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MUTUAL AID
IN THE MEDIÆVAL CITY

I

SOCIABILITY and need of mutual aid and support are such inherent parts of human nature that at no time of history can we discover men living in small isolated families, fighting each other for the means of subsistence. On the contrary, modern research proves that since the very beginning of their prehistoric life men used to agglomerate into *gentes*, clans, or tribes, maintained by an idea of common descent and by worship of common ancestors, and that for thousands and thousands of years this organisation has kept them together, even though there was no authority whatever to impose it. It has deeply impressed all subsequent development of mankind; and when the bonds of common descent had been loosened by migrations on a grand scale, while the development of the separated family within the clan itself had destroyed the old unity of the clan, a new form of union, territorial in its principle—the village community—was called into existence by the social genius of man. This institution, again, kept men together for a number of centuries, permitting them to further develop their social institutions and to pass through some of the darkest periods of history, without being dissolved into loose aggregations of families and individuals. Such were the ideas developed in two previous essays in this Review on ‘Mutual Aid among the Savages and the Barbarians.’¹ We have now to follow the further developments of the same ever-living tendency for mutual aid. Taking the village communities of the so-called barbarians at a time when they were making a new start of civilisation after the fall of the Roman Empire, we have to study the new aspects taken by the sociable wants of the masses in the middle ages, and especially in the mediæval guilds and the mediæval city.

Far from being the fighting animals they have often been compared to, the barbarians of the first centuries of our era (like so many Mongolians, Africans, Arabs, and so on, who still continue in the same barbarian stage) invariably preferred peace to war. With the

¹ *Nineteenth Century*, April and December 1891.

exception of a few tribes which had been driven during the great migrations into unproductive deserts or highlands, and were thus compelled periodically to prey upon their better favoured neighbours — apart from these, the great bulk of the Teutons, the Saxons, the Slavonians, and so on, very soon after they had settled in their newly conquered abodes, reverted to the spade or to their herds. The earliest barbarian codes already represent to us societies composed of peaceful agricultural communities, not of hordes of men at war with each other. These barbarians covered the country with villages and farmhouses;² they cleared the forests, bridged the torrents, and colonised the formerly quite uninhabited wilderness; and they left the uncertain warlike pursuits to brotherhoods, *scholæ*, or 'trusts' of unruly men, gathered round temporary chieftains, who wandered about, offering their adventurous spirit, their arms, and their knowledge of warfare for the protection of populations, only too anxious to be left in peace. The warrior bands came and went, prosecuting their family feuds; but the great mass continued to till the soil, taking but little notice of their would-be rulers, so long as they did not interfere with the independence of their village communities.³ The new occupiers of Europe evolved the systems of land tenure and soil culture which are still in force with hundreds of millions of men; they worked out their systems of compensation for wrongs, instead of the old tribal blood-revenge; they learned the first rudiments of industry; and while they fortified their villages with palisaded walls, or erected towers and earthen forts whereto to repair in case of a new invasion, they soon abandoned the task of defending these towers and forts to those who made of war a speciality.

The very peacefulness of the barbarians, certainly not their supposed warlike instincts, thus became the source of their subsequent subjection to the military chieftains. It is evident that the very mode of life of the armed brotherhoods offered them more facilities for enrichment than the tillers of the soil could find in their agricultural communities. Even now we see that armed men occasionally come together to shoot down Matabeles and to rob them of their droves of cattle, though the Matabeles only want peace and are ready to buy it at a high price. The *scholæ* of old certainly were not more scrupulous than the *scholæ* of our own time. Droves of cattle, iron (which was extremely costly at that time⁴),

² W. Arnold in his *Wanderungen und Ansiedelungen der deutschen Stämme*, p. 431, even maintains that one-half of the now arable area in middle Germany must have been reclaimed from the sixth to the ninth century. Nitzsch (*Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, Leipzig, 1883, vol. i.) shares the same opinion.

³ Leo and Botta, *Histoire d'Italie*, French edition, 1844, t. i., p. 37.

⁴ The composition for the stealing of a simple knife was 15 *solidi*, and of the iron parts of a mill, 45 *solidi*. (See on this subject Lamprecht's *Wirtschaft und Recht der Franken* in Raumer's *Historisches Taschenbuch*, 1883, p. 52.) According to the Riparian law, the sword, the spear, and the iron armour of a warrior attained

and slaves were appropriated in this way; and although most acquisitions were wasted on the spot in those glorious feasts of which epic poetry has so much to say—still some part of the robbed riches was used for further enrichment. There was plenty of waste land, and no lack of men ready to till it, if only they could obtain the necessary cattle and implements. Whole villages, ruined by murrains, pests, fires, or raids of new immigrants, were often abandoned by their inhabitants, who went anywhere in search of new abodes. They still do so in Russia in similar circumstances. And if one of the *hirdmans* of the armed brotherhoods offered the peasants some cattle for a fresh start, some iron to make a plough, if not the plough itself, his protection from further raids, and a number of years free from all obligations, before they should begin to repay the contracted debt, they settled upon the land. And when, after a hard fight with bad crops, inundations and pestilences, those pioneers began to repay their debts, they fell into servile obligations towards the protector of the territory. Wealth undoubtedly did accumulate in this way, and power always follows wealth.⁵ And yet, the more we penetrate into the life of those times, the sixth and seventh centuries of our era, the more we see that another element, besides wealth and military force, was required to constitute the authority of the minorities. It was an element of law and right, a desire of the masses to maintain peace, and to establish what they considered to be justice, which gave to the chieftains of the *scholæ*—kings, dukes, *knyazes*, and the like—the force they acquired two or three hundred years later. That same idea of justice, conceived as an adequate revenge for the wrong done, which had grown in the tribal stage, now passed as a red thread through the history of subsequent institutions, and, much more even than military or economic causes, it became the basis upon which the authority of the kings and the feudal lords was founded.

In fact, one of the chief preoccupations of the barbarian village community always was, as it still is with our barbarian contemporaries, to put a speedy end to the feuds which arose from the then current conception of justice.⁶ When a quarrel took place, the community at once interfered, and after the folk-mote had heard the case, it settled the amount of composition (*vergeld*) to be paid to the wronged person, or

the value of at least twenty-five cows, or two years of a freeman's labour. A cuirass alone was valued in the Salic law (Desmichels, quoted by Michelet) at as much as thirty-six bushels of wheat.

⁵ The chief wealth of the chieftains, for a long time, was in their personal domains peopled partly with prisoner slaves, but chiefly in the above way. On the origin of property see Inama Sternegg's *Die Ausbildung der grossen Grundherrschaften in Deutschland*, in Schmoller's *Forschungen*, Bd. I., 1878; F. Dahn's *Urgeschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker*, Berlin, 1881; Maurer's *Dorfverfassung*; Guizot's *Essais sur l'histoire de France*; Maine's *Village Community*; Botta's *Histoire d'Italie*; Seebohm, Vinogradoff, J. R. Green, &c.

⁶ For more details upon this subject, see *Nineteenth Century*, December 1891.

to his family, as well as the *fred*, or fine for breach of peace, which had to be paid to the community. Interior quarrels were easily appeased in this way. But when feuds broke out between two different tribes, or two confederations of tribes, notwithstanding all measures taken to prevent them,⁷ the difficulty was to find an arbiter or sentence-finder whose decision should be accepted by both parties alike, both for his impartiality and for his knowledge of the oldest law. The difficulty was the greater as the customary laws of different tribes and confederations were at variance as to the compensation due in different cases. It therefore became habitual to take the sentence-finder from among such families, or such tribes, as were reputed for keeping the law of old in its purity; of being versed in the songs, triads, sagas, &c., by means of which law was perpetuated in memory; and to retain the law in this way became a sort of art, a 'mystery,' carefully transmitted in certain families from generation to generation. Thus in Iceland, and in other Scandinavian lands, at every *Allthing*, or national folkmote, a *lövsögmáthr* used to recite the whole law from memory for the enlightening of the assembly; and in Ireland there was, as is known, a special class of men reputed for the knowledge of the old traditions, and therefore enjoying a great authority as judges.⁸ Again, when we are told by the Russian annals that some stems of North-west Russia, moved by the growing disorder which resulted from 'clans rising against clans,' appealed to Norman *varingjar* to be their judges and commanders of warrior *scholæ*; and when we see the *knyazes*, or dukes, elected for the next two hundred years always from the same Norman family, we cannot but recognise that the Slavonians trusted to the Normans for a better knowledge of the law which would be equally recognised as good by different Slavonian kins. In this case the possession of runes, used for the transmission of old customs, was a decided advantage in favour of the Normans; but in other cases there are faint indications that the 'eldest' branch of the stem, the supposed mother-branch, was appealed to to supply the judges, and its decisions were relied upon as just;⁹ while at a later epoch we see a distinct tendency towards taking the sentence-finders from the Christian clergy, which, at that time, kept still to the fundamental, now forgotten, principle of Christianity, that retaliation is no act of justice. At that time the Christian clergy opened the churches as places of asylum for those who fled from blood revenge, and they willingly acted as arbiters in criminal cases, always opposing the old tribal principle of life for life

⁷ See Sir Henry Maine's *International Law*, London 1888.

⁸ Among the Ossetes the arbiters from three *oldest* villages enjoy a special reputation (M. Kovalevsky's *Modern Custom and Old Law*, Moscow, 1886, ii. 217, Russian).

⁹ It is permissible to think that this conception (related to the conception of tanistry) played an important part in the life of the period; but research has not yet been directed that way.

and wound for wound. In short, the deeper we penetrate into the history of early institutions, the less we find grounds for the military theory of origin of authority. Even that power which later on became such a source of oppression seems, on the contrary, to have found its origin in the peaceful inclinations of the masses.

In all these cases the *fred*, which mostly amounted to half the compensation, went to the folkmote, and from times immemorial it used to be applied to works of common utility and defence. It has still the same destination (the erection of towers) among the Kabyles and certain Mongolian stems; and we have direct evidence that even several centuries later the judicial fines, in Pskov and several French and German cities, continued to be used for the repair of the city walls.¹⁰ It was thus quite natural that the fines should be handed over to the sentence-finder, who was bound, in return, both to maintain the *schola* of armed men to whom the defence of the territory was trusted, and to execute the sentences. This became a universal custom in the eighth and ninth centuries, even when the sentence-finder was an elected bishop. A germ of combination of what we should now call the judicial power and the executive thus made its appearance. But to these two functions the attributions of the duke or king were strictly limited. He was no ruler of the people—the supreme power still belonging to the folkmote—not even a commander of the popular militia; when the folk took to arms, it marched under a separate, also elected, commander, who was not a subordinate, but an equal to the king.¹¹ The king was a lord on his personal domain only. In fact, in barbarian language, the word *konung*, *koning*, or *cyning*, synonymous with the Latin *rex*, had no other meaning than that of a temporary leader or chieftain of a band of men. The commander of a flotilla of boats, or even of a single pirate boat, was also a *konung*, and till the present day the commander of fishing in Norway is named *Not-kong*—‘the king of the nets.’¹² The veneration attached later on to the personality of a king did not yet exist, and while treason to the kin was punished by death, the slaying of a king could be recouped by the payment of compensation: a king simply was valued so much more than a freeman.¹³ And when

¹⁰ It was distinctly stated in the charter of St. Quentin of the year 1002 that the ransom for houses which had to be demolished for crimes went for the city walls. The same destination was given to the *Ungeld* in German cities. At Pskov the cathedral was the bank for the fines, and from this fund money was taken for the walls.

¹¹ Sohm, *Fränkische Rechts- und Gerichtsverfassung*, p. 23; also Nitzsch, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, i. 78.

¹² See the excellent remarks on this subject in Augustin Thierry's *Lettres sur l'histoire de France*, 7th letter. The barbarian translations of parts of the Bible are extremely instructive on this point.

¹³ Thirty-six times more than a noble, according to the Anglo-Saxon law. In the code of Rothari the slaying of a king is, however, punished by death; but (apart from Roman influence) this new disposition was introduced (in 646) in the

King Knu (or Canute) had killed one man of his own *schola*, the saga represents him convoking his comrades to a *thing* where he stood on his knees imploring pardon. He was pardoned, but not till he had agreed to pay nine times the regular composition, of which one-third went to himself for the loss of one of his men, one-third to the relatives of the slain man, and one-third (the *fred*) to the *schola*.¹⁴ In reality, a complete change had to be accomplished in the current conceptions, under the double influence of the Church and the students of Roman law, before an idea of sanctity began to be attached to the personality of the king.

However, it lies beyond the scope of these essays to follow the gradual development of authority out of the elements just indicated. Historians, such as Mr. and Mrs. Green for this country, Augustin Thierry, Michelet, and Luchaire for France, Kaufmann, Janssen, W. Arnold, and even Nitzsch, for Germany, Leo and Botta for Italy, Byelaëff, Kostomaroff, and their followers for Russia, and many others, have fully told that tale. They have shown how populations, once free, and simply agreeing 'to feed' a certain portion of their military defenders, gradually became the serfs of these protectors; how 'commendation' to the Church, or to a lord, became a hard necessity for the freeman; how each lord's and bishop's castle became a robber's nest—how feudalism was imposed, in a word—and how the crusades, by freeing the serfs who wore the cross, gave the first impulse to popular emancipation. All this need not be retold in this place, our chief aim being to follow the constructive genius of the masses in their mutual-aid institutions.

At a time when the last vestiges of barbarian freedom seemed to disappear, and Europe, fallen under the dominion of thousands of petty rulers, was marching towards the constitution of such theocracies and despotic States as had followed the barbarian stage during the previous starts of civilisation, life took another direction. It went on on lines similar to those it had once taken in the cities of antique Greece. With a unanimity which seems almost incomprehensible, and for a long time was not understood by historians, the urban agglomerations, down to the smallest burgs, began to shake off the yoke of their worldly and clerical lords. The fortified village rose against the lord's castle, defied it first, attacked it next, and finally destroyed it. The movement spread from spot to spot, involving every town on the surface of Europe, and in less than a hundred years free cities had been called into existence on the coasts of the Mediterranean, the North Sea, the Baltic, the Atlantic Ocean, down to the

Lombardian law—as remarked by Leo and Botta—to cover the king from blood revenge. The king being at that time the executioner of his own sentences (as the tribe formerly was of its own sentences), he had to be protected by a special disposition the more so as several Lombardian kings before Rothari had been slain in succession (Leo and Botta, *l.c.* i. 66-90).

¹⁴ Kaufmann, *Deutsche Geschichte*, Bd. I. 'Die Germanen der Urzeit', p. 133.

fjords of Scandinavia, at the feet of the Apennines, the Alps, the Black Forest, the Grampians, and the Carpathians, in the plains of Russia, Hungary, France and Spain. Everywhere the same revolt took place, with the same features, passing through the same phases, leading to the same results. Wherever men had found, or expected to find, some protection behind their town walls they instituted their 'co-jurations,' their 'fraternities,' their 'friendships,' united in one common idea, and boldly marching towards a new life of mutual support and liberty. And they succeeded so well that in three or four hundred years they had changed the very face of Europe. They had covered the country with beautiful sumptuous buildings, expressing the genius of free unions of free men, unrivalled since for their beauty and expressiveness; and they bequeathed to the following generations all the arts, all the industries, of which our present civilisation, with all its achievements and promises for the future, is only a further development. And when we now look to the forces which have produced these grand results, we find them—not in the genius of individual heroes, not in the mighty organisation of huge States or the political capacities of their rulers, but in the very same current of mutual aid and support which we saw at work in the village community, and which was vivified and reinforced in the middle ages by a new form of unions, inspired by the very same spirit but shaped on a new model—the guilds.

It is well known by this time that feudalism did not imply a dissolution of the village community. Although the lord had succeeded in imposing servile labour upon the peasants, and had appropriated for himself such rights as were formerly vested in the village community alone (taxes, mortmain, duties on inheritances and marriages), the peasants had, nevertheless, maintained the two fundamental rights of their communities: the common possession of the land, and self-jurisdiction. In olden times, when a king sent his vogt to a village, the peasants received him with flowers in one hand and arms in the other, and asked him—which law he intended to apply: the one he found in the village, or the one he brought with him? And, in the first case they handed him the flowers and accepted him; while in the second case they fought him.¹⁵ Now, they accepted the king's or the lord's official whom they could not refuse; but they maintained the folk-mote's jurisdiction, and themselves nominated six, seven, or twelve judges, who acted with the lord's judge, in the presence of the folk-mote, as arbiters and sentence-finders. In most cases the official had nothing left to him but to confirm the sentence and to levy the customary *fred*. This precious right of self-jurisdiction, which, at that time meant self-administration and self-legislation, had been maintained through all the struggles; and even the lawyers by

¹⁵ Dr. F. Dahn, *Urgeschichte der germanischen und romanischen Völker*, Berlin, 1881, Bd. I. 96.

whom Karl the Great was surrounded could not abolish it; they were bound to confirm it. At the same time, in all matters concerning the community's domain, the folk-mote retained its supremacy and (as shown by Maurer) often claimed submission from the lord himself in land tenure matters. No growth of feudalism could break this resistance; the village community kept its ground; and when, in the ninth and tenth centuries, the invasions of the Normans, the Arabs, and the Ugrians had demonstrated that military *scholæ* were of little value for protecting the land, a general movement began all over Europe for fortifying the villages with stone walls and citadels. Thousands of fortified centres were then built by the energies of the village communities; and, once they had built their walls, once a common interest had been created in this new sanctuary—the town walls—they soon understood that they could henceforward resist the encroachments of the inner enemies, the lords, as well as the invasions of foreigners. A new life of freedom began to develop within the fortified enclosures. The mediæval city was born.¹⁶

No period of history could better illustrate the constructive powers of the popular masses than the tenth and eleventh centuries, when the fortified villages and market-places, representing so many 'oases amidst the feudal forest,' began to free themselves from their lord's yoke, and slowly elaborated the future city organisation; but, unhappily, this is a period about which historical information is especially scarce: we know the results, but little has reached us about the means by which they were achieved. Under the protection of their walls the cities' folk-motes—either quite independent, or led by the chief noble or merchant families—conquered and maintained the right of electing the military *defensor* and supreme judge of the town, or at least of choosing between those who pretended to occupy this position. In Italy the young communes were continually sending away their *defensors* or *domini*, fighting those who refused to go. The same went on in the East. In Bohemia, rich and poor

¹⁶ If I thus follow the views long since advocated by Maurer (*Geschichte der Städteverfassung in Deutschland*, Erlangen, 1869), it is because he has fully proved the uninterrupted evolution from the village community to the mediæval city, and that his views alone can explain the universality of the communal movement. Savigny and Eichhorn and their followers have certainly proved that the traditions of the Roman *municipia* had never totally disappeared. But they took no account of the village-community period which the barbarians lived through before they had any cities. The fact is, that whenever mankind made a new start in civilisation, in Greece, Rome, or middle Europe, it passed through the same stages—the tribe, the village community, the free city, the state—each one naturally evolving out of the preceding stage. Of course, the experience of each preceding civilisation was never lost. Greece (itself influenced by Eastern civilisations) influenced Rome, and Rome influenced our civilisation; but each of them began from the same beginning—the tribe. And just as we cannot say that our states are *continuations* of the Roman state, so also can we not say that the mediæval cities were a continuation of the Roman cities. They were a continuation of the barbarian village community, influenced to a certain extent by the traditions of the Roman towns.

alike (*Bohemicae gentis magni et parvi, nobiles et ignobiles*) took part in the election;¹⁷ while the *vyeches* (folk-motes) of the Russian cities regularly elected their dukes—always from the same Rurik family—covenanted with them, and sent the *knjaz* away if he had provoked discontent.¹⁸ At the same time in most cities of Western and Southern Europe, the tendency was to take for *defensor* a bishop whom the city had elected itself; and so many bishops took the lead in protecting the ‘immunities’ of the towns and in defending their liberties, that numbers of them were considered, after their death, as saints and special patrons of different cities. St. Uthelred of Winchester, St. Ulrik of Augsburg, St. Wolfgang of Ratisbon, St. Heribert of Cologne, St. Adalbert of Prague, and so on, as well as many abbots and monks, became so many cities’ saints for having acted in defence of popular rights.¹⁹ And under the new *defensors*, whether laic or clerical, the citizens conquered full self-jurisdiction and self-administration for their folk-motes.²⁰

The whole process of liberation progressed by a series of imperceptible acts of devotion to the common cause, accomplished by men who came out of the masses—by unknown heroes whose very names have not been preserved by history. The wonderful movement of the God’s peace (*treuga Dei*) by which the popular masses endeavoured to put a limit to the endless family feuds of the noble families, was born in the young towns, the bishops and the citizens trying to extend to the nobles the peace they had established within their town walls.²¹ Already at that period, the commercial cities of Italy, and especially Amalfi (which had its elected consuls since 844,

¹⁷ M. Kovalevsky, *Modern Customs and Ancient Laws of Russia* (Ichester Lectures, London, 1891, lecture 4).

¹⁸ A considerable amount of research had to be done before this character of the so-called *udjelnyi* period was properly established by the works of Byelaeff (*Tales from Russian History*), Kostomaroff (*The Beginnings of Autocracy in Russia*), and especially Professor Sergievich (*The Vyeche and the Prince*). The English reader may find some information about this period in the just-named work of M. Kovalevsky, in Rambaud’s *History of Russia*, and, in a short summary, in the article ‘Russia’ of the last edition of *Chambers’s Encyclopædia*.

¹⁹ Ferrari, *Histoire des révolutions d’Italie*, i. 257; Kallsen, *Die deutschen Städte im Mittelalter*, Bd. I. (Halle, 1891).

²⁰ See the excellent remarks of Mr. G. L. Gomme as regards the folk-mote of London (*The Literature of Local Institutions*, London, 1886, p. 76). It must, however, be remarked that in royal cities the folk-mote never attained the independence which it assumed elsewhere. It is even certain that Moscow and Paris were chosen by the kings and the Church as the cradles of the future royal authority in the State, because they did not possess the tradition of folk-motes accustomed to act as sovereign in all matters.

²¹ A. Luchaire, *Les Communes françaises*; also Kluckhohn, *Geschichte des Gottesfriedens*, 1857. L. Sémichon (*La paix et la trêve de Dieu*, 2 vols., Paris, 1869) has tried to represent the communal movement as issued from that institution. In reality, the *treuga Dei*, like the league started under Louis le Gros for the defence against both the robberies of the nobles and the Norman invasions, was a thoroughly popular movement. The only historian who mentions this last league—that is, Vitalis—

and frequently changed its doges in the tenth century)²² worked out the customary maritime and commercial law which later on became a model for all Europe; Ravenna elaborated its craft organisation, and Milan, which had made its first revolution in 980, became a great centre of commerce, its trades enjoying a full independence since the eleventh century.²³ So also Brügge and Ghent; so also several cities of France in which the *Mahl* or *forum* had become a quite independent institution.²⁴ And already during that period began the work of artistic decoration of the towns by works of architecture, which we still admire and which loudly testify of the intellectual movement of the times. 'The basilicæ were then renewed in almost all the universe,' Raoul Glaber wrote in his chronicle, and some of the finest monuments of mediæval architecture date from that period: the wonderful old church of Bremen was built in the ninth century, Saint Marc of Venice was finished in 1071, and the beautiful dome of Pisa in 1063. In fact, the intellectual movement which has been described as the Twelfth Century Renaissance²⁵ and the Twelfth Century Rationalism—the precursor of the Reform²⁶—date from that period, when most cities were still simple agglomerations of small village communities enclosed by walls.

However, another element, besides the village-community principle, was required to give to these growing centres of liberty and enlightenment the unity of thought and action, and the powers of initiative, which made their force in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. With the growing diversity of occupations, crafts and arts, and with the growing commerce in distant lands, some new form of union was required, and this necessary new element was supplied by the *gilds*. Volumes and volumes have been written about these unions which, under the name of gilds, brotherhoods, friendships, *minne*, *artels* in Russia, *esnairs* in Servia and Turkey, *amkari* in Georgia, and so on, took such a formidable development in mediæval times and played such an important part in the emancipation of the cities. But it took historians more than sixty years before the universality of this institution and its true characters were understood. Only now when hundreds of gild statutes have been published and studied, and their relationship to the Roman *collegice*, and the earlier unions in Greece and in India,²⁷ is known, can we maintain

describes it as a 'popular community' ('*Considérations sur l'histoire de France*,' in vol. iv. of Aug. Thierry's *Œuvres*, Paris, 1868, p. 191 and *note*).

²² Ferrari, i. 152, 263, &c.

²³ Perrens, *Histoire de Florence*, i. 188; Ferrari, *l.c.*, i. 283.

²⁴ Aug. Thierry, *Essai sur l'histoire du Tiers Etat*, Paris, 1875, p. 414, *note*.

²⁵ F. Rocquain, 'La Renaissance au XIIe siècle' in *Études sur l'histoire de France*, Paris, 1875, pp. 55-117.

²⁶ N. Kostomaroff, 'The Rationalists of the Twelfth Century,' in his *Monographies and Researches* (Russian).

²⁷ Very interesting facts relative to the universality of gilds will be found in

with full confidence that these brotherhoods were but a further development of the same principles which we saw at work in the *gens* and the village community.

Nothing illustrates better these mediæval brotherhoods than those temporary guilds which were formed on board ships. When a ship of the Hansa had accomplished her first half-day passage after having left the port, the captain (*Schiffer*) gathered all crew and passengers on the deck, and held the following language, as reported by a contemporary:—

‘As we are now at the mercy of God and the waves,’ he said, ‘each one must be equal to each other. And as we are surrounded by storms, high waves, pirates and other dangers, we must keep a strict order that we may bring our voyage to a good end. That is why we shall pronounce the prayer for a good wind and good success, and, according to marine law, we shall name the occupiers of the judges’ seats (*Schiffstellen*). Thereupon the crew elected a Vogt and four *scabini*, to act as their judges. At the end of the voyage the Vogt and the *scabini* abdicated their functions and addressed the crew as follows:—‘What has happened on board ship, we must pardon to each other and consider as dead (*tott und ab sein lassen*). What we have judged right, was for the sake of justice. This is why we beg you all, in the name of honest justice, to forget all the animosity one may nourish against another, and to swear on bread and salt that he will not think of it in a bad spirit. If anyone, however, considers himself wronged, he must appeal to the land Vogt and ask justice from him before sunset.’ On landing, the Stock with the *fred-fines* was handed over to the Vogt of the sea-port for distribution among the poor.²⁸

This simple narrative, perhaps better than anything else, depicts the spirit of the mediæval guilds. Like organisations came into existence wherever a group of men—fishermen, hunters, travelling merchants, builders, or settled craftsmen—came together for a common pursuit. Thus, there was on board ship the naval authority of the captain; but, for the very success of the common enterprise, all men on board, rich and poor, masters and crew, captain and sailors, agreed to be equals in their mutual relations, to be simply men, bound to aid each other and to settle their possible disputes before judges elected by all of them. So also when a number of craftsmen—masons, carpenters, stone-cutters, &c.—came together for building, say, a cathedral, they all belonged to a city which had its political organisation, and each of them belonged moreover to his own craft; but they were united besides by their common enterprise, which they knew better than anyone else, and they joined into a body united by closer, although temporary, bonds; they founded the guild for the building of the cathedral.²⁹ We may see the same till now

‘Two Thousand Years of Guild Life,’ by Rev. J. M. Lambert, Hull, 1891. On the Georgian *amkari*, see S. Eghiazarov, *Gorodskije Zekhi* (‘Organisation of Transcaucasian Amkari’) in *Memoirs of the Caucasian Geographical Society*, xiv. 2, 1891.

²⁸ J. D. Wunderer’s ‘Reisebericht’ in Fichard’s *Frankfurter Archiv*, ii. 245; quoted by Janssen, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, i. 355.

²⁹ Dr. Leonard Ennen, *Der Dom zu Köln, Historische Einleitung*, Köln, 1871, pp. 46, 50.

in the Kabylean *çof*:³⁰ the Kabyles have their village community; but this union is not sufficient for all political, commercial, and personal needs of union, and the closer brotherhood of the *çof* is constituted.

As to the social characters of the mediæval gild, any gild-statute may illustrate them. Taking, for instance, the *skraa* of some early Danish gild, we read in it, first, a statement of the general brotherly feelings which must reign in the gild; next come the regulations relative to self-jurisdiction in cases of quarrels arising between two brothers, or a brother and a stranger; and then, the social duties of the brethren are enumerated. If a brother's house is burned, or he has lost his ship, or has suffered on a pilgrim's voyage, all the brethren must come to his aid. If a brother falls dangerously ill, two brethren must keep watch by his bed till he is out of danger, and if he dies, the brethren must bury him—a great affair in those times of pestilences—and follow him to the church and the grave. After his death they must provide for his children, if necessary; very often the widow becomes a sister to the gild.³¹

These two leading features appeared in every brotherhood formed for any possible purpose. In each case the members treated each other as, and named each other, brother and sister;³² all were equals before the gild. They owned some 'chattel' (cattle, land, buildings, places of worship, or 'stock') in common. All brothers took the oath of abandoning all feuds of old; and, without imposing upon each other the obligation of never quarrelling again, they agreed that no quarrel should degenerate into a feud, or into a law-suit before another court than the tribunal of the brothers themselves. And if a brother was involved in a quarrel with a stranger to the gild, they agreed to support him for bad and for good; that is, whether he was unjustly accused of aggression, or really was the aggressor, they had to support him, and to bring things to a peaceful end. So long as his was not a secret aggression—in which case he would have been treated as an outlaw—the brotherhood stood by him.³³ If the relatives of the wronged man wanted to revenge the offence at once by a new aggression, the brotherhood supplied him with a horse to run away, or with a boat, a pair of oars, a knife and a steel for striking

³⁰ See *Nineteenth Century*, December 1891.

³¹ Kofod Ancher, *Om gamle Danske Gilder og deres Undergang*, Copenhagen, 1785. Statutes of a Knu gild.

³² Upon the position of women in gilds, see Miss Toulmin Smith's introductory remarks to the *English Gilds* of her father. One of the Cambridge statutes (p. 281) of the year 1503 is quite positive in the following sentence: 'Thys statute is made by the comyne assent of all the bretherne and sisterne of alhallowe yelde.'

³³ In mediæval times, only secret aggression was treated as a murder. Blood-revenge in broad daylight was justice; and slaying in a quarrel was not murder, once the aggressor showed his willingness to repent and to repair the wrong he had done. Deep traces of this distinction still exist in modern criminal law, especially in Russia.

light; if he remained in town, twelve brothers accompanied him to protect him; and in the meantime they arranged the composition. They went to court to support by oath the truthfulness of his statements, and if he was found guilty they did not let him go to full ruin and become a slave through not paying the due compensation: they all paid it, just as the *gens* did in olden times. Only when a brother had broken the faith towards his gild-brethren, or other people, he was excluded from the brotherhood 'with a Nothing's name' (*tha scal lan muelas af bröðrescap met nidings nafn*).³⁴

Such were the leading ideas of those brotherhoods which gradually covered the whole of mediæval life. In fact, we know of guilds among all possible professions: guilds of serfs,³⁵ guilds of freemen, and guilds of both serfs and freemen; guilds called into life for the special purpose of hunting, fishing, or a trading expedition, and dissolved when the special purpose had been achieved; and guilds lasting for centuries in a given craft or trade. And, in proportion as life took an always greater variety of pursuits, the variety in the guilds grew in proportion. So we see not only merchants, craftsmen, hunters, and peasants united in guilds; we also see guilds of priests, teachers of primary schools and universities, guilds for performing the passion play, for building a church, for developing the 'mystery' of a given school of art or craft, or for a special recreation—even guilds among beggars, executioners, and lost women, all organised on the same double principle of self-jurisdiction and mutual support. For Russia we have positive evidence showing that the very 'making of Russia' was as much the work of its hunters', fishermen's, and traders' *artels* as of the budding village communities, and up to the present day the country is covered with *artels*.³⁶

These few remarks show how incorrect was the view taken by some early explorers of the guilds when they wanted to see the essence of the institution in its yearly festival. In reality, the day of the common meal was always the day, or the morrow of the day, of election of aldermen, of discussion of alterations in the statutes, and very often the day of judgment of quarrels that had arisen among the brethren,³⁷ or of renewed allegiance to the gild. The common meal, like the festival at the old tribal folk-mote—the *mahl* or *malum*

³⁴ Kofod Ancher, *l.c.* This old booklet contains much that has been lost sight of by later explorers.

³⁵ They played an important part in the revolts of the serfs, and were therefore prohibited several times in succession in the second half of the ninth century. Of course, the king's prohibitions remained a dead letter.

³⁶ The chief works on the *artels* are named in the article 'Russia' of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, p. 84.

³⁷ See, for instance, the texts of the Cambridge guilds given by Toulmin Smith (*English Guilds*, London, 1870, pp. 274-276), from which it appears that the 'generall and principall day' was the 'eleccioun day'; or, Ch. M. Clode's *The Early History of the Guild of the Merchant Taylors*, London, 1888, i. 45; and so on. For the renewal

—or the Buryate *aba*, or the parish feast and the harvest supper, was simply an affirmation of brotherhood. It symbolised the times when everything was kept in common by the clan. This day, at least, all belonged to all; all sate at the same table and partook of the same meal. Even at a much later time the inmate of the almshouse of a London gild sat this day by the side of the rich alderman. As to the distinction which several explorers have tried to establish between the old Saxon 'frith gild' and the so-called 'social' or 'religious' gilds—all were frith gilds in the sense above mentioned,³⁸ and all were religious in the sense in which a village community or a city placed under the protection of a special saint is social and religious. If the institution of the gild has taken such an immense extension in Asia, Africa, and Europe, if it has lived thousands of years, reappearing again and again when similar conditions called it into existence, it is because it was much more than an eating association, or an association for going to church on a certain day, or a burial club. It answered to a deeply inrooted want of human nature; and it embodied all the attributes which the State appropriated later on for its bureaucracy and police, and much more than that. It was an association for mutual support in all circumstances and in all accidents of life, 'by deed and advise,' and it was an organisation for maintaining justice—with this difference from the State, that on all these occasions a humane, a brotherly element was introduced instead of the formal element which is the essential characteristic of State interference. Even when appearing before the gild tribunal, the gild-brother answered before men who knew him well and had stood by him before in their daily work, at the common meal, in the performance of their brotherly duties: men who were his equals and brethren indeed, not theorists of law nor defenders of some one else's interests.

It is evident that an institution so well suited to serve the need of union, without depriving the individual of his initiative, could but spread, grow, and fortify. The difficulty was only to find such form of federation as would permit the unions of the gilds without interfering with the unions of the village community, and to fede-

of allegiance, see the *Jómsviking saga*, mentioned in Pappenheim's *Alt-dänische Schutzgilden*, Breslau, 1885, p. 67. It appears very probable that when the gilds began to be prosecuted, many of them inscribed in their statutes the meal day only, or their pious duties, and only alluded to the judicial function of the gild in vague words; but this function did not disappear till a very much later time. The question, 'Who will be my judge?' has no meaning now, since the State has appropriated for its bureaucracy the organisation of justice; but it was of primordial importance in mediæval times, the more so as self-jurisdiction meant self-administration. It must also be remarked that the translation of the Saxon and Danish 'gild-bretheren,' or 'bröðra,' by the Latin *convivii* must also have contributed to the above confusion.

³⁸ See the excellent remarks upon the frith gild by J. R. Green and Mrs. Green in *The Conquest of England*, London, 1883, pp. 229-230.

rate all these into one harmonious whole. And when this form of combination had been found, and a series of favourable circumstances permitted the cities to affirm their independence, they did so with a unity of thought which can but excite our admiration, even in our century of railways, telegraphs, and printing. Hundreds of charters in which the cities inscribed their liberation have reached us, and through all of them—notwithstanding the infinite variety of details, which depended upon the more or less greater fulness of emancipation—the same leading ideas run. The city organised itself as a federation of both small village communities and gilds.

‘All those who belong to the friendship of the town’—so runs a charter given in 1188 to the burghesses of Aire by Phillip, Count of Flanders—‘have promised and confirmed by faith and oath that they will aid each other as brethren, in whatever is useful and honest. That if one commits against another an offence in words or in deeds, the one who has suffered therefrom will not take revenge, either himself or his people . . . he will lodge a complaint and the offender will make good for his offense, according to what will be pronounced by twelve elected judges acting as arbiters. And if the offender or the offended, after having been warned thrice, does not submit to the decision of the arbiters, he will be excluded from the friendship as a wicked man and a perjurer.’³⁹

‘Each one of the men of the commune will be faithful to his con-juror, and will give him aid and advise, according to what justice will dictate him’—the Amiens and Abbeville charters say. ‘All will aid each other, according to their powers, within the boundaries of the Commune, and will not suffer that anyone takes anything from any one of them, or makes him pay contributions’—do we read in the charters of Soissons, Compiègne, Senlis, and many others of the same type.⁴⁰ And so on with countless variations on the same theme.

‘The Commune,’ Guilbert de Nogent wrote, ‘is an oath of mutual aid (*mutui adjutorii conjuratio*): . . . A new and detestable word. Through it the serfs (*capite sensi*) are freed from all serfdom; through it, they can only be condemned to a legally determined fine for breaches of the law; through it, they cease to be liable to payments which the serfs always used to pay.’⁴¹

The same wave of emancipation ran, in the twelfth century, through all parts of the continent, involving both rich cities, like the Italian republics, and the poorest towns. And if we may say that, as a rule, the Italian cities were the first to free themselves, we can assign no centre from which the movement would have spread. Very often a small burg took the lead for its region, and big agglomerations accepted the little town’s charter as a model for their own. Thus, the charter of a small town, Lorris, was adopted by eighty-three towns in south-west France, and that of Beaumont became the model for over five hundred towns and cities in Belgium and France. Special deputies were dispatched by the cities to their neighbours to obtain a copy from their charter, and the constitution was framed upon

³⁹ *Recueil des ordonnances des rois de France*, t. xii. 562; quoted by Aug. Thierry in *Considérations sur l’histoire de France*, p. 196, ed. 12mo.

⁴⁰ A. Luchaire, *Les Communes françaises*, pp. 45-46.

⁴¹ Guilbert de Nogent, *De vita sua*, quoted by Luchaire, *l.c.*, p. 14.

that model. However, they did not simply copy each other: they framed their own charters in accordance with the concessions they had obtained from their lords; and the result was that, as remarked by an historian, the charters of the mediæval communes offer the same variety as the Gothic architecture of their churches and cathedrals. The same leading ideas in all of them, and the same infinitely rich variety of detail.

Self-jurisdiction was the essential point, and self-jurisdiction meant self-administration. But the commune was not simply an 'autonomous' part of the State—such ambiguous words had not yet been invented by that time—it was a State in itself. It had the right of war and peace, of federation and alliance with its neighbours. It was sovereign in its own affairs, and mixed with no others. The supreme political power could be vested entirely in a democratic forum, as was the case in Pskov, whose *vyeche* sent and received ambassadors, concluded treaties, accepted and sent away princes, or went on without them for dozens of years; or it was vested in, or usurped by, an aristocracy of merchants or even nobles, as was the case in hundreds of Italian and [middle European cities. The principle, nevertheless, remained the same: the city was a State and, what it usurped by, an aristocracy of merchants or even nobles, as was the case perhaps still more remarkable, the inner life of the city and the democratism of its daily life depended but little upon what may be called the political form of the State.

The secret of this seeming anomaly lies in the fact that a mediæval city was not a centralised State; it hardly could be named a State as regards its interior organisation, because the middle ages knew no more of the present centralisation of functions than of the present territorial centralisation. Each group had its share of sovereignty. The city was usually divided into four quarters, or into five to seven sections radiating from a centre, each quarter or section roughly corresponding to a certain prevailing trade or profession, but nevertheless containing inhabitants of different social positions and occupations, nobles, merchants, artisans, or even half-serfs; and each section or quarter constituted a quite independent agglomeration. In Venice, each island was an independent political community. It had its own organised trades, its own commerce in salt, its own jurisdiction and administration, its own forum; and the nomination of a doge by the city changed nothing in the inner independence of the units.⁴² In Cologne, we see the inhabitants divided into *Geburschaften* and *Heimschaften* (*vicinice*), i.e. neighbour guilds, which dated from the Franconian period. Each of them had its judge (*Burrichter*) and the usual twelve elected sentence-finders (*Schöffen*), its Vogt, and its

⁴² Lebret, *Histoire de Venise*, i. 393; also Marin, quoted by Leo and Botta in *Histoire de l'Italie*, French edition, 1844, t. i. 500.

greve or commander of the local militia.⁴³ The story of early London before the Conquest—Mr. Green says—is that ‘of a number of little groups scattered here and there over the area within the walls, each growing up with its own life and institutions, guilds, soles, religious houses and the like, and only slowly drawing together into a municipal union.’⁴⁴ And if we refer to the annals of the Russian cities, Novgorod and Pskov, both of which are relatively rich in local details, we find the section (*konets*) consisting of independent streets (*ulitsa*), each of which, though chiefly peopled with artisans of a certain craft, had also merchants and landowners among its inhabitants, and was a separate community. It had the communal responsibility of all members in case of crime, its own jurisdiction and administration by street aldermen (*ulichanskiye starosty*), its own seal and, in case of need, its own forum; its own militia, as also its self-elected priests and its own collective life and collective enterprise.⁴⁵

The mediaeval city thus appears as a double federation: of all householders united into small territorial unions—the street, the parish, the section—and of individuals united by oath into guilds according to their professions, the former being a produce of the village-community origin of the city, while the second is a subsequent growth called to life by new conditions.

To guarantee liberty, self-administration, and peace was the chief aim of the mediaeval city; and labour, as we shall presently see when speaking of the craft guilds, was its chief foundation. But ‘production’ did not absorb the whole attention of the mediaeval economist. With his practical mind, he understood that ‘consumption’ must be guaranteed in order to obtain production; and therefore, to provide for ‘the common first food and lodging of poor and rich alike’ (*gemeine nothdurft vnd gemach armer vnd richer*⁴⁶) was the fundamental principle in each city. The purchase of food supplies and other first necessities (coal, wood, &c.) before they had reached the market, or altogether in especially favourable conditions from which others would be excluded—the *preemptio* in a word—was entirely prohibited. Everything had to go to the market and be offered there for everyone’s purchase, till the ringing of the bell had closed the market. Then only could the retailer buy the remainder, and even then his profit should be an ‘honest profit’ only.⁴⁷ Moreover, when

⁴³ Dr. W. Arnold, *Verfassungsgeschichte der deutschen Freistädte*, 1854, Bd. ii. 227 seq.; Ennen, *Geschichte der Stadt Koeln*, Bd. i. 228–229; also the documents published by Ennen and Eckert.

⁴⁴ *Conquest of England*, 1883, p. 453.

⁴⁵ Byelaeff, *Russian History*, vols. ii. and iii.

⁴⁶ W. Gramich, *Verfassungs- und Verwaltungsgeschichte der Stadt Würzburg im 13. bis zum 15. Jahrhundert*, Würzburg, 1882, p. 34.

⁴⁷ When a boat brought a cargo of coal to Würzburg, coal could only be sold in retail during the first eight days, each family being entitled to no more than fifty basketfuls. The remaining cargo could be sold wholesale, but the retailer was

corn was bought by a baker wholesale after the close of the market, every citizen had the right to claim part of the corn (about half-a-quarter) for his own use, at wholesale price, if he did so before the final conclusion of the bargain; and reciprocally, every baker could claim the same if the citizen purchased corn for re-selling it. In the first case, the corn had only to be brought to the town mill to be ground in its proper turn for a settled price, and the bread could be baked in the *four banal*, or communal oven.⁴⁸ In short, if a scarcity visited the city, all had to suffer from it more or less; but apart from the calamities, so long as the free cities existed no one could die in their midst from starvation, as is unhappily too often the case in our own times.

However, all such regulations belong to later periods of the cities' life, while at an earlier period it was the city itself which used to buy all food supplies for the use of the citizens. The documents recently published by Mr. Gross are quite positive on this point and fully support his conclusion to the effect that the cargoes of subsistences 'were purchased by certain civic officials in the name of the town, and then distributed in shares among the merchant burgesses, no one being allowed to buy wares landed in the port unless the municipal authorities refused to purchase them. This seems—he adds—to have been quite a common practice in England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland.'⁴⁹ Even in the sixteenth century we find that common purchases of corn were made for the 'comoditie and profitt in all things of this. . . . Citie and Chamber of London, and of all the Citizens and Inhabitants of the same as moche as in lieth'—as the Mayor wrote in 1565.⁵⁰ In Venice, the whole of the trade in corn is well known to have been in the hands of the city;

allowed to raise a *zittlicher* profit only, the *unzittlicher*, or dishonest profit, being strictly forbidden (Gramich, *l.c.*). Same in London (*Liber albus*, quoted by Ochenkowski, p. 161), and, in fact, everywhere.

⁴⁸ See Fagniez, *Etudes sur l'industrie et la classe industrielle à Paris au XIII^e et XIV^e siècle*, Paris, 1877, p. 155 *seq.* It hardly need be added that the tax on bread, and on beer as well, was settled after careful experiments as to the quantity of bread and beer which could be obtained from a given amount of corn. The Amiens archives contain the minutes of such experiences (A. de Calonne, *l.c.* pp. 77, 93). Also those of London (Ochenkowski, *England's wirtschaftliche Entwicklung, &c.*, Jena, 1879, p. 165).

⁴⁹ Ch. Gross, *The Guild Merchant*, Oxford, 1890, i. 135. His documents prove that this practice existed in Liverpool (ii. 148-150), Waterford in Ireland, Neath in Wales, and Linlithgow and Thurso in Scotland. Mr. Gross's texts also show that the purchases were made for distribution, not only among the merchant burgesses, but 'upon all citsains and commynalte' (p. 136, *note*), or, as the Thurso ordinance of the seventeenth century runs, to 'make offer to the merchants, craftsmen, and inhabitants of the said burgh, that they may have their proportion of the same, according to their necessitys and ability.'

⁵⁰ *The Early History of the Guild of Merchant Taylors*, by Charles M. Clode, London, 1888, i. 361, appendix 10; also the following appendix which shows that the same purchases were made in 1546.

the 'quarters,' on receiving the cereals from the board which administrated the imports, being bound to send to every citizen's house the quantity allotted to him.⁵¹ In France, the city of Amiens used to purchase salt and to distribute it to all citizens at cost price; ⁵² and even now one sees in many French towns the *halles* which formerly were municipal *dépôts* for corn and salt.⁵³ In Russia it was a regular custom in Novgorod and Pskov.

The whole matter relative to the communal purchases for the use of the citizens, and the manner in which they used to be made, seems not to have yet received proper attention from the historians of the period; but there are here and there some very interesting facts which throw a new light upon it. Thus there is, among Mr. Gross's documents, a Kilkenny ordinance of the year 1367, from which we learn how the prices of the goods were established. 'The merchants and the sailors,' Mr. Gross writes, 'were to state on oath the first cost of the goods and the expenses of transportation. Then the mayor of the town and two discreet men were to name the price at which the wares were to be sold.' The same rule held good in Thurso for merchandise coming 'by sea or land.' This way of 'naming the price' so well answers to the very conceptions of trade which were current in mediæval times that it must have been all but universal. To have the price established by a third person was a very old custom; and for all interchange within the city it certainly was a widely spread habit to leave the establishment of prices to 'discreet men'—to a third party—and not to the vendor or the buyer. But this order of things takes us still further back in the history of trade—namely, to a time when trade in staple produce was carried on by the whole city, and the merchants were only the commissioners, the trustees, of the city for selling the goods which it exported. A Waterford ordinance, published also by Mr. Gross, says 'that all manere of marchandis *what so ever kynde thei be of* . . . shal be bought by the Maire and balives which bene commene biers [common buyers, for the town] for the time being, and to distribute the same on freemen of the citie (the propre goods of free citisains and inhabitants only excepted).' This ordinance can hardly be explained otherwise than by admitting that all the exterior trade of the town was carried on by its agents. Moreover, we have direct evidence of such having been the case for Novgorod and Pskov. It was the Sovereign Novgorod and the Sovereign Pskov who sent their caravans of merchants to distant lands.

⁵¹ Cibrario, *Les conditions économiques de l'Italie au temps de Dante*, Paris, 1865, p. 44.

⁵² A. de Calonne, *La vie municipale au XV^{me} siècle dans le Nord de la France*, Paris, 1880, pp. 12-16. In 1485 the city permitted the export to Antwerp of a certain quantity of corn, 'the inhabitants of Antwerp being always ready to be agreeable to the merchants and burgesses of Amiens' (*ibid.*, pp. 75-77 and texts).

⁵³ A. Babeau, *La ville sous l'ancien régime*, Paris, 1880.

We know also that in nearly all mediæval cities of Middle and Western Europe, the craft guilds used to buy, as a body, all necessary raw produce, and to sell the produce of their work through their officials, and it is hardly possible that the same should not have been done for exterior trade—the more so as it is well known that up to the thirteenth century, not only all merchants of a given city were considered abroad as responsible in a body for debts contracted by any one of them, but the whole city as well was responsible for the debts of each one of its merchants. Only in the twelfth and thirteenth century the towns on the Rhine entered into special treaties abolishing this responsibility.⁵⁴ And finally we have the remarkable Ipswich document published by Mr. Gross, from which document we learn that the merchant gild of this town was constituted by all who had the freedom of the city, and who wished to pay their contribution ('their hanse') to the gild, the whole community discussing all together how better to maintain the merchant gild, and giving it certain privileges. The merchant gild of Ipswich thus appears rather as a body of trustees of the town than as a common private gild.

In short, the more we begin to know the mediæval city the more we see that it was not simply a political organisation for the protection of certain political liberties. It was an attempt at organising, on a much grander scale than in a village community, a close union for mutual aid and support, for consumption and production, and for social life altogether, without imposing upon men the fetters of the State, but giving full liberty of expression to the creative genius of each separate group of individuals in art, crafts, science, commerce, and political organisation. How far this attempt has been successful will be best seen when we have analysed in the second part of this paper the organisation of labour in the mediæval city, the relations of the cities with the surrounding peasant population as well as with other cities, the intellectual, industrial, and artistic progress realised, and the causes which finally brought these wonderful organisations to decay.

P. KROPOTKIN.

⁵⁴ Ennen, *Geschichte der Stadt Köln*, i. 491, 492, also texts.

MUTUAL AID
IN THE MEDIÆVAL CITY

II

THE mediæval cities were not organised upon some preconceived plan in obedience to the will of an outside legislator. Each of them was a natural growth in the full sense of the word—an always varying result of struggle between various forces which adjusted and re-adjusted themselves in conformity with their relative energies, the chances of their conflicts, and the support they found in their surroundings. Therefore, there are not two cities whose inner organisation and destinies would have been identical. Each one, taken separately, varies from century to century. And yet, when we cast a broad glance upon all the cities of Europe, the local and national unlikenesses disappear, and we are struck to find among all of them a striking resemblance, although each has developed for itself, independently from the others, and in different conditions. A small town in the north of Scotland, with its population of coarse labourers and fishermen; a rich city of Flanders, with its world-wide commerce, luxury, love of amusement and animated life; an Italian city enriched by its intercourse with the East, and breeding within its walls a refined artistic taste and civilisation; and a poor, chiefly agricultural, city in the marsh and lake district of Russia, seem to have little in common. And nevertheless, the leading lines of their organisation, and the spirit which animates them, are imbued with a strong family likeness. Everywhere we see the same federations of small communities and guilds, the same 'sub-towns' round the mother city, the same folkmote, and the same insigns of its independence. The *defensor* of the city, under different names and in different accoutrements, represents the same authority and interests; food supplies, labour and commerce, are organised on closely similar lines; inner and outer struggles are fought with like ambitions; nay, the very formulæ used in the struggles, as also in the annals, the ordinances, and the rolls, are identical; and the architectural monuments, whether Gothic, Roman, or Byzantine in style, express the same aspirations and the same ideals; they are conceived and

built in the same way. Many dissemblances are mere differences of age, and those disparities between sister cities which are real are repeated in different parts of Europe. The unity of the leading idea and the identity of origin make up for differences of climate, geographical situation, wealth, language and religion. This is why we can speak of *the* mediæval city as of a well-defined phase of civilisation; and while every research insisting upon local and individual differences is most welcome, we may still indicate the chief lines of development which are common to all cities.¹

There is no doubt that the protection which used to be accorded to the market-place from the earliest barbarian times has played an important, though not an exclusive, part in the emancipation of the mediæval city. The early barbarians knew no trade within their village communities; they traded with strangers only, at certain definite spots, on certain determined days. And, in order that the stranger might come to the barter-place without risk of being slain for some feud which might be running between two kins, the market was always placed under the special protection of all kins. It was inviolable, like the place of worship under the shadow of which it was held. With the Kabyles it is still *annaya*, like the footpath along which women carry water from the well; neither must be trodden upon in arms, even during inter-tribal wars. In mediæval times the market universally enjoyed the same protection.² No feud could be

¹ The literature of the subject is immense; but there is no work yet which treats of the mediæval city as of a whole. For the French Communes, Augustin Thierry's *Lettres* and *Considérations sur l'histoire de France* still remain classical, and Luchaire's *Communes françaises* is a beautiful addition on the same lines. For the cities of Italy, the great work of Sismondi (*Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge*, Paris, 1826, 16 vols.), Leo and Botta's *History of Italy*, Ferrari's *Révolutions d'Italie*, and Hegel's *Geschichte der Städteverfassung in Italien*, are the chief sources of general information. For Germany we have Maurer's *Städteverfassung*, Barthold's *Geschichte der deutschen Städte*, and, of recent works, Hegel's *Städte und Gilden der germanischen Völker* (2 vols. Leipzig, 1891), and Dr. Otto Kallisen's *Die deutschen Städte im Mittelalter* (Halle, 1891, not yet completed), as also Janssen's *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes* (5 vols. 1886), which, let us hope, will soon be translated into English (French translation in 1892). For Belgium, A. Wauters, *Les Libertés communales* (Bruxelles, 1869-78, 3 vols.). For Russia, Bychael's, Kostomarov's and Sergievich's works. And finally, for England, we possess one of the best works on cities of a wider region in Mrs. J. R. Green's *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century* (2 vols. London, 1894), which, to my regret, I could peruse only too late to borrow from it more illustrations of English town life. We have, moreover, a wealth of well-known local histories, and several excellent works of general or economical history which I have so often mentioned in this and the preceding essay. The richness of literature consists, however, chiefly in separate, sometimes admirable, researches into the history of separate cities, especially Italian and German; the guilds; the land question; the economical principles of the time; the economical importance of guilds and crafts; the leagues between cities (the Hansa), and communal art. An incredible wealth of information is contained in works of this second category, of which only some of the more important are named in these pages.

² Kulischer, in an excellent essay on primitive trade (*Zeitschrift für Völkerpsychologie*, Bd. x. 380), also points out that, according to Herodotus, the Argippæans

prosecuted on the place whereto people came to trade, nor within a certain radius from it; and if a quarrel arose in the motley crowd of buyers and sellers, it had to be brought before those under whose protection the market stood—the community's tribunal, or the bishop's, the lord's, or the king's judge. A stranger who came to trade was a guest, and he went on under this very name. Even the lord who had no scruples about robbing a merchant on the high road, respected the *Weichbild*, that is, the pole which stood in the market-place and bore either the king's arms, or a glove, or the image of the local saint, or simply a cross, according to whether the market was under the protection of the king, the lord, the local church, or the folk-mote—the *vyechke*.³

It is easy to understand how the self-jurisdiction of the city could develop out of the special jurisdiction in the market-place, when this last right was conceded, willingly or not, to the city itself. And such an origin of the city's liberties, which can be traced in very many cases, necessarily laid a special stamp upon their subsequent development. It gave a predominance to the trading part of the community. The burghers who possessed a house in the city at the time being, and were co-owners in the town-lands, constituted very often a merchant gild which held in its hands the city's trade; and although at the outset every burgher, rich and poor, could make part of the merchant gild, and the trade itself seems to have been carried on for the entire city by its trustees, the gild gradually became a sort of privileged body. It jealously prevented the outsiders who soon began to flock into the free cities from entering the gild, and kept the advantages resulting from trade for the few 'families' which had been burghers at the time of the emancipation. There evidently was a danger of a merchant oligarchy being thus constituted. But already in the tenth, and still more during the two next centuries, the chief crafts, also organised in gilds, were powerful enough to check the oligarchic tendencies of the merchants. The craft gild being then a common seller of its produce and a common buyer of the raw materials, its members were merchants and manual workers at the same time; and the predominance taken by the old craft gilds from the very beginnings of the free city life guaranteed to manual labour the high position which it afterwards occupied

were considered inviolable, because the trade between the Scythians and the northern tribes took place on their territory. A fugitive was sacred on their territory, and they were often asked to act as arbiters for their neighbours.

³ Some discussion has lately taken place upon the *Weichbild* and the *Weichbild*-law, which still remain obscure (see Zöpfl, *Alterthümer des deutschen Reichs und Rechts*, iii. 29; Kallsen, i. 316). The above explanation seems to be the more probable, but, of course, it must be tested by further research. It is also evident that, to use a Scotch expression, the 'mercet cross' could be considered as an emblem of Church jurisdiction, but we find it both in bishop cities and in those in which the folk-mote was sovereign.

in the city.⁴ In fact, in a mediæval city manual labour was no token of inferiority; it bore, on the contrary, traces of the high respect it had been kept in in the village community. Manual labour in a 'mystery' was considered as a pious duty towards the citizens, as a public function (*Amt*), as honourable as any other. An idea of 'justice' to the community, of 'right' towards both producer and consumer, which would seem so extravagant now, penetrated production and exchange. The tanner's, the cooper's, or the shoemaker's work must be 'just,' fair, they wrote in those times. Wood, leather or thread which are used by the artisan must be 'right'; bread must be baked 'in justice,' and so on. Transport this language into our present life, and it would seem affected and unnatural; but it was natural and unaffected then, because the mediæval artisan did not produce for an unknown buyer, or to throw his goods into an unknown market. He produced for his gild first; for a brotherhood of men who knew each other, knew the technics of the craft, and, in naming the price of each product, could appreciate the skill displayed in its fabrication or the labour bestowed upon it. Then the gild, not the separate producer, offered the goods for sale in the community, and this last, in its turn, offered to the brotherhood of allied communities those goods which were exported, and assumed responsibility for their quality. With such an organisation, it was the ambition of each craft not to offer goods of inferior quality, and technical defects or adulterations became a matter concerning the whole community, because, an ordinance says, 'they would destroy public confidence.'⁵ Production being thus a social duty, placed under the control of the whole *amitas*, manual labour could not fall into the degraded condition which it occupies now, so long as the free city was living.

A difference between master and apprentice, or between master and worker (*compayne*, *Geselle*), existed in the mediæval cities from their very beginnings; but this was at the outset a mere difference of age and skill, not of wealth and power. After a seven years' apprentice-

⁴ For all concerning the merchant gild see Mr. Gross's exhaustive work, *The Gild Merchant* (Oxford, 1890, 2 vols.); also Mrs. Green's remarks in *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, vol. ii. chaps. v. viii. x.; and A. Doren's review of the subject in Schmoller's *Forschungen*, vol. xii. If the considerations indicated in the first part of this essay (according to which trade was communal at its beginnings) prove to be correct, it will be permissible to suggest as a probable hypothesis that the gild merchant was a body entrusted with commerce in the interest of the whole city, and only gradually became a gild of merchants trading for themselves; while the merchant adventurers of this country, the Novgorod *porolniki* (free colonisers and merchants) and the *mercato personati*, would be those to whom it was left to open new markets and new branches of commerce for themselves. Altogether, it must be remarked that the origin of the mediæval city can be ascribed to no separate agency. It was a result of many agencies in different degrees.

⁵ Janssen's *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, i. 315; Gramich's *Würzburg*; and, in fact, any collection of ordinances.

ship, and after having proved his knowledge and capacities by a work of art, the apprentice became a master himself. And only much later, in the sixteenth century, after the royal power had destroyed the city and the craft organisation, was it possible to become master in virtue of simple inheritance or wealth. But this was also the time of a general decay in mediæval industries and art.

There was not much room for hired work in the early flourishing periods of the mediæval cities, still less for individual hirelings. The work of the weavers, the archers, the smiths, the bakers, and so on, was performed for the craft and the city; and when craftsmen were hired in the building trades, they worked as temporary corporations (as they still do in the Russian *artels*), whose work was paid *en bloc*. Work for a master began to multiply only later on; but even in this case the worker was paid better than he is paid now, even in this country, and very much better than he used to be paid all over Europe in the first half of this century. Thorold Rogers has familiarised English readers with this idea; but the same is true for the Continent as well, as is shown by the researches of Falke and Schönberg, and by many occasional indications. Even in the fifteenth century a mason, a carpenter, or a smith worker would be paid at Amiens four *sols* a day, which corresponded to forty-eight pounds of bread, or to the eighth part of a small ox (*bouvard*). In Saxony, the salary of the *Geselle* in the building trade was such that, to put it in Falke's words, he could buy with his six days' wages three sheep and one pair of shoes.⁶ The donations of workers (*Geselle*) to cathedrals also bear testimony of their relative well-being, to say nothing of the glorious donations of certain craft guilds nor of what they used to spend in festivities and pageants.⁷ In fact, the more we learn about the mediæval city, the more we are convinced that at no time has labour enjoyed such conditions of prosperity and such respect as when city life stood at its highest.

More than that; not only many aspirations of our modern radicals were already realised in the middle ages, but much of what is described now as Utopian was accepted then as a matter of fact. We are laughed at when we say that work must be pleasant, but—'everyone must be pleased with his work,' a mediæval Kuttentberg ordi-

⁶ Falke, *Geschichtliche Statistik*, i. 373-393, and ii. 66; quoted in Janssen's *Geschichte*, i. 339; J. D. Blavignac, in *Comptes et dépenses de la construction du clocher de Saint-Nicolas à Fribourg en Suisse*, comes to a similar conclusion. For Amiens, De Calonne's *Vie Municipale*, p. 99 and Appendix. For a thorough appreciation and graphical representation of the mediæval wages in this country and their value, see G. Steffen's excellent article in this Review for 1891.

⁷ To quote but one example out of many which may be found in Schönberg's and Falke's works, the sixteen shoemaker workers (*Schusterknechte*) of the town Xanten, on the Rhine, gave, for erecting a screen and an altar in the church, 75 guldens of subscriptions, and 12 guldens out of their box, which money was worth, according to the best valuations, ten times its present value.

nance says, 'and no one shall, while doing nothing, (*mit nichts thun*), appropriate for himself what others have produced by application and work, because laws must be a shield for application and work.'⁸ And amidst all present talk about an eight hours' day, it may be well to remember an ordinance of Ferdinand the First relative to the Imperial coal mines, which settled the miner's day at eight hours, 'as it used to be of old' (*wie vor Alters herkommen*), and work on Saturday afternoon was prohibited. Longer hours were very rare, we are told by Janssen, while shorter hours were of common occurrence. In this country, in the fifteenth century, Rogers says, 'the workmen worked only forty-eight hours a week.'⁹ The Saturday half-holiday, too, which we consider as a modern conquest, was in reality an old mediæval institution; it was bathing-time for a great part of the community, while Wednesday afternoon was bathing-time for the *Geselle*.¹⁰ And although school meals did not exist—probably because no children went hungry to school—a distribution of bath-money to the children whose parents found difficulty in providing it was habitual in several places. As to Labour Congresses, they also were a regular feature of the middle ages. In some parts of Germany craftsmen of the same trade, belonging to different communes, used to come together every year to discuss questions relative to their trade, the years of apprenticeship, the wandering years, the wages, and so on; and in 1572, the Hanseatic towns formally recognised the right of the crafts to come together at periodical congresses, and to take any resolutions, so long as they were not contrary to the cities' rolls, relative to the quality of goods. Such Labour Congresses, partly international like the Hansa itself, are known to have been held by bakers, founders, smiths, tanners, sword-makers and cask-makers.¹¹

The craft organisation required, of course, a close supervision of the craftsmen by the gild, and special jurates were always nominated for that purpose. But it is most remarkable that, so long as the cities lived their free life, no complaints were heard about the supervision; while, after the State had stepped in, confiscating the property of the gilds and destroying their independence in favour of its own bureaucracy, the complaints became simply countless.¹² On the other hand, the immensity of progress realised in all arts under the

⁸ Quoted by Janssen, *l.c.* i. 343.

⁹ Janssen, *l.c.* See also Dr. Alwin Schultz, *Deutsches Leben im XIV. und XV. Jahrhundert*, grosse Ausgabe, Wien, 1892, pp. 67, *seq.*

¹⁰ *The Economical Interpretation of History*, London, 1891, p. 303.

¹¹ W. Stieda, 'Hansische Vereinbarungen über städtisches Gewerbe im XIV. und XV. Jahrhundert,' in *Hansische Geschichtsblätter*, Jahrgang 1886, p. 121. Schönberg's *Wirtschaftliche Bedeutung der Zünfte*; also, partly, Roscher.

¹² See Toulmin Smith's deeply felt remarks about the royal spoliation of the gilds, in Miss Smith's Introduction to *English Gilds*. In France the same royal spoliation and abolition of the gilds' jurisdiction was begun from 1306, and the final blow was struck in 1382 (Fagniez, *l.c.* pp. 52-54).

mediaeval gild system is the best proof that the system was no hindrance to individual initiative.¹³ The fact is, that the mediæval gild, like the mediæval parish, 'street,' or 'quarter,' was not a body of citizens, placed under the control of State functionaries; it was a union of all men connected with a given trade: jurate buyers of raw produce, sellers of manufactured goods, and artisans—masters, 'compaynes,' and apprentices. For the inner organisation of the trade its assembly was sovereign, so long as it did not hamper the other gilds, in which case the matter was brought before the gild of the gilds—the city. But there was in it something more than that. It had its own self-jurisdiction, its own military force, its own general assemblies, its own traditions of struggles, glory, and independence, its own relations with other gilds of the same trade in other cities: it had, in a word, a full organic life which could only result from the integrality of the vital functions. When the town was called to arms, the gild appeared as a separate company (*Schaar*), armed with its own arms (or its own guns, lovingly decorated by the gild, at a subsequent epoch), under its own self-elected commanders. It was, in a word, as independent a unit of the federation as the republic of Uri or Geneva was fifty years ago in the Swiss Confederation. So that, to compare it with a modern trade union, divested of all attributes of State sovereignty, and reduced to a couple of functions of secondary importance, is as unreasonable as to compare Florence or Brügge with a French commune vegetating under the Code Napoléon, or with a Russian town placed under Catherine the Second's municipal law. Both have elected mayors, and the latter has also its craft corporations; but the difference is—all the difference that exists between Florence and Fontenay-les-Oies or Tsarevokokshaisk, or between a Venetian doge and a modern mayor who lifts his hat before the *sous-préfet's* clerk.

The mediæval gilds were capable of maintaining their independence; and, later on, especially in the fourteenth century, when, in consequence of several causes which shall presently be indicated, the old municipal life underwent a deep modification, the younger crafts proved strong enough to conquer their due share in the management of the city affairs. The masses, organised in 'minor' arts, rose to wrest the power out of the hands of a growing oligarchy, and mostly succeeded in this task, opening again a new era of prosperity. True, that in some cities the uprising was crushed in blood, and mass

¹³ Adam Smith and his contemporaries knew well what they were condemning when they wrote against the *State* interference in trade and the trade monopolies of *State* creation. Unhappily, their followers, with their hopeless superficiality, flung mediæval gilds and State interference into the same sack, making no distinction between a Versailles edict and a gild ordinance. It hardly need be said that the economists who have seriously studied the subject, like Schönberg (the editor of the well-known course of *Political Economy*), never fell into such an error. But, till lately, diffuse discussions of the above type went on for economical 'science.'

decapitations of workers followed, as was the case in Paris in 1306, and in Cologne in 1371. In such cases the city's liberties rapidly fell into decay, and the city was gradually subdued by the central authority. But the majority of the towns had preserved enough of vitality to come out of the turmoil with a new life and vigour.¹⁴ A new period of rejuvenescence was their reward. New life was infused, and it found its expression in splendid architectural monuments, in a new period of prosperity, in a sudden progress of technics and invention, and in a new intellectual movement leading to the Renaissance and to the Reformation.

The life of a mediæval city was a succession of hard battles to conquer liberty and to maintain it. True, that a strong and tenacious race of burghers had developed during those fierce contests; true, that love and worship of the mother city had been bred by these struggles, and that the grand things achieved by the mediæval communes were a direct outcome of that love. But the sacrifices which the communes had to sustain in the battle for freedom were, nevertheless, cruel, and left deep traces of division on their inner life as well. Very few cities had succeeded, under a concurrence of favourable circumstances, in obtaining liberty at one stroke, and these few mostly lost it equally easily; while the great number had to fight fifty or a hundred years in succession, often more, before their rights to free life had been recognised, and another hundred years to found their liberty on a firm basis—the twelfth century characters thus being but one of the stepping-stones to freedom.¹⁵ In reality, the mediæval city was a fortified oasis amidst a country plunged into feudal submission, and it had to make room for itself by the force of its arms. In consequence of the causes briefly alluded to in the first part of this paper, each village community had gradually fallen under the yoke of some lay or clerical lord. His house had grown to be

¹⁴ In Florence the seven minor arts made their revolution in 1270-82, and its results are fully described by Perrens (*Histoire de Florence*, Paris, 1877, 3 vols.), and especially by Gino Capponi (*Storia della repubblica di Firenze*, 2da edizione, 1876, i. 58-80; translated into German). In Rostock the same movement took place in 1313; in Zürich in 1336; in Bern in 1363; in Braunschweig in 1374, and next year in Hamburg; in Lübeck in 1376-84; and so on. See Schmoller's *Strassburg zur Zeit der Zunfkämpfe* and *Strassburg's Blüthe*; Brentano's *Arbeitergilden der Gegenwart*, 2 vols. Leipzig, 1871-72; Eb. Bain's *Merchant and Craft Gilds*, Aberdeen, 1887, pp. 26-47, 75, &c. As to Mr. Gross's opinion relative to the same struggles in England, see Mrs. Green's remarks in her *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, ii. 190-217; also the chapter on the Labour Question, and, in fact, the whole of this extremely interesting volume. Brentano's views on the crafts' struggles, expressed especially in §§ iii. and iv. of his essay 'On the History and Development of Gilds,' in T. Smith's *English Gilds*, remain classical for the subject, and may be said to have been again and again confirmed by subsequent research.

¹⁵ To give but one example—Cambrai made its first revolution in 907, and, after three or four more revolts, it obtained its charter in 1076. This charter was repealed twice (in 1107 and 1138), and twice obtained again (in 1127 and 1180). Total, 223 years of struggles before conquering the right to independence.

a castle, and his brothers-in-arms were now the scum of adventurers, always ready to plunder the peasants. In addition to three days a week which the peasants had to work for the lord, they had also to bear all sorts of exactions for the right to sow and to crop, to be gay or sad, to live, to marry, or to die. And, worst of all, they were continually plundered by the armed robbers of some neighbouring lord, who chose to consider them as their master's kin, and to take upon themselves, their cattle, or their crops, the revenge for a feud he was fighting against their owner. Every meadow, every field, every river, and road around the city, and every man upon the land belonged to some lord.¹⁶

Freedom could not be maintained in such surroundings, and the cities were compelled to carry on the war outside their walls. The burghers sent out emissaries to lead revolt in the villages; they received villages into their corporations, and they waged direct war against the nobles. In Italy, where the land was thickly sprinkled with feudal castles, the war assumed heroic proportions, and was fought with a stern acrimony on both sides. Florence sustained for seventy-seven years a succession of bloody wars, in order to free its *contado* from the nobles; but when the conquest had been accomplished (in 1181) all had to begin anew. The nobles rallied; they constituted their own leagues in opposition to the leagues of the towns, and, receiving fresh support from either the Emperor or the Pope, they made the war last for another 130 years. The same took place in Rome, in Lombardy, all over Italy.

Prodigies of valour, audacity, and tenaciousness were displayed by the citizens in these wars. But the bows and the hatchets of the arts and crafts had not always the upper hand in their encounters with the armour-clad knights, and many castles withstood the ingenious machinery and the perseverance of the citizens. Some cities, like

¹⁶ The hatred of the burghers towards the feudal barons is best expressed in the wording of the charters which they compelled them to sign. Heinrich der Fünfte is made to sign in the charter granted to Speier in 1111, that he frees the burghers from 'the horrible and execrable law of mortmain, through which the town has been sunk into deepest poverty (*von dem scheusslichen und nichtswürdigen Gesetze, welches gemein Budel genannt wird*)' (Kallsen, i. 307). The *coutume* of Bayonne, written about 1273 contains such passages as: 'The people is anterior to the lords. It is the people, more numerous than all others, who, desirous of peace, has made the lords for bridling and knocking down the powerful ones,' and so on (Giry, *Etablissements de Rouen*, i. 117, quoted by Luchaire, p. 24). A charter submitted for King Robert's signature is equally characteristic. He is made to say in it: 'I shall rob no oxen nor other animals. I shall seize no merchants, nor take their moneys, nor impose ransom. From Lady Day to the All Saints' Day I shall seize no horse, nor mare, nor foals, in the meadows. I shall not burn the mills, nor rob the flour. . . . I shall offer no protection to thieves,' &c. (Pfister has published that document, reproduced by Luchaire). The charter 'granted' by the Besançon Archbishop Hugues, in which he has been compelled to enumerate all the mischiefs due to his mortmain rights, is equally characteristic (see Tuetey, 'Etude sur le droit municipal . . . en Franche-Comté,' in *Mémoires de la Société d'émulation de Montbéliard*, 2^e série, ii. 129, *seq.*). And so on.

Florence, Bologna, and many towns in France, Germany, and Bohemia, succeeded in emancipating the surrounding villages, and they were rewarded for their efforts by an extraordinary prosperity and tranquillity. But even here, and still more in the less strong or less impulsive towns, the merchants and artisans, exhausted by war, and misunderstanding their own interests, bargained over the peasants' heads. They compelled the lord to swear allegiance to the city; his country castle was dismantled, and he agreed to build a house and to reside in the city, of which he became a co-burgher (*combourgeois, con-cittadino*); but he maintained in return most of his rights upon the peasants, who only won a partial relief from their burdens. The burgher could not understand that equal rights of citizenship might be granted to the peasant upon whose food supplies he had to rely, and a deep rent was traced between town and village. In some cases the peasants simply changed owners, the city buying out the barons' rights and selling them in shares to her own citizens.¹⁷ Serfdom was maintained, and only much later on, towards the end of the thirteenth century, it was the craft revolution which undertook to put an end to it, and abolished personal servitude, but dispossessed at the same time the serfs of the land.¹⁸ It hardly need be added that the fatal results of such policy were soon felt by the cities themselves; the country became the city's enemy.

The war against the castles had another bad effect. It involved the cities in a long succession of mutual wars, which have given origin to the theory, till lately in vogue, namely, that the towns lost their independence through their own jealousies and mutual fights. The imperialist historians have especially supported this theory, which, however, is very much undermined now by modern research. It is certain that in Italy cities fought each other with a stubborn animosity, but nowhere else did such contests attain the same proportions; and in Italy itself the city wars, especially those of the earlier period, had their special causes. They were (as was already shown by Sismondi and Ferrari) a mere continuation of the war against the castles—the free municipal and federative principle unavoidably entering into a fierce contest with feudalism, imperialism, and papacy. Many towns which had but partially shaken off the yoke of the bishop, the lord, or the Emperor, were simply driven against the free cities by the nobles, the Emperor, and Church, whose policy was to divide the cities and to arm them against each other. These special circumstances (partly reflected on to Germany also)

¹⁷ This seems to have been often the case in Italy. In Switzerland Bern bought even the towns of Thun and Burgdorf.

¹⁸ Such was, at least, the case in the cities of Tuscany (Florence, Lucca, Sienna, Bologna, &c.), for which the relations between city and peasants are best known. (Luchitzkiy, 'Slavery and Russian Slaves in Florence,' in Kieff University *Izvestia* for 1885, who has perused Rumohr's *Ursprung der Besitzlosigkeit der Colonien in Toscana*, 1830).

explain why the Italian towns, some of which sought support with the Emperor to combat the Pope, while the others sought support from the Church to resist the Emperor, were soon divided into a Ghibelin and a Guelf camp, and why the same division appeared in each separate city.¹⁹

The immense economical progress realised by most Italian cities just at the time when these wars were hottest,²⁰ and the alliances so easily concluded between towns, still better characterise those struggles and further undermine the above theory. Already in the years 1130-1150 powerful leagues came into existence; and a few years later, when Frederick Barbarossa invaded Italy and, supported by the nobles and some retardatory cities, marched against Milan, popular enthusiasm was roused in many towns by popular preachers. Crema, Piacenza, Brescia, Tortona, &c., went to the rescue; the banners of the guilds of Verona, Padua, Vicenza, and Trevisa floated side by side in the cities' camp against the banners of the Emperor and the nobles. Next year the Lombardian League came into existence, and sixty years later we see it reinforced by many other cities, and forming a lasting organisation which had half of its federal war-chest in Genoa, and the other half in Venice.²¹ In Tuscany, Florence headed another powerful league, to which Lucca, Bologna, Pistoia, &c., belonged, and which played an important part in crushing down the nobles in middle Italy, while smaller leagues were of common occurrence. It is thus certain that although petty jealousies undoubtedly existed, and discord could be easily sown, they did not prevent the towns from uniting together for the common defence of liberty. Only later on, when separate cities became little States, wars broke out between them, as always must be the case when States struggle for supremacy or colonies.

Similar leagues were formed in Germany for the same purpose. When, under the successors of Conrad, the land was the prey of the interminable feuds between the nobles, the Westphalian towns concluded a league against the knights, one of the clauses of which was never to lend money to a knight who would continue to conceal stolen goods.²² When 'the knights and the nobles lived on plunder, and murdered whom they chose to murder,' as the *Wormser Zorn* complains, the cities on the Rhine (Mainz, Cologne, Speier, Strasburg, and Basel) took the initiative of a league which soon numbered

¹⁹ Ferrari's generalisations are often too theoretical to be always correct; but his views upon the part played by the nobles in the city wars are based upon a wide range of authenticated facts.

²⁰ Only such cities as stubbornly kept to the cause of the barons, like Pisa or Verona, lost through the wars. For many towns which fought on the barons' side, the defeat was also the beginning of liberation and progress.

²¹ Ferrari, ii. 18, 104, *seq.*; Leo and Botta, i. 432.

²² Joh. Falke, *Die Hansa als Deutsche See- und Handelsmacht*, Berlin, 1863, pp. 31, 55.

sixty allied towns, repressed the robbers, and maintained peace. Later on, the league of the towns of Suabia, divided into three 'peace districts' (Augsburg, Constance, and Ulm), had the same purpose. And even when such leagues were broken,²³ they lived long enough to show that while the supposed peacemakers—the kings, the emperors, and the Church—fomented discord, and were themselves helpless against the robber knights, it was from the cities that the impulse came for re-establishing peace and union. The cities—not the emperors—were the real makers of the national unity.²⁴

Similar federations were organised for the same purpose among small villages, and now that attention has been drawn to this subject by Luchaire we may expect soon to learn much more about them. Villages joined into small federations in the *contado* of Florence, so also in the dependencies of Novgorod and Pskov. As to France, there is positive evidence of a federation of seventeen peasant villages which has existed in the Laonnais for nearly a hundred years (till 1256), and has fought hard for its independence. Three more peasant republics, which had sworn charters similar to those of Laon and Soissons, existed in the neighbourhood of Laon, and, their territories being contiguous, they supported each other in their liberation wars. Altogether, Luchaire is of the opinion that many such federations must have come into existence in France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but that documents relative to them are mostly lost. Of course, being unprotected by walls, they could easily be crushed down by the kings and the lords; but in certain favourable circumstances, when they found support in a league of towns and protection in their mountains, such peasant republics became independent units of the Swiss Confederation.²⁵

As to unions between cities for peaceful purposes, they were of quite common occurrence. The intercourse which had been established during the period of liberation was not interrupted afterwards. Sometimes, when the *scabini* of a German town, having to pronounce judgment in a new or complicated case, declared that they knew not the sentence (*des Urtheiles nicht weise zu sein*), they sent delegates to another city to get the sentence. The same happened also in France;²⁶ while Forli and Ravenna are known to have mutually

²³ For Aachen and Cologne we have direct testimony that the bishops of these two cities—one of them bought by the enemy—opened to him the gates.

²⁴ See the facts, though not always the conclusions, of Nitzsch, iii. 133, *seq.*; also Kallsen, i. 468, &c.

²⁵ On the Commune of the Laonnais, which, until Melleville's researches (*Histoire de la Commune du Laonnais*, Paris, 1853), was confounded with the Commune of Laon, see Luchaire, pp. 75, *seq.* For the early peasants' guilds and subsequent unions see R. Wilman's 'Die ländlichen Schutzgilden Westphaliens,' in *Zeitschrift für Kulturgeschichte*, neue Folge, Bd. iii., quoted in Henne-am-Rhyn's *Kulturgeschichte*, iii. 249.

²⁶ Luchaire, p. 149.

naturalised their citizens and granted them full rights in both cities. To submit a contest arisen between two towns, or within a city, to another commune which was invited to act as arbiter, was also in the spirit of the times.²⁷ As to commercial treaties between cities, they were quite habitual.²⁸ Unions for regulating the production and the sizes of casks which were used for the commerce in wine, 'herring unions,' and so on, were mere precursors of the great commercial federations of the Flemish Hansa, and, later on, of the great North German Hansa, the history of which alone might contribute pages and pages to illustrate the federation spirit which permeated men at that time. It hardly need be added, that through the Hanseatic unions the mediæval cities have contributed more to the development of international intercourse, navigation, and maritime discovery than all the States of the first seventeen centuries of our era.

In a word, federations between small territorial units, as well as among men united by common pursuits within their respective guilds, and federations between cities and groups of cities constituted the very essence of life and thought during that period. The first five of the second decade of centuries of our era may thus be described as an immense attempt at securing mutual aid and support on a grand scale, by means of the principles of federation and association carried on through all manifestations of human life and to all possible degrees. This attempt was attended with success to a very great extent. It united men formerly divided; it secured them a very great deal of freedom, and it tenfolded their forces. At a time when particularism was bred by so many agencies, and the causes of discord and jealousy might have been so numerous, it is gratifying to see that cities scattered over a wide continent had so much in common, and were so ready to confederate for the prosecution of so many common aims. They succumbed in the long run before powerful enemies; not having understood the mutual aid principle widely enough, they themselves committed fatal faults; but they did not perish through their own jealousies, and their errors were not a want of federation spirit among themselves.

The results of that new move which mankind made in the mediæval city were immense. At the beginning of the eleventh century the towns of Europe were small clusters of miserable huts, adorned but with low clumsy churches, the builders of which hardly knew how to make an arch; the arts, mostly consisting of some

²⁷ Two important cities, like Mainz and Worms, would settle a political contest by means of arbitration. After a civil war broken out in Abbeville, Amiens would act, in 1231, as arbiter (Luchaire, 149); and so on.

²⁸ See, for instance, W. Stieda, *Hansische Vereinbarungen*, l.c. p. 114.

weaving and forging, were in their infancy; learning was found in but a few monasteries. Three hundred and fifty years later, the very face of Europe had been changed. The land was dotted with rich cities, surrounded by immense thick walls which were embellished by towers and gates, each of them a work of art in itself. The cathedrals, conceived in a grand style and profusely decorated, lifted their bell-towers to the skies, displaying a purity of form and a boldness of imagination which we now vainly strive to attain. The crafts and arts had risen to a degree of perfection which we can hardly boast of having superseded in many directions, if the inventive skill of the worker and the superior finish of his work be appreciated higher than rapidity of fabrication. The navies of the free cities furrowed in all directions the Northern and the Southern Mediterranean; one effort more, and they would cross the oceans. Over large tracts of land well-being had taken the place of misery; learning had grown and spread. The methods of science had been elaborated; the basis of natural philosophy had been laid down; and the way had been paved for all the mechanical inventions of which our own times are so proud. Such were the magic changes accomplished in Europe in less than four hundred years. And the losses which Europe sustained through the loss of its free cities can only be understood when we compare the seventeenth century with the fourteenth or the thirteenth. The prosperity which formerly characterised Scotland, Germany, the plains of Italy, was gone. The roads had fallen into an abject state, the cities were depopulated, labour was brought into slavery, art had vanished, commerce itself was decaying.²⁹

If the mediæval cities had bequeathed to us no written documents to testify of their splendour, and left nothing behind but the monuments of building art which we see now all over Europe, from Scotland to Italy, and from Gerona in Spain to Breslau in Slavonian territory, we might yet conclude that the times of independent city life were times of the greatest development of human intellect during the Christian era down to the end of the eighteenth century. On looking, for instance, at a mediæval picture representing Nuremberg with its scores of towers and lofty spires, each of which bore the stamp of free creative art, we can hardly conceive that three hundred years before the town was but a collection of miserable hovels. And our admiration grows when we go into the details of the architecture and decorations of each of the countless churches, bell towers, gates, and communal houses which are scattered all over Europe as far east as Bohemia

²⁹ Cosmo Innes's *Early Scottish History and Scotland in Middle Ages*, quoted by Rev. Denton, *l.c.* pp. 68, 69; Lamprecht's *Deutsches wirthschaftliche Leben im Mittelalter*, review by Schmoller in his *Jahrbuch*, Bd. xii.; Sismondi's *Tableau de l'agriculture toscane*, pp. 226, *seq.* The dominions of Florence could be recognised at a glance through their prosperity.

and the now dead to mother of art, but all fact that of all arts are the highest development it must have originated

Mediæval architecture was a natural development, each architect who knew through artistic effects can be simple logs and the result of collective craft³⁰—it was grand

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The means of construction were infinitely small. Only of but 300 men denation,³¹ and

³⁰ Mr. John J. ... aspect of mediæval ... of ... relations in ... writes, 'not through mechanical construction; and by the subdivision of work standing ... of the social life

³¹ Dr. L. ... 1871.

and the now dead towns of Polish Galicia. Not only Italy, that mother of art, but all Europe is full of such monuments. The very fact that of all arts architecture—a social art above all—had attained the highest development, is significant in itself. To be what it was, it must have originated from an eminently social life.

Mediæval architecture attained its grandeur—not only because it was a natural development of handicraft; not only because each building, each architectural decoration, had been devised by men who knew through the experience of their own hands what artistic effects can be obtained from stone, iron, bronze, or even from simple logs and mortar; not only because each monument was a result of collective experience, accumulated in each ‘mystery’ or craft³⁰—it was grand because it was borne out of a grand idea. Like Greek art, it sprang out of a conception of brotherhood and unity fostered by the city. It had an audacity which could only be won by audacious struggles and victories; it had that expression of vigour, because vigour permeated all the life of the city. A cathedral or a communal house symbolised the grandeur of an organism of which every mason and stonecutter was the builder, and a mediæval building appears—not as a solitary effort to which thousands of slaves would have contributed the share assigned them by one man’s imagination; all the city contributed to it. The lofty bell tower rose upon a structure, grand in itself, in which the life of the city was throbbing—not upon a meaningless scaffold like the Paris iron tower, not as a sham structure in stone intended to conceal the ugliness of an iron frame, as has been done in the Tower Bridge. Like the Acropolis of Athens, the cathedral of a mediæval city was intended to glorify the grandeur of the victorious city, to symbolise the union of its crafts, to express the glory of each citizen in a city of his own creation. After having achieved its craft revolution, the city often began a new cathedral in order to express the new, wider, and broader union which had been called into life.

The means at hand for these grand undertakings were disproportionately small. Cologne Cathedral was begun with a yearly outlay of but 500 marks; a gift of 100 marks was inscribed as a ‘grand donation’;³¹ and even when the work approached completion, and gifts

³⁰ Mr. John J. Ennett (*Six Essays*, London, 1891) has excellent pages on this aspect of mediæval architecture. Mr. Willis, in his appendix to Whewell’s *History of Inductive Sciences* (i. 261–262), has pointed out the beauty of the mechanical relations in mediæval buildings. ‘A new decorative construction was matured,’ he writes, ‘not thwarting and controlling, but assisting and harmonising with the mechanical construction. Every member, every moulding, becomes a sustainer of weight; and by the multiplicity of props assisting each other, and the consequent subdivision of weight, the eye was satisfied of the stability of the structure, notwithstanding curiously slender aspects of the separate parts.’ An art which sprang out of the social life of the city could not be better characterised.

³¹ Dr. L. Ennen, *Der Dom zu Köln, seine Construction und Anstaltung*. Köln, 1871.

poured in in proportion, the yearly outlay in money stood at about 5,000 marks, and never exceeded 14,000. The cathedral of Basel was built with equally small means. But each corporation contributed its part of stone, work, and decorative genius to *their* common monument. Each gild expressed in it its political conceptions, telling in stone or in bronze the history of the city, glorifying the principles of 'Liberty, equality, and fraternity,'³² praising the city's allies, and sending to eternal fire its enemies. And each gild bestowed its *love* upon the communal monument by richly decorating it with stained windows, paintings, 'gates, worthy to be the gates of Paradise,' as Michel Angelo said, or stone decorations of each minutest corner of the building.³³ Small cities, even small parishes,³⁴ vied with the big agglomerations in this work, and the cathedrals of Laon and St. Ouen hardly stand behind that of Rheims, or the Communal House of Bremen, or the folkmote's bell tower of Breslau. 'No works must be begun by the commune but such as are conceived in response to the grand heart of the commune, composed of the hearts of all citizens, united in one common will'—such were the words of the Council of Florence; and this spirit appears in all communal works of common utility, such as the canals, terraces, vineyards, and fruit gardens around Florence, or the irrigation canals which intersected the plains of Lombardy, or the port and aqueduct of Genoa, or, in fact, any works of the kind which were achieved by almost every city.³⁵

All arts had progressed in the same way in the mediæval cities, those of our own days mostly being but a continuation of what had grown at that time. The prosperity of the Flemish cities was based upon the fine woollen cloth they fabricated. Florence, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, before the black death, fabricated from 70,000 to 100,000 *panni* of woollen stuffs, which were valued at 1,200,000 golden florins.³⁶ The chiselling of precious metals, the

³² The three statues are among the outer decorations of Notre Dame de Paris.

³³ Mediæval art, like Greek art, did not know those curiosity-shops which we call a National Gallery or a Museum. A picture was painted, a statue was carved, a bronze decoration was cast to stand in its proper place in a monument of communal art. It lived there, it was part of a whole, and it contributed to give unity to the impression produced by the whole.

³⁴ Cf. J. T. Ennett's 'Second Essay,' p. 36.

³⁵ Sismondi, iv. 172; xvi. 356. The great canal, *Naviglio Grande*, which brings the water from the Tessino, was begun in 1179, *i.e.* after the conquest of independence, and it was ended in the thirteenth century. On the subsequent decay, see xvi. 355.

³⁶ In 1336 it had 8,000 to 10,000 boys and girls in its primary schools, 1,000 to 1,200 boys in its seven middle schools, and from 550 to 600 students in its four universities. The thirty communal hospitals contained over 1,000 beds for a population of 90,000 inhabitants (Capponi, ii. 249, *seq.*). It has more than once been suggested by authoritative writers that education stood, as a rule, at a much higher level than is generally supposed. Certainly so in democratic Nuremberg.

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 of *Inductive Sciences*, i. 212.

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Various causes contrib

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art of casting, the fine forging of iron, were creations of the mediæval 'mysteries' which had succeeded in attaining in their own domains all that could be made by the hand, without the use of a powerful prime motor. By the hand and by invention, because, to use Whewell's words:

Parchment and paper, printing and engraving, improved glass and steel, gunpowder, clocks, telescopes, the mariner's compass, the reformed calendar, the decimal notation; algebra, trigonometry, chemistry, counterpoint (an invention equivalent to a new creation of music); these are all possessions which we inherit from that which has so disparagingly been termed the Stationary Period (*History of Inductive Sciences*, i. 252).

True that no new principle was illustrated by any of these discoveries, as Whewell said; but mediæval science had done something more than the actual discovery of new principles. It had prepared the discovery of all we know at the present time in mechanical sciences by accustoming the explorer to observe facts and to reason from them. It was inductive science, even though it had not yet fully grasped the importance and the powers of induction; and it laid the foundations of both mechanics and natural philosophy. Lord Bacon, Galileo, and Copernicus were the direct descendants of a Roger Bacon and a Michael Scot, as the steam engine was a direct product of the researches carried on in the Italian universities and of the mathematical and technical learning which characterised Nuremberg.

But why should one take trouble to insist upon the advance of science and art in the mediæval city? Is it not enough to point to the cathedrals in the domain of skill, and to the Italian language and the poem of Dante in the domain of thought, to give at once the measure of what the mediæval city *created* during the four centuries it lived?

The mediæval cities have undoubtedly rendered an immense service to European civilisation. They have prevented it from being drifted into the theocracies and despotical states of old; they have endowed it with the variety, the self-reliance, the force of initiative, and the immense intellectual and material energies it now possesses, which are the best pledge for its being able to resist any new invasion of the East. But why did these centres of civilisation, which attempted to answer to deeply seated needs of human nature, and were so full of life, not live further on? Why were they seized with senile debility in the sixteenth century? and, after having repulsed so many assaults from without, and only borrowed new vigour from their interior struggles, why did they finally succumb to both?

Various causes contributed to this effect, some of them having

their roots in the remote past, while others originated in the mistakes committed by the cities themselves. Towards the end of the fifteenth century, mighty States, reconstructed on the old Roman pattern, were already coming into existence. In each country and each region some feudal lord, more cunning, more given to hoarding, and often less scrupulous than his neighbours, had succeeded in appropriating to himself richer personal domains, more peasants on his lands, more knights in his following, more treasures in his chest. He had chosen for his seat a group of happily situated villages, not yet trained into free municipal life—Paris, Madrid, or Moscow—and with the labour of his serfs he had made of them royal fortified cities, whereto he attracted war companions by a free distribution of villages, and merchants by the protection he offered to trade. The germ of a future State, which began gradually to absorb other similar centres, was thus laid. Lawyers, versed in the study of Roman law, flocked into such centres; a tenacious and ambitious race of men issued from among the burgesses, who equally hated the naughtiness of the lords and what they called the lawlessness of the peasants. The very forms of the village community, unknown to their code, and federalism were repulsive to them as 'barbarian' inheritances. Cæsarism, supported by the fiction of popular consent and by the force of arms, was their ideal, and they worked hard for those who promised to realise it.³⁷

The Christian Church, once a rebel against Roman law and now its ally, worked in the same direction. The attempt at constituting the theocratic Empire of Europe having proved a failure, the more intelligent and ambitious bishops now yielded support to those whom they reckoned upon for reconstituting the power of the Kings of Israel or of the Emperors of Constantinople. The Church bestowed upon the rising rulers her sanctity, she crowned them as God's representatives on earth, she brought to their service the learning and the statesmanship of her ministers, her blessings and maledictions, her riches, and the sympathies she had retained among the poor. The peasants, whom the cities had failed or refused to free, on seeing the burghers impotent to put an end to the interminable wars between the knights—which wars they had so dearly to pay for—now set their hopes upon the King, the Emperor, or the Great Prince; and while aiding them to crush down the mighty feudal owners, they aided them to constitute the centralised State.

³⁷ Cf. L. Ranke's excellent considerations upon the essence of Roman law in his *Weltgeschichte*, Bd. iv. Abth. 2, pp. 20-31. Also Sismondi's remarks upon the part played by the *légistes* in the constitution of royal authority, *Histoire des Français*, Paris, 1326, viii. 85-99. The popular hatred against these '*weise Doktoren und Beutelschneider des Volks*' broke out with full force in the first years of the sixteenth century in the sermons of the early Reform movement.

And finally, the invasions of the terrible wars which shook the sovereignty—He de France, England and France. Little or contributed to the appearance; and the cities of lords, but strongly at their disposal.

The worst was, that the divisions which had grown out of the mental idea of the medieval enough. Mutual aid and association, they must of soundings will absorb the medieval citizen had been. Instead of looking upon the protection of his own contribute their part to a sharp division was between the old and the new-comers. The trade and communal law the latter but the right of the city thus became 'monopoly' and 'the communal, now became 'families, and the next privilege of aggressive

The same division of surrounding villages. peasants, but her wars mentioned, wars for free for freeing the peasants villeins, on condition of would become co-burghers and now residing within its very precinct simple artisans and streets. Each city had and Wism. Drawing retained, they surrounded feudalised the customs discontent began to

"Distantly fully understood burghers" and the new comers of Switzerland, has indicated

And finally, the invasions of the Mongols and the Turks, as well as the terrible wars which soon broke out between the growing centres of sovereignty—Ile de France and Burgundy, Scotland and England, England and France, Lithuania and Poland, Moscow and Tver, and so on—contributed to the same end. Mighty States made their appearance; and the cities had now to resist not only loose federations of lords, but strongly organised centres, which had armies of serfs at their disposal.

The worst was, that the growing autocracies found support in the divisions which had grown within the cities themselves. The fundamental idea of the mediæval city was grand, but it was not wide enough. Mutual aid and support cannot be limited to a small association, they must spread to its surroundings, or else the surroundings will absorb the association. And in this respect the mediæval citizen had committed a formidable mistake at the outset. Instead of looking upon the peasants and artisans who gathered under the protection of his walls as upon so many brothers who would contribute their part to the making of the city—as they really did—a sharp division was traced between the ‘families’ of old burghers and the new-comers. For the former, all benefits from communal trade and communal lands were reserved, and nothing was left for the latter but the right of freely using the skill of their own hands. The city thus became divided into ‘the burghers’ or ‘the commonalty,’ and ‘the inhabitants.’³⁸ The trade, which was formerly communal, now became the privilege of the merchant and artisan ‘families,’ and the next step—that of becoming individual, or the privilege of oppressive trusts—was unavoidable.

The same division took place between the city proper and the surrounding villages. The commune had well tried to free the peasants, but her wars against the lords soon became, as already mentioned, wars for freeing the city itself from the lords, rather than for freeing the peasants. She left to the lord his rights over the villeins, on condition that he would molest the city no more and would become co-burgher. But the nobles ‘adopted’ by the city, and now residing within its walls, simply carried on the old war within its very precincts. They disliked to submit to a tribunal of simple artisans and merchants, and fought their old feuds in the streets. Each city had now its Colonnas and Orsinis, its Overstolzes and Wisers. Drawing large incomes from the estates they had still retained, they surrounded themselves with numerous clients and feudalised the customs and habits of the city itself. And when discontent began to be felt in the artisan classes of the town, they

³⁸ Brentano fully understood the fatal effects of the struggle between the ‘old burghers’ and the new comers. Miaskowski, in his work on the village communities of Switzerland, has indicated the same for village communities.

offered their sword and their followers to settle the differences by a free fight, instead of letting the discontent find out the channels which it did not fail to secure itself in olden times.

The greatest and the most fatal error of most cities was to base their wealth upon commerce and industry, to the neglect of agriculture. They thus repeated the error which had once been committed by the cities of antique Greece, and they fell through it into the same crimes.³⁹ The estrangement of so many cities from the land necessarily drew them into a policy hostile to the land, which became more and more evident in the times of Edward the Third,⁴⁰ the French Jacqueries, the Hussite wars, and the Peasant War in Germany. On the other hand, a commercial policy involved them in distant enterprises. Colonies were founded by the Italians in the south-east, by German cities in the east, by Slavonian cities in the far north-east. Mercenary armies began to be kept for colonial wars, and soon for local defence as well. Loans were contracted to such an extent as to totally demoralise the citizens; and internal contests grew worse and worse at each election, during which the colonial politics in the interest of a few families was at stake. The division into rich and poor grew deeper, and in the sixteenth century, in each city, the royal authority found ready allies and support among the poor.

And there is yet another cause of the decay of communal institutions, which stands higher and lies deeper than all the above. The history of the mediæval cities offers one of the most striking illustrations of the power of *ideas* and *principles* upon the destinies of mankind, and of the quite opposed results which are obtained when a deep modification of leading ideas has taken place. Self-reliance and federalism, the sovereignty of each group, and the construction of the political body from the simple to the composite, were the leading ideas in the eleventh century. But since that time the conceptions had entirely changed. The students of Roman law and the prelates of the Church, closely bound together since the time of Innocent the Third, had succeeded in paralysing the idea—the antique Greek idea—which presided at the foundation of the cities. For two or three hundred years they taught from the pulpit, the University chair, and the judges' bench, that salvation must be sought for in a strongly centralised State, placed under a semi-divine authority;⁴¹ that *one man*

³⁹ The trade in slaves kidnapped in the East was never discontinued in the Italian republics till the fifteenth century. Feeble traces of it are found also in Germany and elsewhere. See Cibrario, *Della schiavitù e del scervaggio*, 2 vols. Milan, 1868; Professor Luchitskiy, 'Slavery and Russian Slaves in Florence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,' in *Izvestia of the Kieff University*, 1885.

⁴⁰ J. R. Green's *History of the English People*, London, 1878, i. 455.

⁴¹ See the theories expressed by the Bologna lawyers, already at the Congress of Roncaglia in 1158.

can and must be the saviour of public salvation he can commit at the stake, make them plunge whole provinces into they fail to give object lesson and with an unheard-of cruelty Church's fire, or both at and examples, continually repetition, the very minds of the mould. They began to feel by degrees too cruel, since at this new direction of mind power, the old federalist protective genius of the masses, and in such circumstances a ready prey.

Florence in the fifteenth century. Formerly a popular revolution. Now, when the people, brought to ideas no more; no fire. A thousand representatives instead of 400; 100 men and a revolution of figures could was growing up, and new was appealed to; he mass of the communal body confined a new revolt, the people of man, Gieronimo Savonarola 'Oh, people mine, thou know . . . purify thy soul, and reformest thy city, then, perated the reform in all Ital were burned, a law of ch passed, and the democracy old spirit had gone. By had ceased to trust to the issues. The State had on liberties.

And yet, the current of the masses, it continued again with a formidable the first propagandists of after the masses, having inaugurate under the ins dominations of an autocrat

can and must be the saviour of society, and that in the name of public salvation he can commit any violence: burn men and women at the stake, make them perish under indescribable tortures, plunge whole provinces into the most abject misery. Nor did they fail to give object lessons to this effect on a grand scale, and with an unheard-of cruelty, wherever the king's sword and the Church's fire, or both at once, could reach. By these teachings and examples, continually repeated and enforced upon public attention, the very minds of the citizens had been shaped into a new mould. They began to find no authority too extensive, no killing by degrees too cruel, once it was 'for public safety.' And, with this new direction of mind and this new belief in one man's power, the old federalist principle faded away, and the very creative genius of the masses died out. The Roman idea was victorious, and in such circumstances the centralised State had in the cities a ready prey.

Florence in the fifteenth century is typical of this change. Formerly a popular revolution was the signal of a new departure. Now, when the people, brought to despair, insurged, it had constructive ideas no more; no fresh idea came out of the movement. A thousand representatives were put into the Communal Council instead of 400; 100 men entered the *signoria* instead of 80. But a revolution of figures could be of no avail. The people's discontent was growing up, and new revolts followed. A saviour—the 'tyran'—was appealed to; he massacred the rebels, but the disintegration of the communal body continued worse than ever. And when, after a new revolt, the people of Florence appealed to their most popular man, Gieronimo Savonarola for advice, the monk's answer was:—'Oh, people mine, thou knowest that I cannot go into State affairs . . . purify thy soul, and if in such a disposition of mind thou reformest thy city, then, people of Florence, thou shalt have inaugurated the reform in all Italy!' Carnival masks and vicious books were burned, a law of charity and another against usurers were passed, and the democracy of Florence remained where it was. The old spirit had gone. By too much trusting to government, they had ceased to trust to themselves; they were unable to open new issues. The State had only to step in and to crush down their last liberties.

And yet, the current of mutual aid and support did not die out in the masses, it continued to flow even after that defeat. It rose up again with a formidable force in answer to the communist appeals of the first propagandists of the reform, and it continued to exist even after the masses, having failed to realise the life which they hoped to inaugurate under the inspiration of a reformed religion, fell under the dominions of an autocratic power. It flows still even now, and it seeks

its way to find out a new expression which would not be the State, nor the mediæval city, nor the village community of the barbarians, nor the savage clan, but would proceed from all of them, and yet be superior to them in its wider and more deeply humane conceptions.

P. KROPOTKIN.

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