

dom, each forming a grand trunk whose branches spread in all directions. Along these routes the Inca led his loyal hosts to victory, and returned again in triumph bringing many a humbled chief to grace his court and learn to do the bidding of his conqueror. Or when his sword was sheathed he made a peaceful progress in the interest of his people; mingled with them in their worship and at their feasts, and showed in various ways his regard for them. Upon these roads, long before any postal system was in use in Europe, the swift-footed Indian, made swifter by a careful training for his work, carried the decrees of his royal master to the remotest provinces; while the journey was so distributed as the arrangements of the system so perfect, that dispatches were transmitted at the rate of one hundred and fifty miles per day by a succession of these trusty messengers. Some portions of these old thoroughfares, rivalling in durability the Roman roads of Europe, still remain and witness to the skill and enterprise of their swarthy builders.

The government of the Incas was a despotism, mild and patriarchal in its character, and the disposition of the emperor toward his people parental; but his power over them was unrestricted, and his control reached even to the minutest concerns of everyday life. One might fancy that Julian West, in "Looking Backward," who closed his eyes to the abuses and social inequalities of our time to awake in the golden age that follows twentieth century reforms, had visited in his dreams this old Peruvian empire in its palmy days, so closely do the institutions of that halcyon period resemble many of the customs that obtained under the sceptre of the children of the sun. Here, the state controlled everything, furnished everything, and required nothing of the individual but obedience and diligence. His dress was prescribed and provided without his tastes being consulted. The roof that sheltered him might be raised by his own hand, but his fancy had no part in designing the dwelling, nor could he by any means become its owner. At a certain age he was required to marry, and if from indifference or diffidence he had deferred choosing his companion, the ceremony was not delayed but the ever-provident executive made the choice for him. A house with all the requisites for housekeeping and a quantity of land was assigned him; but every year his little

homestead, in common with all the lands of the empire, reverted to the state and a new distribution followed, the amount assigned each householder in every case bearing a direct ratio to the number of individuals in his family.

The existence of such relations between a people and its rulers must of course destroy every incentive to improvement that permanent possession gives, and weaken every principle of self-reliance and personal ambition without which there can be no true progress. The Inca and his subjects might be compared to a great family in which the children went through the whole of life deprived of the rights of their majority. But if the Inca's subjects could not accumulate a fortune, they had no fear of pinching poverty. If their landscape lacked the ornaments of luxury, it did not suggest the miseries of the poor. If the native found the government unpleasantly inquisitive in his private expenditure, it was equally zealous to see that by accident or misfortune he was not in want. It was reserved for this people to receive the answer to an ancient prayer without offering the petitions—the Peruvian could have "neither poverty nor riches." The Incas brought a system of government originally designed and apparently adapted only to their own small community to operate successfully among all the various races in their great empire. One by one they brought the barbarous tribes about them within the pale of civilization, and succeeded in creating for all under their sacred ensign a degree of comfort and prosperity unknown among any other of the American nations. Thus far had the Incas fulfilled what they claimed to be their mission, when they were in turn conquered by invaders who professed to come, that they might make known a greater God and show to them a brighter light than the burning orb they worshipped. The question has been asked, "Which of the conquering nations was the truer to its trust?" Surely, the history of the subject peoples fully answers the enquiry. Such are a few of the features of this remarkable civilization. A civilization developed by a people isolated from every nation that had advanced beyond barbarism, its institutions bear the stamp of originality and reveal much genius on the part of its founders. One who has closely studied the system has said: "The defects of this government were those of over-refinement in legislation; the last defects to have been looked for certainly, in the American aborigines."