

ple, but, after the gradual downfall of the Egypto-Alexandrian school, the dimmed sparks of knowledge and of intellectual investigation were scattered abroad, and it was not until a later period that they reappeared in Greece and Asia Minor. As is the case in all unlimited monarchies embracing a vast extent of the most heterogeneous elements, the efforts of the Roman government were mainly directed to avert, by military restraint and by means of the internal rivalry existing in their divided administration, the threatened dismemberment of the political bond; to conceal, by an alternation of severity and mildness, the domestic feuds in the house of the Cæsars; and to give to the different dependencies such an amount of peace, under the sway of noble rulers, as an unchecked and patiently-endured despotism is able periodically to afford.

The attainment of universal sway by the Romans certainly emanated from the greatness of the national character, and from the continued maintenance of rigid morals, coupled with a high sense of patriotism. When once universal empire was attained, these noble qualities were gradually weakened and altered under the unavoidable influence of the new relations induced. The characteristic sensitiveness of separate individuals became extinguished with the national spirit, and thus vanished the two main supports of free institutions, publicity and individuality. The eternal city had become the center of too extended a sphere, and the spirit was wanting which ought to have permanently animated so complicated a state. Christianity became the religion of the state when the empire was already profoundly shaken, and the beneficent effects of the mildness of the new doctrine were frustrated by the dogmatic dissensions awakened by party spirit. That dreary contest of knowledge and of faith had already then begun, which continued through so many centuries, and proved, under various forms, so detrimental to intellectual investigation.

If the Roman empire, from its extent and the form of constitution necessitated by its relations of size, was wholly unable to animate and invigorate the intellectual activity of mankind, as had been done by the small Hellenic republics in their partially-developed independence, it enjoyed, on the other hand, peculiar advantages, to which we must here allude. A rich treasure of ideas was accumulated as a consequence of experience and numerous observations. The objective world became considerably enlarged, and was thus prepared for that meditative consideration of natural phenomena which has characterized recent times. National inter