

THE ORIGIN OF THE PROFITEER

A Period when Man was Free.

In the preceding chapter it was stated, for analytical reasons, that slavery is a state brought about in the affairs of mankind primarily as the result of experimental error, committed in a desire to establish a social system which will secure freedom for the community of individuals in the presence of a rapidly changing environment caused by the application of man's acquirement of special intelligence.

Referring to the existence of human physical charms, which Darwin contended had been acquired as the result of Sexual Selection—as, for example, great beauty of form, exquisite colouring and musical voice, most noticeable at the present day among well-cared-for children—he remarks: "We may infer that they first acquired musical powers in order to attract the other sex. But, if so, this must have occurred long ago, before our ancestors had become sufficiently human to treat and value their women merely as useful slaves."

Darwin, who included slavery as one of the principal checks to the beneficial operation of Sexual Selection, lived at a time when the woman's economic status compared with that of the man was at a deplorably low ebb. The great biologist was doubtless influenced by the prevailing belief of those who held the then orthodox views of her absolute inferiority, and he may have feared that parasitism in humanity was irremediably established and that civilisation was impossible without it.

From the point of view of the evolutionist, historical records do not go back very far; but even they, when proper perspective is given to the froth and scum of superficialities, show that the volume of slavery rose and fell

enormously. In the history of every civilisation there are lucid intervals of comparative freedom, and the fact that slavery should vary between wide limits or vary at all during the historical period is evidence that it is tentative, and not inherently permanent in human nature.

The life of the individual is the epitome of the race, and there is no reason for thinking that any portion of the human race has as yet reached maturity. The child, in struggling to learn, frequently gets itself into a tangle, which it makes worse by violent outbursts of temper. Similarly, the race, as instinct has ripened into intelligence, has tried experiments and developed errors. These were made innocently enough, and the consequences for long have been attributed to the wrong cause. It is in this way that humanity drifts into slavery, which is intensified by outbursts of physical and moral violence.

Primæval Man.

Early man lived much as socially inclined animals live now, and, contrary to popular belief, he was not a cannibalistic savage thirsting for human blood. He possessed all the common humane attributes, which are inherently his for all time. He took pleasure in the society of his fellows and felt sympathy towards them exceeding in degree that shown by any species.

This sympathy was not confined to human kind, but extended itself to the love of other animals in an exceptional degree. Probably the earliest expression of his love of animals was the domestication of the dog, bred from wild species, wolves and jackals (*canis*), and foxes (*vulpes*). This old friend of man assisted him in hunting and in the defence of the women and children against the attacks of the larger carnivora.

In the herd, school or pack there are leaders possessing more than ordinary inceptivity, skill and strength; so among the tribes of men there were natural leaders, chosen with unanimity, who, as individuals, had equal opportunity with the others, but who captained the co-operative activities of their fellows.

A leader does not require to be either a slave-owner, "owning" the persons of his followers, nor a landlord,

"owning" the land upon which they exist. Indeed, when slavery enters into the function of leadership, the latter becomes perverted so that the advantages of close co-operation are lost in jealousies. Healthy emulation is destroyed because the reward of industry is confiscated.

Just as the Cossacks of the Ural, the Nigerians of Northern Africa, and within recent times the highlanders of Scotland and the peasants in parts of Europe out of contact with Roman jurisprudence, looked upon land as in the same category as air, and as Western peoples do not credit ownership of persons as chattels, so primæval man had no false sense of ownership in either.

How Man drifted into Slavery.

Caves and other natural shelters might be shared by many families, and huts, when man learned to build them, would probably be constructed by little communities and properly regarded as the joint property of each community. Simple tools made by individuals would be owned by those individuals, so that even from early times there would be a belief in common property belonging to the clan, as well as in private property, made the subject of barter as between individuals.

It may be conjectured that the domestication of the dog did not lead to any confusion as to ownership, because a dog attaches himself definitely to one person before any other, although he may graduate his affection and differentiate between those with whom he associates. It is, however, easy to understand that when man proceeded to domesticate the sheep, the goat and the ox, confusion might arise out of which contention and unhappiness resulted. To obviate this in so small a community, it is probable these chattels would also be regarded as common to the tribe or clan.

Man had now entered the transition stage from hunting to pastoral habit, and the size of the community would increase. While for the family, or group of families all related, sharing-in-common would be an amicable arrangement, experience shows that there comes a limiting period when the social system becomes unstable, and tyranny is necessary to delay outbursts of anarchy.

It is axiomatic that everyone seeks to gratify his desires with the least possible exertion. It is also axiomatic that self-interest is the dynamic force motivated by man's pursuit of happiness and that man is never satisfied. Thus, under free and just conditions it follows that there would be constant progress, but no undue exertion would be expended to obtain it.

The head-man or chief elected by the general consent of the clan would find, as numbers increased, that his responsibilities began to encroach upon his happiness, and he would become leader of a council of heads of families, who would assist him to preserve order. In this we discern the rudimentary State based upon force. A crisis had been reached, where the function of management was in danger of being exaggerated into the monopoly of ownership in flocks and herds, individuals, in order to facilitate control, being prevented from owning their own. Compulsory communism is the first step to absolutism, and it always arises through confusion in ownership.

When an individual, or voluntary co-operation of individuals, or family is unable to retain the reward of its endeavour, to keep, to give away, or to exchange fairly and freely with others, strains are set up in society and trouble is inevitable. Instead of gratifying desire with the least possible exertion, some seek to take advantage of the rest by withholding exertion, and others are imposed upon.

Industry is discouraged and freedom of choice is interfered with. Poverty takes the place of plenty. Deceit and cunning substitute willing co-operation in communism based upon force, which is always supported by plundering the industrious. At all times, and upon any considerable scale, attempts at sharing-in-common have ended in failure and disappointment. The early Christians, who reverted to communism, when they grew in numbers failed to destroy self-interest by putting to death Ananias and Sapphira.

Communism by coercion failed after the French Revolution, and the recent experiment in Russia ended disastrously, caused not by external interference, but owing to internal trouble, created through failure on the part of the citizens to distinguish between what was rightly the

property of the community and separately that of the individual.

Primitive Communes.

In isolated localities upon the globe there yet exist primitive communistic tribes, and their condition is everywhere the most wretched and least progressive known unless we include the slum-dwellers of modern towns and cities.

The Fuegians are physically and mentally of good capacity, but they do not progress because they have not learnt to respect individual rights. As an example of the length to which this is carried, Darwin relates how, when a native Fuegian was given a piece of red cloth, it was confiscated and carefully torn up into small equal squares for each member of the clan, which rendered it quite useless.

Infanticide, cannibalism and the brutal slavery of women characterise the custom of all peoples whose philosophy of ownership has not advanced beyond the stage of coercive communism. Mutual robbery leads to universal poverty, and the children and the aged are frequently forsaken. Fuegian tribes are continually at war, each labouring under the delusion that the other is responsible for the calamity that error has brought upon all.

"They cannot know the feeling of having a home, and still less that of domestic affection; for the husband is to the wife a brutal master to a laborious slave. Was a more horrid deed ever perpetrated than that witnessed on the west coast by [Admiral] Byron, who saw a wretched mother pick up her bleeding, dying infant boy, whom her husband had mercilessly dashed on the stones for dropping a basket of sea-eggs? How little can the higher powers of the mind be brought into play; what is there for imagination to picture, for reason to compare, for judgment to decide upon? To knock a limpet from the rock does not require even cunning, that lowest power of the mind. Their skill in some respects may be compared to the instincts of animals, for it is not improved by experience; their canoe, their most ingenious work, poor as it is, has remained the same, as we know from Drake, for the last two hundred and fifty years." (Darwin.)

Nevertheless, Darwin showed that, when placed even

for a short time in a freer atmosphere, selected Fuegians were capable of astonishing advancement, just as on a larger scale the New Zealanders and Fijians have absorbed a higher culture.

The effects of collectivism, or indeed any form of captivity, are similar in any part of the world. The communistic Fijians in the Southern Pacific, living in a climate which is that of a veritable Garden of Eden, exhibit the same symptoms as do the Fuegians, who live in a climate where the sun is rarely seen.

It is not necessary to trace in detail all the logical steps leading to the consequences which result from an erroneous attempt to secure equality of opportunity by means of communal conscription. All forms of slavery, whether of man's person or through his surroundings, have their root in compulsory communism, which is the negation of equality of opportunity.

The Pastoral Patriarchs.

We may conjecture that in groping for means with which to repress anarchy, inevitably resulting from the interference with the natural right of the individual to dispose of his own labour products according to pleasure, the chief would seek to add to his authority and power, and he would be supported in this by the clan, most of whom at any given time desire to live peaceably. Unable to discern where they had gone astray, coercion would appear to them to be unavoidable.

The chief would soon be recognised as the trustee for the tribal property, and a short step would lead to virtual possession. At the death of the chief the head-men would at first elect a successor from among themselves, but increasing oppression of the clan would lead to the formation of factions, and contention would necessitate the adoption of a succession of chiefs, which would ensure a smooth transition. Experience of crises would lend foresight in avoiding trouble, and the custom of appointing a successor during the lifetime of the reigning patriarch would grow up. The choice would tend to be invested in a relation of the patriarch, frequently a son or a daughter. Hereditary succession would follow as a consequence.

At first ruler and priest or adviser in one, a differentiation of these functions took place, and side by side with the rulers there grew up a privileged caste of oracles, judges or witch-doctors. Nativity, marriage and death were the pivotal mysteries round which this "trade union" or professional society wove their superstitions to enclose a credulous people. Priestcraft has always been the prop of constituted authority, sometimes delaying disaster, sometimes delaying progress.

As an agent of inertia the hereditary principle was found to be most effective, and the incestuous custom of brother and sister uniting in marriage was not an uncommon one. Among Aryan tribes it was customary for the new ruler to marry the widow of his predecessor for the better substantiation of his claim to reign, and this custom persisted even when father-to-son succession had become more usual.

From nominal possession of the tribal chattels it is easy to see a development into complete ownership, with power in the hands of the once trustee leader to dispose, and even at pleasure to withhold, the common property of the tribe. Raised by monopoly power high above his fellows, the chief and his court would be the arbiters of life and death. Opportunity would be unequal and the clansmen would become subjects.

Out of necessity, owing to shortage caused by the killing of males in battle, women as wives and concubines would submit to be herded in harems, presently accounted property and commodity to be given away and exchanged. Children would be born into slavery, and thus male slaves as chattels would be reared. Among the Maories it was the custom for almost every girl in New Zealand who was pretty or promised to be well-favoured to be *tapu* for some chief. The Kaffir chiefs also exercise the same privilege, and we have some evidence in the ancient law of Gavelkind that a similar custom was common in Feudal times among ourselves.

The Antagonism of the Shepherd and the Hunter.

The free hunting and fishing tribesmen might long hold out against these developments, but the bulk of the com-

munity would be pastoral, relying upon the herds for their subsistence, desire being satisfied with less exertion. Self-interest in the case of the shepherds being directed into desire to dominate each other, they would seek in due time to dominate their neighbours. We are now in a position to understand the dislike of the patriarch and the slaves for the more independent hunters, who were regarded as outlaws, and the story of Esau and Jacob of the Old Testament possesses a new interest.

In encounters with these hunters, skilled in the use of weapons, the patriarch and his enervated bondsmen would often be overcome, the victors taking the place of the former slave-owners to apply their suction to the existing channels formed in the customs of the community. The free men would thus become emmeshed in the slave system. We may expect that such masters would develop military preparedness, and there would be emulation in armaments. Remembering the success of their skilled attack, the new masters would seek to add to their glory and fancied security. Schemes of conquest over other tribes, to coalesce them into greater power for still further conquest, would readily occur to the ancient Attilas.

Herein we see the beginnings of organised warfare among mankind.

Polyandry and Polygamy.

Where coercive communism has been carried to an extreme, the horrible custom of infanticide, associated with abortion, incest and sexual perversion, is very common. For economic reasons there is great mortality among girl babies. The consequent unbalance of sex numbers leads to the practice of one woman having several husbands, known as polyandry, which frequently breaks down into the institution of so-called communal marriages, when intercourse becomes utterly licentious and promiscuous.

Polygamy, or several wives to one husband, distinguishes the patriarchal system of centralised slavery, and the effect is the same in many ways as that which results from female infanticide. While not so degrading as the institution of polyandry, polygamy is a fruitful source of anarchy, the law of battle becoming perverted into the lawlessness of necessity.

It is obvious that although a protracted war may cause a temporary shortage of males, the tendency is for the sexes to regain their balance as time goes on. Assuming that polygamy had been instituted during a period of hostilities and retained because it was thought to be an advantageous arrangement for everyone, the women included, it is easy to see that many unattached males would grow up afterwards. The younger generation would, of course, have been taught to look upon polygamy as a divine institution, and it would be perpetuated.

When confusion of ownership arises in what is private property, it appears to be inevitable for property rights to be vested in what, in the nature of things, cannot be owned. As women were bought and sold, the monopoly of the profiteer patriarch would intensify, because the young men would be at a disadvantage in the market. It can thus be understood that resort would be made to violence and that raids for women would take place.

An Example from the Bible.

With the possible exception of the period when some approximation of the Mosaic land laws was in operation, the story of Ruth indicating a bright interval, the status of the woman was never very high among the ancient Israelites. Even in the Decalogue the wife is included among the chattels, and towards the end of the commonwealth or commune the institution of polygamy was general.

In the Book of Judges a classic example of civil strife brought about by the slavery of women is recorded. The inciting incident to the outbreak was a revolting outrage perpetrated by a roving band of young Benjamites upon a Levite's concubine in Gibeah.

Before the battle, the tribe of Benjamin having refused to hand over the murderers to justice, the other Israelitish tribes had taken a vow to withhold their daughters as wives to the offending tribe.

This trading restriction was evidently considered a very severe reprisal by all, for in great remorse, after the battle, in which all had suffered heavy losses, they joined forces and attacked in combination their kinsmen of

Jabesh-gilead, who had not responded to the horrid missive of the Levite.

Men, women and children of the unoffending people were massacred, and only four hundred virgins were saved alive. These were awarded to the Benjamites, "and yet so they sufficed them not." The children of Benjamin were therefore advised to lie in wait in the vineyards and "catch every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh" as they danced at the feast.

In this quaint old Bible story there is no indication that the chronicler regarded polygamy as an unjust system, still less that he realised that the disorderly condition of the country was brought about because the Israelites had a faulty philosophy of ownership.

He evidently considered that the anarchy existed because the people were not governed firmly enough. "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

His error is a common one at the present day, in spite of the abundant lessons of the past. As a matter of fact, the regal period of the Hebrews was a stormier one than that of the commonwealth.