

So it was in ancient times, as history tells us, not only among the progenitors of the Jewish people, but long after them, with the Greeks of old, and even in the balmy days of the Roman republic and empire. The gens was then very different from its American homonym; it consisted merely of families bearing the same name and, on that account, supposed to be allied by blood. As woman, on her marriage, took the feminine form of her husband's name, it follows that the Romans did not know of what we now call mother-right.*

It was not apparently until looseness of morals and the absence of social restraint concomitant with the introduction of the totemic gens and its peculiar laws of heredity had made it a point of vital importance that the filiation of the child be not questioned, that paternal rights probably yielded to maternal pretensions. A child always knows its father, but, in degraded communities, it is not in all cases so sure of its father. Yet, as the rank of the deceased and the material advantages flowing therefrom must not be suffered to be alienated into a strange clan, let us make succession dependent on the mother and through the maternal line.

Such, in my eyes, seems to have been the reasoning of the originators of matriarchate considered as a social system.

These considerations, of course, are based on higher ground than the present status of our own aborigines. Yet it might not be out of place to observe that those two British Columbia tribes to which we must incontestably grant the palm for morality, I mean the Kootenay and the Sékanais, are both governed by paternal right. Everybody knows also how the Salish have taken kindly to religion. Patriarchate has likewise remained their fundamental law.

And right here I foresee two objections.

The Kwakiutl follow the paternal system, and yet they are "the least advanced and most averse to civilization of any in the province", will say the one, who may add that "the missionaries of several churches have endeavoured to carry on mis-

* In virtue of the "*patria potestas*", the child belonged entirely to the father, who exercised the most absolute control over him, while the mother was practically nothing in the Roman family.