VII

THE ECONOMICAL REVOLUTION

Discovery of the Cape of Good Hope (1497). — The end of the Middle Ages is marked, not only by the destruction of hitherto prevalent political forms, but also by the simultaneous revolution in commercial affairs, consequent upon the discovery of America and of the passage to the Indies around the Cape of Good Hope.

Up to that time, commerce had followed the routes marked out by the Greeks and the Romans. The products of the East reached Europe by the Red Sea and Egypt, or through Persia and the Black Sea. But the peoples who bordered on the Atlantic had long been turning their gaze toward the mysterious expanse of its unknown waters. They had become familiar with its tempests and had gained confidence in the compass. The Normans had been the first to enter upon the path of maritime discoveries along the western coast of Africa. There the Portuguese, more advantageously situated, followed and outstripped them. In 1472 they crossed the equator. In 1486 Bartolomeo Diaz discovered the Cape of Storms, which King John II more wisely named the Cape of Good Hope. In fact, Vasco da Gama soon sailed round the African continent and reached Calicut on the Malabar coast (1498). Later on Camoens in his *Lusiad* painted this heroic expedition. At Calicut Alvarez Cabral founded the first European establishment in the Indies. On the way thither he had been cast upon the coast of Brazil.

Colonial Empire of the Portuguese. — The true creator of the Portuguese colonies was Albuquerque. By the capture of Socotora and Ormuz, he closed the ancient routes of Indian commerce to the Mussulmans and to Venice. He gave to Portuguese India its capital by taking possession of Goa (1510). He conquered Malacca and secured the alliance of the kings of Siam and Pegu and the possession of the Molucca Islands. While preparing one expedition

Engraved by Colton, Ohman & Co., N.Y.

Copyright, 1898, by T. Y. Crowell & Co.

against Egypt and another against Arabia, where he wished to destroy Mecca and Medina, he was arrested by an unmerited disgrace (1515). The conquest continued under John de Castro, who seized Cambaye. Japan was discovered in 1542, and a trading station set up opposite Canton in the island of Sanciam. Goa was the centre of Portuguese domination. The other principal points in their empire were Mozambique, Sofala and Melinda on the African coast, whence they obtained gold-dust and ivory; Muscat and Ormuz, on the Persian Gulf, whither came the products of Central Asia; Diu, on the coast of Malabar; Negapatam, on that of Coromandel; Malacca, in the peninsula of the same name, which threw into their hands the commerce of the countries of Indo-China; and the Moluccas, where they occupied Ternate and Timor, and whence they exported spices. Their trading stations on the western coast of Africa and on the Congo were of no importance until after the establishment of the slave trade. For a long time, the only colonists whom Brazil received were criminals and deported Jews.

Christopher Columbus. Colonial Empire of the Spaniards. —The discovery of America had taken place earlier, in 1492. The Genoese navigator, Christopher Columbus, engrossed with the idea that India must extend far toward the west as a counterbalance to the European continent, hoped to reach its furthest shore by directing his course westward across the Atlantic. Rebuffed as a visionary by the Senate of Genoa and by the king of Portugal, as well as for a time by the court of Spain, he succeeded in obtaining from Isabella three small vessels. After sailing for two months he landed on October 11, 1492, in Guanahani, one of the Lucaya Islands, which he named San Salvador. Only during his third voyage in 1498 did he touch the continent, without knowing it, and on the fourth in 1502 discovered the coast of Columbia. He still believed that he had reached the shores of India. Hence was derived the name, West Indies, which long prevailed. The name America refers to Amerigo Vespucci, who merely enjoyed the inferior distinction of landing on the mainland before Columbus.

The route once found, discoveries followed each other in rapid succession. In 1513 Balboa traversed the Isthmus of Panama and caught sight of the Great Ocean. In 1518 Grijalva discovered Mexico, of which Fernando Cortés effected

the conquest (1519–1521). In 1520 Magellan reached the strait to which his name has been given between South America and Tierra del Fuego. He traversed the Pacific Ocean, where he died, and his comrades returned to Spain by way of the Moluccas and the Cape of Good Hope. They were the first to make the circuit of the globe. The adventurers, Almagro and Pizarro, gave to the crown of Spain Peru and Chili. Others founded on the opposite coast Buenos Ayres, at the mouth of the Plata. In 1534 Cartier discovered Canada for France.

The Portuguese colonies rapidly declined. They were only a line of trading posts along the coasts of Africa and Hindustan, without power of resistance, because few Portuguese settled there. The Spanish colonies, which in the beginning aimed not so much at commerce as at the development of the mines, attracted on the contrary many Spaniards to the New World, and formed in America a compact domination, divided into the two governments of Mexico and Lima. At the present day Mexico and South America are dominated by Spanish blood, while Brazil is Portuguese.

Results. — These discoveries threw open to the industrious activity of the men of the West both a New World and also that East where so much idle wealth was locked up. They changed the course and form of trade. For land commerce, which hitherto had held first rank, maritime commerce was about to be substituted. As a result the cities of the interior were to decline and those on the coast to expand. Moreover commercial importance passed from the countries bathed by the Mediterranean to the countries situated on the Atlantic, from the Italians to the Spaniards and the Portuguese, and later on from these latter to the Dutch and the English. Not only did these peoples grow rich, but they were enriched in a peculiar manner. The mines of Mexico and Peru threw into European circulation an enormous mass of specie. Industry, commerce and agriculture developed on receiving the capital which they required in order to thrive. "The third part of the kingdom of France," says a writer of the sixteenth century, "was put under cultivation in the course of a few years." All this created a new power in personal wealth which fell into the hands of the burgher class, and which in after centuries was to battle with the landed wealth still remaining in the hands of the lords.

By means of the posting stations which Louis XI had organized, and the canals with locks which Venice began to construct in 1481, communication became more rapid and more easy. When to the letters of exchange, devised by the Jews in the Middle Ages for the purpose of saving their fortunes from their persecutors, were added the deposit and credit banks, instituted by the Hanse, the Lombards and the Tuscans, it came to pass that capital circulated as easily as produce. We have already seen a banker, Cosmo de Medici, become a prince. Lastly, the system of insurance, practised first at Barcelona and Florence, and later on at Bruges, began the great system of guarantees which at the present day gives to commerce such audacity and security. Thus labor was making for itself a place in the new society. Through it, by means of order, economy and intelligence, the descendants of the slaves of antiquity and of the serfs of the Middle Ages became the leaders of the industrial world and masters of money, and were one day to find themselves the equals of the ancient masters of the land.

VIII

THE REVOLUTION IN ARTS AND LETTERS, OR THE RENAISSANCE

The Invention of Printing. — The ardor which impelled men of action to abandon beaten paths and rush into unexplored ways was shared by men of learning. They also aspired after another world. They sought it, not in front but in the rear. Like Columbus, they thought they were only travelling toward the old land, but on their route thither they, like him, found a new one.

Weary of the vain disputes of scholasticism and the quibbles of a school which its barbarous Latin speech rendered obscure, they threw themselves toward the half-extinguished lights of antiquity. They ransacked monastic libraries, those storehouses of old books. The discovery of a Greek or Latin manuscript, or of an antique statue, caused the joy of a victory. But only a few men would have profited by the new spirit, which reviving antiquity was breathing upon the world, had not an invention appeared by means of which the treasures, otherwise reserved to a small number, could become the domain of all. Guttenberg created printing by devising movable characters. As early as 1455, the first printed book made its appearance. This was a Bible. The new art spread rapidly throughout all Christian Europe, and the price of books marvellously decreased. In 1500 Aldus Manutius at Venice placed on sale a whole collection of ancient authors at about fifty cents the volume. A single bookseller of Paris, Josse Bade, published as many as 400 works, the majority in folio. In 1529, the *Colloquia* of Erasmus was printed in an edition of 24,000 copies. Thus eager were people to learn, "for they began to perceive that they had been living in mental slavery as well as in bodily servitude."

The ancients wrote upon parchment or papyrus, both materials of great cost, the Chinese upon silk, the Arabs of Damascus upon cotton, the Spanish Arabs upon a paper made from flax and hemp. Thus the printers, at the very beginning of their labors, had at their disposal a low-priced product which could receive the imprint of the characters.

Renaissance of Letters. — Italy eagerly seized upon the new invention. Before the year 1470, there were already printers at Rome, Venice and Milan. Everywhere schools, libraries and universities were founded. The ancient authors were published and translated. Not only the Fathers of the Church were published to uphold the faith, but also the orators, historians and philosophers. Thereby faith was exposed to peril, for thus were opened to the mind new horizons where reason was to seek and find its domain. Pope Julius II was not always surrounded by captains and diplomats. Quite as many learned men and artists were to be seen at his side. "Polite letters," he said, "are the silver of plebeians, the gold of nobles, the diamonds of princes." The day on which the Laocoon was discovered in the Baths of Titus, he caused the bells of all the churches in Rome to be rung. Leo X paid 500 sequins for five manuscript volumes of Titus Livius, and was the friend as well as the patron of Raphael and Michael Angelo.

At that period only three countries thought and produced. Italy was foremost with Ariosto, Machiavelli, Guicciardini and all her artistic geniuses. France came second, with Marot, Rabelais, Calvin, Amyot, Montaigne and a host of learned men or jurisconsults whose fame still endures, like Cujas, Pithou, Godefroy and Dumoulin. Germany stood third, with Ulric von Hutten, the cobbler-poet Hans Sachs and the Ciceronians, with Luther and his Latin writings at the head. The Netherlands presented Erasmus, a hardy thinker but timid-hearted man, whose Latin works enjoyed an immense success. As for England, she was healing the wounds inflicted by the War of the Roses. As for Spain, her eyes were turned far less upon antiquity than toward America and her mines, toward Italy and the Netherlands, where the bands of Charles V so loved to indulge in war and pillage.

Renaissance of Arts. — Italy was their natural cradle, since there the finest remains of ancient art were to be found. As early as the beginning of the fifteenth century, Brunelleschi substituted the rounded for the pointed arch, and for the tortured lines of the florid Gothic, the straight line of the Greek temples or the elegant curve of the Roman dome. For

Julius II Bramante constructed Saint Peter's at Rome, which Michael Angelo crowned with the immense cupola, the idea of which he had derived from the Pantheon of Agrippa. The sculptors of Florence and Rome were unable to excel their classic rivals, but Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael and Titian far surpassed their most illustrious predecessors and created painting, which with music has remained the distinctive modern art.

In the field of the arts, Italy in the sixteenth century was the teacher of the nations. France followed her close behind. Her architects reared many chateaux and palaces, the Louvre, the Tuileries, Fontainebleau, Blois and Chambord, where elegance and grace are blended with strength. Two French sculptors are still famous, Jean Goujon and Germain Pilon. Germany had but two painters, Albert Dürer and Holbein. Engraving, recently invented, multiplied the masterpieces of the artists, just as printing had popularized masterpieces in literature, and Palestrina began the great school of music.

Renaissance in Science. — Science was still hesitating between the dreams of the Middle Ages and the stern reason which guides it at the present day. Men did not know that the physical world is subject to changeless laws. They continued to believe in capricious powers, in magicians and sorcerers, whom they burned by thousands. At Würzburg 158 persons were sent to the stake in the course of two years (1527–1528). But Italy had several geometers, and as early as 1507 the Pole, Copernicus, discovered the truth concerning the planetary system.

Thus, while the navigators were opening new worlds to human activity and through artists and learned men modern genius was acquiring fresh vigor from the ancients, science was assigning its place to the sun and to the earth and the planets their parts in the universe. Is it a marvel that the century which beheld these mighty results of audacity and intelligence should have abandoned itself to the resistless power of thought?

IX

THE REVOLUTION IN CREEDS, OR THE REFORMATION

The Clergy in the Sixteenth Century. — By its reverence for the two antiquities, the sacred and profane, which had just been as it were rediscovered, the literature of the sixteenth century led to the religious Reformation, whose true character was a mixture of the reasoning spirit borrowed from the pagans, and of theological ardor derived from the Bible and the Fathers. The prime author of this revolution was the clergy itself. What was there in common between the Church of the early days, poor, humble, ardent, and the opulent, lordly, indolent Church of Leo X, who lived like a gentleman of the Renaissance, with huntsmen, artists and poets, rather than with theologians? And of those bishop-princes who had armies, and of those monks who were so vicious and so ignorant, what was not said? For a long time the most devout had been demanding the reform of the Church in its head and its members. "I see," said Cardinal Julian to Pope Eugenius IV, "that the axe is laid to the root; the tree leans, and instead of propping it up, we are hurling it to the earth." Bossuet himself recognized the necessity of a reform.

Luther (1517). — The strife began with the pamphlets of Erasmus and Hutten. It became serious only when Luther had drawn the theologians after him into the lists. This son of a Saxon miner of Eisleben was an Augustinian monk. He became the most esteemed doctor of the University of Wittenberg. During a journey to Rome he beheld the disorders of the Church. The scandal of indulgences, whence Leo X sought money for the completion of Saint Peter's, led him to examine the very principles of this doctrine. Finding the system of indulgences contrary to the teachings of the primitive Church, he fought against it. The Dominican Tetzel was the broker of these spiritual wares in Germany. Luther nailed to the doors of the church in Wittenberg ninety-five propositions concerning