

CHAPTER 3 THE LAW OF HUMAN PROGRESS

What, then, is the law of human progress—the law under which civilization advances?

The law of human progress must explain why, though mankind started presumably with the same capacities and at the same time, there now exist such wide differences in social development. It must account for retrogression as well as for progression, and must show what are the essential conditions of progress.

It must explain clearly and definitely, and not by vague generalities or superficial analogies, why, though mankind started presumably with the same capacities and at the same time, there now exist such wide differences in social development. It must account for the arrested civilizations and for the decayed and destroyed civilizations; for the general facts as to the rise of civilization, and for the petrifying or enervating force which the progress of civilization has heretofore always evolved. It must account for retrogression as well as for progression; for the differences in general character between Asiatic and European civilizations; for the difference between classical and modern civilizations; for the different rates at which progress goes on; and for those bursts, and starts, and halts of progress which are so marked as minor phenomena. And, thus, it must show us what are the essential conditions of progress, and what social adjustments advance and what retard it.

It is not difficult to discover such a law. We have but to look and we may see it. I do not pretend to give it scientific precision, but merely to point it out.

The incentives to progress are the desire to be, to know, and to do,

The incentives to progress are the desires inherent in human nature—the desire to gratify the wants of the animal nature, the wants of the intellectual nature, and the wants of the sympathetic nature; the desire to be, to know, and to do

—desires that short of infinity can never be satisfied, as they grow by what they feed on.

desires that can never be satisfied.

Mind is the instrument by which man advances, and by which each advance is secured and made the vantage ground for new advances. Though he may not by taking thought add a cubit to his stature, man may by taking thought extend his knowledge of the universe and his power over it, in what, so far as we can see, is an infinite degree. The narrow span of human life allows the individual to go but a short distance, but though each generation may do but little, yet generations, succeeding to the gain of their predecessors, may gradually elevate the status of mankind, as coral polyps, building one generation upon the work of the other, gradually elevate themselves from the bottom of the sea.

Mind is the instrument by which man advances. Little can be accomplished in one generation, but each generation can build on the knowledge obtained by the previous ones.

Mental power is, therefore, the motor of progress, and men tend to advance in proportion to the mental power expended in progression—the mental power which is devoted to the extension of knowledge, the improvement of methods, and the betterment of social conditions.

Therefore, men tend to advance in proportion to the mental power expended in progression: extension of knowledge, improvement of methods, betterment of social conditions. But mental power is a fixed quantity, and what is needed for nonprogressive purposes cannot be available for progress.

Now mental power is a fixed quantity—that is to say, there is a limit to the work a man can do with his mind, as there is to the work he can do with his body; therefore, the mental power which can be devoted to progress is only what is left after what is required for nonprogressive purposes.

These nonprogressive purposes in which mental power is consumed may be classified as maintenance and conflict. By maintenance I mean, not only the support of existence, but the keeping up of the social condition and the holding of advances already gained. By conflict I mean not merely warfare and preparation for warfare, but all expenditure of mental power in seeking the gratification of desire at the expense of others, and in resistance to such aggression.

These nonprogressive purposes are maintenance (subsistence and holding of previous advances) and conflict (gratification of desire at the expense of others, and resistance thereto).

In a separated state, all of man's powers are needed to maintain existence, so mental power is set free for higher uses only by association of men in communities. Thus association is the first essential of progress.

And waste of mental power in conflict is less when equality of rights is maintained, so equality (or justice) is the second essential of progress.

Thus association in equality is the law of progress.

This law explains all diversities, advances, halts, and retrogressions.

To compare society to a boat. Her progress through the water will not depend upon the exertion of her crew, but upon the exertion devoted to propelling her. This will be lessened by any expenditure of force required for bailing, or any expenditure of force in fighting among themselves, or in pulling in different directions.

Now, as in a separated state the whole powers of man are required to maintain existence, and mental power is set free for higher uses only by the association of men in communities, which permits the division of labor and all the economies which come with the co-operation of increased numbers, association is the first essential of progress. Improvement becomes possible as men come together in peaceful association, and the wider and closer the association, the greater the possibilities of improvement. And as the wasteful expenditure of mental power in conflict becomes greater or less as the moral law which accords to each an equality of rights is ignored or is recognized, equality (or justice) is the second essential of progress.

Thus association in equality is the law of progress. Association frees mental power for expenditure in improvement, and equality, or justice, or freedom—for the terms here signify the same thing, the recognition of the moral law—prevents the dissipation of this power in fruitless struggles.

Here is the law of progress, which will explain all diversities, all advances, all halts, and retrogressions. Men tend to progress just as they come closer together, and by co-operation with each other increase the mental power that may be devoted to improvement, but just as conflict is provoked, or association develops inequality of condition and power, this tendency to progression is lessened, checked, and finally reversed.

Given the same innate capacity, and it is evident that social development will go on faster or slower, will stop or

turn back, according to the resistances it meets. In a general way these obstacles to improvement may, in relation to the society itself, be classed as external and internal—the first operating with greater force in the earlier stages of civilization, the latter becoming more important in the later stages.

Man is social in his nature. He does not require to be caught and tamed in order to induce him to live with his fellows. The utter helplessness with which he enters the world, and the long period required for the maturity of his powers, necessitate the family relation; which, as we may observe, is wider, and in its extensions stronger, among the ruder than among the more cultivated peoples. The first societies are families, expanding into tribes, still holding a mutual blood relationship, and even when they have become great nations claiming a common descent.

Given beings of this kind, placed on a globe of such diversified surface and climate as this, and it is evident that, even with equal capacity, and an equal start, social development must be very different. The first limit or resistance to association will come from the conditions of physical nature, and as these greatly vary with locality, corresponding differences in social progress must show themselves. The net rapidity of increase, and the closeness with which men, as they increase, can keep together, will, in the rude state of knowledge in which reliance for subsistence must be principally upon the spontaneous offerings of nature, very largely depend upon climate, soil, and physical conformation. Where much animal food and warm clothing are required; where the earth seems poor and niggard; where the exuberant life of tropical forests mocks barbarous man's puny efforts to control; where mountains, deserts, or arms of the sea separate and isolate men; association, and the power of improvement which it evolves,

Man is social in his nature.

Because the earth's surface is diverse, social development varies considerably from place to place, community to community.

Naturally, civilization first arises in the rich plains of warm climates, where human existence can be maintained with less effort and denser populations can be supported.

But, as families and tribes are separated from each other, differences arise, prejudices grow, and animosities spring up.

can at first go but a little way. But on the rich plains of warm climates, where human existence can be maintained with a smaller expenditure of force, and from a much smaller area, men can keep closer together, and the mental power which can at first be devoted to improvement is much greater. Hence civilization naturally first arises in the great valleys and table lands where we find its earliest monuments.

But these diversities in natural conditions, not merely thus directly produce diversities in social development but, by producing diversities in social development, bring out in man himself an obstacle, or rather an active counterforce, to improvement. As families and tribes are separated from each other, the social feeling ceases to operate between them, and differences arise in language, custom, tradition, religion—in short, in the whole social web which each community, however small or large, constantly spins. With these differences, prejudices grow, animosities spring up, contact easily produces quarrels, aggression begets aggression, and wrong kindles revenge.¹ And so between these separate social aggregates arises the feeling of Ishmael and the spirit of Cain, warfare becomes the chronic and seem

How easy it is for ignorance to pass into contempt and dislike; how natural it is for us to consider any difference in manners, customs, religion, etc., as proof of the inferiority of those who differ from us, any one who has emancipated himself in any degree from prejudice, and who mixes with different classes, may see in civilized society. In religion, for instance, the spirit of the hymn
 “I’d rather be a Baptist, and wear a shining face,
 Than for to be a Methodist and always fall from grace,”

is observable in all denominations. As the English Bishop said, “Orthodoxy is my doxy, and heterodoxy is any other doxy,” while the universal tendency is to classify all outside of the orthodoxies and heterodoxies of the prevailing religion as heathens or atheists. And the like tendency is observable as to all other differences.

ingly natural relation of societies to each other, and the powers of men are expended in attack or defense, in mutual slaughter and mutual destruction of wealth, or in warlike preparations. How long this hostility persists, the protective tariffs and the standing armies of the civilized world today bear witness; how difficult it is to get over the idea that it is not theft to steal from a foreigner, the difficulty in procuring an international copyright act will show. Can we wonder at the perpetual hostilities of tribes and clans? Can we wonder that when each community was isolated from the others— when each, uninfluenced by the others, was spinning its separate web of social environment, which no individual can escape, that war should have been the rule and peace the exception? “They were even as we are.”

Now, warfare is the negation of association. The separation of men into diverse tribes, by increasing warfare, thus checks improvement; while in the localities where a large increase in numbers is possible without much separation, civilization gains the advantage of exemption from tribal war, even when the community as a whole is carrying on warfare beyond its borders. Thus, where the resistance of nature to the close association of men is slightest, the counterforce of warfare is likely at first to be least felt; and in the rich plains where civilization first begins, it may rise to a great height while scattered tribes are yet barbarous. And thus, when small, separated communities exist in a state of chronic warfare which forbids advance, the first step to their civilization is the advent of some conquering tribe or nation that unites these smaller communities into a larger one, in which internal peace is preserved. Where this power of peaceable association is broken up, either by external assaults or internal dissensions, the advance ceases and retrogression begins.

Powers of men are expended in attack and defense, or warlike preparations.

Warfare is the negation of association. Separation of men into diverse tribes, by increasing warfare, thus checks improvement. So in areas where a large number of people can be supported without much separation, civilization gains the advantage of exemption from tribal war.

But if the diversities of the earth operate at first to separate mankind, they also encourage trade. And trade promotes civilization, building interests opposed to warfare, and dispelling ignorance.

Common religion, too, can mitigate war and furnish the basis of union.

Throughout history, we thus see civilization springing up where men are brought into association, and disappearing as this association is broken up.

But it is not conquest alone that has operated to promote association, and, by liberating mental power from the necessities of warfare, to promote civilization. If the diversities of climate, soil, and configuration of the earth's surface operate at first to separate mankind, they also operate to encourage exchange. And commerce, which is in itself a form of association or co-operation, operates to promote civilization, not only directly, but by building up interests which are opposed to warfare, and dispelling the ignorance which is the fertile mother of prejudices and animosities.

And so of religion. Though the forms it has assumed—and the animosities it has aroused have often sundered men and produced warfare, yet it has at other times been the means of promoting association. A common worship has often, as among the Greeks, mitigated war and furnished the basis of union, while it is from the triumph of Christianity over the barbarians of Europe that modern civilization springs. Had not the Christian Church existed when the Roman Empire went to pieces, Europe, destitute of any bond of association, might have fallen to a condition not much above that of the North American Indians or only received civilization with an Asiatic impress from the conquering scimiters of the invading hordes which had been welded into a mighty power by a religion which, springing up in the deserts of Arabia, had united tribes separated from time immemorial, and, thence issuing, brought into the association of a common faith a great part of the human race.

Looking over what we know of the history of the world, we thus see civilization everywhere springing up where men are brought into association, and everywhere disappearing as this association is broken up. Thus the Roman civilization, spread over Europe by the conquests which insured internal peace, was overwhelmed by the incursions of the northern

nations that broke society again into disconnected fragments; and the progress that now goes on in our modern civilization began as the feudal system again began to associate men in larger communities, and the spiritual supremacy of Rome to bring these communities into a common relation, as her legions had done before. As the feudal bonds grew into national autonomies, and Christianity worked the amelioration of manners, brought forth the knowledge that during the dark days she had hidden, bound the threads of peaceful union in her all-pervading organization, and taught association in her religious orders, a greater progress became possible, which, as men have been brought into closer and closer association and co-operation, has gone on with greater and greater force.

But we shall never understand the course of civilization, and the varied phenomena which its history presents, without a consideration of what I may term the internal resistances, or counter forces, which arise in the heart of advancing society, and which can alone explain how a civilization once fairly started should either come of itself to a halt or be destroyed by barbarians.

The mental power, which is the motor of social progress, is set free by association, which is, what, perhaps, it may be more properly called, an integration. Society in this process becomes more complex; its individuals more dependent upon each other. Occupations and functions are specialized. Instead of wandering, population becomes fixed. Instead of each man attempting to supply all of his wants, the various trades and industries are separated—one man acquires skill in one thing, and another in another thing. So, too, of knowledge, the body of which constantly tends to become vaster than one man can grasp, and is separated into different parts, which different individuals acquire and pursue. So, too, the performance of religious ceremonies tends to pass into the hands of a body of

As association develops, society becomes more complex, its individuals more dependent upon each other. Individuals specialize, including some in the performance of religious ceremonies.

and some in the administration of government.

men specially devoted to that purpose, and the preservation of order, the administration of justice, the assignment of public duties and the distribution of awards, the conduct of war, etc., to be made the special functions of an organized government. In short, to use the language in which Herbert Spencer has defined evolution, the development of society is, in relation to its component individuals, the passing from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity. The lower the stage of social development, the more society resembles one of those lowest of animal organisms which are without organs or limbs, and from which a part may be cut and yet live. The higher the stage of social development, the more society resembles those higher organisms in which functions and powers are specialized, and each member is vitally dependent on the others.

This process of integration and specialization is accompanied by a constant liability to inequality. Inequality is not the necessary result of social growth, but it is the constant tendency of social growth if not accompanied by proper social adjustments.

Now, this process of integration, of the specialization of functions and powers, as it goes on in society, is, by virtue of what is probably one of the deepest laws of human nature, accompanied by a constant liability to inequality. I do not mean that inequality is the necessary result of social growth, but that it is the constant tendency of social growth if unaccompanied by changes in social adjustments which, in the new conditions that growth produces, will secure equality. I mean, so to speak, that the garment of laws, customs, and political institutions, which each society weaves for itself, is constantly tending to become too tight as the society develops. I mean, so to speak, that man, as he advances, threads a labyrinth, in which, if he keeps straight ahead, he will infallibly lose his way, and through which reason and justice can alone keep him continuously in an ascending path.

For, while the integration which accompanies growth tends in itself to set free mental power to work improvement, there is, both with increase of numbers and with

increase in complexity of the social organization, a counter tendency set up to the production of a state of inequality, which wastes mental power, and, as it increases, brings improvement to a halt.

To trace to its highest expression the law which thus operates to evolve with progress the force which stops progress, would be, it seems to me, to go far to the solution of a problem deeper than that of the genesis of the material universe—the problem of the genesis of evil. Let me content myself with pointing out the manner in which, as society develops, there arise tendencies which check development.

There are two qualities of human nature which it will be well, however, first to call to mind. The one is the power of habit—the tendency to continue to do things in the same way; the other is the possibility of mental and moral deterioration. The effect of the first in social development is to continue habits, customs, laws, and methods, long after they have lost their original usefulness, and the effect of the other is to permit the growth of institutions and modes of thought from which the normal perceptions of men instinctively revolt.

Now the growth and development of society not merely tend to make each more and more dependent upon all, and to lessen the influence of individuals, even over their own conditions, as compared with the influence of society; but the effect of association or integration is to give rise to a collective power which is distinguishable from the sum of individual powers. Analogies, or, perhaps, rather illustrations of the same law, may be found in all directions. As animal organisms increase in complexity, there arise, above the life and power of the parts, a life and power of the integrated whole; above the capability of involuntary movements, the capability of voluntary movements. The actions and impulses of bodies

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Mental and moral deterioration permit the growth of institutions and modes of thought which men would normally find revolting.

As the community grows, land value arises and increases, as does power in various other forms. This power is produced not by individual effort but by association.

Social adjustments appropriate for primitive communities tend to remain, and tend to lodge this collective power in the hands of a portion of the community. The idea of justice is blurred by the habitual toleration of injustice.

This explains the growth of monarchy, the inappropriate extension of a system which could make sense in a family.

of men are, as has often been observed, different from those which, under the same circumstances, would be called forth in individuals. The fighting qualities of a regiment may be very different from those of the individual soldiers. But there is no need of illustrations. In our inquiries into the nature and rise of rent, we traced the very thing to which I allude. Where population is sparse, land has no value; just as men congregate together, the value of land appears and rises—a clearly distinguishable thing from the values produced by individual effort; a value which springs from association, which increases as association grows greater, and disappears as association is broken up. And the same thing is true of power in other forms than those generally expressed in terms of wealth.

Now, as society grows, the disposition to continue previous social adjustments tends to lodge this collective power, as it arises, in the hands of a portion of the community; and this unequal distribution of the wealth and power gained as society advances tends to produce greater inequality, since aggression grows by what it feeds on, and the idea of justice is blurred by the habitual toleration of injustice.

In this way the patriarchal organization of society can easily grow into hereditary monarchy, in which the king is as a god on earth, and the masses of the people mere slaves of his caprice. It is natural that the father should be the directing head of the family, and that at his death the eldest son, as the oldest and most experienced member of the little community, should succeed to the headship. But to continue this arrangement as the family expands, is to lodge power in a particular line, and the power thus lodged necessarily continues to increase, as the common stock becomes larger and larger, and the power of the community grows. The head of the family passes into the hereditary king, who comes to

look upon himself and to be looked upon by others as a being of superior rights. With the growth of the collective power as compared with the power of the individual, his power to reward and to punish increases, and so increase the inducements to flatter and to fear him; until finally, if the process be not disturbed, a nation grovels at the foot of a throne, and a hundred thousand men toil for fifty years to prepare a tomb for one of their own mortal kind.

So the war chief of a little band of savages is but one of their number, whom they follow as their bravest and most wary. But when large bodies come to act together, personal selection becomes more difficult, a blinder obedience becomes necessary and can be enforced, and from the very necessities of warfare when conducted on a large scale absolute power arises.

And so of the specialization of function. There is a manifest gain in productive power when social growth has gone so far that instead of every producer being summoned from his work for fighting purposes, a regular military force can be specialized; but this inevitably tends to the concentration of power in the hands of the military class or their chiefs. The preservation of internal order, the administration of justice, the construction and care of public works, and, notably, the observances of religion, all tend in similar manner to pass into the hands of special classes, whose disposition it is to magnify their function and extend their power.

But the great cause of inequality is in the natural monopoly which is given by the possession of land. The first perceptions of men seem always to be that land is common property; but the rude devices by which this is at first recognized—such as annual partitions or cultivation in common—are consistent with only a low stage of development. The idea of property, which naturally arises with reference to things of human pro-

A little band of savages will naturally follow a leader who is but the bravest and most wary of their number, but when warfare is conducted on a large scale absolute power arises.

The preservation of internal order, administration of justice, public works, and observances of religion, all tend to pass into the hands of special classes, whose disposition it is to magnify their function and extend their power. But the great cause of inequality is in the natural monopoly given by possession of land. Initially perceived as common property, land becomes confounded

with products of labor, which, when population is sparse, merely secures to the improver and user the due reward of his labor. But as population becomes denser and rent arises, this practice strips the producer of his wages. The powerful class comes to own the land, the rest of the community being merely tenants. Wars and conquests exacerbate the concentration of power in a class which obtains much of the conquered land, and we see by modern instances that the remaining common lands or public domain are readily acquired.

As social development goes on, inequality tends to establish itself, though the particular sequence of events varies.

The masses of the community are compelled to expend their

duction, is easily transferred to land, and an institution which when population is sparse merely secures to the improver and user the due reward of his labor, finally, as population becomes dense and rent arises, operates to strip the producer of his wages. Not merely this, but the appropriation of rent for public purposes, which is the only way in which, with anything like a high development, land can be readily retained as common property, becomes, when political and religious power passes into the hands of a class, the ownership of the land by that class, and the rest of the community become merely tenants. And wars and conquests, which tend to the concentration of political power and to the institution of slavery, naturally result, where social growth has given land a value, in the appropriation of the soil. A dominant class, who concentrate power in their hands, will likewise soon concentrate ownership of the land. To them will fall large partitions of conquered land, which the former inhabitants will till as tenants or serfs, and the public domain, or common lands, which in the natural course of social growth are left for awhile in every country, and in which state the primitive system of village culture leaves pasture and woodland, are readily acquired, as we see by modern instances. And inequality once established, the ownership of land tends to concentrate as development goes on.

I am merely attempting to set forth the general fact that as a social development goes on, inequality tends to establish itself, and not to point out the particular sequence, which must necessarily vary with different conditions. But this main fact makes intelligible all the phenomena of petrification and retrogression. The unequal distribution of the power and wealth gained by the integration of men in society tends to check, and finally to counterbalance, the force by which improvements are made and society advances. On the one side, the masses of the community are compelled to expend

their mental powers in merely maintaining existence. On the other side, mental power is expended in keeping up and intensifying the system of inequality, in ostentation, luxury, and warfare. A community divided into a class that rules and a class that is ruled—into the very rich and the very poor, may “build like giants and finish like jewelers”; but it will be monuments of ruthless pride and barren vanity, or of a religion turned from its office of elevating man into an instrument for keeping him down. Invention may for awhile to some degree go on; but it will be the invention of refinements in luxury, not the inventions that relieve toil and increase power. In the arcana of temples or in the chambers of court physicians knowledge may still be sought; but it will be hidden as a secret thing, or if it dares come out to elevate common thought or brighten common life, it will be trodden down as a dangerous innovator. For as it tends to lessen the mental power devoted to improvement, so does inequality tend to render men adverse to improvement. How strong is the disposition to adhere to old methods among the classes who are kept in ignorance by being compelled to toil for a mere existence, is too well known to require illustration; and on the other hand the conservatism of the classes to whom the existing social adjustment gives special advantages is equally apparent. This tendency to resist innovation, even though it be improvement, is observable in every special organization—in religion, in law, in medicine, in science, in trade guilds; and it becomes intense just as the organization is close. A close corporation has always an instinctive dislike of innovation and innovators, which is but the expression of an instinctive fear that change may tend to throw down the barriers which hedge it in from the common herd, and so rob it of importance and power; and it is always disposed to guard carefully its special knowledge or skill.

It is in this way that petrification succeeds progress. The

mental powers merely maintaining existence. The powerful class expends mental power in keeping up and intensifying the system of inequality. Little, and eventually, no mental power remains for progress, and petrification sets in.

Under inequality, both the lower and upper classes tend to oppose improvement; the former because they are kept in ignorance, compelled to toil for mere existence, and the latter because of their existing special advantages.

advance of inequality necessarily brings improvement to a halt, and as it still persists or provokes unavailing reactions, draws even upon the mental power necessary for maintenance, and retrogression begins.

These principles make intelligible the history of civilization.

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The first civilizations grew up where geographic barriers were few. Power, wealth, and knowledge would tend to concentrate. The power which association sets free for progress would be wasted on temples, palaces, and pyramids, and innovation would be discouraged.

In the localities where climate, soil, and physical conformation tended least to separate men as they increased, and where, accordingly, the first civilizations grew up, the internal resistances to progress would naturally develop in a more regular and thorough manner than where smaller communities, which in their separation had developed diversities, were afterward brought together into a closer association. It is this, it seems to me, which accounts for the general characteristics of the earlier civilizations as compared with the later civilizations of Europe. Such homogeneous communities, developing from the first without the jar of conflict between different customs, laws, religions, etc., would show a much greater uniformity. The concentrating and conservative forces would all, so to speak, pull together. Rival chieftains would not counterbalance each other, nor diversities of belief hold the growth of priestly influence in check. Political and religious power, wealth and knowledge, would thus tend to concentrate in the same centers. The same causes which tended to produce the hereditary king and hereditary priest would tend to produce the hereditary artisan and laborer, and to separate society into castes. The power which association sets free for progress would thus be wasted, and barriers to further progress be gradually raised. The surplus energies of the masses would be devoted to the construction of temples, palaces, and pyramids; to ministering to the pride and pampering the luxury of their rulers; and should any disposition to improvement arise among the classes

of leisure it would at once be checked by the dread of innovation. Society developing in this way must at length stop in a conservatism which permits no further progress.

How long such a state of complete petrification, when once reached, will continue, seems to depend upon external causes, for the iron bonds of the social environment which grows up repress disintegrating forces as well as improvement. Such a community can be most easily conquered, for the masses of the people are trained to a passive acquiescence in a life of hopeless labor. If the conquerors merely take the place of the ruling class, as the Hyksos did in Egypt and the Tartars in China, everything will go on as before. If they ravage and destroy, the glory of palace and temple remains but in ruins, population becomes sparse, and knowledge and art are lost.

European civilization differs in character from civilizations of the Egyptian type because it springs not from the association of a homogeneous people developing from the beginning, or at least for a long time, under the same conditions, but from the association of peoples who in separation had acquired distinctive social characteristics, and whose smaller organizations longer prevented the concentration of power and wealth in one center. The physical conformation of the Grecian peninsula is such as to separate the people at first into a number of small communities. As those petty republics and nominal kingdoms ceased to waste their energies in warfare, and the peaceable co-operation of commerce extended, the light of civilization blazed up. But the principle of association was never strong enough to save Greece from intertribal war, and when this was put an end to by conquest, the tendency to inequality, which had been combated with various devices by Grecian sages and statesmen, worked its result, and Grecian valor, art, and literature became things of the past. And so in the

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European civilization differs from this, because it springs not from the association of a homogenous people developing for a long time, but from the association of peoples who in separation had acquired distinctive social characteristics, and whose smaller organizations longer prevented the concentration of power and wealth in one center.

rise and extension, the decline and fall, of Roman civilization, may be seen the working of these two principles of association and equality, from the combination of which springs progress.

Springing from the association of the independent husbandmen and free citizens of Italy, and gaining fresh strength from conquests which brought hostile nations into common relations, the Roman power hushed the world in peace. But the tendency to inequality, checking real progress from the first, increased as the Roman civilization extended. The Roman civilization did not petrify as did the homogeneous civilizations where the strong bonds of custom and superstition that held the people in subjection probably also protected them, or at any rate kept the peace between rulers and ruled; it rotted, declined and fell. Long before Goth or Vandal had broken through the cordon of the legions, even while her frontiers were advancing, Rome was dead at the heart. Great estates had ruined Italy. Inequality had dried up the strength and destroyed the vigor of the Roman world. Government became despotism, which even assassination could not temper; patriotism became servility; vices the most foul flouted themselves in public; literature sank to puerilities; learning was forgotten; fertile districts became waste without the ravages of war—everywhere inequality produced decay, political, mental, moral, and material. The barbarism which overwhelmed Rome came not from without, but from within. It was the necessary product of the system which had substituted slaves and coloni for the independent husbandmen of Italy, and carved the provinces into estates of senatorial families.

Modern civilization owes its superiority to the growth of equality with the growth of association. Two great causes contributed to this—the splitting up of concentrated power into innumerable little centers by the influx of the Northern

Roman civilization started as the association of independent farmers and free citizens, gaining fresh strength from conquest. But the tendency to inequality increased as Roman civilization extended, and finally government became despotism.

Modern civilization owes its superiority to the growth of equality with the growth of association.

nations, and the influence of Christianity. Without the first there would have been the petrification and slow decay of the Eastern Empire, where church and state were closely married and loss of external power brought no relief of internal tyranny. And but for the other there would have been barbarism, without principle of association or amelioration. The petty chiefs and allodial lords who everywhere grasped local sovereignty held each other in check. Italian cities recovered their ancient liberty, free towns were founded, village communities took root, and serfs acquired rights in the soil they tilled. The leaven of Teutonic ideas of equality worked through the disorganized and disjointed fabric of society. And although society was split up into an innumerable number of separated fragments, yet the idea of closer association was always present—it existed in the recollections of a universal empire; it existed in the claims of a universal church.

Though Christianity became distorted and alloyed in percolating through a rotting civilization; though pagan gods were taken into her pantheon, and pagan forms into her ritual, and pagan ideas into her creed; yet her essential idea of the equality of men was never wholly destroyed. And two things happened of the utmost moment to incipient civilization—the establishment of the papacy and the celibacy of the clergy. The first prevented the spiritual power from concentrating in the same lines as the temporal power; and the latter prevented the establishment of a priestly caste, during a time when all power tended to hereditary form.

In her efforts for the abolition of slavery; in her Truce of God; in her monastic orders; in her councils which united nations, and her edicts which ran without regard to political boundaries; in the lowborn hands in which she placed a sign before which the proudest knelt; in her bishops who by con-

This was due to the splitting up of concentrated power into innumerable little centers, and the influence of Christianity.

Christianity's essential idea of the equality of men was never wholly destroyed. Establishment of the papacy prevented the spiritual power from concentrating with the temporal power, and celibacy of the clergy prevented the establishment of a priestly caste.

The Church, in spite of everything, was a promoter of association and a witness for the natural equality of men.

secration became the peers of the greatest nobles; in her "Servant of Servants," for so his official title ran, who, by virtue of the ring of a simple fisherman, claimed the right to arbitrate between nations, and whose stirrup was held by kings; the Church, in spite of everything, was yet a promoter of association, a witness for the natural equality of men; and by the Church herself was nurtured a spirit that, when her early work of association and emancipation was well-nigh done— when the ties she had knit had become strong, and the learning she had preserved had been given to the world— broke the chains with which she would have fettered the human mind, and in a great part of Europe rent her organization.

The rise and growth of European civilization illustrates the truth that progress goes on just as society tends toward closer association and greater equality.

The rise and growth of European civilization is too vast and complex a subject to be thrown into proper perspective and relation in a few paragraphs; but in all its details, as in its main features, it illustrates the truth that progress goes on just as society tends toward closer association and greater equality. Civilization is co-operation. Union and liberty are its factors. The great extension of association— not alone in the growth of larger and denser communities, but in the increase of commerce and the manifold exchanges which knit each community together and link them with other though widely separated communities; the growth of international and municipal law; the advances in security of property and of person, in individual liberty, and towards democratic government— advances, in short, towards the recognition of the equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—it is these that make our modern civilization so much greater, so much higher, than any that has gone before. It is these that have set free the mental power which has rolled back the veil of ignorance which hid all but a small portion of the globe from men's knowledge; which has measured the orbits of the circling spheres and bids us see moving, pulsing

life in a drop of water; which has opened to us the ante-chamber of nature's mysteries and read the secrets of a long-buried past; which has harnessed in our service physical forces beside which man's efforts are puny; and increased productive power by a thousand great inventions.

In that spirit of fatalism to which I have alluded as pervading current literature, it is the fashion to speak even of war and slavery as means of human progress. But war, which is the opposite of association, can aid progress only when it prevents further war or breaks down antisocial barriers which are themselves passive war.

War cannot aid progress except when it prevents further war or breaks down antisocial barriers which are themselves passive war.

As for slavery, I cannot see how it could ever have aided in establishing freedom, and freedom, the synonym of equality, is, from the very rudest state in which man can be imagined, the stimulus and condition of progress. Auguste Comte's idea that the institution of slavery destroyed cannibalism is as fanciful as Elia's humorous notion of the way mankind acquired a taste for roast pig. It assumes that a propensity that has never been found developed in man save as the result of the most unnatural conditions—the direst want or the most brutalizing superstitions²—is an original impulse, and that he, even in his lowest state the highest of all animals, has natural appetites which the nobler brutes do not show. And so of the idea that slavery began civilization by giving slaveowners leisure for improvement.

Slavery could not have aided in establishing freedom (equality), nor could it ever aid in improvement.

Slavery never did and never could aid improvement. Whether the community consist of a single master and a single slave, or of thousands of masters and millions of slaves, slavery necessarily involves a waste of human power; for not

² The Sandwich Islanders did honor to their good chiefs by eating their bodies. Their bad and tyrannical chiefs they would not touch. The New Zealanders had a notion that by eating their enemies they acquired their strength and valor. And this seems to be the general origin of eating prisoners of war.

Not only is slave labor less productive than free labor, but the power of the masters is wasted in holding and watching the slaves.

No slaveholding people ever were an inventive people. Whatever degrades the laborer and robs him of the fruits of his toil stifles the spirit of invention and forbids the use of inventions and discoveries even when made.

The law of human progress, what is it but the moral law? Just as social adjustments promote justice, must civilization advance. Just as they fail in this, must civilization stop advancing and recede. These simple truths seem to underlie every religion.

only is slave labor less productive than free labor, but the power of masters is likewise wasted in holding and watching their slaves, and is called away from directions in which real improvement lies. From first to last, slavery, like every other denial of the natural equality of men, has hampered and prevented progress. Just in proportion as slavery plays an important part in the social organization does improvement cease. That in the classical world slavery was so universal, is undoubtedly the reason why the mental activity which so polished literature and refined art never hit on any of the great discoveries and inventions which distinguish modern civilization. No slaveholding people ever were an inventive people. In a slaveholding community the upper classes may become luxurious and polished; but never inventive. Whatever degrades the laborer and robs him of the fruits of his toil stifles the spirit of invention and forbids the utilization of inventions and discoveries even when made. To freedom alone is given the spell of power which summons the genii in whose keeping are the treasures of earth and the viewless forces of the air.

The law of human progress, what is it but the moral law? Just as social adjustments promote justice, just as they acknowledge the equality of right between man and man, just as they insure to each the perfect liberty which is bounded only by the equal liberty of every other, must civilization advance. Just as they fail in this, must advancing civilization come to a halt and recede. Political economy and social science cannot teach any lessons that are not embraced in the simple truths that were taught to poor fishermen and Jewish peasants by One who eighteen hundred years ago was crucified—the simple truths which, beneath the warpings of selfishness and the distortions of superstition, seem to underlie every religion that has ever striven to formulate the spiritual yearnings of man.