

moderation, and republics on virtue. To someone who cited the remark as to republics to Alexander Hamilton, the latter replied that, in his opinion, what republics most depended on was corrupt. Montesquieu, however, was perfectly right in postulating public virtue as a condition of the permanence of republics. If the electorate as a whole is corrupt, republican institutions will be of short duration. On the other hand, Hamilton was not altogether wrong in his fling as to the necessity of corruption. There is no absolute contradiction between the two views: the one refers to the conditions for the *existence* of a republic, the other to the conditions necessary as things are to the carrying out of the work of government. The more public virtue there is, the less need will there be for resorting to Hamilton's prescription for keeping the machinery of government going. Raise the level of public virtue and certain things which are now only done from interested and selfish motives will be done from disinterested and unselfish ones. Raise the level of public virtue and better laws will be passed, and once passed will be observed, not evaded. Raise the level of public virtue and the whole political system will work with greater power towards better ends. But meantime many compromises that would not look well in broad daylight have to be made.

Sir Henry Maine speaks with great severity of the abject flattery administered to the multitude by those who would win its favour. To whom, however, is this mainly a reproach? It is indeed to be regretted that the populace should not have a more delicate taste in this matter than the monarchs and other great ones of the past before whom men of intellect used to debase themselves; but what are we to think of the more or less educated gentlemen who purvey the stuff? If the people would take a little measure of themselves they would be aided by referring to a book that never flatters, and that knows nothing of party views. They would there find such utterances as these:

"Why do . . . the people imagine a vain thing?"

"Where no counsel is, the people fail."

"Where there is no vision, the people perish."

"The people that know their good shall be strong."

"The people that do not understand shall fall."

I do not imagine that in relation to the problems of to-day "the people" of to-day enjoy any advantage over "the people" of the times of Daniel or Hosea. In simpler times there were simpler problems; the problems of our time tax the wisdom of the wisest; so that now, as ever, the people need to take heed against imagining vain things and against acting without counsel or vision. To believe in their own infallibility is a sure way of falling into hurtful errors. Yet something like this state of mind