

survey of the country or locality, its geographical position, climate, productions, and other physical circumstances as they bear on the character of the people. We ought to be presented, in short, with a complete description of the scene of the historic drama, as well as with an account of the race to which the actors belong. In the early stages of his development, at all events, man is mainly the creature of physical circumstances; and by a systematic examination of physical circumstances we may to some extent cast the horoscope of the infant nation as it lies in the arms of Nature.

That the central position of Rome, in the long and narrow peninsula of Italy, was highly favourable to her Italian dominion, and that the situation of Italy was favourable to her dominion over the countries surrounding the Mediterranean, has been often pointed out. But we have yet to ask what launched Rome in her career of conquest, and still more, what rendered that career so different from those of ordinary conquerors? What caused the Empire of Rome to be so durable? What gives it so high an organization? What made it so tolerable, and even in some cases beneficent to her subjects? What enabled it to perform services so important in preparing the way for a higher civilization?

About the only answer that we get to these questions is *race*. The Romans, we are told, were by nature a peculiarly warlike race. "They were the wolves of Italy," says Mr. Merivale, who may be taken to represent fairly the state of opinion on this subject. We are presented in short with the old fable of the Twins suckled by the She-wolf in a slightly rationalized form. It was more likely to be true, if anything, in its original form, for in mythology nothing is so irrational as rationalization. That unfortunate She-wolf with her Twins has now been long discarded by criticism as a historical figure; but she still obtrudes herself as a symbolical legend into the first chapter of Roman history, and continues to affect the historian's imagination and to give him a wrong bias at the outset. Who knows whether the statue which we possess is a real counterpart of the original? Who knows what the meaning of the original statue was? If the group was of great antiquity, we may be pretty sure that it was not political or historic, but religious; for primæval art is the handmaid of religion; historic representation and political portraiture belong generally to a later age. We cannot tell with certainty even that the original statue was Roman: it may have been brought to Rome among the spoils of some conquered city,