

Rome was mistress of all the lands bordering on the Mediterranean, virtually, that is, of the then known world. The Roman empire thus established lasted unbroken for over 400 years, and for more than 1,000 years thereafter the influence of Rome was paramount in Europe.

3. This supremacy of the Roman people was based on certain qualities which we find them possessing from the beginning of their history. The Romans were extremely resolute, daunted by no reverse or misfortune, strenuous and untiring; stern and ruthless, though on the whole honorable in their dealings; they were conspicuous for their self-denying patriotism and their high sense of duty; they lacked refinement and imagination, but were clear-headed, business-like and efficient; and finally they were not a mere fighting race, but one gifted above all other nations with the power of governing, framing laws and organizing. Roman law, Roman organization and Roman institutions persist to this day over most of continental Europe; and when in the middle ages the power of the Roman empire passed over to the Roman church, this genius for organization and government was not lost. Quite as important, too, as these contributions to modern civilization is the fact that Rome, after conquering the ancient world, gathered up into her own civilization all that Greece, Egypt and Asia had of value for mankind in science, literature, art, philosophy and religion, and preserved it for the modern world.

4. During the long centuries of Roman supremacy in Europe, Latin came to have a peculiar preeminence which no other language has ever enjoyed. French,