system, and the extensive use of cheap slave labor, the small farmer found his former occupation too laborious and unprofitable to be continued; and if he did not yield to the enticements of the army life, or seek a better home in the provinces, he did give up in discouragement to lead a shiftless, purposeless life as one of the city rabble. The new division of the population into two principal classes, made on the basis of wealth, was a heavy blow to Rome, depriving her, as it did, of the powerful conserving force of her middle class or bourgeoisie - that backbone of every great nation. Conservatism has always been characteristic of this class, for the bourgeois feels that he cannot afford to subscribe to radical movements because he runs the risk of losing more than he is likely to gain by any drastic change. This is the reason why extremists hate the bourgeois element in a nation and find in it their greatest obstacle to revolution. The germs of the Gracchan revolt, which were inherent in the inadequate reconstruction policy adopted after the second Punic war, were nurtured in a favorable environment - a society composed of two extreme ele-

ments and lacking a firm center to give it equilibrium.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Debilitation of Italy's Native Population

It is an unquestionable fact of history that economic conditions have a decided influence upon the social order of a nation,- not only upon the community at large, but penetrating even the sanctuary of the home and the personal, moral life of the individual. Here we are concerned with the effects of the Punic wars, and especially with the influence of the economic revolution which was the outcome of this gigantic struggle, upon Roman society. Leaving aside, for the time, the discussion of its moral effects upon the people, we propose to limit this chapter to a treatment of the purely social question involved. It is obviously impossible to trace in these pages the influences affecting specific families or clans; but from a study of the effects produced within the community as a whole, we can see what forces were gradually changing the quality of the Roman familia.

When Cicero was a candidate for the consulship in 64 B.C., his brother wrote that in canvassing the city he must bear in mind that "Roma est civitas ex nationum conventu constituta" (1), and that his behavior towards slaves and freedmen might mean much to him in the coming election, since these possessed considerable power in influencing the votes of the populace. Such a chance remark as this makes one curious to know how, within

18.

a few generations, the purity of the Roman stock had been so altered that the citizen body was now a conglomeration of many nations, especially since citizenship had not yet been granted to any people outside of Italy. Immigration, as far as we can learn, does not answer the question, as one might at first suspect. Something more fundamental, and resulting more immediately from the wars with Carthage, seems the best explanation to this difficult problem.

The almost continual wars in which Rome was engaged during this period of her history, were largely instrumental in destroying Italy's native stock. Her strongest and noblest sons she had sacrificed on the battlefields of a hundred momentous years. Her veins were rapidly being emptied of the old, but pure and vigorous Latin blood. The first two Punic wars alone demanded the immolation of nearly a third of Rome's adult male citizens (2); scores of thousands of the best citizen-troops which she could put into the field had fallen in the tragic massacres of Cannae and Trasimene, while each year of the protracted struggles reaped a frightful toll. The wars with Spain and in the East with Macedonia, Greece and Asia, which were, one might say, but the outgrowth and continuation of the Punic wars, continued without intermission for fifty years after this to sap the strength of the Roman people, not only by deaths on the battlefields, but by the loss to her social fabric through the withdrawal from family life of the fittest portion of her manhood. Though time would restore the numbers

on the census lists, nothing could, in reality, repair the loss of those slain thousands and their unborn posterity; while the constant retention of about twenty percent (3) of the young men of marriageable age in military service proved destructive to the family life of the nation. The flower of Rome's manhood had been enlisted and exposed to death, the weaklings were left at home to propagate. Mommsen's summary statement is strong:

"Although it was in the first instance the two long wars with Carthage which decimated and ruined both the burgesses and the allies, the Roman capitalists beyond doubt contributed quite as much as Hamilcar and Hannibal to the decline in the vigour and the numbers of the Italian people." (4)

This is indeed a grave charge to bring against the new capitalistic system of Rome, but, upon examination, the complaint seems well substantiated by the facts of history. The root-cause, evidently, was the extensive use of cheap slave-labor which capitalism required for mass-production. During the period when the best of the native stock was being drafted into the army, the slaves and freedmen, who were not considered eligible for military service, lived undisturbed at home and continued to multiply in numbers while the citizen body decreased. After the second Punic war the vast areas of vacated lands which were being exploited by wealthy ranchers and plantation owners were largely manned by slaves. In fact, as Appian (5) remarks, the landlords preferred

"using slaves as labourers and herdsmen, lest free labourers should be drawn from agriculture into the army. At the same time the ownership of slaves brought them great gain from the mul-



titute of their progeny, who increased because they were exempt from military service. Thus....the race of slaves multiplied throughout the country, while the Italian people dwindled in numbers and strength, being oppressed by penury, taxes, and military service. If they had any respite from these evils they passed their time in idleness, because the land was held by the rich, who employed slaves instead of freemen as cultivators."

It was the visible effects of this slave economy, witnessed on his journey through Tuscany, where he saw very few free husband-men or shepherds in the fields with the numerous imported slaves, that later brought Tiberius Gracchus to conceive his policy of agrarian reforms. (6)

In the passage just referred to, Appian suggests another reason for the decline of the old Roman stock - the idleness and poverty of so many of the people. The new generation that was growing up found itself placed in a rather precarious position. The small farmer found himself excluded by the capitalists from the opportunity of acquiring land in Italy at reasonable rates, and where he did own a few acres he found it quite impossible to work the land profitably. He was in a situation analogous to that of the modern small business man who finds it all but impossible to compete with larger firms or corporations.

"Enclosed little by little by those immense domains where cultivation is easiest, the poor peasant had for a long time struggled against misery and the usurers; then, discouraged in the struggle, he had ended by selling his field to his rich neighbor, who coveted it to round off his estate. He had tried then to become a tenant-farmer, a metayer, a hired labourer on the property

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where he had been for so long the master, but there he met with the competition of the slave, a more frugal worker, who did not stand out for his wages, who did not make terms, who might be treated as one liked. Thus, driven twice from his fields, both as owner and as tenant-farmer, without work or resources, he had been forced to migrate to the city." (7)

Though the Romans did not use the modern terms "depression" or "unemployment situation", such names could rightly be predicated of those conditions. For as a matter of fact, it was the inability to cope with the new economic system, and the penury consequent upon unemployment, which caused the Italian people to dwindle in numbers and strength. With an uncertain living to be gained in the city, without definite prospects of better times, many of the people could little afford to care for a family - at least for a respectably large number of children. Under these conditions, too, the children who were brought up did not always have the proper food and attention. For instance, writers on agriculture claim that flesh and milk disappeared more and more from the diet of the common people. (8)

A complete statement of the causes for the decline in population would lead us to considerations for which, unfortunately, few data are extant. One further point, however, may be indicated in passing. After the Punic wars the old Roman religion (which we shall discuss at greater length a little later), which had encouraged the raising of large families by inculcating the practice of ancestor-worship and emphasizing the supreme importance of this cult for the continued happiness

of the parent in after-life, counted for little among the upper classes who could afford to have many offspring. These people had become too sophisticated and sceptical to permit such a doctrine to cheat them of their pampered ease. Children were such a nuisance anyhow!

That the native stock dwindled in numbers is clear from all the evidence handed down to us. The question as to what elements replaced it is now pertinent. Some of the new stock was made up of free immigrants who flowed in and soon mingled with the native population. Some were discharged soldiers of foreign or Italian blood. There were strangers from allied cities in Italy and from the provinces, who were attracted by the greatness and glory of the conquerors of Carthage, by the needs of the capital, or by their own desire for pleasure and adventure. A few were traders, some were artisans and craftsmen, others were learned in the higher professions. Yet immigration seems to have been only a minor factor; for neither the Italian lands which required capital for development, nor the city of Rome, which had as yet no highly developed industries nor extensive commerce, and which was being crowded by the great rush (not unlike that of our own pre-depression days) from country to city, could offer much of an attraction to the foreign workingman. Even of those who came to Rome not all remained permanently; while the Senate took measures more than once to return some of these strangers to their homes.

By far the most important class which figured in the transmutation of stock was that which had come up from slavery. We shall see how, through the Roman process of manumission, which became increasingly common after the Punic war period, a vast number of slaves were enabled to acquire their freedom. Since the native stock was rapidly dwindling, owing to the causes which have already been outlined, this rising class of libertini eventually constituted a large portion of the Roman citizenry. But as a class, these people were naturally prone to a code of easy morality, and the treatment they received in their servile condition was not such as to train them for useful citizenship. As a result, though they augmented the thinning ranks of the Romans, these new citizens were to vitiate rather than to instill new life and vigor into the body of which they became members. Because of this prominent part it played in the life of the "new Rome", this group demands a rather detailed study.

Slavery had been an accepted institution in Rome from its earliest days. The slave, who was recognized as an integral part of the Roman familia, was not the human chattel that he later became, but was regarded as a man whom unfortunate circumstances had placed in bondage. A turn of fortune could restore to him his liberty and former position among his own people. The slave seems to have been, ordinarily, a native of Italy, a captive in some war, who may have been passed by sale from one owner to another. Yet he was no nameless piece

of property with whom the master had no personal dealings or acquaintance. The suffix "por" added to the master's praenomen told at once to whom he belonged, for Publipor, Marcipor, Lucipor etc. were the slaves of Publius, Marcus, or Lucius. Because slavery existed only on a small scale - one or two slaves sufficing even for the more wealthy - there existed between master and slave a more personal relation, which sometimes grew into an intimacy such as was frequently found in some of our own southern families previous to the Civil War. The slave helped, not replaced, the master in the work about the farm and house; he often worked in the fields side by side with his master, and sat at table with the rest of the family. But though slavery was a common institution, it was more of an economic necessity than a profitable business, and remained on a small scale.

"Until there came an impulse of an 'industrial' kind, prompting men to engage in wholesale production for a large market, the slave remained essentially a domestic, bearing a considerable share of the family labours, whatever the nature of those labours might be." (9)

The era opened by the wars with Carthage witnessed a very natural, yet a very important development of slavery. The sources of the slave supply were varied. Besides the natural increase by birth, there was the enslavement by pirates and brigands of persons captured from all over the Mediterranean world. But by far the largest supply came from military conquest in the numerous quarrels among the various peoples who inhabited Italy. As a natural consequence, the percentage of

slaves in Rome's population grew in proportion to her dominion; and one of the most manifest results of the Punic wars was the establishment of Rome as the dominant power in Italy and the Mediterranean world. During the century of fighting inaugurated by the first Punic war, the supply of slaves was not only kept up but greatly increased; for the capture of slaves, as of flocks and herds and beasts of burden, was a common item in the lists of booty taken by the victors. An incomplete statement of the thousands of war-captives who were enslaved gives us a rather alarming total, considering the number of inhabitants of the country at that early date. When Regulus landed the Roman troops on African soil in 256 B.C., he was able to send back home as many as 20,000 slaves as the first fruits of the Roman aggression. (10) At the fall of Palermo, 13,000 inhabitants were sold into slavery, while 14,000 others were able to buy their freedom at two minas each. (11) Professor Frank (12), basing his figures on the ratio of captives to ships at the victory at the Aegates islands in 241 B.C. - ten thousand captives from seventy ships -, concludes that about 30,000 captives were obtained from the ships captured at Mylae, Tyndaris, Ecnomus, Hermaeum, and the Aegates islands, giving a grand total of more than 75,000 captives during the first Punic war. For the second Punic war we have such figures as 25,000 captured or killed in storming approximately nine towns (13); 7,000 captives at Atrium (14); 30,000 sold into slavery at the capture of Tarentum (15) in 209 B.C.; 10,000 at the capture of New Carthage in the same year (16); and another 10,000 in the following year at Baecula.

(17) After this period the supply of slaves seems to have increased, if anything. As only a partial reckoning, we can mention 5,000 from Macedonia in 197 B.C. (18); 5,000 Illyrians in 177 B.C. (19); 80,000 slain or taken at Sardinia in 177 B.C. (20); and the cruel enslavement of 150,000 Epirotes in 167 B.C. at the order of the senate. (21) "This order", claims professor Frank (22), "might support an inference that the Senate was eager to provide cheap slave labor in Italy." Besides those captives enumerated, we must take into account the numerous captives from Spain, as well as those taken during the Punic wars, but whose numbers are not always stated definitely by our authorities.

It is evident from this account that the slave-market was, if not over-crowded, at least very well supplied. But if slaves were plentiful, they were also much in demand. In the first place, the wars were directly responsible for the increased need of slave labor. When a large part of the land owners were forced to leave their farms for army service, when free labor was drawn upon extensively for rowers in the navy and transport service, it was necessary to replace these men by slaves in order that the agricultural and industrial life of the nation might continue. The enormous loss of life throughout Italy during the first and second Punic wars - especially during the seventeen years of the latter struggle, when the mortality rate in the armies facing Hannibal was unusually high - made necessary the continuance of slave labor for some time. After the wars, as we have already

seen, upon realizing that slave labor had gained a firm footing in the economic field and was rapidly strengthening its position as the great landlords and the renters of the public lands sought more slaves for their plantations or ranches, many of the discharged soldiers refused to return to their farms, if they could do so, and to attempt to compete with the cheap labor. As a result, the plantations and ranches grew in number and extent, increasing the demand for slaves. When the fertile Po valley and the exploitation of provincial resources invited thousands of Roman citizens to emigrate, the "economic vacuum" was again filled by new throngs of slaves.

It might be well to consider briefly the position which the slave occupied at this period subsequent to the Punic wars, in order to see both what effect the wars had upon his status, and the effects which the "new slavery", as we might be permitted to call it, had upon the Roman familia. Let us view the question of slavery from three different aspects: the economic, the legal, and the ethical.

On the country estates, which were steadily growing larger and were becoming increasingly worked along capitalistic lines, a larger corps of laborers, both skilled and unskilled, became more and more necessary. The demand for labor was abnormally great, due to the absence and loss of so many soldiers. It had been created with abnormal rapidity because of the wars; it could not possibly be provided for by the free population.



But the same abnormal circumstances which had created the demand also furnished the supply; the great wars furnished a slave-market on such a large scale as had never before nor has since been equalled.

The extensive plantations which grew out of the wars obviously altered the status of the slave. The large number of men working upon one farm, the amount of land covered by such a tract, and the increased cares of mass-production, rendered practically impossible anything like the personal dealing of master with slave that was common when only one or two bondsmen helped with the work of a small farm. No longer was the farm worked by all the members of the familia, bond and free; no longer did it exist primarily for supplying the needs of the farmer and his household. Before the middle of the second century B.C., when Cato wrote his treatise on husbandry (probably about 170 B.C.), the change had already taken place to some extent. The farm was being managed upon capitalistic lines, that is, with a view to mass-production and the greatest possible profit from the sale of its produce. The owner did not work in the fields any longer; often enough he dwelt in the city, merely paying the farm an occasional visit to see that his property was being properly managed by the overseer (vilicus), while he himself was engaged in affairs of state. For, with the advance of Roman domain, Rome became the center of the Mediterranean world, the place where all important issues were decided; and the wealthy landowner was practically compelled to spend much of

his time in the city, in close touch with public affairs. This compelled him to manage his estate through a steward who lived on the farm and had complete charge of affairs there. Ordinarily the vilicus was a trusted slave whom experience had shown to be well qualified both to work the land profitably and to control the slave gangs who tilled the soil and reaped the harvest. He apparently possessed more power than our southern overseers, owing to the prolonged absence of the master. But not all slaves were as favored as the vilicus. He was a highly-qualified superintendent; the ordinary slave was quite below his level. Cheap production, mass-production, was the main thing on the plantation; and the slave came to be regarded as nothing more than a mere means to this end. From the impersonal view which the master came to take of his slaves, he gradually slipped into a frame of mind which regarded the bond-laborer as a machine or a domesticated "animal with hands". He was bought for bone and muscle if he was an unskilled laborer; if intelligent, for knowledge and skill. Like the other beasts of burden the unskilled slave was fed and clothed and housed only sufficiently to keep him fit for work; when old or too weak for active service, he was sold off for whatever price he would bring. Only the stimulus for prospective gain for the capitalists was needed to organize slavery and the slave-trade on a purely industrial basis, without regard for considerations of humanity or the general welfare of the State; and this stimulus was not lacking. It was the sight of the brutal slave-trade and the placing, in some cases, of the slave on an equal level with domestic animals

and moveable property, that aroused northern sentiment almost to a pitch of frenzy before the American Civil War; but Rome had not as yet experienced the humanizing influence of Christianity, so that men were quite unconcerned with philanthropic ideas about alleviating the lot of the slaves. Of course we must not make the mistake of supposing that all masters regarded their bondsmen as mere property. This would be as false as the charge that all slavery in our South was harsh and brutal. The treatment of slaves was naturally dependent upon the character of the individual masters as well as upon the behavior of the slave himself. Yet the general attitude was that slaves were to be classed with moveable property rather than with human beings, and that they could be kept in order only by frequent threats and occasional applications of severity.

Slave labor did not, however, entirely do away with the employment of freemen even on the slave-manned latifundia. The organization described by Roman writers de re rustica consisted of a regular staff of slaves for the everyday work, supplemented by hired labor at times of pressure or for special jobs that required considerable skill or for such jobs as had to be attended to only periodically. At harvest time, in particular, extra hands were needed, and freemen were hired in fairly large numbers; but after the crops had been gathered in, these laborers were paid off and released. We read of such transient laborers, apparently freemen, who travelled about the country in groups, especially during harvest time, gathering in the crops for one

landlord, then moving on to the next plantation; just as in California and our mid-western states large gangs of men follow the harvesting on the more extensive farms. Sometimes the landlord hired laborers in one region and brought them over to his own district to work. At other times he would let out the harvesting work to a contractor who brought in his own men, of whom some at least were apparently free. This method of hiring free laborers only for the rush seasons was preferred to the keeping of regular hands, since the former were paid only for the work actually accomplished, while the latter would have to be maintained and paid even during the slack seasons when little work could be done. Besides these harvesters, there were also free artisans who made the rounds of farms too small to have skilled slaves, and free laborers who were temporarily employed in districts too unhealthy for a permanent staff of resident slaves.

As we have already seen, besides the plantations, large ranches also became increasingly common after the devastation of central and southern Italy during the second Punic war. If the exclusion of the free laborer from the agricultural estates was quite extensive, here it was complete. The cheapest kind of slave labor could be used in managing the flocks, both because skilled labor was unnecessary and because very little personal attention is required of a herdsman. Hence these ranches were entirely slave-manned, for the real recommendation of this system was that it cost almost nothing to keep the slave. Usually a small plot of ground was set aside on these ranches,

where the bondsmen could raise the little that was needed to feed them. Throughout the summer months the slave-shepherds lived under the open sky, often miles away from human habitations; hence it was necessary that the hardiest men should be chosen for this employment, that they be provided with weapons to defend the flocks and herds from wild beasts and brigands, and that they be given a fair amount of liberty, though they were carefully watched lest any should attempt to run away. There was always danger from brigands, especially in the more secluded and mountainous regions. The slave-herdsmen, the roughest and wildest type of bondsmen, were a formidable class. Among their number were those slaves who had been sent away from their master's home and farm as a punishment for insubordination and unmanageableness. With such slaves as these the Italians frequently had trouble. As early as 196 B.C. we hear of a slave rising in Etruria. Again in 185 B.C. a rebellion of slave-herdsmen (pastores) had to be quelled in Apulia. (23) In about another half century there began a series of slave revolts and slave wars which troubled the Roman world for sixty or seventy years, causing great loss of life and property. It was the extensive growth of slavery, replacing the free laborer, that made such strife possible; and wherever there was trouble, the rustic slaves seemed to be in the thick of it. Discontent seemed the normal thing in the miserable slave-gangs; a condition practically unknown before the wars, when slavery was conducted on a small scale and on a more personal basis.

Though slave labor replaced the freeman, to a very large extent, in the rural occupations, we must not run away with the idea that the freeman was robbed of all opportunity to gain a living. In general, the mass of the servile population worked in the households and on the estates of the wealthy; elsewhere they appear to have had no monopoly on labor, and there must have been plenty of honorable and useful employment for the citizens who thronged the city. In the early part of the second century B.C. the industries were largely in the hands of free people, not of slaves as was the case two centuries later. (24) Romans of good family did not often engage in industry, even on a large scale. Cato, who manifests the normal attitude of his day and circle, does not mention it as an ordinary source of income. (25) But there was the poorer class of freemen who made up the great bulk of the city population; these had to live somehow, and life in the city demanded from them a source of income from within the city. Though corn was very cheap, it was not handed out gratis until shortly before the end of the Republic, while clothing and shelter was assuredly not to be had for nothing. The continued existence of trade guilds even in the last century of the Republic, though their primary object was religious rather than economic, nevertheless prove the existence of a considerable number of small employers and of free laborers. That slave labor was employed in industry to some small degree is beyond question; but during this period after the second Punic war which was so greatly affected by the extension of slavery, the competition of slave labor in productive industries

seems not to have harmed noticeably the free laboring class. One reason for this, mentioned by Professor Fowler (26), seems to bear some weight. He states:

"The capital needed to invest, at some risk, in a sufficient number of slaves, who would have to be housed and fed, and whose lives would be uncertain in a crowded and unhealthy city, could not, we must suppose, be easily found by such men" [the small employers. The wealthier class of Romans did not seem to care much for industry, for so-called "big business" did not exist at this period.]

Friedlander, an authority on social life at Rome, goes so far as to assert that even under the early Empire a freeman could always obtain work if he cared to. (27) Even should this statement seem somewhat exaggerated for that late period, still it lends strength to the view stated above for the early part of the second century B.C., namely, that the two kinds of labor, bond and free, existed side by side without active rivalry. In no instance do we hear that the Roman proletariat of this period complained of the competition of slave labor as detrimental to its own interests. That slave labor tended to cramp free labor and keep the wages from rising, it is not our mind to dispute. That it ruined and replaced free labor is a statement perhaps true enough for the late Republic and the Empire, but one that cannot be substantiated for the period with which we are concerned.

Since we shall have occasion later on to speak of the domestic slave, let us now turn our attention from the economic question to the legal status of the bondsman. By the original

Roman law the master was invested with absolute dominion over his slaves (28); his was the power of life and death (jus vitae necisque), the right to punish with chastisement and bonds, to sell, and to use for any purpose he pleased without reference to any higher authority than his own. The slave could not possess property of any kind; whatever he acquired belonged by law to his master. (29) He could not legally enter into a contract. The union of a male and a female slave did not have the legal character of marriage (connubium); it was rather a co-habitation (contubernium) which was tolerated by the master, usually in order to keep the slaves better satisfied or for the gain resulting from the procreation of children (vernae) (30), and which might be terminated by him at will. When the slave was being examined as a witness in the court-room, he was usually put to the torture. He could not accuse his master of any crime except adultery, incest (which also included the violation of sacred things and places), and later, for high treason. The penalties of the law were especially severe in the case of slaves. In brief, before the law a slave was not a persona but a res, a chattel, thing. He had no human rights; he was merely a piece of moveable property.

Such was the legal position of the slave. Fortunately, the practical treatment he received was somewhat more humane. To incapacitate or kill a slave would mean a financial loss, hence a practical master was satisfied with lighter punishments. Public opinion, too, frowned upon a master who dealt too cruel-



ly with his slaves, for cruelty was apt to breed discontent among the slaves and thereby to endanger the lives and property of the neighbors. Often enough there was manifested a natural regard for the slaves,- sometimes a feeling of genuine affection, more commonly an attitude which at least regarded the bondsman as a human being,- which obtained certain privileges for them. Usually the slaves were allowed to accumulate and to enjoy their chance earnings or savings or a small share of what they produced, or sometimes a small plot of ground and a head of cattle or a few chickens were set aside as their own private store or peculium. (31) Then, too, in the case of the union of male and female slaves, general sentiment seems to have given a stronger sanction than merely that of temporary co-habitation, though such unions were not legally recognized.

Yet it must be admitted that a different attitude towards slaves was introduced after the Hannibalic conflict. As was previously stated, before the wars with Carthage slavery existed only on a small scale and the bondsman was a domestic who had personal contact with the family to which he was attached. For instance, Pliny, in speaking of those early days says: "Aliter apud antiquos singuli Marcipores Luciporesve dominorum gentiles omnem victum in promiscuo habebant" (32); that is, the whole household, including the slaves, lived in common. The natural tendency was to regard the slave more as a human being. But the immense extension of latifundia and the rapid multiplication of the numbers of slaves, both caused directly by the wars, made

it practically impossible for the landlords and ranch owners to know their slaves personally, even if they were disposed to take trouble for the purpose. Effective superintendence even by the overseers became less easy; the use of chains was introduced, and these were worn not only in the fields during working hours, but even at night in the ergastulum where the slaves slept. (33)

These private prisons (for they can be considered nothing else) became a marked feature of the period when agriculture was practised on a large scale. The change may perhaps best be described as one from a personal to an impersonal attitude towards the slave, an increasing tendency to regard the slave as a chattel, a thing, rather than as a person. This view is well expressed by Cato in his De Agri Cultura, when he treats of oxen and slaves in the same breath, recommending that both the one and the other should be sold when old and useless.

(34) This attitude which inclines a man "to take the work out of his servants as out of brute beasts, turning them off and selling them in their old age, and thinking there ought to be no further commerce between man and man, than whilst there arises some profit by it" (35), was, of course, more commonly maintained in the rural districts where slaves were numerous, plantations extensive, and the contact between master and slave brief and infrequent. On the smaller farms and in the households this impersonal attitude towards the slave was less manifest, and the treatment he received was more humane. In a word, then, the post-bellum conditions tended to make the practical

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treatment of the slave more in accord with the letter of the law, though this effect was felt primarily where slavery existed on a large scale.

One might well stop to reflect upon the moral consequences, both to the bondsmen themselves and to their masters, which the extension of slavery brought upon the Roman familia. The old, in one sense innocuous, rural slavery, under which the farmer tilled the field along-side his slave, seems to have brought no manifest evils in its train (if we except the fact that "perfect" slavery is in itself a moral evil). If there were occasional evils, their rarity kept them from being brought into prominence. But, as is always the case when an institution of this nature is carried to excess, the injurious effects consequent upon a multiplied and constantly increasing slave-trade became more and more emphasized.

First, regarding the slaves themselves, there are one or two essential points which must be grasped if we are to understand their position; once realized, the inferences are obvious enough to eliminate further details, which would only take us beyond the scope of this work. If there is anything that will break a man's spirit or set loose his vicious instincts, make him a craven time-server or an unscrupulous wretch, it is the moral breakdown resulting from a complete separation from the natural means of social and moral development; and it is this privation more, perhaps, than anything else, which was the root-cause of the evils visible in Roman slavery once it

overstepped its early narrow limits. By far the greater number of the slaves brought to Rome and Italy both during and immediately after the wars with Carthage and the East came from countries bordering on the Mediterranean - from the civilized, the cultured world of that day. In their native land they had enjoyed the natural ties which, binding men together in close society, tend to develop their finer qualities. They were united by the natural bonds of locality and race and tribe, of community life and kinship and family. Their government and customs, religion and culture deeply influenced their lives and their every action. Their whole native environment, the spirit and ideals and views of their fellow-men could not but leave an impress upon their character. All those ties were snapped, all those influences were lost once and for all by permanent captivity in a foreign land under servile conditions. Separated from country and home, from friends and, only too often, from husband or wife or parents or children, they were deprived of every softening influence, of social and family life, of their ancestral religion, of every subjective moral restraining influence upon vicious tendencies. (36) The ties that had been severed could not be replaced, for what these people had lost had been their very own - had through generations grown to be part of their essential make-up, and mere external influences were an inadequate substitute for them. They were human beings destitute of the natural means of social and moral development, their mental and religious growth was stunted beyond hope of recovery amid their new surroundings.

A second factor regarding the slave himself is somewhat akin to the first. In the earlier days of the Republic, when one or two slaves sufficed for a household and when religion was still a significant element in the lives of the Romans, even the slaves (most of whom came from Italy itself) shared to some extent the social life and religious rites of the family, and so came under the influence of these humanizing forces. But the impersonal treatment of the bondsman, consequent upon the post-bellum extension of the slave trade, removed even these moral influences in the families which possessed a large number of slaves. The rural slaves seem to have been particularly affected in this regard. The treatment they received, as was noted previously, classified them as moveable property or animals rather than as human beings. Since the master was seldom resident, they were under the immediate control of one or more of their own kind who had gained favor by good conduct and ability, and whose sole aim was to keep their position of superiority by satisfying the pecuniary demands of their master. Having little hope of improving his condition, the slave did only enough work to escape the lash or worse punishment; having no interest in the improvement of the farm or the profits of the work, he labored mechanically and with little care. He had to be watched constantly if he were to be kept up to the mark. He was there to work, to work hard; and as long as he was, economically speaking, a good hand, little attention was paid to his social, moral, or religious life, except in so far as this had any bearing upon his usefulness. Even as late as Varro,

when more humane views were held, this utilitarian aspect was predominant; for this writer on agriculture tells the farmer:

"Manage your slaves as men, if you can get them to obey you on those terms; if not,- well, you must make them obey - flog them." (37)

If small privileges were given them at times, it was only in order to make them work harder to gain these rewards; but even the little peculia allowed to villici and to the best of the common hands do not appear to have been a step towards manumission. The hopes of the rustic slaves were limited indeed; hence it is no wonder that they had to be driven to do anything. Those, too, who worked on the great ranches were of the wildest type; it was they who were usually at the bottom of trouble. The life, then, that these rural slaves often had to lead - one of work in the fields from sunrise to sunset, with their every movement watched by the foreman, sometimes chained together or with shackles on their legs, and nights spent without privacy, comfort, or even pleasant surroundings - was not one calculated to elevate their moral tone, but rather one apt to sow the seeds of permanent moral contamination in Italy. As a caution, though, against thinking this ugly picture to be universally true, we must bear in mind that on the smaller estates the condition of the slaves was naturally better, since a more humane master who gave the workmen a bit more personal attention, might reproduce something of the earlier spirit of willing co-operation of master and slave, of participation in the life as well as in the industry of the plantation.

The ordinary city slaves, excepting those who had become devoted to their masters, appear to have had as their highest moral standard a complete external obedience to their owners. To obey orders diligently was the most that could be expected of them; fear of punishment was their ultimate motive; and they seem not to have risen above this low level of conduct. The typical city slave, as pictured by Plautus, is a rather unscrupulous rascal, tricky, a liar, a thief, notoriously subject to bribery, always ready for intrigue, quite destitute of a conscience. Sometimes affection for his master might prompt him to help right some wrong or to do a good turn, but even here he manifests no scruples in taking whatever means will attain his purpose, even though the means be evil. Without religion or personal responsibility, subject to no one except their master, deprived of all motives for restraint, these slaves often made up the most dangerous element of the city rabble. Nothing was to be feared more than a slave uprising, particularly towards the end of the Republican period when slaves had become very numerous.

Nature usually has a way of punishing a violation of her laws, and when these laws are continually flouted, the retribution is sometimes terrible to behold. By the natural law all men are essentially, though not accidentally, equal. Hence, when by "perfect" slavery one man reduces another of his fellows from the dignity of a human being to the base servitude of a domesticated animal, he is running counter to the laws of

nature, and sooner or later he must pay the penalty. Rome was no exception to this rule; she, too, felt the effects of slavery as it enervated and corrupted her mighty nation. Not only those who possessed slaves were affected by this system of bondage; as often happens, the innocent suffered together with the guilty. Though the individual farmer, the small business man, the free employee were not completely ruined by the competition of slave labor, still this system of cheap labor did, to a great extent, replace the free laborer, prevent his lot from being improved as post-bellum conditions grew better, and aid in creating an impoverished proletariat and an idle city rabble with all its moral worthlessness. Such people later became, as they usually are, a power to be feared; for they can very easily start trouble brewing in a crowded city, as we can witness today when crowds of unemployed give vent to their discontent or agitate for an acceptance of the illusory principles of Communism. Our own country has not gone unscathed in this regard; we have had our "poor white trash", created by the competition of cheap slave labor, upon whom even the negro slave looked with scorn before the Civil War which, by the way, found its occasion, if not its cause, in slavery.

But upon the slave owner himself fell the brunt of nature's punishment for slavery. To omit the economic reaction to slavery, the personal danger to himself and to his family which the number and disreputable character of the slaves threatened towards the end of the Republic, and the political



disturbances in which dissatisfied slaves and the city rabble played a conspicuous role, let us reflect upon the moral consequences which the slave owner experienced. The impersonal attitude towards the bondsman which the "new" slavery inculcated, tended to dull the master's moral sense, to make him unmindful of his duties and moral obligations towards these unfortunate creatures, to make him grow callous and indifferent to the misery about him. This departure from a more humane spirit is clearly seen in Cato's advice to sell the slave when he has grown old and useless (38); no sense of gratitude nor even of common decency prompts him to repay the fidelity and services of the bondsman by as much as some inexpensive provision for the man's infirmity; his interest in the slave is purely economic. With the slave under his absolute control and at his mercy, bound to do his will whatever it be or to suffer the consequences, the master enjoyed the role of a petty dictator - and he literally did enjoy that office. But as a consequence, his sense of duty, of responsibility, of obligation, was inevitably deadened, even in regard to others who were not under his control. His attitude towards those of a lower station in life became imperious, his temper despotic.

"Can we doubt that the lack of a sense of justice and right dealing, more especially towards provincials, but also towards a man's fellow citizens, ---- noticed in the two upper sections of society, was due in great part to the constant exercise of arbitrary power at home, to the habit of looking upon the men who ministered to his luxurious ease as absolutely without claim upon his respect or his benevolence?" (39)

Not without reason did Cato wage a relentless war against the growing tendency towards luxury in his day. The demoralizing let-down of agriculture due to slave labor

"was anathema to the champion of old-Roman ideas and traditions. It was a grave factor in the luxury and effeminacy that to his alarm were undermining the solid virtues of the Roman people." (40)

The old Roman peasant was giving up the life of hard toil on the farm for a life of greater ease and enjoyment; his rustic simplicity, frugality and hardiness were gradually giving way to luxurious ease and effeminacy, to idleness and consequent immorality. It was a change that steadily enervated the hardy Roman soldiery and was finally to figure in the ruin of the Roman power. Even the Roman religion became tainted with the immorality frequent in the cults of the Orient.

This discussion about the slave is important not only for the economic but also for the moral influence which slavery exerted upon the population both indirectly, through the contact of master with slave, and more directly by the enfranchisement of so many slaves. For a vast number of bondsmen became, through manumission, freedmen and citizens of Rome, who soon mingled with the natives and formed a large percentage of the populace by the end of the Republic. Even before the Punic Wars the increasing number and importance of the libertini was marked (41) by very serious discussions about their right to vote in the public assemblies; while during the Hannibalic struggle it was shown by the Senate's remarkable resolution to

admit honorable freedwomen to a participation in the public collections, and to grant to the legitimate children of freedmen the insignia which hitherto belonged only to the children of the free-born. (42) The manumission of slaves, though common enough even before the Punic Wars, became a much more usual occurrence as the number of the slaves rapidly multiplied. During the Hannibalic struggle, at a time when Rome was sadly in need of soldiers to wrest Italy from the hands of the victorious enemy, we hear of slaves being manumitted in large numbers as a reward for military service. Livy (43) mentions 8,000 slaves who were drafted after the disaster at Cannae; while Appian (44), apparently speaking of the same group, says they were freed with their masters' consent. Again we are told (45) of slaves who were rewarded with liberty and burgess-rights for distinguished service under Tiberius Gracchus in Lucania. Basing his figures on the 4,000 pounds of gold which the sacred treasury had acquired by 209 B.C. from the 5% manumission tax on freed slaves, and taking 400 denarii as the average price of a slave, Professor Frank (46) estimates that from the institution of the tax in 357 B.C. till 209 B.C., about the middle of the second Punic War, an average of 1,350 slaves had been set free each year throughout this period. Of course far more were manumitted each year towards the end of this period than at the beginning, for manumission was not practiced on a large scale during the earlier years when slaves were few; there must have been a gradual increase in the number of slaves freed until the first Punic War, and a more abrupt rise there-

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after, if we proportion the number of freedmen to the number of slaves. After the second Punic War, when Rome drew an increasing supply of slaves from the Mediterranean world by her Eastern wars, the number of freedmen seems to have kept pace, proportionately, with the number of slaves. Let it suffice to point out that by the end of the Republic the average total of manumissions for each year was no longer 1,350 but 16,000. (47)

Yet the more important point to be regarded is not the marked increase in their numbers, but rather the change in the quality of freedmen which was introduced by the Punic War period, and the replacement of the pure Italic stock by this heterogeneous ingredient. As was previously mentioned, in the earlier days the bondsmen were almost all natives of Italy and domestic in character. They were influenced, even in captivity, by the religion, the moral code and the customs of their Roman masters; for, to some extent at least, they participated in the social life and religious rites of the familia. With the "new" slavery, though, as we have already seen, a new social element was introduced into Italy - to the Western civilization was added not only the Eastern culture but also the disintegrating and demoralizing influences of the Orient. The slaves were brought into Italy from all over the Mediterranean world - predominantly from the East, especially Macedonia and Greece; and this heterogeneous crowd brought with them their national characteristics and customs, religions, moral codes, vices, attitudes and principles (or lack of them); and though they

were somewhat changed by their new environment, they by no means lost their peculiar traits.

Because the Romans were exceedingly liberal in the practice of manumission of slaves, this heterogeneous stock soon became an integral part of the Roman citizenry. Not only did manumission result from the growth of affection between master and slave, such as in the case of Cicero and Tiro; many slaves were freed by testament at their master's death, while it was not unusual for a master to grant freedom to his bondsmen after six years of honest and painstaking service. (48) Besides these methods of manumission, frugal and ambitious slaves, especially the ingenious Orientals, could easily buy their freedom in a few years by saving up their peculium and occasional gifts (besides what they were able to pilfer), or, as was sometimes done, by means of their dividends, when their master started them out in some small business on a profit-sharing basis. (49) These freedmen would naturally labor hard to procure liberty for their wives and children, if these were not already free; and as the children born after manumission were considered free-born (ingenui), there soon was a multitude of these offspring who possessed full civil liberty, even, after several generations, to the extent of holding office, and who assumed Roman names, dress and manners. The freedmen and their descendants spread out into the trades and crafts, and by Cicero's time they already constituted the major element of the plebeian classes. (50) As early as 130 B.C. Scipio Aemili-

anus, in addressing the voting assembly and the people, could remind them pointedly that Italy was to them only a step-mother.  
(51)

It cannot be denied that many of the freedmen and their descendants were a valuable acquisition for Rome. Livius Andronicus and Caecilius, the poets; Terence; Publius Syrus, who gained a great reputation for the sententiae in his mimes; Tiro, Cicero's freedman, to whom we are greatly indebted for editing Cicero's letters after the latter's death; Alexis, the freedman of Atticus, whom Cicero called "imago Tironis"; and, later yet, Horace, the son of a freedman, and Verrius Flaccus, who is said to have been one of the most learned men who ever wrote in Latin; - all these were men of whom Rome could well be proud. There were many others, too, who became the merchants, business men, financiers and industrial leaders of the growing city. Had the system of manumission been more judiciously employed or in some way been held in check by the State, all would have turned out to Rome's advantage. As Dionysius of Halicarnassus wrote in the time of Augustus:

"The censors, or at least the consuls, should examine all whom it is proposed to manumit, inquiring into their origin and the reasons and mode of their enfranchisement, as in their examination of the equites. Those whom they find worthy of citizenship should have their names inscribed on tables, distributed among the tribes, with leave to reside in the city. As to the crowd of villains and criminals, they should be sent far away, under the pretext of founding some colony." (52)

But as it was, owing to the great increase in the number of

slaves, to their inferior quality (at least morally speaking), and to the lack of wise supervision, there were many tares to be found among the grains of wheat; the comparative ease with which a slave could procure his liberty gave many undesirable freedmen to Rome. Among those especially who had been able to purchase their liberty, were to be found many unscrupulous rascals whose moral code was dictated rather by utilitarian motives than by any natural law. Perhaps the most striking example of the enfranchisement of a crowd of rascals is the notorious manumission by Sulla of 10,000 slaves who, though intended "to be a kind of military guarantee for the permanence of the Sullan institutions, only became a source of serious peril to the State at the time of Catiline's conspiracy." (53) It was the rapid infusion of foreign blood into the Roman citizen body, which long before the time of Cicero largely consisted of enfranchised slaves and their descendants, which morally, economically, and even politically contributed at least as much as the slaves themselves to the final ruin of the Roman commonwealth.

## CHAPTER V

### Tendencies Toward the Formation of Luxurious Habits

It is not the purpose of this chapter to treat in detail the various manifestations of wealth and luxury which trace their origin to the time of the Punic Wars. It is unnecessary to tabulate and describe the fine apparel, the sumptuous banquets, the expensive homes and villas and furniture. These things did not appear over night, nor, at first, to any great extent. The Roman citizen had too long been accustomed to a meager living to exchange extremes in a trice, as the Senate proved when, as late as 154 B.C., it ordered the destruction of the first stone theatre, already half completed. It seems to be of greater importance for our purpose to point out the tendencies towards such luxuries than to treat of the full-blown vices; first, because these tendencies, rather than the extremes in which they later resulted, were the direct consequences of the Punic War period; and secondly, because the changed attitude of the Roman citizen towards wealth and the things that riches can buy was the really important influence exerted upon the character of the Roman familia, and of this change the manifestations of growing sophistication were but the external evidence.

In treating of such a topic as this, it is highly im-



portant to accept with caution the testimony of many of the later Roman writers, especially the satirists. For though it is undoubtedly true that the conquests which unlocked the hoarded treasures of the eastern monarchs gave a severe shock to the frugality and self-restraint of the old Roman character, yet the result may easily be exaggerated, especially by moralists who, to attain their purpose, select notable excesses as the object of their attacks, purposely neglecting the common practices of moderation. In poetry, satire, oratory, not everything is strictly true to life; the common-place, every-day life of the ordinary citizen seldom attracts attention. To realize this, one need only consult modern literature dealing with the depression and pre-depression days. He would err grievously were he to believe that in 1928 everyone was leading a life of ease and luxury and self-gratification, that high salaries for a few hours of work were common, that the one real object in life for the majority of the people was to find new ways of whiling away their many leisure hours. That there was more general abundance and comfort, that extravagance and licence were noted in certain circles, could be admitted; but a true picture of the times would have to include the poor, whom we have with us always, and the great mass of the people who still worked hard for a moderate wage, and who learned of "high and fast living" only from books and the screen. Extravagant luxury and self-indulgence is, in any age, possible to only a comparatively small number; and luxury, after all, is a relative term.

One fact must be made clear: it was really the wars with Carthage, and in particular the Hannibalic struggle, which lay at the root of the trouble. For it was by these wars that Rome was translated from a position of obscurity to one which commanded the attention of the whole civilized world of that day, which made her conscious of latent power, of vast potentialities, which aroused her from a superstitious, peninsular conservatism. The victories over Carthage opened the way to conquest outside of Italy, for since both Philip of Macedon and Antiochus of Syria, by aiding Hannibal and besieging Rome's Grecian allies while she was struggling with Carthage, drew her wrath upon their heads, they prepared the way for the conquest of their own kingdoms and for the establishment of the Roman power in the East. This contact with the Orient, once it had been established, pointed out to the Romans a richer, gayer, more alluring world than they had ever known before; and it was only natural that what they saw others possessing, they, too, wanted to have; what others did, they endeavored to imitate. The consequent relations with Oriental luxury, morality and religion, exerted a decided influence upon Western civilization during the next few centuries.

The Roman who overcame the power and wealth of mighty Carthage was sparing to the point of abstinence. The traditions of his fathers had inculcated a regard for frugality, his early training had fostered it, and constant practice had made it a second nature to him. At first, and even down to the first

Punic War, his domestic life was characterized by simplicity in thought and action and a stern moderation in the gratification of his senses, which he seldom and but sparingly indulged.

"His food was the rude bread and homely porridge afforded by his grains, the fruits of his own garden and orchard, the flesh of his beasts in sparing quantity, the honey and oil of his bees and olives, and the temperate draught of wine. He was hard working. The toil of generations of earnest men was in his blood; 'industry grafted into the souls of the Romans', writes Livy. He was simple in his ways and ideas; simple, not consciously or for effect, but by nature. .... The luxuries of the mind as well as of the body were actively opposed. The citizen-soldier-farmer held art in contempt; beyond its giving distinction to the buildings that represented the greatness of the state, he did not even understand its uses. Beyond the contribution of practical knowledge to excellence in the ranks, at the rostra and on the senate floor, and in matters of livelihood, he understood as little the nature of education." (1)

But with the sudden change of events introduced by the second Punic War and its aftermath came a pronounced modification of the attitude of the Roman towards wealth and luxury. His continued prosperity exerted its influence upon his views, and these affected his private life and manners, his pursuits, and his social character. From a state of primitive rudeness he gradually progressed in urbanity and refinement, and before long was passing to the opposite extreme. The better acquainted he became with the conveniences and luxuries of his conquered foes, at first of Carthage, but more especially of the Greeks and Asiatics in the succeeding years, and the more abundant his riches became in consequence of these victories, the more prevalent did pride and luxury become in private as

well as in public life. In place of self-restraint and frugality, there now appeared pride and vanity, luxury and pleasure-seeking. What Tiberius was to admit two centuries later can truthfully be applied to the Punic War period:

"By victories abroad we learned to waste the substance of others; by victories at home, our own." (2)

As a result of the second Punic War and, to a greater extent, of the wars of conquest in the East which were its sequel, considerable wealth in the form of indemnities and booty began to pour into Rome. Even though our Roman authorities do not always give figures or mention the smaller amounts of booty captured in less important towns, the data left to us present quite an imposing sum. Since the tabulation of the individual amounts, their sources, and the names of our authorities for them, is far too lengthy to be recorded here, reference must be made to the scholarly work of Professor Tenney Frank and his collaborators (3). To the huge sums of indemnity and booty must be added the income from the silver mines of Macedonia and Spain, the rent from the public lands (ager publicus) in Italy, the revenues of the quarries and salt works, the 5% customs duty on all exports and imports in Italy, and various other amounts. Wealth naturally followed in the wake of conquest. Theoretically, at least, most of this was national wealth; but as Asinius Gallus later noted, with the expansion of Roman dominion and the overflowing of the public treasury, private fortunes had grown apace.

"Wealth was one thing with the Fabricii, another with the Scipios; and all was relative to the state. When the state was poor, you had frugality and cottages: when it attained a pitch of splendour..... the individual also throve." (4)

That the increase in national wealth soon began to affect the financial welfare of the whole citizen community, even in a direct way, is amply proved by the fact that in 167 B.C. it became possible to exempt all Roman citizens from the tributum or property tax. Thereafter the Roman citizen had scarcely any public burden to bear except that of military service, and there are very evident signs that he was becoming unwilling to shoulder even that one. He saw the prominent men of the times enriching themselves abroad and leading luxurious lives at home, and the spirit of ease and comfortable idleness inevitably began to affect him also.

Much of the financial success during this period, to mention only one factor other than the war indemnities and booty, and one which directly influenced the private fortunes, was largely due to real-estate investments. Rome was growing rapidly at this time, and property inside a walled city with an increasing population was bound to rise in value very rapidly. Rural property after the second Punic War was plentiful and cheap - ideal conditions for wealthy landlords and ranch-owners. Those who invested in farms during the first few years which followed the war may well have prospered, not only because of the cheap labor which the slave afforded, but also because the military demands for grain, horses and mules,

woolen clothing and leather, were quite urgent for the next half-century. Indeed it has been estimated that the Roman cultivation of hitherto unfarmed Italian soil, during the second Punic War period, increased the former acreage twofold. (5) Evidently business was improving, and the profits - at least from large-scale farming and cattle-raising - were tempting.

The remarkable feature of the influx of wealth was its extraordinary suddenness. Within the lifetime of a single man, Cato the Censor (235-147 B.C.), the financial condition both of the State and of private individuals had undergone a complete change. Cato realized this, and he saw that the sudden influx of wealth was disturbing and threatening to unbalance the old Roman mind. Most of the vices which henceforth spread in Rome - an unbounded craving for wealth, honors and power, a note of sophistication, a coarse gluttony - were the vices of parvenus, the result of a too rapid increase in wealth. Had the accumulation of wealth been gradual instead of sudden, natural instead of artificial, "the steady growth of capital would have produced no ethical mischief, no false economic ideas, because it would have been an organic growth, resting upon a sound and natural economic basis." (6) But Rome, unfortunately, became intoxicated with success, with suddenly finding the world and all its gold in her hands; her easily acquired gains turned against her, gradually corrupted her ancient virtues, and finally led to the ruin of her power. True are those words of the French historian:

"Money is like the water of a river: if it suddenly floods, it devastates; divide it into a thousand channels where it circulates quietly, and it brings life and fertility to every spot." (7)

The frequent enactment of sumptuary laws from the time of the second Punic War onwards bears ample testimony to the rapid influx of wealth and to the State's cognizance of a growing tendency to adopt luxurious habits. The criticism of these tendencies and attempts to restrain them might be said to have begun with the Lex Oppia (215 B.C.), which forbade women to have more than half an ounce of gold in their adornment, to wear dresses of several colors, or to ride in a carriage within the city except for religious festivals. However, this regulation was a war measure rather than an ordinary sumptuary law, being passed when Rome was in very severe financial straits, and it was repealed in 195 B.C.. Again in 184 B.C., when Cato and Lucius Valerius Flaccus were censors, all women's ornaments or garments, table-ware, furniture and equipages, the value of which in any case exceeded 15,000 asses, and slaves under twenty years of age who had been bought at 10,000 asses or more, were assessed at ten times their value and a tax of three on every thousand asses was then levied. That is, such luxuries were taxed at three percent, whereas ordinary property was taxed only one-tenth of one percent. In 181 B.C. a Lex Orchia was passed, restricting the expenses of the table, but though it is frequently mentioned, the details of the law are nowhere given. The consul, Gaius Fannius Strabo, passed a sumptuary law in 161 B.C., "which allowed the expenditure of

one hundred asses a day at the Roman and plebeian games, at the Saturnalia, and on certain other days; of thirty asses on ten additional days each month; but on all other days of only ten." (8) This law was subsequent to a decree of the Senate which provided that:

"the leading citizens, who according to ancient usage 'interchanged' at the Megalesian games (that is, acted as host to one another in rotation), should take oath before the consuls in set terms, that they would not spend for each dinner more than one hundred and twenty asses, in addition to vegetables, bread and wine; that they would not serve foreign, but only native, wine, nor use at table more than one hundred pounds' weight of silverware." (9)

By 143 B.C. the Lex Didia was added to strengthen the Lex Fannia. Now not only the host, but even the guests at illicit feasts, were made liable to punishment; and the new law was not restricted to Rome, but applied to all Italians, among whom, presumably, high living was having demoralizing effects. About the turn of the century, from about 103 B.C. onwards, further sumptuary legislation was found more and more necessary, especially to restrict the quality and expense of banquets. The lengthy catalogue of these decrees and laws is a commentary on the futility of trying to force the Romans to restrain the growing tendencies towards luxury.

A detailed study of the development of luxurious habits in particular spheres, such as furniture, buildings, dress and meals, is quite impossible for the period introduced by the second Punic War, owing to a lack of very definite data, especially in regard to Roman private life. Just exactly when



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various changes were made, when particular luxuries were introduced, to what extent Rome was influenced by Oriental tastes in these matters in the earlier years, no Roman authority has seen fit to outline. At best, one must be content to note the appearance of luxurious tendencies rather than of specific luxuries, and to obtain a rather general idea of conditions from somewhat vague references.

In regard to private homes this much may be said:

"a tendency to treat the city as the home, the country only as a means of refreshment and a sphere of elegant retirement during that portion of the year when the excitement of the urban season, its business and its pleasure, were suspended, began to be a marked feature of the life of the upper classes." (10)

As a result, the natural tendency was to improve and adorn the city residence to make it accord more with the owner's financial status, especially as wealth and luxury increased. The size of the home was gradually enlarged and the number of rooms increased. It is quite possible that the addition of a second story in private dwellings was introduced at this time, owing to the rapid increase in population and the consequent scarcity of ground-space. Just as most of the public buildings at Rome, from this time onwards, were built in the Hellenistic style which the Roman soldiers had noticed in Sicily, South Italy and Greece (11), so, too, private dwellings gradually assumed more of the Grecian characteristics. It is likely that this period witnessed the adoption of the Greek peristylum and its attendant features. After the Hannibalic struggle the atrium

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ceased to be the ordinary dining place, and special chambers were built, either off the atrium, about the peristylum, or even on the second floor, for the accomodation of the guests, that they might be received in different rooms according to the season and the weather.

"These triclinia were so arranged as to afford the greatest personal comfort and the best opportunities for conversation; they indicate clearly that dinner is no longer an interval in the day's work, but a time of repose and ease at the end of it." (12)

These were not very great luxuries, to be sure, but they were a departure from the rather austere simplicity of former times. The reckless prices paid for houses and villas by the wealthy class of the next generation had not yet been reached, nor was the use of costly materials both within and outside of the home as yet introduced; these had to wait till about the beginning of the first century before Christ. Yet the old Roman conservatism was slowly yielding to the spirit of progress, and time would revolutionize the appearance of the city.

That the houses came to be furnished more luxuriously is quite certain. Both Livy and the elder Pliny trace what has been called "the first invasion of the city by luxury from foreign sources" (13) to the return of the soldiers from the campaign in Asia in 188 B.C.. Among the booty they carried home were such articles as dining couches with bronze mounting and upholstering of precious stuffs, silver plate elegantly figured, fancy ornamental tables, which were regarded in those days as sumptuous furnishings, and carpets of rich gold brocade.

The treasures of Attalus, king of Pergamum and ally of Rome in the second Punic War, which were bequeathed to Rome at his death,

"contained vast amounts of fine fabrics from the royal factories and palaces, tapestries, spreads, and hangings woven with gold (Attalica), and fine textiles and clothing. ... Such imports taught the Romans where to buy fine textiles. Trade accordingly increased with the East." (14)

Once the way to these luxurious furnishings and ornaments had been opened and the Romans came to realize what the Orient had to offer, their desires would no longer be satisfied with the plain articles they had so long been accustomed to use. "Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur cum illis!"

In regard to clothing, little definite information can be gleaned from ancient sources, except for the fact that there existed, especially after the expedition to Asia Minor, a growing tendency to adopt the Oriental luxuries. The women, in particular, began to chafe under the restrictions of the Oppian law of 215 B.C., which forbade them more than half an ounce of gold in personal jewelry, as well as the wearing of vari-colored garments. They had submitted to the law while the State was in distress,

"but the terrible Punic war had now ended gloriously, success crowned all the military expeditions of the Romans, wealth flowed in from the East, the men had taken advantage of the prosperity, and it seemed singularly hard that the women alone should not share in the indulgences which riches had carried in their train." (15)

Livy (xxxiv, 1-8) gives a very dramatic account of how they united, sought the support of the men voters, and even put to

shame modern lobbyists by besieging the homes of two obstinate tribunes until the latter yielded to their importunities and consented to withdraw their opposition. The women achieved a singular victory at the formal assembly, and the law was finally abrogated. As time went on, more and more of the Asiatico-Hellenic luxuries found their way to the capital of the West. Finer materials were sought for the making of garments; and since Cato began taxing women's wardrobes costing over 15,000 asses to the extent of thirty percent of their original value (16), the inference is that very costly garments (for those times) were in use. The Roman woman, too, was passionately fond of jewelry, and took great pains in the adornment of her person. Rings, brooches, pins, jeweled buttons, coronets, bracelets, necklaces, ear-rings, pendants, were common ornaments. Not only were they of costly material, but their value was enhanced by artistic workmanship. Women who cared much for jewelry and ornaments were not slow, we can be quite certain, to seize the opportunity which the Orient now afforded of acquiring articles which were decidedly "different".

In no other sphere of Roman private life does luxury appear to have made greater inroads and to have taken deeper root than in regard to the table. The men who had conquered Hannibal were very temperate in both eating and drinking. They were almost strict vegetarians; much of their food was eaten cold; and the greatest simplicity marked the preparation and the serving of their meals. But after the Asiatic campaign

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(the aftermath of the second Punic War) had introduced them to the delicacies of the East, a decided change came about. No longer did rich and poor fare alike. The latter were forced by poverty to live frugally as before; the wealthy gradually felt a distaste for the simple fare to which they had long been accustomed, and their contact with the outside world awakened in them a craving for something more tasty. The vegetarian diet came to be despised, and the consumption of meat and game became increasingly common. (17) Gastronomy became a familiar topic, and many poems were to be found giving long lists of the most palatable fishes and fowl. Theory was put into practice; foreign delicacies grew in popularity, and high prices were paid for choice dainties. New fruits were introduced from other lands, and the improvement of native varieties was promoted by hothouse cultivation. Aulus Gellius affords some idea of what luxurious foods were being introduced, where he recalls the satire *Περὶ Ἑδεσμάτων* of Marcus Cato. He states:

"So far as my memory goes, these are the varieties and names of the foods surpassing all others, which a bottomless gullet has hunted out and which Varro has assailed in his satire, with the places where they are found: a peacock from Samos, a woodcock from Phrygia, cranes from Media, a kid from Ambracia, a young tunny from Calcedon, a lamprey from Tartessus, codfish from Pesinus, oysters from Tarentum, cockles from Sicily, a swordfish from Rhodes, pike from Cilicia, nuts from Thasos, dates from Egypt, acorns from Spain." (18)

Hitherto the Romans had, without exception, partaken of hot dishes only once a day; now hot dishes were not infrequently served at both prandium and coena, while the usual two courses

of food were now deemed insufficient for the principal meal of the day (coena). Prolonged dinner-parties, with a large staff of slaves to cook and to serve the meals, came into fashion among the rich. Formerly the women of the household had themselves attended to the cooking, and only for special banquets was a professional cook summoned to take charge of the kitchen. Now, however, cooking became an art; and in the better homes a special cook was retained to prepare the meals. By 171 B.C. the first bakers' shops were opened in Rome;- the first step in specialization in the culinary art had been taken.

The Romans had been accustomed to linger over their desert and wine at their dinner (coena) in the evening, in order to enjoy the pleasant conversation, but drinking-banquets in the strict sense of the term were unknown before the second Punic War. After this period, however, especially among the younger men, the Greek symposium (a "drinking together") gradually came into vogue. This drinking bout (comissatio or compotatio) differed from the old convivium not merely in the greater amount of wine consumed, but also in its lower tone and the sometimes questionable amusements which accompanied it. The wine was often but little or not at all diluted, and the number of toasts indulged in frequently enough ended in intoxication. Greek customs, such as the use of perfumes and flowers at a feast, the selection of a rex bibendi, and even the entertainment by singing girls, harp players and tumblers, were introduced at the banquets. (19) It is no wonder that

the separate dining-room (or rooms) was introduced, that the diners reclined instead of seating themselves, that a special dinner-dress was devised, and that the dinner was often prolonged far into the night. Rome was entering upon the road of ease and indulgence that was to enervate not only the bodies but even the character of her manhood.

The outstanding proof of luxurious tendencies in regard to the table in particular is to be found in the fact that of all the sumptuary legislation passed from the period of the Punic Wars to the first years of the Empire, the greater part, by far, dealt with restrictions on the quality and cost both of the daily fare and of occasional banquets. To cite but a few instances: besides the senatorial decree regarding the Megalesian games, which we have noted previously, the Lex Orchia (181 B.C.), the Lex Fannia (161 B.C.), and the Lex Didia (143 B.C.) further restricted the amount to be expended on the table. The Licinian law (about 103 B.C.) allowed one hundred asses for specified days, but conceded two hundred asses for weddings and set a limit of thirty asses for other days. However, after fixing a certain weight of dried meat and salted provisions for each day, this law permitted indiscriminate and unlimited use of the products of the earth, vine and orchard. (20)

"Afterwards, when these laws were illegible from the rust of age and forgotten, when many men of abundant means were gormandizing, and recklessly pouring their family and fortune into an abyss of dinners and banquets, Lucius Sulla in his dicta-

torship proposed a law to the people, which provided that on the Kalends, Ides and Nones, on days of games, and on certain regular festivals, it should be proper and lawful to spend three hundred sesterces on a dinner, but on all other days no more than thirty." (21)

An examination of the complete record of sumptuary legislation indicates that the restrictions were becoming less stringent, for the people could not be forced to remain within the earlier narrow limits, but constantly tended to more luxurious ways. By the time of Augustus or Tiberius, it is not certain which period, the outlay for banquets on certain festivals was increased from three hundred to two thousand sesterces, and note the reason, "to the end that the rising tide of luxury might be restrained at least within those limits". (22)

A last point is sufficiently obvious, it would seem, after what has already been said on the subject of slavery, to require no more than a passing reference: the subject of slavery in its relation to luxury. Naturally this refers, as does the whole discussion of luxury, to the wealthy classes; though the existence both of slavery and of luxurious tendencies could not have been without definite effects upon the average Roman and the very lowest classes. Enough has been said about the rural slaves and the latifundia to show that the wealthy landlord was enabled to spend most of his time at home in the city, while his villicus took care of the slave-manned plantation that brought in his regular income. In the city, the upper classes of society were engaged in financial enterprises and governmental work, for the most part; and the



details of the work, as it gradually developed together with the extension of Roman dominion after the Hannibalic struggle, created a demand for workmen of every kind. The constant demand for help was, to a very great extent, supplied by slave labor. (23) From the office the slave was soon introduced into the home as private secretary, copyist, messenger, and the like. This fact, coupled with the tendency to employ the slave as cook, waiter and attendant, gradually built up quite a large household. True, it was not until the early Empire that the immense familiae urbanae were existent, but their origin can be traced back through years of gradual development to the multiplication of domestic slaves which followed in the wake of Rome's rise to prominence by the victories over Carthage. So extensively did slave labor increase in the private home that by the time of Cicero slaves were employed in the role of jani-tor, cubicularius, cook, attendant, litter-bearer, messenger, letter-carrier, household doctor, business manager, nomenclator, secretary at accounts, reader, copyist, clerk and librarian. (24) The great increase of wealth and luxury had led to the demand for all this help; slave labor satisfied the demand that free labor could not adequately meet during abnormal conditions of war-time and empire-building; but the effects upon the familia of the better classes, at least, were certainly not desirable. It led gradually to that condition where the servants did the work while the master and his family lived in idle ease. It helped to create a leisured class who knew not how, and cared less, to make the best use

of their leisure hours. And idleness is the root of all evils!

## CHAPTER VI

### Decline in Morality

Moral degeneration, history seems to testify, is a common, if not universal, accompaniment of war. Why this is - whether it is due to the intense emotional agitation of the times, the natural consequence of stimulating to action some of the baser passions of men, the craving for relaxation from the tenseness that holds the nation in its grip, the exhilaration in time of victory, or the result of wealth that sometimes follows a great conquest - it is not the purpose of this chapter to discuss. That there was a moral decline, both during and after the second Punic War in particular, is a fact supported by ancient and modern authorities alike. A few causes may be suggested for the decline, and wherever possible this shall be done; but the principal aim of this chapter is to point out briefly the existence of this degeneration and its marks upon the character of the Roman people. This can be done rather summarily here, since this topic has already been touched upon in passing and because more remains to be said in the chapter on religion and its influence upon the moral character of the people.

Perhaps the first sign of moral corruption was made manifest after the disaster at Cannae, when two Vestal virgins were

found guilty of manifest unchastity. (1) Other women, too, found the strain of the war too great for their moral equilibrium; more than one case of shame was brought before the attention of the public. (2) Of course only the exceptional cases of immorality are mentioned, just as today the sensational news gets into the newspapers while many more private scandals are kept secret. Still, it is a significant fact that Fabius Pictor returned from the Delphic oracle with the injunction to the Roman population to banish licentiousness (lascivia) from their city. (3) In the Bacchanalian rites, which were introduced into Rome shortly after this, immorality often resulted from the emotional frenzy into which the participants worked themselves; and to such a degree did the evils spread that the Senate was forced to suppress the cult. Such examples as these seem to indicate that the immorality was due to the nervous tension and emotional unrestraint, the uncertainty of the outcome of affairs, and the craving for religious practices which were less formally ceremonious and more emotionally stimulating than the old Roman religion.

After the Hannibalic struggle, the Asiatic campaign, which was one of the direct results of the second Punic War and the source of so many deleterious influences for Rome, seems to have been the cause of a rather peculiar evil. Men like Cato pointed out that the soldiers were returning from the East infected with Oriental vices. The evil of keeping grisettes and boy favorites became quite common.

"For some of the Roman youths had abandoned themselves to amours with boys and others to the society of courtesans, and many to musical entertainments and banquets and the extravagance they involve, having in the course of the war with Perseus been speedily infected by the Greek laxity in these respects. So great in fact was the incontinence that had broken out among the young men in such matters, that many paid a talent for a male favorite." (4)

Roman legislation seemed unable to take any worth-while measures against this evil, and though Cato, when censor, tried to remedy matters by placing a heavy tax upon such species of slaves, no permanent results were effected. Celibacy and divorces were the natural result of such abominable practices.

Another cause for the increasing number of evils was the weakening of the marriage tie. When in 233 B.C. Spurius Carvilius Ruga put away his wife for sterility, his act was denounced by public opinion; a hundred years later, due to the changes which the wars brought to Roman religious and social life, such an act would have been nothing extraordinary. The old religious rites used to solemnize a Roman marriage were weakened; marriages cum manu (a justum matrimonium, or one sanctioned by law and religion) became unusual (5), and the sacred ceremony (confarreatio) was commonly omitted. The wife remained in the potestas of her father instead of passing into absolute subjection to her husband, as had previously been the custom. A further factor - the so-called "emancipation" of women - also loosened the intimate bond between man and wife. According to ancient custom, the married woman was subject in

law to the marital power rather than to the patria potestas which had hitherto governed her life, and the unmarried woman was under the guardianship of her nearest male agnatus; the wife had no property of her own, the virgin and widow possessed the property but not the right of management. Now, however, since the wife did not commonly pass into the power (in manu) of her husband, the property remained her own instead of becoming her husband's, and thus she acquired a new position of independence. Other ways of acquiring control of their property, by ridding themselves of the guardianship of their agnate relation, became known and practiced.

"Many women entered upon formal marriages in order to gain a matron's control of their property with the stipulated condition that divorce proceedings should immediately follow the marriage ceremony."

(6)

Indeed, by 169 B.C. so much capital was accumulating in the hands of women that it appeared to constitute a danger, and by the Lex Voconia of that year women could no longer be named heirs in legacies. Gradually the old family jurisdiction over women, which was connected with that marital and tutorial power, became weakened, and women increased in social and economic independence and importance. To conclude, this change

"was fundamentally due to the steady deterioration of the ancient family ideals; and this, in turn, was part of a widespread decline of moral standards following upon Rome's wars for dominion. ... Men and women alike were infected with the dry rot of selfishness and a frenzied pleasure-seeking, in consequence they looked upon the earlier almost religious conceptions of family duties and responsibilities as troublesome and outgrown. When marriages were contracted, the motives were too often mercenary or concerned with mere personal

gratification. Rarely, in the senatorial class, was marriage any longer regarded as a solemn obligation to the State and to the domestic gods. Concubinage and prostitution grew by leaps and bounds as men sought to satisfy their passions without assuming the cares of married life." (7)

Let it suffice here merely to indicate some further degenerating tendencies, usually the concomitant evils of a disposition inclined to luxurious habits. Wealth in the hands of the unrefined often brought with it a tawdry display and an arrogant manner. Dice-playing and other forms of gambling, bribery, and corruption at elections, were gradually introduced by an uncontrolled avarice or the "pride of life". Idleness and a love of amusement attracted throngs of the very poor and extremely wealthy to public shows and games which steadily grew in favor, and which, after the organization of new ludi during the course of the second Punic war, most probably for the purpose of keeping up the drooping spirits of the population, increased in magnificence. (8) But all this, one must realize, directly affected but a small percentage of the population; and in the main there was a gradual, not a sudden, development of these vices. Yet the tendencies were present, and they can be traced, for their origin, to the extension of Roman dominion outside of Italy, and for their effects upon the Roman character, down to the moral corruption of the Empire.

## CHAPTER VII

### Fundamental Religious Changes

When Augustus took up the reins of government, he beheld a mighty nation tossed by civil strife, attacked by foreign enemies, harassed by brigandage, and suffering severely from general disorder, a reckless disregard for the sacredness of human life and private property, by rapine and avarice. The thirteen years between the murder of Julius Caesar and the battle of Actium were only the culmination of Rome's terrible experience; for a century the State had been the victim of continuous disintegrating forces. A profound change had come over Rome - a change which laws and banishments and military force tried in vain to correct; for it was not something merely external, its roots were embedded in the hearts of men. But what was the nature of this disease that was sapping the vital forces of Rome? How could it be remedied? How could Rome recover her ancient national character of the days when her citizens could govern themselves with stern discipline, and knew how to obey the laws and to serve the State? How had two centuries wrought such a change in the minds and hearts of men?

The answer to these questions, Augustus decided, lay in the decay of religion. Less than two centuries before, Polybius had pointed out the force which underlay Rome's great-



ness. He claimed:

"The most important difference for the better, which the Roman Commonwealth appears to me to display, is in their religious beliefs, for I conceive that what in other nations is looked upon as a reproach, I mean a scrupulous fear of the gods, is the very thing which keeps the Roman Commonwealth together." (1)

But to such a low level had religious observance fallen by the end of the Republic that Varro, Cicero's contemporary, devoted sixteen books of his Antiquities to the gods, because, as Augustine writes:

"... dicat se timere ne [di] pereant, non incursu hostili, sed civium negligentia." (2)

Let us try to discover the reasons for this religious decline during the last two centuries of the Republic.

The gods of the early Romans were the tutelary spirits of family life, tribal organization, and of the common occupations - farming, cattle-raising, and warfare. They were conceived as supernatural beings or powers (numina), believed to exist and to operate in natural objects; they were immanent forces (3) which, by their presence within an object, enabled that object to perform its natural function - the fire to burn, the door to afford protection, the crops to grow, and the like. Strange as it may perhaps seem, these deities were not clearly recognized personalities with distinct attributes. If we may make a distinction, the early Romans personified their gods, but did not humanize them; they seemed conscious of addressing a personal force, but failed to attribute to the divinity any anthropomorphic conceptions. "Dii obscurissimi" they were call-

ed by Varro, owing to the vagueness about their personal forms, and prayers addressed to them included the qualification, "sive mas, sive femina". The practical Roman was not interested in these spirits except so far as they could aid or harm him; he cared nothing about inquiring into their names, sex, powers or wishes, or about developing a real mythology. Their relation to him was strictly a practical matter, adjusted to his daily needs. Religion was, for the early Roman, a family affair. The father of the family was the priest who performed the sacred ritual and uttered the traditional invocations. The deities invoked had an intimate relation with the family: the father was protected by his Genius, conceived as a kind of double of the living man and a divinization of his procreative power; Lar (later the two household Lares) was the protector of the home and its activities; the di Penates had charge of the family larder; Vesta was the divinization of the hearth-fire; Mars watched over the agricultural interests of the family until he was called upon to aid in a very different struggle for existence - offensive and defensive warfare. Many other divinities had special functions to perform; they reigned in the springs and brooks, the newly-planted seed, the growing crops, or on special occasions such as birth, marriage, and death. Because of the intimate association of these numina with the daily activities of each member of the family, religion was an everyday function, and the people naturally became deeply religious in character.

By the time of the Punic wars, however, the religious atmosphere of Rome had changed considerably. Greek influences, filtering in through Etruria and by way of the Greek colonies in the south of Italy, initiated a change from the Roman "an-  
iconic numinism to Greek anthropomorphic polytheism with its multiplicity of statues and temples." (4) The "di novensiles" had an appeal to the senses and imagination of the people that the "di indigetes" could not offer; the statues and pictures of the gods, their beautiful shrines and temples, the intriguing poetic mythology, the attractive religious spectacles and games, and the emotional appeal of the sacred ritual, facilitated the rising ascendancy of the Graecus ritus over the more simple Roman rite, and the Hellenization of Roman concepts of the divinities. Many of the ancient di indigetes had become dim or obsolete as the life of the people changed, and they no longer felt the need of them; in their place were substituted imported deities who had some relation to politics, trade and art - according to the new experiences or needs in the life of the people. As a rule the new deities - Greek for the most part - assumed Italian names; sometimes the old Roman name was retained, while Greek gods were superimposed on the indistinctly conceived di indigetes.

The reason for this more liberal attitude towards the ideas of the deity is, in general, not difficult to determine. By the time of the Punic wars, the Roman religion had already changed from the worship which centered about the hearth and

home into a community concern.

"The state took over the religion just as it had grown up around the family hearth and, by analogy and through development, applied the various household cults to the needs of the state. ... The state now undertook to render to the gods the worship which the citizens had hitherto regarded as part of their own private duty." (5)

Thus began the jus divinum (or sacrum), whose object was to protect the community and its members from harm which might come to them from the divinities, and to relieve them from anxiety and scruples by systematizing and directing the worship of the numina. The State religion developed into quite an elaborate system, directed by various collegia and priesthoods for special cults. A collegium pontificum, headed by the pontifex maximus, the collegium augurum, the fetiales and Flamines and the collegium in charge of the Sibylline Books, were the spiritual advisers, and the individual Roman had but to submit himself to their authority in order to feel sure that his obligations to the supernatural world had been satisfied. He felt that doctrines and creeds were quite unnecessary in his religious life, which was a rather cold, practical business affair - a matter of giving in order to receive. Practice or cult, under the direction of the religious authorities, was quite sufficient to obtain the object he had in view - not an increase in virtue, but protection from temporal misfortune and an increase in material goods. This systematization of the State religion produced a sense of trust in authority and a habit of obedience to rule or law; but while emphasizing external practice according to State ritual and ceremonies, it tended to

minimize the personal aspect of religion - the internal religious convictions and devotion of the individual. As a consequence, the citizens began to lose the intimate contact with their gods which simple and childlike faith had fostered in earlier years; their interest was not so much in the gods as in the cult.

Two essentially weak points stand out prominently in this State-supervised religion. The first of these lay in the fact that in its development it underwent a purely mechanical process of accretion from without; there was no internal, organic change. As new deities and new rituals were introduced from other cities, they were merely added to the long list of those before them; they meant that new devotions and ceremonies were offered to the people, but they failed to bring the individual into closer contact with the divinities or to teach him more about the supernatural. This absence of organic growth indicates a lack of vitality in the Roman religion, for, if we may suggest an analogy from biology, accretion is a property of inanimate objects (such as crystals), while internal growth or organic development is characteristic of living objects (such as a tree or an animal). The second weakness of the religion was in the use made of it by the State. Originally natural, spontaneous and sincere, when it was a personal, a family affair, religion became an artificial, external, and purely ritualistic matter when taken over by the State. The government saw in religion nothing supernatural, nothing

divine, but merely a convenient instrument for promoting a spirit of trust in authority and obedience to law, which would be useful for those in power. The gods did not exist through any power of their own; they were created by and for the State. Their only *raison d'être* was to keep the State intact and to preserve the moral order from chaos; if the religious cults were neglected, the gods would perish. (6) Cicero and Varro are quite clear in their opinion that the gods of the State religion existed in and through the worship ordained by the State, and the use of religion for political purposes constituted one of the principal objections which Roman writers had against it. Obviously, such a religion was liable to fail when put to the test, and that crucial test of its vitality came in the terrific strain of the Punic wars, which dealt it so severe a blow that it never did fully recover. "In the two centuries that followed the great struggle with Hannibal Rome gained the world and lost her own soul." (7)

In approaching the Punic war period, it is important to keep in mind these essential points concerning Roman religion. First of all, the Roman religion as we know it in historical times, was "not a religion of the individual, but of the community; not a matter in which any man was a law to himself, but a system in which the State regulated all his dealings with the supernatural." (8) True, the ancient household gods continued to be worshipped for centuries, but the decrees which went out from the Capitoline to introduce imported gods into the

State religion pushed private worship into the background. In the second place, the State religion placed more emphasis upon the cult or religious observances than upon the deities who were worshipped, and in so doing it tended to hypnotize the truly religious instinct of the people. Lastly, the introduction of foreign deities and cults whenever expediency demanded, betrayed the weakness of the State religion and opened the way for further changes in it; for in times of peril or doubt, its only means of providing comfort and support from the supernatural world, if the gods who were then venerated seemed unable or unwilling to help them, was to give the people new gods to be worshipped in new ways.

For our purpose we can concentrate our attention upon the State religion and neglect the worship of the household gods, for it was chiefly to the divinities of the State that the citizens looked for aid in time of distress such as they faced during the period which now concerns us.

Along with the establishment of a State religion, there arose a tendency to despise and neglect the old religious forms. The foundation for this neglect appears to lie in the recognition of the fact that the State religion was a merely human institution used for political purposes. As early as 293 B.C. we find evidence of carelessness regarding regulations of the jus divinum. An auspex, influenced by the universal enthusiasm among the soldiers to fight in battle, dared to misrepresent the omens; though the sacred chickens refused to feed -

an evil omen - he reported to the consul that they had eaten voraciously. This falsehood was later revealed by Spurius Papirius, who had investigated the matter; Livy calls him a youth born in an age when that sort of learning which inculcates contempt of the gods was yet unknown. The consul, the lad's uncle, if not a contemptor deorum, at least knew how to use the auspices to his advantage. He replied: "The person who officiates in taking the auspices, if he makes a false report, draws on his own head the evil portended; but to the Roman people and their army, the favorable omen reported to me is an excellent auspice." (9) The Romans won a decisive victory.

Again, during the first Punic war, the consul, Claudius Pulcher, and his colleague, L. Junius, ventured to engage the enemy in spite of unfavorable omens. Of Claudius we are told that when the sacred chickens would not feed, he tossed them into the sea to let them drink. (10) Immediately before the disaster at Trasimene, Gaius Flaminius was forced to leave Rome secretly, for fear he would be detained by a falsification of the auspices. He himself was accused of having been made consul without the proper auspices, and of further having neglected his religious obligations imposed by the jus divinum.

(11) Marcus Marcellus, famous for his deeds during the second Punic war, refused to act on an auspiciu ex acuminibus, and was accustomed to ride in his litter with the blinds drawn (lectica operta) so as to avoid seeing evil omens which might impede some work he wanted to accomplish. Yet Cicero could call Marcellus an "augur optimus": (12) We may ask in the spirit



of a Scripture quotation: If an augur optimus so treated the auspices, how would less scrupulous authorities act? These examples indicate that a hard and fast system of religious observances was arousing rebellion in certain minds, and as the great crisis of the Hannibalic war throws the Romans into a panic, we shall find evidence that the people were losing their trust in the gods of the State and turning elsewhere for comfort and aid.

The Hannibalic struggle, more than anything else, put the Roman State religion to the acid test. This is not surprising, for although Italy had been invaded before, it had not been invaded by one who had the relentless determination and genius for leadership that Hannibal possessed. Instinctively, the Romans realized that they were engaged in a life-or-death struggle; and it is scarcely possible for us to exaggerate the terrors of the situation which confronted them during the long years that Hannibal spent in Italy. Their constant anxiety and uncertainty, in an age of slow communication and doubtful news, taxed to the utmost the endurance of the nerve-racked people, and stimulated their emotions to a highly abnormal degree. It is to Livy's credit that he realized the importance of this fact, and left to future ages a record of the people's feelings and the means taken to soothe them. He recognized the fact that history is not merely a matter of wars and census-taking, but is also concerned with the psychological processes and emotional experiences of men.

The religious history of the Hannibalic invasion shows the predominance of a sense of awe in the presence of the Unknown, a vague sense of terror which impelled the people to have recourse to the supernatural. Many prodigies either occurred or, as happens when the mind is inclined toward superstition, were reported as having taken place and readily given credence. Among the numerous prodigies mentioned by Livy (13) we find: that an infant only six months old had called out "Io triumphe" in the vegetable market; that an ox of its own accord had ascended to the third story of a building and, being frightened by the noise of the people, had flung itself down; that a phantom navy was seen shining in the sky; that the temple of Hope had been struck by lightning; that it had rained stones in Picenum; that in Gaul a wolf had snatched a sentinel's sword from its scabbard and carried it off. The decemvirs were ordered to consult the Sibylline books; a nine-day festival was proclaimed because of the shower of stones at Picenum, and the people were busy for some time expiating the other prodigies. The city was purified; victims were sacrificed to various gods; gifts were given to Juno; a lectisternium and a supplicatio were ordered at Rome and at other places; and the praetor was ordered to make certain vows. Livy concludes: "These ceremonial observances and vows, ordered in obedience to the Sacred Books, did much to allay the religious fears of the people."

(14)

Shortly afterwards there was a new list of prodigies to

terrify the people. In Sicily, several darts belonging to the soldiers had taken fire; in Sardinia, the staff of an equestrian, who was making his rounds upon a wall, took fire as he held it in his hand; the shores had frequently been seen blazing with fire; two shields at Praeneste had sweated blood; red-hot stones had fallen from the heavens at Arpi; shields were seen in the heavens, and the sun fighting with the moon at Capena; two moons were seen in the daytime; the waters of Caere had flowed mixed with blood; at Antium, bloody ears of corn had fallen into the reapers' baskets; the prophetic tablets had spontaneously shrunk, and on one had been inscribed: "Mavors telum suum concutit"; the statue of Mars on the Appian Way had sweated at the sight of images of wolves. After these and other portents, credit was given to prodigies of lesser magnitude. Again the religious authorities had to decree expiatory sacrifices, supplicationes, gifts to the gods, and lectisternia, and proclaimed that the Saturnalia should be kept for a day and a night, besides being observed perpetually as a holiday. (15)

The next occasion for increased religious sacrifices and ceremonies was due, not to repeated prodigies, but to the massacre of the Roman troops at Lake Trasimene and the resulting panic of the people. The Sibylline books ordered great games in honor of Jupiter; temples were to be vowed to Venus Erycina and Mens; a supplicatio and a lectisternium were to be held; a Sacred Spring was to be vowed to Jupiter; and other

offerings were to be made to various gods. (16) Throughout the history of the war we find records of prodigies and the means taken to expiate them. (17) The list is too lengthy to be reproduced, but those already mentioned will serve to give us an idea of the superstitio of the people and the religious ceremonies performed to relieve their agitation. It now remains for us to inquire into the significance of these disturbances and the effect they had upon the minds of the Roman populace.

The numerous prodigies emphasize the character of the State religion upon which the Romans relied for supernatural assistance. To this period we can aptly apply the words of Cicero:

"Nam, ut vere loquamur, superstitio fusa per gentis oppressit omnium fere animos atque hominum imbecillitatem occupavit. ... Instat enim et urget et, quo te cumque verteris, persequitur, sive tu vatem sive tu omen audieris, sive immolaris sive avem aspexeris, si Chaldaeum, si haruspicem videris, si fulserit, si tonuerit, si tactum aliquid erit de caelo, si ostenti simile natum factumve quippiam; quorum necesse est plerumque aliquid eveniat, ut numquam liceat quieta mente consistere." (18)

It was an age of superstition in which every unusual event demanded some form of satisfaction or atonement, not by means of a virtuous life and individual prayer and penance, but by public rites and ceremonies directed by the Sibylline books. The devotional instinct is hardly discernible; it is replaced by a scrupulous exactness in the performance of the prescribed rites.

There was, besides, a tendency towards novelty, both in the ceremonies performed and in the ritual by which they were

governed. This tendency was not entirely new, but the state of excitement during the long period of war offered an occasion for indulging this inclination to such an extent that it proved detrimental to religion. In this period we notice the repeated occurrence of the lectisternia - a purely Greek festival - which had hitherto been rare. Even the ancient cult of Saturn was Graecised by holding a lectisternium at his temple in Rome; while on another occasion a lectisternium on a larger scale than had ever before been witnessed in Rome, was held to honor twelve deities, Roman and Greek together, for a space of three days. (19) Competent authorities interpret this event as marking a turning point in the religious history of Rome.

"The old distinction between di indigetes and di novensiles now vanishes for good; the showy Greek ritual is applied alike to Roman and to Greek deities; the Sibylline books have conquered the jus divinum, and the decemviri in religious matters are more trusted physicians than the pontifices. The old Roman State religion ... may be said henceforward to exist only in the form of dead bones, which even Augustus will hardly be able to make live." (20)

This important change was the direct result of the tragedy at Lake Trasimene and other disasters which came in its wake, for the authorities were forced to make a supreme effort to quiet the panic-stricken populace at Rome, just as they were forced to take the undesirable remedy of appointing a dictator to save the city from destruction.

Other exceptional practices also took place at Rome after the massacre at Cannae. Besides other prodigies, two Vestal Virgins, Opimia and Floronia, were found guilty of adultery.

One was buried alive, the other committed suicide. One of the lesser pontiffs, who had seduced Floronia, was scourged to death. This event being considered a prodigy, the Sibylline books were consulted and Fabius Pictor was sent to the Delphic oracle to inquire what must be done to appease the gods and to terminate the continued distress of the nation. Other extraordinary sacrifices were performed, according to the direction of the books of fate; the most horrible of these was the rite by which a Gallic man and woman and a Greek man and woman were buried alive in the cattle-market in a hole fenced round with stone, which had already, Livy tells us, been polluted with human victims, - a rite by no means Roman. (21)

Other prodigies continued to disturb the populace from time to time during the protracted years of war with Hannibal, until, as Livy states:

"The longer the war continued, and the more men's minds as well as their fortunes were affected by the alternations of success and failure, so much the more did the citizens become the victims of superstitions, and those for the most part foreign ones. It seemed as though either the characters of men or the nature of the gods had undergone a sudden change. The Roman ritual was growing into disuse not only in secret and in private houses; even in public places, in the Forum and the Capitol, crowds of women were to be seen who were offering neither sacrifices nor prayers in accordance with ancient usage. Unauthorised sacrificers and diviners had got possession of men's minds and the numbers of their dupes were swelled by the crowds of country people whom poverty or fear had driven into the City, and whose fields had lain untilled owing to the length of the war or had been desolated by the enemy. These imposters found their profit in trading upon the ignorance of others, and they practiced their calling with as much effrontery as if they had been duly author-

ised by the State." (22)

When the aediles and triumviri attempted to remove from the Forum the crowd of persons thus employed, and to overthrow their preparations for their sacred rites, they narrowly escaped personal injury. As a last resort, the city praetor, at the command of the senate, forbade the use of new and foreign rites in public or consecrated places, and ordered all persons who had any books of divination, forms of prayer, or written system of sacrificing, to bring those books and writings to him before the kalends of April. The public excitement was thus checked for the time, but the mischief was not entirely stopped. Nothing was done to prevent the continuance of foreign rites in private homes - a policy which continued in the future. That the inclination toward foreign cults and more emotional forms of worship was not crushed, will be made clear very shortly.

Besides the introduction of foreign rites and private priests and soothsayers, we notice especially the wave of feminine excitement that now disturbs the city - the crowds of women praying and sacrificing to the gods in unusual rites. This is not surprising when we remember the break-up in family life which was occasioned by the deaths of so many fathers, brothers and sons. Thousands of Romans had fallen at Trasimene and Cannae, not to mention the other battles in Italy, Spain, Gaul and Sicily, and so completely was Rome filled with grief that after Cannae, for instance, the sacred rites of Ceres could not be performed because those in mourning were forbidden

to take part in them, and there was not a single matron who was not in mourning. (23) It was no wonder, then, that the women especially should turn for consolation in their grief to foreign cults and soothsayers, since their own gods seemed to have deserted them. This is the first instance of feminine emotion breaking through the bonds of Roman religion; later we shall see that they went still further along the same direction.

A further step towards the amalgamation of Roman and Greek religion was taken in 212 B.C., through the prophecies of a distinguished soothsayer named Marcius. Certain prophetic verses by this divine had been confiscated by the city praetor when, as we saw before, all writings of such religious nature had to be turned in according to the senate's decree. One of the prophecies referred to the disaster of Cannae which had already occurred, and for this reason credence was given to the second, which promised victory and prosperity if games and sacrifice (the latter Graeco ritu) were instituted in honor of Apollo. The prophecy stated:

"Romans, if you wish to expel the enemy and the ulcer which has come from afar, I advise that games should be vowed, which may be performed in a cheerful manner annually to Apollo. .... That the praetor shall preside in the celebration of these games. ... Let the decemviri perform sacrifice with victims after the Grecian fashion. If you do these things properly you will ever rejoice, and your affairs will be more prosperous, for that deity will destroy your enemies."

(24)

After consulting the Sibylline books for their sanction, the senators ordered that the games be vowed to Apollo and that the



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decemviri should perform sacrifice according to the Greek rite. The entire population took part in the celebration, wearing garlands upon their heads as partakers in a sacred rite; the matrons made supplications; and the people feasted in the courts of their houses, with the doors wide open. These ludi Apollinares were later renewed and made a permanent festival.

In this account we see that the senate and religious authorities employed quite un-Roman means in an attempt to calm the people by new rites in honor of the deity who had already gained their gratitude because of his advice to Fabius Pictor at Delphi. A Greek god was now honored in Rome by Greek rites, and that, too, by the decemviri. Coming, as this did, after the consultation of the Delphic oracle, the repetition of lectisternia (especially the one honoring Greek and Roman gods together), and other religious events of the year 212 B.C., this official approbation of the Graecus ritus completes the amalgamation of Roman and Greek religion. (25)

We have seen how the Romans turned from their own gods to the Greek deities, in the hope of calming the populace in times of panic, and to obtain divine help in repulsing the victorious Hannibal. Now we shall find evidence that they went even further, appealing to the gods of Asia to drive the enemy from their land. In 205 B.C., the appearance of more prodigies, especially an unusual shower of stones from the heavens, furnished a pretext for consulting the Sibylline books; and there the following oracle was found:

"Quandoque hostis alienigena terrae Italiae bellum intulisset, eum pelli Italia vincique posse, si mater Idaea a Pessinunte Romam advecta foret." (26)

Because the religious authorities did not understand the necessity of introducing this new goddess into Rome, since the Delphic oracle had promised victory, an embassy was again sent to Delphi for further advice. The oracle only confirmed the first prophecy and added: "Curarent ut eam, qui vir optimus Romae esset, hospitio exciperet." (27) Accordingly, the great goddess (Magna Mater or Cybele) was brought to Italy in the form of a black stone, and was received by P. Scipio Nasica, while all Rome turned out to greet her. Until she should have her own sanctuary, she was installed in the temple of Victory on the Palatine. The ludi Megalenses were founded to commemorate annually the introduction into Rome of this first Oriental deity and her exotic cult. The goddess continued to abide in Rome in her own temple, though her cult, because of its noisy, orgiastic character and other degrading features, was forbidden to the Roman population. (28)

At the close of the Hannibalic war, we see the religion of Rome already changed and decaying. The failure to trust in the di indigetes, the growing desire to seek aid in new gods and foreign rites, was leading to the spiritual ruin which confronted Augustus before two centuries had passed. It may be well here to take a cursory glance at another tendency which hastened the fall of religion at Rome - a tendency towards individualism and freedom in religion. We mentioned before that

the Roman religion was characterized by a systematic formalisation of religious duties. That certain individuals rebelled against this formalism, this continual hampering and restricting of one's personal actions, was also noted. There are other instances of individuals trying to break through the restrictions imposed upon them (29), but we shall confine our attention to one public religious outbreak which will exemplify this spirit of independence.

During the Hannibalic war, the excited feelings of the people led them to seek more emotionally-appealing cults in which to indulge their religious inclinations, and thereby they planted the seeds of religious ferment which continued to develop even when peace was at last restored. The sudden outbreak of Dionysiac orgies (or Bacchanalia) in Italy, fifteen years after the end of the second Punic war, took the appearance of a revival of those recently-awakened desires,- it was the fruit of the seeds before planted. The severity with which the disturbance was quelled, indicates the seriousness of the matter and the extent to which it had spread.

The most striking characteristics in the genuine Grecian ritual of this cult have been summed up by Dr. Farnell as follows:

"The wild and ecstatic enthusiasm that it inspired, the self-abandonment and communion with the deity achieved through orgiastic rites and a savage sacramental act, and the prominence of women in the ritual, which in accordance with a certain psychic law made a special appeal to their temperament."

Such was the character of the ritual which was introduced into Rome in 186 B.C., from Etruria, whence Greek influence had long before filtered into Italy. A Greek, of a rather low type, came to Etruria and introduced the rites; drunkenness resulted, and with it came crime and immorality. From Etruria the mischief spread to Rome, and the rapidity with which it multiplied its devotees there indicates the inability of the old religious traditions to satisfy the Roman mind once it had experienced the recent changes in religion. Beginning with a small association of women, who met openly in the daytime three times a year, it came under the direction of a priestess from Campania, and under her guidance it became more vicious. Meetings were now held at night, and immoralities grew extensively. A large part of the population was infected, and at last matters reached such a peak that the authorities were compelled to take drastic measures. The devotees were sought out; many were imprisoned or executed; and some, in a panic, killed themselves. The women were handed over to their relations or guardians for private punishment. (31) In spite of the severe punishment of the offenders, the authorities seemed to recognize the general demand for more emotional religious rites, for the Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus provided for the continuance of the cult in private, under certain definite conditions. (32)

In the practice of this new cult, without any approbation from the religious authorities, we see a tendency of the people to shake off the yoke of the old jus divinum and the re-

strictions of its ministers, in a desire for free, individualistic religious practice. Breaking through the rules of conventionality to experience an elevation of spirit and external religious demonstration, the people tried to claim for themselves a freedom for which nothing but a religious impulse would have led many of the more submissive to strive. The way was being prepared for the spread of new philosophies of life and a spirit of religious scepticism which would hasten the decay of the Roman - now Graeco-Roman - religion, and necessitate the religious revival under Augustus.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Conclusion

By bringing Rome into prominence as a world power with whom the other nations of the world would soon have to reckon, and by drawing her into close contact with Oriental, especially Grecian, culture, the Punic wars had a far more extensive and important effect upon her civilization than was immediately evident. Though the numerous changes brought about were far-reaching in their influence even before the destruction of Carthage, they proved to be but the seed which was to germinate for two centuries and bear its ripest fruit in the time of the Empire. No nation which had, like Rome, for the first time in its history awakened to the realization of its hidden potentialities and had caught a glimpse of the treasures which other nations might be forced to lay at its feet, could remain satisfied with returning to its former condition of conservatism and comparative obscurity. The desire for innovation, the stimulus to progress, and the lust for power, urged Rome to make the best of her opportunity. In the flush of victory she was thrilled with the consciousness of her ability to conquer the world and to claim as her own the best that the world could offer. She would not rest until she should reign supreme mistress of the world; until that position should be reached, all her other conquests were to be held as naught.

Keeping pace with her material progress, however, the germ of deterioration, conceived in the throes of the Punic wars, kept gnawing at the vitals of the Roman Republic. The rapid growth of the latifundia system dealt a death-blow to small-scale agriculture, which had hitherto been the principal occupation of the people. The yeoman class, the bulwark of the nation, were being deprived of their only means of livelihood; and there followed a steady stream of farmers to swell the ranks of the ever-growing city rabble. Rome now saw the extremes of poverty and wealth, with all their concomitant evils. Here the masses lived in squalid poverty, crowded together in tenement houses, living on the State doles, and seeking to forget their misery at the circuses and games. There lived the idle rich, with their arrogant manners, their luxurious homes and banquets, their large retinues of slaves and clients; each plutocrat striving only for more wealth and greater political power. The vast throng of slaves and brigands and reckless poor, who cared for nothing but excitement and booty, were always ready to do the bidding of whoever could offer them the greatest gains. It was a perfect stage setting for the civil wars which were to rend the country in twain until the time of Augustus.

Not all the disintegrating processes, however, were immediately confined to the people as a nation; the family and the individual also suffered at the hands of the new destructive forces. The multiplication of foreign slaves and, through their manumission, of freedmen, rapidly brought Rome to that

stage where she could be termed a colluvies nationum, and the pure Roman stock was vitiated by the infusion of this foreign blood into its veins. Among her own people, the steady influence of the conservative middle-class was being lost through the continual wars which robbed her of the flower of her manhood, and by the disruption of family life while the men were away from home on military service. If the poor could not afford to have children in respectably large numbers, the more wealthy were prevented by selfishness from even desiring them, for the growing independence and freedom of women gave them interests other than that of raising a family. As a result of these influences, Rome's family life had become so far removed from the noble ideals of ancient times that in the age of Augustus there was desperate need of a thorough reform, especially in high places.

Poverty and wealth were to develop side by side, each bringing with it its own dire consequences. Idleness, the root of all evils, permeated the upper and lower strata of society. The masses of the poor were content to be fed at State expense and amused at the public spectacles; given the panem et circenses, they appeared content to do nothing, and it was by the tempting promise of these vitae necessaria that ambitious politicians bribed the people and corrupted the elections for their own personal gain. The wealthy, particularly the nouveaux riches, led a life of luxurious ease. Palatial homes and country villas were erected and adorned with the artistic



splendors of the Orient. Expensive banquets, often accompanied by questionable entertainment and followed by comissationes, were featured by rare delicacies from all parts of the world. Garments of fine materials and costly articles of personal adornment brought on a spirit of Eastern effeminacy. In fine, an unbounded craving for wealth and honors and power, a note of sophistication, a coarse gluttony and sensuality, pervaded the lives of the people and weakened the inner fabric of Roman life. With luxurious ease and sensual living came the natural concomitant - a decline in morality. Oriental vice, following in the wake of Eastern conquests, where the soldiers were introduced to new ideals of morality, was encouraged by the foreign element in the population, and took easy root in the minds and hearts prepared for it by wealth and pleasure. The simple home virtues of the old Roman familia were before long neglected, and the poets could yearn in vain for a return of the people to the forgotten ideals of early times.

Not even religion was spared by the turbulent times of the Punic wars and the succeeding years. Faith in the old Roman gods was perceptibly weakened during the Hannibalic struggle, and the people were turning to the gods of Greece and the Orient for succor. The new anthropomorphic conception of the gods, as opposed to the old idea of numenism, rapidly gained favor, only to give rise to the tendency of attributing human faults and immoralities to the deities. Though the more pure anthropomorphic concepts may have prepared the people, in a negative

way, to accept the humanity of Jesus Christ when the Gospel was later preached to them, the imputation of faults and failings to a divinity tended towards what might be termed a somewhat Protestant acceptance of Christ; while the whole idea of anthropomorphism weakened the people's conception of a spirit world, thus militating against the Christian belief in a spirit-God and the hierarchy of angels. To such an extent were these strange ideas of divinity developed that the deification of an emperor later became a not uncommon affair. With such innovations creeping into the religious life of the Romans, it is easy to see why a spirit of scepticism was becoming increasingly manifest, and why the people were turning to foreign philosophies, such as Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Peripateticism, for enlightenment regarding the meaning of life.

In conclusion, while Rome was being enriched with the material and intellectual gifts of the whole world, not all of these were to her advantage; while we are struck with admiration at the sight of her extensive conquests and increasing material splendor (which are only too often taken as synonymous with civilization and culture), we must bear in mind that darker scenes were laid on the stage. Though we must be discreet in accepting the pictures drawn by the Roman satirists (for satire has license to exaggerate), we can see that even the poets and historians of classical times realized the presence of an under-current of corruption which was threatening the power and glory of Rome. Call them laudatores temporis acti

or foolish dreamers of an impossible Utopia, but such facts as we have pointed out in our discussion will prove that material prosperity brought to Rome many undesirable elements which gave these writers just cause for complaint and even regret.

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28. The legal term stated that the slave was in dominica potestate.
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30. For example, Cato, who always had a strict eye to profit in his dealings with his slaves, allowed the contubernium of male and female slaves at the price of a money payment out of their peculium. Cf. Plutarch, Lives of Illustrious Men, trans. by Dryden, Vol.II, p. 378  
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