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the hands of the Persians, and the markets were at Callinicum or at Sura. The ruin of Doura was as rapid as it was complete. In 363, when the Emperor Julian marched on Ctesiphon, he was shown "the traces of what had once been a city."

This short account will suffice to show the bearing of M. Cumont's discoveries on economic history. They lead one to hope for others. The unexpected find among the ruins of leaves of parchment, one of which, dating from the year 195 B.C., is the oldest parchment which has come down to us, gives ground for the hope that other discoveries of the same nature will, thanks to the dryness of the Syrian climate, give rise to a "pergamenology" which will do for the social history of the East what papyrology has done for the history of Egypt.

H. PIRENNE.

HENRI PIRENNE. *Les Villes du Moyen Age*. (Lamertin, Bruxelles. 1927.)

This essay is a new edition (in French) of the lectures on *Medieval Cities* which were published two years ago by the Princeton University Press. M. Pirenne excels in the art of summarizing in a popular form the results of erudite investigations; and this particular essay has the double merit of explaining the hypotheses which have inspired his own researches in this subject, and of combining in a systematic form the solid and valuable results at which he has arrived. For those who are new to the subject it has the further merit of giving brief but circumstantial descriptions of those communities and institutions of the early Middle Ages which in various ways sheltered and fostered the revival of commerce. The most important were the episcopal cities, with their fairs, their markets and their mints; the *castella*, which were founded for purposes of defence and became in many cases the administrative capitals of large dependent districts; the fairs and markets of the open country; the guilds, hanses or fraternities of itinerant merchants. But M. Pirenne insists, rightly as we think, that the motive force which gave the first impetus to the development of trading and manufacturing towns was the influx, through the Netherlands and the Adriatic, of goods which were in universal demand throughout the West, but could not be produced there. The network of highways along which this traffic was conducted has been mapped out by Schaube, Bugge, Schulte and others, and the more we learn about the network the more evident becomes the importance of Venice and the Flemish seaports as nodal points. Commercial towns sprang up at many points along these arteries of international trade; but the urban movement was nowhere so vigorous or so precocious as in the neighbourhood of the terminal seaports.

These considerations lead M. Pirenne to a remark, discreetly relegated to a footnote, which is perhaps the most provocative in the whole volume. "Les villes les plus importantes pour l'étude de l'origine des institutions urbaines sont évidemment les plus anciennes; c'est là que la bourgeoisie s'est constituée. C'est une faute de méthode que de chercher à expliquer celle-ci en s'appuyant sur des villes de formation postérieure et tardives comme celles de l'Allemagne d'Outre Rhin" (p. 119). M. Pirenne *appears* to suggest that the whole of the literature relating to the origin of German towns is irrelevant. We do not, however, suspect him of meaning to go this length. The study of German town-institutions has been invaluable to the historians of other towns in other countries, because German scholars have traced with infinite ingenuity the obscure and archaic origins of certain urban institutions (such as the special peace and the borough-court) which occur all over Europe. But the earliest German town-charters belong to a period when the bourgeois were already a well-differentiated class. And what M. Pirenne contends is that the town did not make the bourgeois, but the bourgeois made the town. Here we come to the central hypothesis of his book. It is ingenious, it is suggestive, and it explains certain features of town-life in the Netherlands, in England, and in Germany. The master-minds in the communal movement were not local moneylenders and forestallers. They were adventurous men who, like Ulysses, had seen men and cities far and near, roaming to Spain and Italy and England and the furthest corners of the Baltic, not as individuals, but in fraternities travelling in fleets of caravans under armed escort, to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market. These men required fixed halting-places on their journeys for rest and refreshment, for storage depots, and for the business of buying and selling. Such fixed points were found in the *faubourgs*, *suburbia*, *novi burgi*, or *poorts* which developed, along the arterial trade-routes, as appendages to the fortified *civitates* of bishops and *castella* of counts and other administrative officials. The population of such a suburb was commercial through and through. It amassed capital, it attracted a steady influx of manual labour from the countryside, it became a formidable community which could buy or extort franchises from the local count or bishop, and which often grew until it enveloped, stifled, and submerged the older, less progressive community of *castrensens* or *cives* to which it had once been inferior. The new development, M. Pirenne suggests, was not a case of the few overwhelmed by the many, of ancient laws and privileges crushed by the dead-weight of collective wealth. It was the triumph of a new type of social leader, the capitalist, over the aristocracy of the domanial régime; and M. Pirenne regards the triumph with satisfaction not

merely because on the whole it meant the increase of material well-being, but also because it afforded opportunities for the development of *l'esprit laïque* in government, in the arts, and in the schools.

No one will quarrel with M. Pirenne for resorting to hypothesis where the texts are so few and generally so unilluminative. But we may fairly ask whether it is legitimate to *assume* that all the earliest medieval towns developed in this way and no other. It may be so, but the balance of probability is against the assumption. The guilds of itinerant merchants existed in many parts of Europe, but we hear about them only as birds of passage, welcome everywhere provided that they do not settle down in the places where they do their trade. The great capitalist emerges at an early date. In twelfth-century England we find a Godric of Finchale; Mr. Hilary Jenkinson and others have traced some of the international ramifications of the lending business of William Cade of St. Omer. But we do not detect these cosmopolitan magnates assuming the rôle of agitators in the domestic politics of the towns where they set up their business establishments. They may have played such a part; but, on the other hand, they may have been loftily indifferent to the petty fears and petty ambitions of their smaller neighbours—the retailers who bought from foreign merchants to supply the local market, the craftsmen who worked up the local surplus of wool or hides or metal into articles which could be sold either at home or abroad. In England, at all events, the mass of the borough community always appears to be composed of these two indigenous elements; and against the forinsec merchant both are firmly united. They cannot do without him, but they will not admit him to full burgess-right. They may at times be in his debt and to that extent his humble servants. But we have no evidence that in this early stage of urban evolution he ever played a leading political rôle.

H. W. C. DAVIS.

The Pipe Roll for 1295: Surrey Membrane. (Surrey Record Society, No. xxi. London. 1924.)

This very valuable work, which can only be obtained through membership of the Surrey Record Society, is entirely the result of the labours of Miss Mabel Mills, now our chief authority on Exchequer procedure in the thirteenth century. Its importance lies in the fact that Miss Mills has made the text of the Surrey entries on a particular Pipe Roll the occasion of an elaborate illustrative commentary upon the financial system, so far as it is reflected in the annual audit at the Exchequer. She has worked out all the details in order to show their relation to the system as a whole; she gives a facsimile of part of the membrane, and adds an exhaustive index. It would be quite un-