

that such a system would necessarily produce a military despotism.

The element by which the growth and progress of the state was nurtured, at last became the governing force.

Every institution of the commonwealth was designed to inure the people to war, and to inspire them with an aspiration for conquest and dominion. At times, a desire for peace gained the ascendancy, but the intermittent calms were deceptive. The Temple of Janus was occasionally closed, but the war spirit still lived in the Temple of Mars. Indeed, it seemed impossible for Rome to sink down into a peaceful life, without endangering or destroying her national existence. In a republic, there are always ambitious individuals, and this was true of the Roman republic. The tribunes, prætors, quæstors, and consuls became the generals of armies, and the governors of provinces. Veteran legions might salute their general, "Imperator." This distinction, bestowed by soldiers in the enthusiasm of victory, ultimately became a more exalted title than any conferred by the votes of the citizens. The victorious general was supported by the votes and influence of the veterans who had served under him in the camp and field. The support of the soldiers formed an increasingly powerful element at the annual elections.

Another influence had become powerful in the commonwealth. The commerce and finances of the world became centred in Rome. The spoils of war, the wealth, and the wreck of nations, found their way to the great city. Captive peoples were sold and purchased in her slave markets. Some men became enormously wealthy, and wealth purchased political power,—a Crassus could equip and maintain an army with his annual rents. Political power was thus reduced to two elements. "Government rested," says Cicero, "not on the constitution; not on the laws; not on the will of the best citizens, but on the power of

"money, and on the force of soldiers,"—the one representing the power to purchase; the other the power to compel.

"When matters had arrived at this stage," says Tacitus, "the spirit of the constitution was dead. The outward forms remained, the elections were held, the consuls, prætors and tribunes were annually chosen, but they could no longer command, unless supported by the army. The real power was in the hands of the wealthy, and of the army." The consuls, the representative heads of the republic, consulted the Senate, and acted on its advice; but when the Senate proved adverse, they could act on their own magisterial authority, or could apply to the "Comitia"—the Assembly of the people. The constitution set no limit to the power of the Assembly to decide any question whatsoever that was laid before it, and the magistrates might, at any time, consult the people, rather than the Senate. The will of the people in the "Comitia" had, in the most explicit and unqualified manner, been declared to be supreme, alike in the election of magistrates, in the passing of the laws, and in all matters affecting Roman citizenship.

In practice, the Senate, not the Assembly, was the Legislature of Rome, and the adviser and director of consuls, and governors of provinces; but eventually both the Senate and the magistrates fell into the hands of a class which, in defiance of all laws, arrogated to itself the titles and privileges of a nobility. The Senate could always be convened. Matters were generally settled by a "Senatus Consultum," without any reference to the people at all, but, though the Senate tried to engross the whole legislative and administrative powers of the commonwealth, yet, legally, it had no sound constitutional authority. It could merely advise magistrates, when asked to do so. It was customary for the magistrate to ask the Senate's advice on all important matters (as the