

The Ideal of the Roman Empire.

An Empire is composed of its individual subjects. To study a nation's ideals is to encounter a problem in the composition of forces: Required the resultant ideal of a number of greatly varying minds.

There are two principal factors which enter into the measurement of a man,—his ideal and the effort with which he pursues it. His ideal is his standard of life and the nearness to which he approaches that standard marks his success or failure. We concede that one's ideal is not constant as to degree, but as to quality it remains unchanged. It appears to recede as man advances and to grow larger upon his approach. But to all men it is an abiding presence. Whether it be recognized or not, we live by ideals.

But how are such constants to be recognized? Let the thoughtful man study himself. As the magnetic pole controls the magnet, so one object will be found to attract and to absorb the attention of the individual. The complement of man is without himself. The attraction between man and his ideal is a law of nature. When we say that no two persons are alike, we simply affirm that their objects of interest are dissimilar. It is difference of ideal which makes one man a mechanic and another a lawyer.

This method of investigation should reveal to us a nation's ideals.

We thus have before us the Roman Empire and are permitted briefly to review her career, to consider the end she had in view and to see how nearly she attained to that end. And in this connection let us bear in mind that the Roman Empire is the great central fact in the history of nations. All the nations of the ancient world except those in the far east were one after another conquered by Rome and incorporated into her Empire. And the nations of the modern world began with her disruption. The Roman Empire thus stands midway between and forms the parting-ground of the two grand courses of the world's history, ancient and modern.

It is the Roman ideal of independence which first attracts our attention. In the dim twilight of the regal age, we can plainly discern grand human figures thrilled with the spirit of personal and national freedom. These are the figures of those stern old patriots who have given to the name "Roman" its lofty significance. The world may yet revere such names as Horatius, Coriolanus and Cincinnatus.

It was this ideal of freedom which found its expression