

THE LAW OF CIVILIZATION AND DECAY.

FEW more powerful and more melancholy books have been written than Mr. Brooks Adams's "Law of Civilization and Decay."¹ For one thing, it is a marvel of compressed statement. In a volume of less than four hundred pages he singles out some of the vital factors in the growth and evolution of civilized life during the last two thousand years; and so brilliant is his discussion of these factors as to give, though but a glimpse, yet the most vivid glimpse ever given, of some of the most important features in the world-life of Christendom. Of some of the features only; for the defective point in Mr. Adams's brilliant book is his failure to present certain phases of the life of the nations,—phases which are just as important as those which he discusses with such vigorous ability. Furthermore, he disregards not a few facts which would throw light on others, the weight of which he fully recognizes. Both these shortcomings are very natural in a writer who possesses an entirely original point of view, who is the first man to see clearly things that to his predecessors have been nebulous, and who writes with a fervent intensity of conviction, even in his bitterest cynicism, such as we are apt to associate rather with the prophet and reformer than with a historian to whom prophet and reformer alike appeal no more than do their antitypes. It is a rare thing for a historian to make a distinct contribution to the philosophy of history; and this, Mr. Adams has done. Naturally enough, he, like other men who break new ground, tends here and there to draw a devious furrow.

The book is replete with vivid writing, and with sentences and paragraphs which stand out in the memory as marvels in the art of presenting the vital features of a subject with a few master-strokes. The story of the crusades, the outline of the English conquest of India, and the short tale of the rise of the house of Rothschild, are masterpieces. Nowhere else is it possible to find in the same compass any description of the crusades so profound in its appreciation of the motives behind them, so startling in the vigor with which the chief

¹"The Law of Civilization and Decay." By BROOKS ADAMS. New York: The Macmillan Company.

actors, and the chief events, are portrayed. Indeed, one is almost tempted to say that it is in the description of the crusades that Mr. Adams is at his best. He is dealing with a giant movement of humanity; and he grasps not only the colossal outward manifestations, but also the spirit itself, and above all the strange and sinister changes which that spirit underwent. His mere description of the baronies set up by the crusaders in the conquered Holy Land, with their loose feudal government, brings them before the reader's eyes as few volumes specially devoted to the subject could. It is difficult to write of a fortress and make a pen picture which will always stay in the mind; yet this is what Mr. Adams has done in dealing with the grim religious castles, terrible in size and power, which were built by the Knights of the Temple and the Hospital as bulwarks against Saracen might. He is not only a scholar of profound research, but a student of art, who is so much more than a mere student as to be thrilled and possessed by what he studies. He shows, with a beauty and vigor of style not unbecoming his subject, how profoundly the art of Europe was affected by the crusades. It is not every one who can write with equal interest of sacred architecture and military engineering, who can appreciate alike the marvels of Gothic cathedrals and the frowning strength of feudal fortresses, and who furthermore can trace their inter-relation.

The story of the taking of Constantinople by the crusaders who followed the lead of the blind Doge Dandolo is told with an almost brutal ruthlessness quite befitting the deed itself. Nowhere else in the book is Mr. Adams happier in his insistence upon the conflict between what he calls the economic and the imaginative spirits. The incident sets well with his favorite theory of the inevitable triumph of the economic over the imaginative man, as societies grow centralized, and the no less inevitable fossilization and ruin of the body politic which this very triumph itself ultimately entails. The history of the English conquest of India is only less vividly told. Incidentally it may be mentioned that one of Mr. Adams's many merits is his contemptuous refusal to be misled by modern criticism of Macaulay. He sees Macaulay's great merits as a historian, and his essential truthfulness on many of the very points where he has been most sharply criticized.

Mr. Adams's book, however, is far more than a mere succession of brilliant episodes. He fully sees that the value of facts lies in their relation to one another; and from the facts as he sees them he deduces certain laws with more than a Thucydidean indifference as to his own

individual approval or disapproval of the development. The life of nations, like any other form of life, is but one manifestation of energy; and Mr. Adams's decidedly gloomy philosophy of life may be gathered from the fact that he places fear and greed as the two forms of energy which stand conspicuously predominant; fear in the earlier, and greed in the later, stages of evolution from barbarism to civilization. Civilization itself he regards merely as the history of the movement from a condition of physical distribution to one of physical concentration. During the earlier stages of this movement the imaginative man—the man who stands in fear of a priesthood—is, in his opinion, the representative type, while with him and almost equally typical stand the soldier and the artist. As consolidation advances, the economic man—the man of industry, trade, and capital—tends to supplant the emotional and artistic types of manhood, and finally himself develops along two lines,—“the usurer in his most formidable aspect, and the peasant whose nervous system is best adapted to thrive on scanty nutriment.” These two very unattractive types are in his belief the inevitable final products of all civilization, as civilization has hitherto developed; and when they have once been produced there follows either a stationary period, during which the whole body politic gradually ossifies and atrophies, or else a period of utter disintegration.

This is not a pleasant theory; but, as Mr. Adams would very truthfully answer, his concern is not whether or not the theory be pleasant, but whether or not it be true. There is in it a very ugly element of truth. One does not have to accept either all his theories or all his facts in order to recognize more than one disagreeable resemblance between the world as it is to-day, and the Roman world under the Empire, or the Greek world under the successors of Alexander. Where he errs is in his failure to appreciate the fundamental differences which utterly destroy any real parallelism between the two sets of cases. Indeed his zeal in championing his theories leads him at times into positions which are seen at a glance to be untenable.

Probably Mr. Adams's account of the English Reformation, and of Henry VIII and his instruments, is far nearer the truth than Froude's. But his view of the evils upon which the reformers as a whole waged war, and of the spirit which lay behind the real leaders and spurred them on, is certainly less accurate than the view given by Froude in his “Erasmus,” and “Council of Trent.” It can be partly corrected by the study of a much less readable book—Mr. Henry C. Lea's work on “The Inquisition.” Yet Mr. Adams's description of the English

Reformation is very powerful, and has in it a vein of bitter truth; though on the whole it is perhaps not so well done as his account of the suppression of the Templars in France. If he can be said to have any heroes, the Templars must certainly be numbered among them.

He is at his best in describing the imaginative man, and especially the imaginative man whose energy manifests itself in the profession of arms. His description of the tremendous change which passed over Europe during the centuries which saw what is commonly called the decay of faith is especially noteworthy. In no other history are there to be found two sentences which portray so vividly the reasons for the triumph of the great Pope Hildebrand over the Emperor Henry as these:

“To Henry’s soldiers the world was a vast space peopled by those fantastic beings which are still seen on Gothic towers. These demons obeyed the monk of Rome, and his army melting from the Emperor under a nameless horror, left him helpless.”

His account of the contrast between the relations of Philip Augustus and of Philip the Fair with the Church is dramatic in its intensity. To Mr. Adams, Philip the Fair, even more than Henry VIII, is the incarnation of the economic spirit in its conflict with the Church; and he makes him an even more repulsive, though perhaps an abler, man than Henry. In this he is probably quite right. His account of the hounding down of Boniface, and the cruel destruction of the Templars, is as stirring as it is truthful; but he certainly pushes his theory to an altogether impossible extreme when he states that the moneyed class, the *bourgeoisie*, was already the dominant force in France. The heroes of Froissart still lay in the future; and for centuries to come the burgher was to be outweighed by king, priest, and noble. The economic man, the man of trade and money, was, at that time, in no sense dominant.

That there is grave reason for some of Mr. Adams’s melancholy forebodings, no serious student of the times, no sociologist or reformer, and no practical politician who is interested in more than momentary success, will deny. A foolish optimist is only less noxious than an utter pessimist; and the pre-requisite for any effort, whether hopeful or hopeless, to better our conditions is an accurate knowledge of what these conditions are. There is no use in blinding ourselves to certain of the tendencies and results of our high-pressure civilization. Some very ominous facts have become more and more apparent during the present century, in which the social movement of the white race has gone on with such unexampled and ever-accelerating rapidity. The

rich have undoubtedly grown richer ; and, while the most careful students are inclined to answer with an emphatic negative the proposition that the poor have grown poorer, it is nevertheless certain that there has been a large absolute, though not relative, increase of poverty, and that the very poor tend to huddle in immense masses in the cities. Even though these masses are, relatively to the rest of the population, smaller than they formerly were, they constitute a standing menace, not merely to our prosperity but to our existence. The improvement in the means of communication, moreover, has so far immensely increased the tendency of the urban population to grow at the expense of the rural ; and philosophers have usually been inclined to regard the ultimate safety of a nation as resting upon its peasantry. The improvement in machinery, the very perfection of scientific processes, cause great, even though temporary, suffering to unskilled laborers. Moreover, there is a certain softness of fibre in civilized nations which, if it were to prove progressive, might mean the development of a cultured and refined people quite unable to hold its own in those conflicts through which alone any great race can ultimately march to victory. There is also a tendency to become fixed, and to lose flexibility. Most ominous of all, there has become evident, during the last two generations, a very pronounced tendency among the most highly civilized races, and among the most highly civilized portions of all races, to lose the power of multiplying, and even to decrease ; so much so as to make the fears of the disciples of Malthus a century ago seem rather absurd to the dweller in France or New England to-day.

Mr. Adams does not believe that any individual or group of individuals can influence the destiny of a race for good or for evil. All of us admit that it is very hard by individual effort thus to make any alteration in destiny, but we do not think it is impossible ; and Mr. Adams will have performed a great service if he succeeds in fixing the eyes of the men who ought to know thoroughly the problems set us to solve, upon the essential features of these problems. I do not think his diagnosis of the disease is in all respects accurate. I believe there is an immense amount of healthy tissue as to the existence of which he is blind ; but there is disease, and it is serious enough to warrant very careful examination.

It seems, however, as if Mr. Adams was certainly in error in putting the immense importance he does upon the question of the expansion or contraction of the currency. There is no doubt what-

ever that a nation is profoundly affected by the character of its currency ; but there seems to be equally little doubt that the currency is only one, and by no means the most important, among a hundred causes which profoundly affect it. The United States has been on a gold basis, and on a silver basis ; it has been on a paper basis, and on a basis of what might be called the scraps and odds and ends of the currencies of a dozen other nations ; but it has kept on developing along the same lines no matter what its currency has been. If a change of currency were so enacted as to amount to dishonesty, that is, to the repudiation of debts, it would be a very bad thing morally ; or, if a change took place in a manner that would temporarily reduce the purchasing power of the wage-earner, it would be a very bad thing materially ; but the current of the national life would not be wholly diverted or arrested, it would merely be checked, even by such a radical change. The forces that most profoundly shape the course of a nation's life lie far deeper than the mere use of gold or of silver, the mere question of the appreciation or depreciation of one metal when compared with the other, or when compared with commodities generally.

Mr. Adams unconsciously shows this in his first and extremely interesting chapter on the Romans. In one part of this chapter he seems to ascribe the ruin of the Roman Empire to the contraction of the currency, saying, "with contraction came that fall of prices which first ruined, then enslaved, and finally exterminated the native rural population of Italy." This he attributes to the growth of the economic or capitalistic spirit. As he puts it, "the stronger type exterminated the weaker, the money-lender killed out the husbandman, the soldiers vanished, and the farms on which they once flourished were left desolate."

But, curiously enough, Mr. Adams himself shows that all this really occurred during the two centuries, or thereabouts, extending from the end of the second Punic war through the reign of the first of the Roman emperors ; and this was a period of currency expansion, not of currency contraction. Moreover, it was emphatically a period when the military and not the economic type was supreme. The great Romans of the first and second centuries before Christ were soldiers, not merchants or usurers, and they could only be said to possess the economic instinct incidentally, in so far as it is possessed by every man of the military type who seizes the goods accumulated by the man of the economic type. It was during these centuries,

when the military type was supreme, and when prices were rising, that the ruin, the enslavement, and the extermination of the old rural population of Italy began. It was during these centuries that the husbandmen left the soil and became the mob of Rome, clamoring for free bread and the games of the amphitheatre. It was toward the close of this period that the Roman army became an army no longer of Roman citizens, but of barbarians trained in the Roman manner; it was toward the close of this period that celibacy became so crying an evil as to invoke the vain action of the legislature, and that the Roman race lost the power of self-perpetuation. What happened in the succeeding centuries,—the period of the contraction of the currency and the rise of prices,—was merely the completion of the ruin which had already been practically accomplished.

These facts seem to show clearly that the question of the currency had really little or nothing to do with the decay of the Roman fibre. This decay began under one set of currency conditions, and continued unchanged when these conditions became precisely reversed. An infinitely more important cause, as Mr. Adams himself shows, was the immense damage done to the Italian husbandman by the importation of Asiatic and African slaves; which was in all probability the chief of the causes that conspired to ruin him. He was forced into competition with races of lower vitality; races tenacious of life, who possessed a very low standard of living, and who furnished to the great slave-owner his cheap labor. Mr. Adams shows that the husbandman was affected, not only by the importation of vast droves of slaves to compete with him in Italy, but by the competition with low-class labor in Egypt and elsewhere. These very points, if developed with Mr. Adams's skill, would have enabled him to show in a very striking manner the radical contrast between the present political and social life of civilized states, and the political and social life of Rome during what he calls the capitalistic or closing period. At present, the minute that the democracy becomes convinced that the workman and the peasant are suffering from competition with cheap labor, whether this cheap labor take the form of alien immigration, or of the importation of goods manufactured abroad by low-class working-men, or of commodities produced by convicts, it at once puts a stop to the competition. We keep out the Chinese, very wisely; we have put an end to the rivalry of convict contract labor with free labor; we are able to protect ourselves, whenever necessary, by heavy import duties, against the effect of too cheap labor in any foreign country; and, finally, in the civil war, we utterly destroyed

the system of slavery, which really was threatening the life of the free working-man in a way in which it cannot possibly be threatened by any conceivable development of the "capitalistic" spirit.

Mr. Adams possesses a very intimate knowledge of finance, and there are many of his discussions on this subject into which only an expert would be competent to enter. Nevertheless, on certain financial and economic questions, touching matters open to discussion by the man of merely ordinary knowledge, his terminology seems somewhat vague. This is especially true when he speaks of "the producer." Now the producer, as portrayed by the Populist stump orator or writer of political and economic pamphlets, is a being with whom we became quite intimate during the recent campaign; but we have found it difficult to understand at all definitely who this "producer" actually is. According to one school of Populistic thinkers the farmer is the producer; but according to another and more radical school this is not so, unless the farmer works with his hands and not his head, this school limiting the application of the term "producer" to the working-man who does the immediate manual work of production. On the other hand, those who speak with scientific precision must necessarily class as producers all men whose work results directly or indirectly in production. Under this definition, inventors, and men who improve the methods of transportation, like railway presidents, and men who enable other producers to work, such as bankers who loan money wisely, are all themselves to be classed as producers, and often indeed as producers of the most effective kind.

The great mass of the population consists of producers; and in consequence the majority of the sales by producers are sales to other producers. It requires one set of producers to make a market for any other set of producers; and in consequence the rise or fall of prices is a good or a bad thing for different bodies of producers according to the different circumstances of each case. Mr. Adams says that the period from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the thirteenth centuries was an interval of "almost unparalleled prosperity," which he apparently ascribes to the expansion of the currency, with which, he says, "went a rise in prices, all producers grew rich, and for more than two generations the strain of competition was so relaxed that the different classes of the population preyed upon each other less savagely than they are wont to do in less happy times." It is not exactly clear how a rise in the prices both of what one producer sells another, and of what he in return buys from that other, can somehow make both of

them rich, and relax the strain of competition. Certainly in the present century, competition has been just as severe in times of high prices; and some of the periods of greatest prosperity have coincided with the periods of very low prices. There is reason to believe that low prices are ultimately of great benefit to the wage-earners. A rise in prices generally injures them. Moreover, in the century of which Mr. Adams speaks, the real non-producers were the great territorial feudal lords and the kings and clergymen; and these were then supreme. It was the period of the ferocious Albigensian crusades. It is true that it ushered in a rather worse period,—that of the struggle between England and France, with its attendant peasant wars and Jacqueries and huge bands of marauding free-companies. But the alteration for the worse was due to a fresh outbreak of “imaginative” spirit; and the first period was full of recurring plagues and famines, besides the ordinary unrest, murder, oppression, pillage, and general corruption. Mr. Adams says that the different classes of the population during that happy time “preyed upon each other less savagely” than at other times. All that can be said in answer is that there is not now a civilized community, under no matter what stress of capitalistic competition, in which the different classes prey upon one another with one-tenth the savagery they then showed; or in which famine and disease, even leaving war out of account, come anywhere near causing so much misery to poor people, and above all to the wage-earners, or working-men, the under strata and base of the producing classes. Yet, while thus disagreeing radically with some of Mr. Adams’s positions, I am compelled to admit the power of thought and the beautiful clearness and force of style with which, in the very chapter wherein he discusses the producers, he describes the rise of the great trading towns in Europe, with its causes and effects, and the profound influence it had on the social conditions of the time.

From many of the statements in Mr. Adams’s very interesting concluding chapter I should equally differ; and yet this chapter is one which is not merely interesting but soul-stirring, and it contains much with which most of us would heartily agree. Through the cold impartiality with which he strives to work merely as a recorder of facts, there break now and then flashes of pent-up wrath and vehement scorn for all that is mean and petty in a purely materialistic, purely capitalistic, civilization. With his scorn of what is ignoble and base in our development, his impatient contempt of the deification of the stock-market, the trading-counter, and the factory, all generous souls

must agree. When we see prominent men deprecating the assertion of national honor because it "has a bad effect upon business," or because it "impairs the value of securities"; when we see men seriously accepting Mr. Edward Atkinson's pleasant theory that patriotism is of no consequence when compared with the price of cotton sheeting or the capacity to undersell our competitors in foreign markets, it is no wonder that a man who has in him the stuff of ancestors who helped to found our Government, and helped to bring it safely through the civil war, should think blackly of the future. But Mr. Adams should remember that there always have been men of this merely huckstering type, or of other types not much higher. It is not a nice thing that Mr. Eliot, the president of one of the greatest educational institutions of the land, should reflect discredit upon the educated men of the country by his attitude on the Venezuela affair, carrying his desertion of American principles so far as to find himself left in the lurch by the very English statesman whose cause he was championing; but Mr. Adams, by turning to the "History" of the administration of Madison, by his brother, Henry Adams, would find that Mr. Eliot had plenty of intellectual ancestors among the "blue lights" federalists of that day. Timothy Pickering showed the same eager desire to stand by another country to the hurt of his own country's honor, and Timothy Pickering was a United States Senator whose conduct was far more reprehensible than that of any private individual could be. We have advanced, not retrograded, since 1812.

This applies also to what Mr. Adams says of the fall of the soldier and the rise of the usurer. He quite overstates his case in asserting that in Europe the soldier has lost his importance since 1871, and that the administration of society since then has fallen into the hands of the economic man, thereby making a change "more radical than any that happened at Rome or even at Byzantium." In the first place, a period of a quarter of a century is altogether too short to admit of such a generalization. In the next place, the facts do not support this particular generalization. The Germans are quite as military in type as ever they were, and very much more so than they were at any period during the two centuries preceding Bismarck and Moltke. Nor is it true to say that "the ruler of the French people has passed for the first time from the martial to the moneyed type." Louis XV and Louis Philippe can hardly be held to belong to any recognized martial type; and the reason of the comparative sinking of the military man in France is due not in the least to the rise of his economic fellow-

countryman, but to the rise of the other military man in Germany. Mr. Adams says that since the capitulation of Paris the soldier has tended to sink more and more, until he merely receives his orders from financiers (which term when used by Mr. Adams includes all business and working-men) with his salary, without being allowed a voice, even in the questions which involve peace and war. Now this is precisely the position which the soldier has occupied for two centuries among English-speaking races; and it is during these very centuries that the English-speaking race has produced its greatest soldiers. Marlborough and Wellington, Nelson and Farragut, Grant and Lee, exactly fill Mr. Adams's definition of the position into which soldiers have "sunk"; and the United States has just elected as President, as it so frequently has done before, a man who owes his place in politics in large part to his having done gallant service as a soldier, and who is in no sense a representative of the moneyed type.

Again, Mr. Adams gloomily remarks that "producers have become the subjects of the possessors of hoarded wealth," and that among capitalists the money-lenders form an aristocracy, while debtors are helpless and the servants of the creditors. All this is really quite unworthy of Mr. Adams, or of anyone above the intellectual level of Mr. Bryan, Mr. Henry George, or Mr. Bellamy. Any man who has had the slightest practical knowledge of legislation, whether as Congressman or as State legislator, knows that nowadays laws are passed much more often with a view to benefiting the debtors than the creditors; always excepting that very large portion of the creditor class which includes the wage-earners. "Producers"—whoever they may be—are not the subjects of "hoarded wealth," or of anyone or anything else. Capital is not absolute; and it is idle to compare the position of the capitalist nowadays with his position when his workmen were slaves and the law-makers were his creatures. The money-lender, by whom I suppose Mr. Adams means the banker, is not an aristocrat as compared to other capitalists,—at any rate in the United States. The merchant, the manufacturer, the railroad man, stand just as the banker does; and bankers vary among themselves just as any other business men do. They do not form a "class" at all; anyone who wishes to can go into the business; men fail and succeed in it just as in other businesses. As for the debtors being powerless, if Mr. Adams knows of any gentlemen who have lent money in Kansas or similar States they will speedily enlighten him on this subject, and will give him an exact idea of the extent to which the debtor is the servant of the creditor.

In those States the creditor—and especially the Eastern money-lender or “gold bug”—is the man who has lost all his money. Mr. Adams can readily find this out by the simple endeavor to persuade some “money-lender,” or other “Wall Street shark” to go into the business of lending money on Far-Western farm property. The money-lender in the most civilized portions of the United States always loses if the debtor is loser, or if the debtor is dishonest. Of course there are “sharpers” among bankers, as there are among producers. Moreover, the private, as distinguished from the corporate, debtor borrows for comparatively short periods, so that he is practically not at all affected by an appreciating currency; the rise is much too small to count in the case of the individual, though it may count in the long-term bonds of a nation or corporation. The wage of the working-man rises, while interest, which is the wage of the capitalist, sinks.

Mr. Adams's study of the rise of the usurer in India and the ruin of the martial races is very interesting; but it has not the slightest bearing upon anything which is now happening in Western civilization. The debtor, in America at least, is amply able to take care of his own interests. Our experience shows conclusively that the creditors only prosper when the debtors prosper, and the danger lies less in the accumulation of debts, than in their repudiation. Among us the communities which repudiate their debts, which inveigh loudest against their creditors, and which offer the poorest field for the operations of the honest banker (whom they likewise always call “money-lender”), are precisely those which are least prosperous and least self-respecting. There are of course individuals here and there who are unable to cope with the money-lender, and even sections of the country where this is true; but this only means that a weak or thriftless man can be robbed by a sharp money-lender just as he can be robbed by the sharp producer from whom he buys or to whom he sells. There is in certain points a very evident incompatibility of interest between the farmer who wishes to sell his product at a high rate, and the working-man who wishes to buy that product at a low rate; but the success of the capitalist, and especially of the banker, is conditioned upon the prosperity of both working-man and farmer.

When Mr. Adams speaks of the change in the relations of women and men he touches on the vital weakness of our present civilization. If we are in truth tending toward a point where the race will cease to be able to perpetuate itself, our civilization is of course a failure. No quality in a race atones for the failure to produce an abundance of

healthy children. The problem upon which Mr. Adams here touches is the most serious of all problems, for it lies at the root of, and indeed itself is, national life. But it is hard to accept seriously Mr. Adams's plea that "martial" men loved their wives more than "economic" men do, and showed their love by buying them. Of course the only reason why a woman was bought in early times was because she was looked upon like any other chattel; she was "loved" more than she is now only as a negro was "loved" more by the negro-trader in 1860 than at present. The worship of women during the Middle Ages was, in its practical effects, worship of a very queer kind. The economic man of the present day is beyond comparison gentler and more tender and more loving to women than the emotional man of the Middle Ages.

Mr. Adams closes with some really fine paragraphs, of which the general purport is, that the advent of the capitalist and the economic man, and especially the advent of the usurer, marks a condition of consolidation which means the beginning of utter decay, so that our society is now in a condition like that of the society of the later Roman Empire. He forgets, however, that there are plenty of modern states which have entirely escaped the general accelerated movement of our time. Spain on the one hand, and Russia on the other, though alike in nothing else, are alike in being entirely outside the current of modern capitalistic development. Spain never suffered from capitalists. She exterminated the economic man in the interest of the emotional and martial man. As a result she has sunk to a condition just above that of Morocco—another state, by the way, which still clings to the martial and emotional type, and is entirely free from the vices of capitalist development, and from the presence of the usurer, save as the usurer existed in the days of Isaac of York. Soldiers and artists have sunk lower in Spain than elsewhere, although they have had no competition from the economic man. Russia is in an entirely different position. Russia is eminently emotional, and her capitalists are of the most archaic type; but it is difficult to say exactly what Russia has done for art, or in what respect her soldiers are superior to other soldiers; and certainly the life of the lower classes in Russia is on the average far less happy than the life of the workingman and farmer in any English-speaking country.

Mr. Adams has shown well that the progress of civilization and centralization has depended largely upon the growing mastery of the attack over the defence; but when he says that the martial type necessarily decays as civilization progresses, he goes beyond what he can

prove. The economic man in England, Holland, and the United States has for several centuries proved a much better fighter than the martial emotionalist of the Spanish countries. It is Spain which is now decaying; not the nation with capitalists. The causes which make Russia formidable are connected with the extent of her territory and her population, for she has certainly failed so far to produce fighting men at all superior to the fighting men of the economic civilizations. In a pent-up territory she would rise less rapidly, and fall more rapidly, than they would; and her freedom from centralization and capitalization would not help her.

Moreover, instead of the mercenary or paid police growing in relative strength, as Mr. Adams says, it has everywhere shrunk during the last fifty years, when compared with the mass of armed farmers and wage-earners who make up a modern army. The capitalist can no longer, as in ages past, count upon the soldiers as being of his party; he can only count upon them when they are convinced that in fighting his battle they are fighting their own; although under modern industrial conditions this is generally the case. Again, Mr. Adams is in error in his facts, when he thinks that producers have prospered in the silver-using, as compared with the gold-using, countries. The wage-earner and small farmer of the United States, or even of Europe, stand waist high above their brothers in Mexico and the other communities that use only silver. The prosperity of the wage-earning class is more important to the state than the prosperity of any other class in the community, for it numbers within its ranks two-thirds of the people of the community. The fact that modern society rests upon the wage-earner, whereas ancient society rested upon the slave, is of such transcendent importance as to forbid any exact comparison between the two, save by way of contrast.

While there is in modern times a decrease in emotional religion, there is an immense increase in practical morality. There is a decrease of the martial type found among savages and the people of the Middle Ages, except as it still survives in the slums of great cities; but there remains a martial type infinitely more efficient than any that preceded it. There are great branches of industry which call forth in those that follow them more hardihood, manliness, and courage than any industry of ancient times. The immense masses of men connected with the railroads are continually called upon to exercise qualities of mind and body such as in antiquity no trade and no handicraft demanded. There are, it is true, influences at work to shake the vitality, courage,

and manliness of the race; but there are other influences which tell in exactly the opposite direction; and, whatever may come in the future, hitherto the last set of influences have been strongest. As yet, while men are more gentle and more honest than before, it cannot be said that they are less brave; and they are certainly more efficient as fighters. If our population decreases; if we lose the virile, manly qualities, and sink into a nation of mere hucksters, putting gain above national honor, and subordinating everything to mere ease of life; then we shall indeed reach a condition worse than that of the ancient civilizations in the years of their decay. But at present no comparison could be less apt than that of Byzantium, or Rome in its later years, with a great modern state where the thronging millions who make up the bulk of the population are wage-earners, who themselves decide their own destinies; a state which is able in time of need to put into the field armies, composed exclusively of its own citizens, more numerous than any which the world has ever before seen, and with a record of fighting in the immediate past with which there is nothing in the annals of antiquity to compare.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.