

A STUDY OF
SOCIAL LIFE IN THE SATIRES OF JUVENAL

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is not to deal with the literary merit and poetic technique of the satirist. I am not asking whether Juvenal was a good poet or not; instead, I intend to undertake this study strictly from a social and historical point of view.

From our author's barrage of bitter protests on the follies and foibles of his age I shall try to uncover as much of the truth as possible (a) from what Juvenal himself says, (b) from what his contemporaries say of the same society, and (c) from the verdict of modern authorities. I shall try to get behind the busy political events of the period and distinguish as clearly as possible the different kinds of people and social activities of the time, relying chiefly on the primary source, the Satires of Juvenal. The results of this study show that the Satires do provide much worthwhile evidence about the society of the people whose lives went into the making of the culture to which our own is so much in debt.

The social history of the epoch cannot be underestimated: "Its importance in universal history it can never lose", said Lord Bryce, "for unto it all the life of the ancient world was gathered, out of it all the life of the modern world arose."

For our own age the social life in the Satires of Juvenal ought to have special interest, as there are considerable resemblances between modern society in the great cities and the busy life that surged before Juvenal's eyes in Rome eighteen centuries ago.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Abstract.	ii
I. INTRODUCTION	
Juvenal the Satirist and His Times1
His Philosophy9
Self-Prescribed Aims and an Introduction to the <u>Satires</u>	13
II. THE SATIRIST'S DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL CONDITIONS	
Houses and the Household	23
Luxury of Dress.	29
Food and Entertainment	32
Recreations and Amusements	39
Vices.	48
Wealth and Poverty	51
Religion	56
City-Life.	64
Legacy-Hunters	69
Perverts	71
Literary Men	75
Country Life	78
III. POPULUS ROMANUS	
The Nobility	80

III. POPULUS ROMANUS (continued)

The Equestrian Order	83
The Masses	85
Freedmen and Clients	88
Freedmen.	88
Clients	91
Slaves	93
Gladiators	96
Greeks and other Foreigners.	100
Egyptians.	103
Jews	106
The Family	108
Women.	111
Children and Education	117
Teachers	119
Soldiers	122

IV. JUVENAL AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Martial.	124
Tacitus.	131
Pliny the Younger.	136

V. ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

Recapitulation	142
The Critics and Re-examination	143

Page

V. ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION (continued)

Humour152
The <u>Satires</u> as a Social Document155
BIBLIOGRAPHY.158

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Juvenal, the Satirist and His Times

If we wish to know how a satirist regarded the actual world of society, of business, of pleasure, of literature, we may examine the Satires of Juvenal, which cover practically every form of Roman society during a period roughly between the death of the Emperor Claudius and that of Hadrian. This whole period is regarded by some as one of the most momentous in the history of the world.

Juvenal (ca. 55-135 A.D.) lived about a century later than Horace (65-8 B.C.) when the seeds of moral degradation, sown long ago, had produced their fruit, when the splendour of the empire had faded into a despotic, self-glorifying rule, when practically unlimited power, which in the hands of Augustus had been bound by his own self-respect and the self-respect of the nation, had crossed or levelled all such bounds and was used for the gratification of its possessors. Rome was full of adventurers from all lands, anxious to acquire wealth and power by all arts. The spirit of earnest devotion to the state and to personal duty, which had marked the earlier Romans,

had given place to self-seeking; pride had become vanity, frugality had become avarice. It seems as if the grave and decent reserve which had been characteristic of many Romans in olden times had been thrown off by the highest classes; emperors engaged in scenes of folly and profligacy, and the sons and grandsons of great men took part in vulgar revelry, gambling, and the games. Nothing, says Juvenal, was respected but wealth - nothing provoked contempt but poverty.¹

It was a time when too few people did any work in Rome. Many lived idly and depended solely on the dole for subsistence. Many were kept and fed by their wealthy patrons, or by the Emperor.² Goods were manufactured in provincial factories with cheap labour and marketed to Rome at the lowest price. The wealth of the Empire kept prices low in Rome, and the city had become an immense bee-hive of idlers and speculators - a huge city awaiting the catastrophe that would eventually sweep her away.

On the whole, we see a city with no rival in size, wealth, and importance, and a free population supported by the state and finding their business in amusements, often of a brutal

1 Sat., iii. 137, 148.

2 Franzero, C. A., The Life and Times of Nero, London, Redman, 1954, p.188.

and inhuman kind. In addition, there was a multitude of slaves brought together from all parts of the world and avenging themselves unconsciously on society by the corruption of domestic life. Equally corrupt was a number of freedmen who combined enormous wealth with the tastes and habits of slaves.

The main reason for the unhappy state of affairs, according to Juvenal, is that "we have the sickness of long peace. Luxury, more deadly than any foe, preys upon us and avenges a conquered world; every crime and shape of lust has appeared since the age when Roman poverty vanished."³

Literature also suffered:

In this period of moral dearth the fountains of genius and literature were dried up. The orator dared not impeach the corrupt politician, or defend the victim of tyranny, when everyone thought the best way to secure his own safety was by trampling on the fallen favorite, now Caesar's enemy. The historian dared not utter his real sentiments. Poetry grew cold without the general fostering encouragement of noble and affectionate hearts. There was criticism, grammar, declamation, panegyric, and verse writing, but not oratory, history, or poetry.⁴

To this, Lindsay⁵ adds:

3 Sat., vi. 292-295.

4 Browne, R. W., A History of Roman Classical Literature, London, Bentley, 1884, p.448.

5 Lindsay, T. B., The Satires of Juvenal, New York, American Book Company, 1890, Introd., pp.xii-xiii.

Here was no time for pretty philosophic generalities, here was no time to compose poems on beauty of content, lying beside some gently murmuring stream, or, crowned with roses, sipping Falernian wine amid a company of pleasant friends; here was no time to laugh at vice, to say what foolish fellows bad men were. No; here was time for fierce invective, for denunciation like that of the Hebrew prophets; here was a time to cry out that sin was the death of all that was good and fair in the family and state. Here was room for contempt indeed, but a contempt too deep and bitter for a laugh. And Juvenal had this contempt, a contempt tinged with despair.

Besides a bitter contempt for all that was morally wrong, Juvenal also possessed great gifts, both of character and intellect. He was evidently a man of stern and serious temperament, an ardent admirer of the old Roman gravitas, that combination of force and dignity on which the then world-wide Empire was based. His hatred of luxury, effeminacy, and indecorum on the part of public men springs from the admiration of the old Roman virtues and also perhaps because he was himself a disappointed and unsuccessful man in the life of the big city.⁶ Moreover, he loved Rome, the ideal Rome, the Rome of the Republic, when patriotism ruled in the forum and family affection in the home. It was a sense of this terrible change, the sure sign of the approaching dissolution, that gave the

⁶ Hightet, G., "Life of Juvenal", Transactions of the American Philological Assoc., LXVIII (1937), p.505.

lash of Juvenal its severest sting: Facit indignatio versum.⁷

It was to reprove the sins of such an age that Juvenal wrote. We shall understand him best if we believe that his eye is fixed throughout on the reign of Domitian, and the horrors, political and social, which he must have witnessed when he was of full age to appreciate them. The witness of his own poems provides ample chronological evidence that all the early Satires were written in the city of Rome or its environs during the reign of Domitian.⁸ In Satire Seven, which must have been published under Hadrian or at least in the last years of Trajan, he refers freely to the men who died in Domitian's reign as if they could exemplify the truth he is asserting.

Taking into account the social and literary climate in which he wrote, we see that his patriotism, in the better sense of the word, was entirely his own. Several years before the death of Domitian he felt he had a right and desire to address his countrymen at large in time of crisis. But like

7 Sat., i. 79.

8 See Sat., xiii. 17 and xv. 27: these are two exact references to 127 A.D., both topical and fairly recent. See also xiv. 96-106 for the airy description of Romans becoming Jewish converts and circumcising themselves. This could not have been written after 131 A.D., when Hadrian forbade the Jews to practise circumcision.

Tacitus and Pliny, he had to hide his feelings at the time and play at oratory in the schools; in the meantime he was sharpening his weapons, and, when freedom of speech and a better government returned in the time of Trajan, his resentment rushed forth all the fiercer for its long suppression.

He is not concerned with matters of government in his Satires but with the many disgraceful dramas of everyday life, and the forces that were at work amongst the people which were destined to have a great bearing on Rome's ultimate downfall.

Juvenal, wishing to speak directly to the great world, decided to talk about what the great world was really eager to hear; he views at close range the latest scandal, the state of the times, the decay of the patrician order, and the joys of simple life. As if standing on the street corner watching the crowds parade before his vigilant gaze, the satirist reviews the types of moral degradation⁹ prevalent in Rome, selecting concrete details and attaching them tellingly to definite people. His works reflect his character so much that every reader is bound to form a strong impression of his personality, subjective though it must be to a considerable extent. Son or foster-son of a rich freedman, Decimus Junius

9 Sat., i. passim.

Juvenalis was born at Aquinum¹⁰ about 55 A.D. His education was of the usual character, literary and rhetorical, and was presumably carried out in Rome. He busied himself in his youth with rhetorical studies and practised declamation without, however, any view to either teaching or law as a profession.¹¹ He served in the army as a tribunus cohortis and was at one time banished to Egypt.¹²

From Martial's statements as well as from the Satires, we conclude that Juvenal lived for some time at Rome.¹³ It is probable that after achieving a high status in his home town and having become a knight, he came to Rome to advance his

10 Roma tuo refici properantem reddet Aquino (iii. 319). Also an inscription found near Aquinum runs as follows [CIL., x.5382, the underlined letters are supplied by editors]:

Cereri sacrum
D. Iunius Iuvenalis
trib. coh. I Delmatarum
II vir quinq. flamen
divi Vespasiani
vovit dedicavitque
sua pecunia

11 For a full account of the life of Juvenal, see Highet, op. cit., pp.480-506, and C. H. Pearson and H. A. Strong, D. Iunii Iuvenalis Saturae XIII, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1892, Introd., pp.9-17.

12 Sat., xv. 45.

13 Sat., xi. 190-204; xii. 87; Mart. 12.18.1-2. See also Highet, op. cit., p.506.

status by courting the nobles for their suffragia.¹⁴ For some reason he was not promoted and he probably wrote a short lampoon on the unfair advancement in the equestrian career, and used the name of Paris, who was executed some time before, as an example.¹⁵ Domitian took this lampoon as an attack on his administration and exiled Juvenal to Egypt, confiscating all his property.¹⁶ When he returned to Rome after Domitian's death, he was middle-aged and penniless.¹⁷ He lived for some years as a client of the rich,¹⁸ writing poetry with little success.¹⁹ As an old man²⁰ he inherited or earned some property²¹ with two or three servants²² and he may have had a farm near Tibur.²³ It seems therefore that he ended his

14 Hight, op. cit., p.505.

15 Loc. cit.

16 Ibid., p.493.

17 The disaster of his life is sufficiently reflected in the furious outburst against the regime of Domitian with which his Satires start, and in the gradual diminution of that vehemence as he leaves that age farther and farther behind.

18 Cf. Sat., i. 133-134; v. 2. 19 Hight, op. cit., p.506.

20 See Sat., xi. 203: he speaks of his contracta cuticula.

21 See Sat., xi. 190; xii. 87.

22 See. Sat., xi. 136-161; xii. 83.

23 Sat., xi. 65. Hight (op. cit., p.486) points out that we cannot be sure since Tiburinus ager need mean no more than "the country round Tibur".

days in reasonable comfort and that he died about A.D. 135.

As to the actual dates of the Satires, Butler²⁴ feels that some of them were written under the reign of Domitian but Juvenal had every reason for concealing them till after the tyrant's death. Highet²⁵ is of the opinion that all the Satires were published in the reigns of Trajan (A.D. 98-117) and Hadrian (A.D. 117-138). In this regard Hembold and O'Neil²⁶ point out:

The poet presumably began publishing under Trajan. There is not a scrap of evidence to show publication before A.D. 100 and Highet may well be right in putting Juvenal's first production as late as 110. Whenever he may have published, his content remains exclusively Flavian in its mise en scène. He was no laudator temporis acti, but its accusator.

The Philosophy of Juvenal

What is the philosophy of Juvenal? It would be interesting for us to examine his philosophical outlook in order to be better equipped to judge his concepts and ideals.

24 Butler, H. E., Post-Augustan Poetry, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1909, p.289.

25 Highet, op. cit., p.481.

26 Hembold, W. C., and O'Neil, E. N., "The Form and Purpose of Juvenal's Seventh Satire", Classical Philology, LIV (1959), p.107.

Michael Grant²⁷ says:

His morality is not exclusively Stoic. He was an eclectic: he speaks not as a Stoic or Cynic or Epicurean alone, but with whatever speech the claims of morality suggest.

Juvenal emphasizes the vices of contemporary Stoics. His character was too passionate to allow him to accept their creed. He was not a Cynic, since he had positive ideals.

Hight²⁸ says that he was respectful to Epicureanism, quotes its dogmas, and accepts its basic moral principles. Hight²⁹ continues:

Although he was primarily an observer and a critic, he was also a thinking man. And every thoughtful man has a structure of moral and metaphysical and religious ideas on which the rest of his judgements are built. He may have taken this structure over as a whole from some philosophical school or teacher. He may have built it up himself by reading and self-examination, changing it as his mind develops, through a period of many years.

Juvenal first begins to use philosophical material in his second and third books. In his fourth book he starts to talk like a philosophical teacher and to approve of a way

27 Grant, Michael, Roman Literature, Cambridge, University Press, 1954, p.249.

28 Hight, G., "The Philosophy of Juvenal", Transactions of the American Philological Assoc., LXXX (1949), p.254.

29 Loc. cit.

of life modelled on that of one of the philosophical sects. Though Juvenal was not really a student of philosophy,³⁰ yet he is naturally familiar with the more important philosophical creeds and disposed by temperament to fall in with the views of the Stoic school. The conclusion of the Tenth Satire owes much to the Stoics:

Si concilium vis,
permittes ipsis expendere numinibus quid
conveniat nobis rebusque sit utile nostris.
Nam pro iucundis aptissima quaeque dabunt di:
carior est illis homo quam sibi.³¹

Moreover, a somewhat Stoic flavour is attached to many of his remarks. For example, when he implies that 'revenge is an unworthy and a degrading passion'³² and 'fate'³³ and revolution of the stars in heaven rule all with unchanging law',³⁴ we note that these maxims are Stoic. Further, he agrees with the Stoics not because of any personal and friendly associations but simply because their practical teaching harmonizes well with the old virtus Romana that is his ideal.

On the other hand, he often turns to Epicureanism and gives the impression that he is converted. He does not, however, adopt all its tenets or share all its comforts.

30 Sat., xiii. 120-134.

31 Sat., x. 346-350.

32 Sat., xiii. 190.

33 Sat., ix. 32; xii. 63.

34 Sat., vii. 194-198; ix. 33.

Highet³⁵ points out that

This conversion was part of a much wider development in his life which manifested itself in an important change of his poetic method and aim, and which can best be understood through a survey of his entire career as a satiric poet.

The reasons given for this conversion can be found in Epicurus' teachings.³⁶ Let us remember that Epicurus originally appealed to the Greeks at a time when they were trying to find ways and means of making a decent life for men within political conflicts and social pressures too violent and unreasonable for them to control or conquer. It might well be that Juvenal was driven into accepting Epicureanism more or less unconsciously but, as Highet³⁷ says,

not as a solution for the corruption and crimes which he had once tried to combat but as a retreat from them. If so, his conversion meant that he abandoned his first vocation as a satirist of contemporary life, but became, at last, a happier man.

Juvenal's moral philosophy or rather teachings have at least an appeal to the ordinary man. His arguments are clear, cogent, and convincing. His pleadings against vengeance possess grave dignity:

35 Highet, "The Philosophy of Juvenal", p.270.

36 Loc. cit.

37 Loc. cit.

"At vindicta bonum vita iucundius ipsa."
 Nempe hoc indocti, quorum praecordia nullis
 interdum aut levibus videas flagrantia causis;³⁸
 quantulacumque adeo est occasio sufficit irae.³⁸

Juvenal further declares that the very temptation to sin is itself sin;³⁹ he attacks the passion for wealth;⁴⁰ he sees clearly that the only path of a peaceful life lies through integrity, and that the highest wisdom is to be true to oneself.⁴¹

Self-Prescribed Aims and an Introduction to the Satires

Before we examine the Satires in detail, we first need to ask the questions: What is Satire? In what way does our author merit the name "satirist"? If we take Dr. Johnson's definition of satire, then perhaps we can see the real aim of Juvenal. Dr. Johnson defines satire as "a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured."⁴² True to this definition Juvenal unquestionably deals mainly with the misdeeds of mankind.

38 Sat., xiii. 180-183. This concept is developed in 187-192.

39 Sat., xiii. 208-210.

40 Sat., xiv. 175-180, 303-320.

41 Sat., x. 363-364.

42 See J. W. Duff, Roman Satire, Cambridge, University Press, 1937, p.2.

Sikes writing in the Cambridge Ancient History⁴³ says:

It is the business of Satire to choose the abnormal, so it was the essence of Rhetoric to exaggerate the abnormality; and Juvenal, however sincere in feeling anger, cannot be acquitted of over-emphasis in expressing it.

Nettleship,⁴⁴ on the other hand, criticizes Juvenal rather pointlessly for encouraging a shift in the emphasis of satire:

The satura was not properly an attack on vice and folly, though Juvenal did his best to encourage the idea that it was, but a sketch of life and character. The Romans had a natural aptitude for this kind of writing, not because they were more spiteful than the Greeks, but because they had a larger sphere of experience, and a greater knowledge of the ars vivendi.

From the Satires we gather that Juvenal had this experience; he describes society as man of the world, taught, in his own words, by Life,⁴⁵ and spurred to write by his saeva indignatio over the vices of Rome. His primary motive is not so much to please⁴⁶ or instruct or even to reform but to bring to light the existing ugly facts of society. He tells us repeatedly

43 Sikes, E. E., "Latin Literature of the Silver Age", Cambridge Ancient History, vol. IX, Cambridge, University Press, 1954, p. 723.

44 Nettleship, H., Lectures and Essays, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1895, p.139.

45 Sat., xiii. 20-22.

46 Yet John Dryden once said, "[Juvenal] gives me as much pleasure as I can bear."

in his introductory satire that his only source of inspiration is his burning anger against folly, vice, and crime.⁴⁷

Juvenal is a stern moralist⁴⁸ who could see little good in society, and he had a definite purpose for which he had at his command the gift of extraordinarily vivid and succinct presentation of men and things. This gift renders him a very powerful delineator of Roman society at the beginning of the second century, so that he recreates for his readers the life that was led then, and the human figures who moved in street, house, or palace. The satirist, reporting everyday life, must do so very clearly, for he has to show us the familiar in a brighter light. Juvenal paints in vivid or dark colours, often with unpleasant realism, the follies and foibles of his age. The persons whom he introduces have either fictitious names or belong to the past, especially to the reigns of Nero and Domitian. His verses are forcible and pointed; and the standard of morality which he sets up has been so much admired in modern times that some churchmen have thought that he must

47 Sat., i. 25-29, 45-80, and passim.

48 This is the traditional view; but it is contested by H. A. Mason, "Is Juvenal a Classic?" in Critical Essays on Roman Literature (ed. J. P. Sullivan), London, Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1963, pp.93-176.

have owed something to the inspiration of Christianity,⁴⁹
unlikely as this may seem.

Bury⁵⁰ feels that his morality, though well and eloquently expressed, was not his own but was really the stock virtue of the rhetorical schools, and he advises us that:

We cannot take too seriously the declamatory invectives and biting epigrams which he launches against his contemporaries. He was not concerned to give a true picture of his times; he wrote his satires at once to make an effect and gratify his spleen. Their value for us lies in the accessory parts of the pictures. They enable us to realise more vividly than we could otherwise do, life and manners at Rome under Domitian, Trajan, and Hadrian.

Duff,⁵¹ who is supported by Hightet,⁵² differs from Bury on the secret of Juvenal's realism which

he had learned, not in any rhetorical academy, but in the severe school of life: he had undergone the privations of poverty, and almost certainly of war and exile: he had possessed the observant eye, the retentive memory, the faculty of direct expression needed to make an experience live again in literature. A few essential and picturesque details, recorded with utmost parsimony, place a whole scene before us.

49 Bury, J. B., A History of the Roman Empire, London, Murray, 1925, p.476.

50 Loc. cit.

51 Duff, J. W., A Literary History of Rome in the Silver Age, New York, Barnes and Noble, 1960, p.494.

52 Hightet, G., Juvenal the Satirist, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1954, p.174.

Hight⁵³ feels that in this regard Juvenal outdoes nearly all other satiric writers. He is real. He is alive, and his work is full of brilliant and unfading pictures. Hight⁵⁴ points out for us some of these pictures:

The rich lady examining her gold fringes while a slave is flogged near by (vi. 481-5); the nobleman lying in a filthy tavern beside gangsters and eunuchs (viii. 171-8); the decrepit old man gaping for food like a young bird in the nest (x. 228-32); the lion-tamer seized and carried off by his roaring pupil (xiv. 246-7); the perverts turning up their quivering eyes as they paint the underlashes (ii. 93-95); the distant yell which shows all Rome is at the races (xi. 193-8); the lovesick husband sipping his wife's bogus tears (vi. 276-7); the tyrant's statue hauled down, smashed, and cast into the furnace to be melted into cooking pots (x. 58-64); and the superb range in the First Satire, from the Egyptian officer waving his sweaty fingers in the air to the satirist burning in the arena as a living torch (i. 26-29 and 115-7).

We find that Juvenal, though essentially a keen observer, often mingles righteous anger with much personal irritation. He often exaggerates and gives us a grotesque picture of a peculiar phase of Roman society. Often, too, he seems to have seen only one side of life. He is at home amidst the corruptions of a city where the struggle for wealth was keen, and pleasure the aim of most men.

53 Hight, G., Juvenal the Satirist, p.174.

54 Loc. cit.

Generally, however, such pictures make a realistic setting for what most concerns him - the life of the times and the faults which demanded castigation. He wished to punish vice by displaying its horrors. Juvenal regarded himself as championing a righteous cause. He seems sincere enough. Cruttwell⁵⁵ believes that the very violence of his prejudices betrays an earnestness which, if his views had been on a higher moral and intellectual plane, we might have thought feigned.

In Juvenal's defence, Duff⁵⁶ sums up the aims of satire by pointing out:

His colours may be too dark, but he does not victimize the innocent. It is of the essence of satire to select its subjects for attack, and when, he asks, was any age richer in material? If he lets virtue and merit pass unrecorded, though at any rate unassailed, it should be borne in mind, as already suggested, that it is not a satirist's business to present a complete view of contemporary society. He wields a scourge from which goodness is exempt.

The philosophers of the first and second centuries speculated on the problems of society, and nearly every writer of the time was primarily a moralist.⁵⁷ Tacitus and Plutarch

55 Cruttwell, C. H., A History of Roman Literature, London, Griffin, 1910, p.447.

56 Duff, Roman Satire, p.161.

57 Swain, J. W., The Ancient World, New York, Harper, 1950, vol. 2, p.521.

preached morality through their histories. Satirists like Juvenal and Lucian were much concerned with moral problems. Generation after generation in a world of change finds something wise and memorable in the topics of satire. They speak to many different men with a universal voice. They deal with themes of permanent importance and of perennial interest.

The very nature of satire and its apparent utter lack of anything approaching conventional form allowed Juvenal an opportunity to comment as freely as he wished. Thus Charles Knapp,⁵⁸ speaking about the themes in Juvenal, quotes Ludwig Friedländer as saying:

He resembles a pedestrian who strolls along at his ease, not bothering his head overmuch about reaching his destination, but as his fancy seizes him, tarrying here, hurrying along there, making a wider detour in one place, in another, leaving the true path entirely. Hence, in cases where out of a number of equally important parts of a given subject he treats one at great length, and then skims over the others or gives them the barest mention, one would look in vain for any sound internal reason for such lack of symmetry.

Further, Juvenal thought it allowable to set down at the very moment it occurred to him any thought that came into his head, however much such a proceeding might interrupt the flow of the general thought of his satire.

With this in mind let us now consider the subjects in the Satires of Juvenal. Of the sixteen poems, twelve deal with

58 Knapp, Charles, "A Brief Review of Juvenal Satire I", The Classical Weekly, XIX (1925), p.19.

the maladjustments of contemporary society considered from different points of view: the relation of husbands and wives, of friends true and false, of parents and children, and of civilians and soldiers.⁵⁹ Two (Satires Four and Five) deal with recent historical events. The other two (Satires Ten and Thirteen) are on moral topics: crime and punishment and the true aim of human life. According to Hightet, a fair estimate might be that ten poems out of the whole collection pertain to subjects important for Juvenal's own time.⁶⁰

Even though he is in a crowded city, Juvenal in his early satires seems extremely lonely. He appears to know few of the pleasures of friendship. He walks alone through the streets with his notebook, inquietus, as Martial imagined him;⁶¹ he says good-bye to the aging Umbricius who is leaving Rome in defeat and despair;⁶² when he advises Trebius and Postumus to avoid clienthood and marriage, he sounds rather as though he were talking to himself.⁶³ In Satire Seven, he is still

59 These twelve are 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14 and 16.

60 Hightet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.167. The ten are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 13 and 14.

61 See Sat., i. 63-64, and Martial, 12.18.1-2.

62 Sat., iii.

63 Satires v. and vi.

alone, looking back gloomily at the starving intellectuals of his youth; in Satire Nine, he is aloof and despises his interlocutor, who is a professional pervert; in Satire Ten, he fixes his eye on the whole world and speaks to no individual. In Satire Eleven, we begin to notice a change in his mood and tone. For the first time his voice is heard talking to a friend as a friend. With a genuine warmth which we have hitherto not noticed he invites an elderly friend, Persicus, to dine with him. This satire is important not only because of its friendly touch, but also because it is the first extant poem which Juvenal devotes to praise rather than criticism.

In general, the Satires of Juvenal are almost all about Rome in the first and early part of the second centuries after Christ - except for one, which Hight⁶⁴ calls the "ferocious fifteenth", which deals with the barbarous cruelty of the Egyptians. His favourite spot is Rome. Often he takes us into the noisy, thronged, busy streets of the capital of the world, and shows us the changing spectacle of the crowds during the day and night. Often he takes us into the homes of rich and poor alike, and we see glimpse after glimpse of Roman daily life, all of which becomes indelibly graven on our memory

64 Hight, G., Poets in a Landscape, London, Hamilton, 1957, p.202.

as it is so similar in many ways to our own. He is, indeed, as Highet says, "the supreme satirist of big city life."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Highet, Poets in a Landscape, p.202.

CHAPTER II

THE SATIRIST'S DESCRIPTION OF SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Houses and the Household

In contrast to the Pompeian domus, the Roman insula grew steadily in stature until it reached a considerable height;¹ we can well imagine how contractors vied with each other in constructing structures. Juvenal does not like the height of the houses and he ridicules this "aerial Rome which rests only on beams as long and thin as flutes."²

The technique of making bricks had been perfected in the second century B.C., and it had become usual to cover the entire façade of a building with bricks. Also, much use was made of these bricks in repairing old buildings. Generally, there was much construction-work being done and the city was constantly filled with noise of buildings collapsing or being torn down to prevent them from doing so. The tenants of an insula lived in constant expectation of its coming down on

1 Thus Juvenal speaks of the altae caligantes fenestrae: Sat., vi. 31.

2 Sat., iii. 193-194.

their heads. We may recall the savage and gloomy tirade of Juvenal:

Who at cool Praeneste, or at Volsinii amid its leafy hills was ever afraid of his house tumbling down? . . . But here we inhabit a city supported for the most part by slender props: for that is how the landlord patches up the gaping cracks in the old wall, bidding the inmates sleep at ease under the ruin that hangs above their heads.³

The Roman houses, moreover, caught fire as frequently as the houses of Istanbul under the Sultans. This was because, in the first place, they were unsubstantial; secondly, the weight of their floors involved the introduction of massive wooden beams, and the movable stoves which heated them, the candles, the smoky lamps, and the torches which lighted them at night involved perpetual risk of fire; thirdly, water was issued to the various stories with a grudging hand. All these reasons combined to increase both the number of fires and the rapidity with which they spread.

In spite of the attention Trajan paid to the policing of the Urbs with a corps of vigiles, outbreaks of fire were an everyday occurrence in Roman life. No Roman ever ceased fearing for the destruction of his property by an outbreak of fire. The rich man trembled for his mansion and kept

3 Sat., iii. 190-196.

his treasured possessions well protected.⁴ The poor man was startled from his sleep by flames invading his attic and the terror of being roasted alive.⁵

In describing a scene of fire, Juvenal makes the houses of Rome live in the minds of his readers. Take the incident of a fire which has broken out in a Roman tenement house:

Ucalegon below is already shouting for water and shifting his chattels; smoke is pouring out of your third-floor attic, but you know nothing of it; for if the alarm begins in the ground-floor, the last man to burn will be he who has nothing to shelter him from the rain but the tiles.⁶

Dread of fire was such an obsession among rich and poor alike that Juvenal was prepared to quit Rome to escape it: "No, no, I must live where there is no fire and the night is free from alarms!"⁷

The scantiness of furniture in Roman houses at least reduced the danger of fires from spreading more quickly. Granted that they were warned in time, the poor devils of the cenacula (like Ucalegon)⁸ were quickly able "to clear

4 Sat., xiv. 305-308.

5 Sat., iii. 199-207.

6 Sat., iii. 199-202.

7 Sat., iii. 197-198.

8 Ucalegon is an imaginary person whom Juvenal ironically labelled with an epic name borrowed from Homer through Vergil: iam proximus ardet Ucalegon: Aeneid ii. 311.

out their miserable goods and chattels".⁹ The rich had more to lose and could not, like Ucalegon, stuff all their wordly possessions into one bundle. Apart from their statues of marble and bronze, their furniture, however, was sparse enough, for wealth displayed itself not in the number of items, but in their quality, the precious materials employed, and the rare shapes which bore witness to their owner's taste. A millionaire whom Juvenal pictures¹⁰ takes precautions to save not what we nowadays would call "furniture" but his curios and objets d'art. For every Roman, the main item of furniture was the bed (lectus) on which he slept during his siesta and at night, and on which he reclined by day to read or write. The chair with a more or less sloping back, the cathedra, was especially popular with women. Great ladies, whose indolence is the target for Juvenal's scorn, were accustomed to repose languidly on them.¹¹

Water, light, and air left much to be desired even in the most luxurious house. It was not until the reign of Trajan and the opening on June 24, 109 A.D., of the aqueduct called by his name, aqua Traiana, that fresh spring-water was brought to the houses on the right bank of the Tiber.¹² Formerly,

9 Sat., iii. 198-199.

10 Sat., xiv. 305-308.

11 Sat., vi. 91.

12 Carcopino, J., Daily Life in Ancient Rome, London, Routledge, 1941, p.38.

the inhabitants had to use well-water for their daily requirements.¹³ Most houses required the services of water-carriers. In Juvenal, the water-carriers (aquarii) are spoken of as the scum of the slave population.¹⁴ Later, however, in the third century A.D., they were considered essential to the collective life of each insula and they formed, as it were, a part of the building itself.¹⁵

Some of the city-dwellers who found their stairs too steep and the road to the middens too long, to save themselves further trouble, were in the habit of emptying the dirty contents of their pots from their heights into the streets.¹⁶ We can well imagine how frequently a pedestrian might be struck by this unwelcome gift! Fouled and sometimes even injured, he had no redress save to lodge a complaint against the unknown assailant.¹⁷

Juvenal also complained about the high rents in the city and said that it was possible to buy an excellent house at Sora, at Fabrateria, or Frusino for what one would pay for a dark garret for one year in Rome.¹⁸ Yet there were many people

13 Carcopino, op. cit., p.38. 14 Sat., vi. 332.

15 Carcopino, op. cit., p.39. 16 Sat., iii. 277.

17 Sat., iii. 269-272.

18 Sat., iii. 223-225.

who were willing to pay such high rents in order to enjoy the benefits of city-life and to watch the games of the Circus.¹⁹

Almost every room from the first to the top floor of every apartment house was over-crowded. Thus Juvenal speaks of the poor gentleman residing garret-high on the top-most storey of an insula "where the gentle doves lay their eggs."²⁰

Juvenal calls up image after image of the elaborate preparation the household makes for the arrival of the master. He mentions the washing of the dishes, the blowing up of the fire with distended cheeks, the preparation of the flesh-scrapers and anointing oil, and the laying out of the towels.²¹ Also, when guests were expected, Juvenal tells us the Romans took great care to see that everything was in order.²² We have the everlasting picture of the paterfamilias who does not bother about appearances before his own family, but has a regular housecleaning when guests are expected. Thus in Satire Fourteen we can almost hear the master's voice roaring out at the slaves.²³ Dunn²⁴ rewrites this humorous scene thus:

19 Sat., iii. 223.

20 Sat., iii. 201-202.

21 Sat., iii. 261-263.

22 Sat., xiv. 64-65.

23 Sat., xiv. 59-63.

24 Dunn, F. S., "Juvenal as a Humorist", The Classical Weekly, IV (1910), p.52.

"Not a blessed one of you servants will have time to breathe. Sweep the pavement there; scrub those columns clean; brush down all those spider-webs yonder; here you, boy, polish that silver-ware - bright, understand? - and, you, Tom, rub up those embossed vases", roars out the voice of the master, as he stands over his household, whip in hand.

Luxury of Dress

Juvenal tells us that people dressed smartly in Rome, somewhat above their means.²⁵ The social climbers liked to give the appearance of being wealthy when, in fact, they habitually lived in a state of pretentious poverty. "This failing", Juvenal says, "is universal in Rome."²⁶ His picture of the luxury of dress of the upper classes is generally quite vivid. The Romans, especially the women, dressed very ornately. Women used perfumes and there were special people called unguentarii who sold these unguenta. In addition to perfumes, silk and jewels were common in most of the upper circles. Some of the Roman nobles, we learn, wore clothing of an almost transparent texture.²⁷ Our author is enraged at the effeminate Emperor Otho who used cosmetics and carried a mirror to war,²⁸ and he envies the purple-clad upstart, Crispinus, who once wore

25 Sat., iii. 180.

26 Sat., iii. 182-183.

27 Sat., ii. 76-78.

28 Sat., ii. 99.

"a strip of native papyrus round his loins."²⁹

The toga was de rigueur for all occasions of public ceremony. In Rome, it was the regular garment worthy of the masters of the world - flowing and solemn. Being hot and cumbrous, especially during the summer months, it was, too, very uncomfortable. In the country, it was usually put away and worn on special occasions only, thus saving it from regular "wear and tear" since repeated washing soon wore the toga threadbare and condemned it to be discarded. Juvenal asserts that in Italian cities, where people are easy-going, the toga is never worn by a man until he is dead that he may be decently buried.³⁰

Boys began to shave at the first sign of facial hair. The cutting-off of the beard of a son or a favourite was attended with some ceremony.³¹ Except for philosophers who wore beards Romans of this period shaved regularly. Those who had no slaves to shave them went to one of the barbers' shops that were to be found all over the city. Idlers loafed around these shops, which were known to be great centres of gossip. Juvenal himself in his youth visited a barber

29 Sat., iv. 23-24.

30 Sat., iii. 171-173.

31 Sat., viii. 166.

(who later amassed a great fortune) "by whose shaving his beard sounded heavy in his youth".³²

The women of the second century were very lavish and finicky in their dress. The Roman woman began her day by dressing her hair. She was very meticulous about getting her hair set properly especially if she had an appointment and wished to be turned out more elegantly than usual. Juvenal portrays a very cruel scene³³ that takes place between the mistress and the unhappy slave who arranges her hair:

Why is this curl standing up? she asks, and down comes a thong of bull's hide to inflict chastisement for the offending ringlet.³⁴

Juvenal, in his turn, makes merry about the contrast between the lack of height of a certain fine lady and the pretentiousness of her piled-up hair to which there seemed no limit:

So important is the business of beautification; so numerous are the tiers and stories piled one upon another on her head! In front, you would take her for an Andromache; she is not so tall behind: you would not think it was the same person.³⁵

The Roman woman wore high heels,³⁶ used perfumes which the

32 Sat., i. 25, repeated in Sat., x. 226.

33 Sat., vi. 490-491.

34 Sat., vi. 492-493.

35 Sat., vi. 501-504.

36 Sat., vi. 506.

"slender Indians"³⁷ exported, in fact, she adorned herself so much that, Juvenal says, "there is nothing that a woman will not permit herself to do, nothing that she deems shameful, when she encircles her neck with green emeralds, and fastens huge pearls to her elongated ears".³⁸ With regard to her facial make-up, Juvenal says:

She ridiculously puffs out and disfigures her face with lumps of dough; she reeks of rich Poppaeian unguents which stick to the lips of her unfortunate husband. Her lover she will meet with a clean-washed skin; but when does she ever care to look beautiful at home? It is for her lovers that her perfumes are prepared.³⁹

Moreover, Juvenal scornfully asks:

But, when she has been coated over and treated with all those layers of medicaments, and had those lumps of moist dough applied to it, shall we call it a face or a sore?⁴⁰

Food and Entertainment

The day's fare of the Roman upper class consisted of three meals. Breakfast, eaten in most instances shortly after sunrise, comprised salt, bread, milk or wine, and sometimes eggs or cheese. Luncheon followed about the middle of the day and included fruit, salad, eggs, meat or fish,

37 Sat., vi. 466.

38 Sat., vi. 457-459.

39 Sat., vi. 461-465.

40 Sat., vi. 471-473.

vegetables and sometimes cheese. Dinner was the main meal of the day and it often lasted several hours. It came late in the afternoon or early evening, and was on occasion accompanied by different forms of entertainment, such as reading, acting, singing, and dancing. The Romans regularly reclined on couches whenever they had their meals.⁴¹

Well-to-do Romans gave much of their time to dining in style, drinking, and talking. The company would consist of three, six, or nine at most, because not more than three could recline comfortably at one table. In an age luxurious with the banquets in which it indulged, Juvenal deplores the extravagance of those who had little in the way of means and yet ruined themselves for the pleasures of the table.⁴² Juvenal tells us of a certain Crispinus who bought a fish of enormous size at an extremely high price to satisfy his greedy appetite.⁴³ We should note that Juvenal does not attack him for buying such a large fish, though this is bad enough, but for eating it himself (emit sibi).

Here, by way of contrast, is a simple and amusing dinner which Juvenal proposes to his friend Persicus about 100 A.D.

41 Smith, E. Marion, "Some Roman Dinner-Tables", Classical Journal, L (1955), p.225.

42 Sat., xi. 35-41.

43 Sat., iv. 15-22.

It is a small banquet, he tells us, such as was served with great simplicity in days of old.

And now hear my feast, which no meat-market shall supply. From my Tiburtine farm there will come a plump kid, tenderest of the flock, innocent of grass, that has never yet dared to nibble the twigs of the dwarf willow-bed, and has more of milk in him than blood; some wild asparagus, gathered by the bailiff's wife when done with her spindle, and some lordly eggs, warm in their wisps of hay, together with the hens that laid them. There will be grapes, too, kept half the year, as fresh as when they hung upon the tree; pears from Signia and Syria, and in the same baskets fresh-smelling apples that rival those of Picenum.⁴⁴

Juvenal warns his friend that his servants will not be spoiled pretty-boys imported at a great price from the East⁴⁵ or highly-skilled carvers who are accustomed to cut up "a magnificent feast of hares and sows' paunches, of boars and antelopes, of pheasants and tall flamingoes and Gaetulian gazelles".⁴⁶ Instead, he will have simple untutored youngsters from the farm, sons of his (Juvenal's) herdsmen, shy, awkward, but honest.⁴⁷ Moreover, the furniture and the dishes will be

⁴⁴ Sat., xi. 66-74. We should note that everything is home-grown. That is, of course, why there is no fish. Also, fish had to be bought in the market and were expensive. See iv. 15-33; v. 92-102.

⁴⁵ Sat., xi. 147-148.

⁴⁶ Sat., xi. 136-140. We may also reckon that these types of meat were consumed in the houses of the rich.

⁴⁷ Sat., xi. 143-161.

as simple as the meal: no tortoise-shell conches and silver plate, not even ivory-handled knives. The knives will be of bone,⁴⁸ and the wine which was bottled on the hills⁴⁹ will be served in cups of common earthenware bought for a few cents.⁵⁰

During the meal, guests were entertained by a reading or music (acroama). Literary hosts often used to bore their parties by reading their own compositions. At the entertainment of the fashionable, there were frequently dancing-girls and singers to amuse the guests by their performances. Juvenal⁵¹ tells his friend that he will have as an accompaniment to the meal no lascivious Spanish girl (Gaditana) to entertain his guests with an immodest dance, no clatter of castanets; instead, Homer will be recited and the poems of "lofty-toned" Vergil. Nor will his guests be haughty ones to look down on his humble condition.⁵² Rather, they will be such as are free from wild ambition, taking a full day's holiday, with no talk of money or need of worry or suspicion over the intrigues of their wives.⁵³

48 Sat., xi. 133-134.

49 Sat., xi. 159.

50 Sat., xi. 145.

51 Sat., xi. 162-181.

52 Sat., xi. 129-131.

53 Sat., xi. 183-192.

Juvenal gives several reasons why a rich man could not enjoy his dinner. He regrets that

nowadays a rich man takes no pleasure in his dinner - his turbot and his venison have no taste, his unguents and his roses seem to smell rotten - unless the broad slabs of his dinner-table rest upon a ramping, gaping leopard of solid ivory sent to us by the swift-footed Moor or from the portal of Syene, or by the still duskier Indian - or perhaps shed by the monstrous beast in the Nabataean forest when too big and too heavy for his head. These are the things that give good appetite and good digestion; for to these gentlemen a table with a leg of silver is like a finger with an iron ring.⁵⁴

Generally speaking, in Rome we find that almost every kind of food had its connoisseurs. From Juvenal alone a collection could be made of gourmands whose mouths watered to see the abundance of the market: "the dirty ditch-digger who remembers the savour of tripe in the reeking cookshop;⁵⁵ the youth who has learned from the hoary gluttony of a spendthrift father to peel truffles, to preserve mushrooms, and to souse beccaficoes in their own juice;⁵⁶ the prodigal who for six thousand sesterces bought a mullet that he coveted;⁵⁷ the gourmet Montanus, who could tell at first bite whether an oyster had been bred at Circeii or on the Lucrine rocks".⁵⁸

54 Sat., xi. 120-129.

55 Sat., xi. 79-81.

56 Sat., xiv. 6-10.

57 Sat., iv. 15-16.

58 Sat., iv. 140-142.

Juvenal also speaks with biting satire of the treatment given to clients of the rich.⁵⁹ In Satire One, Juvenal depicts the wretched client following the patron about all day in the hope of being invited to dinner in the evening; and then, when the summons does not come, he buys some cabbage and some charcoal with which to boil it.⁶⁰ The patron, on the other hand, dines alone on the richest foods - peacock and wild boar.⁶¹ When, however, clients were asked to dine with their patrons, they were very poorly entertained. The client had to recline on the least honourable of the three couches in the triclinium.⁶² There was also a vast disparity in the meal and the service which the master and client received.⁶³ Juvenal gives us a glimpse of the client and his fellow-guests in the patron's house. They are terribly hungry and are served cheap and wretched food, while they sit and watch the master's plate, hoping that they may get a chance at a delicacy which he has half-eaten and pushed away.⁶⁴ Even the water which they drank was not the same. That of the clients was handed them by a Gaetulian groom, or a negro boy whom one would be afraid to meet at midnight when he was driving past the monuments

59 Sat., v. passim.

60 Sat., i. 132-134.

61 Sat., i. 135-143.

62 Sat., v. 17.

63 Sat., v. passim. See especially 67-70, 99-103, 126-128.

64 Sat., v. 166-169.

of the Latin way,⁶⁵ while to the host was given a drink colder than Thracian hoarfrost by a choice slave from Asia.⁶⁶ The lord drank wine bottled "in the days when consuls had long hair",⁶⁷ while the client-guest was served "wine that fresh-clipped wool would refuse to suck up and which soon made corybants of the revellers".⁶⁸ The host drank from jewelled cups "richly crusted with amber and rough with beryl",⁶⁹ whereas the client was given a cracked cup with four nozzles, badly in need of repair.⁷⁰ The host was provided with a large lobster or lamprey garnished with asparagus, while the client received on a "small plate a crab surrounded by half an egg - a fit banquet for the dead", or perhaps an eel or pike from the Tiber and its sewers.⁷¹ The patron treated his client in this way both because he grudged the expense and because he wished to cause him pain:⁷²

For what comedy, what mime, is so amusing as a disappointed belly? His one object, let me tell you, is to compel you to pour out your wrath in tears, and to keep gnashing your squeaking molars.⁷³

65 Sat., v. 52-55.

66 Sat., v. 49-50.

67 Sat., v. 30.

68 Sat., v. 24-25.

69 Sat., v. 37-39.

70 Sat., v. 46-48.

71 Sat., v. 80-106.

72 Sat., v. 156-157.

73 Sat., v. 157-160.

Pliny the Younger, who disapproved of all this, had had an experience with this sort of feast and he comments on it in a letter to Junius Avitus.⁷⁴ He tells us that it was not a matter of expense with him, because his freedmen did not drink the same wine he did - rather he drank what they did! "When I give an invitation", he concludes, "it is to dine, not to be disgraced."⁷⁵

Recreations and Amusements

In early times the Romans made use of the bath only for health and cleanliness. They washed their arms and legs once a day and their whole body every week. But in later times bathing came to be regarded not merely as a necessity but as a pleasure and convenience, and in the imperial period it was a conspicuous feature of Roman life. Thus Carcopino⁷⁶ rightly says:

Nevertheless I am convinced that the imperial baths brought immense benefit to the people. In their dazzling marble grandeur the thermae were not only the splendid "Palace of Roman Water", but above all the Palace of the Roman people, such as our democracies dream of today. In them the Romans learned to admire physical cleanliness, useful sports, and culture; and thus for many generations they kept decadence at bay by returning to the ancient ideal which had inspired their past greatness

74 Pliny, ii. 6.

75 Loc. cit.

76 Carcopino, op. cit., p.263.

and which Juvenal held before them as a boon to pray for: "a healthy mind in a healthy body (orandum est ut sit mens sana in corpore sano)."⁷⁷

The bath was a very cheap form of luxury in which the poorest men could indulge. The warm Italian climate makes frequent bathing not merely comfortable but necessary.

The opening of the baths in Rome was fixed in Hadrian's time at two o'clock (before the chief meal of the day) but it varied according to period, place and circumstance.⁷⁸ The manner of their use varied also. Earlier or later in the day, according to the hour at which his business left him free, the bather appeared, alone or attended by a slave with the necessary towels and other articles.⁷⁹ He stripped in the dressing-room and was given a rub with perfumed oil, or, if he had stripped for exercise, was relieved of dirt, perspiration, and oil by the use of a strigil⁸⁰ - a sharp instrument of bone or metal. The rich man was scraped by slaves whom he brought with him for the purpose; the poor man scraped himself.

Two kinds of baths seem to have been in existence at the

77 Sat., x. 356.

78 See Sat., xi. 204. Juvenal proposes to Persicus to bathe before the sixth hour.

79 Showerman, Grant, Rome and the Romans, New York, Macmillan, 1931, p.355.

80 Sat., iii. 362.

time of Juvenal. There were the ordinary baths (balneae), and a special kind called thermae.⁸¹ Rich men had private baths (balneae) in their own houses, though they used to frequent the public baths also.⁸² Juvenal mentions six hundred thousand sesterces as a large price for building a set of bath-rooms.⁸³

The Romans undoubtedly enjoyed their afternoons at the great Baths. They delighted in the free and easy contact of the baths. The bath, usually crowded, seems to have been a place where many abuses flourished. It is all too well established that there lurked under the stately porticoes many dishonest vendors of food and drink and procurers of both sexes. Many congregated there to overeat and drink and indulge in other disreputable tastes,⁸⁴ and that many heated themselves merely in order "to raise a thirst,"⁸⁵ and found bathing a stimulant for other excesses: "You will soon pay for it, my friend, if you take off your clothes, and with distended stomach carry your peacock into the bath undigested! This leads to death and an intestate old age!"⁸⁶ With so many people around indulging in different

81 Balneae are distinguished from thermae in Sat., vii. 232. Bury, op. cit., p.611, points out that in some baths there was a sweating-chamber of higher temperature, known as laconicum, which was a round room with a domed ceiling.

82 Ibid., p.612.

83 Sat., vii. 178: balnea sescentis.

84 Martial, xii. 70.

85 Sat., vi. 419-429.

86 Sat., i. 143-144.

activities, these baths must have been very noisy places indeed.

Consequently, Davis⁸⁷ says:

What place has witnessed more financial bargains struck, quarrels started or abated, lawsuits arranged, marriage treaties negotiated, philosophical theories spun, artistic points discussed?

Besides the baths, the average Roman did not lack amusements. Indeed, the great attraction of the city was the endless succession of things to see. Idle Romans were catered to by travelling performers of every sort at street corners and in public places. Conjurors, clowns, jugglers, fortune-tellers, snake-charmers were always making their rounds, endeavouring to pick up a few small coins or some other reward from the idle crowds who thronged the streets, markets, gardens, and porticoes of the vast Imperial City.

They would compete with all kinds of beggars, including pavement artists and singers among whom would be one of those ship-wrecked mariners, who, having lost his ship and its cargo, was reduced, as Juvenal said, to "a rag to cover his cold and nakedness and a poor morsel of food, while he begs for pennies and supports himself by a painting of the storm!"⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Davis, W. S., A Day in Old Rome, New York, Allyn and Bacon, 1925, p.362.

⁸⁸ Sat., xiv. 300-302.

All these diversions were very amateurish and paltry amusements compared with the great thrills at Rome. Let us now turn to the most striking expenditure of the city - the games, the shows, and the festivals which the State provided free of charge in theatres, amphitheatres, and great race-tracks. In this connection it must be remembered that the Government was dealing with an immense, idle, turbulent city-populace, gathered from many races, which was still supposed to be the sovereign Roman people, though all genuine political power was now taken away from them. They had continually to be kept in good temper. We therefore find Emperors supplying the populace with doles of grain - a continuation of the practice begun in the late Republic, which had taken root so strongly that it could not be abandoned with safety - and, having eaten, the mob must be amused. Instead of taking part, as their forefathers had done, in the conduct of State affairs through elections and legislation, the people were content to surrender their political rights⁸⁹ to occupy themselves with the exploits of gladiators, the successes of this or that colour⁹⁰ in the chariot races,

89 Sat., x. 77-78.

90 There were four factions in the Circus, consisting of the supporters of the four charioteering colours, White, Red, Green, and Blue. The Green, it seems, was the popular colour, being usually favoured by the emperor.

and the gifts and graces of popular actors and dancers. Juvenal rightly sums up the desires of the people in his well-known words panem et circenses.⁹¹ Food-doles, and public entertainment were the only things the average city-dweller worried about and were still used as the chief means of currying favour with the people. They were soon regarded as no mere imperial indulgence, but, as Friedländer⁹² says,

an absolute right; a damnosa hereditas which had to be accepted by every new government; the best and worst emperors alike had to vie in the splendour and magnificence of the festivals.

Neglect of amusements caused discontent; further largesses of corn and money pacified only a few or even individuals only, but the games the whole people.

Between the Aventine and the Palatine extended a field filled with race-courses surrounded by arcades and tiers of seats rising above them. This was the Circus Maximus. The main feature of the Circus was, as always, the four-horse chariot races (quadrigae). The races, in the course of the centuries, became larger, more various, and more magnificent. It was the favourite spectacle of the Roman people. "All Rome

91 Sat., x. 79-81.

92 Friedländer, L., Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire, London, Routledge, 1910, vol. 2, p.2.

today is in the Circus," writes Juvenal, "such sights are for the young, whom it befits to shout and make bold wagers with a smart damsel by their side."⁹³ The Circus Maximus was generally packed to capacity with noisy and excitable people. Accordingly, Davis⁹⁴ says:

With their near animal instincts and passions unrestrained by education, good manners or breeding, they were squashed promiscuously together, men, women and children, crying, shouting, sweating in the deafening crescendo of noise.

In each race the chariot made a triple circuit of the circus and there were twenty races in a single day. The Blues and Greens were very popular with the mob. Their supporters often raised disputes which agitated the whole city so much that Juvenal wrote: "If the Greens were beaten, Rome would be as sad and dismayed as after the defeat of Cannae."⁹⁵ At Rome there was the same passion for chariot-races as there is now for horse-races. Women and even children talked about them. Successful jockeys were regarded as the "darlings" of society.

In the life of this idle populace, the gladiatorial shows held a place that we are now hardly able to imagine. Except

93 Sat., xi. 193-202.

94 Davis, op. cit., p.377.

95 Sat., xi. 199-200.

for intermission periods these shows proceeded throughout the day and continued on the following day, and so for a week at least. The amphitheatre was, as it were, the rendezvous of the whole free population.⁹⁶

This institution, which to modern minds appears the darkest blot on Roman civilization, was not of native origin in Rome. According to tradition, the practice of pitting slaves or prisoners of war against each other in mortal combat was introduced to Italy by the Etruscans at the funeral games of their nobles.⁹⁷ This single expression of cruelty seems to us nowadays a horrible sport and proves that the noblest regarded the games from a standpoint far different from ours. Friedländer⁹⁸ cites some tangible reasons to explain this difference:

the division of mankind into those who had rights, and those who had not; the effect of habit and the intoxicating effect of splendour. In ancient Rome down to very late times there was no idea of the rights of man, of the sanctity of life, or of thought for its preservation. International law was almost non-existent; slavery fixed a wide and impassable gulf between those with rights and those without them, and fostered the regarding of slaves by a slave-standard, as negligible and their suffering and death as unimportant.

96 Sat., vi. 352.

97 Jones, H. S., Companion to Roman History, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1912, p.360.

98 Friedländer, op. cit., p.79.

The fighters in the arena were public enemies, barbarians, criminals, or slaves either indifferent or dangerous to society.

Another centre of diversion was the Roman theatre.⁹⁹

It was like the Greek theatre, from which it was copied, but with certain differences. The orchestra no longer formed almost an entire circle, but only a semi-circle, and had been appropriated for seats for a portion of the audience. The seats in the orchestra were reserved for senators.¹⁰⁰ Comedies, tragedies, farces, recitations,¹⁰¹ and mimes were well attended by the higher society of Rome. Mimes which represented vulgar actors speaking in vulgar language, were generally popular, and the composition of mimes was much cultivated.¹⁰² Some mimes had ghosts in them, for example, the Phasma of Catullus and the Laureolus.¹⁰³ Also the part of the runaway buffoon formed the subject of another.¹⁰⁴

99 See Sat., iii. 173-175.

100 See Sat., iii. 178. Bury, op. cit., p.615, takes orchestram et populum to mean "the senators and the ordinary public".

101 In Sat., vii. 46-47 Juvenal describes a room fitted up on the model of a theatre for a recitation.

102 Bury, op. cit., p.615.

103 See Sat., viii. 186-187.

104 See Sat., xiii. 111.

On the whole, these stage-performers, who were skilled in personifying every human type, thrilled and delighted the Romans immensely.¹⁰⁵

Vices

Rome as Juvenal saw it was full of vices: Egyptian vice, Greek vice, and Syrian vice; all the rivers of the East flowed into the Tiber.¹⁰⁶ Tacitus had rightly called Rome a sink and cesspool and drain for all the world.¹⁰⁷ Juvenal feels that vice in Rome had reached its nadir and that posterity could think of nothing worse.¹⁰⁸

Everywhere in his Satires, Juvenal devotes himself to the prevalence of certain vices. Juvenal castigates with the lash of his satire men who fling away all their earnings at the gambling-table with a throw of dice and have not enough left to buy a tunic for a shivering slave.¹⁰⁹ Then also there is the famous piece in which Juvenal describes an effeminate Fabius or Lepidus, before the mutilated statues and masters

105 See Sat., viii. 189-190.

106 See Westgate, R. I. W., and MacKendrick, P. L., "Juvenal and Swift", Classical Journal, XXXVII (1942), p.470.

107 Tacitus, Ann., xv.44.3; cf. Juv., Sat., iii. 62.

108 Sat., i. 87, 147-149.

109 Sat., i. 88-93.

of the smoke-stained horse, rattling the dice-box till dawn,
or sunk in the stupor of debauch at the hour when his ancestors
were sounding their trumpets for the march.¹¹⁰

The rich, too, had other vices. They indulged in gluttony
and luxurious houses, while the freedman with his newly-acquired
wealth lords it over tribunes and praetors. Huge fortunes
have been ruined merely because their possessors wished to
surpass all rivals with the extravagant refinements of frivol-
ity¹¹¹ and of gluttony.¹¹² The rich take precedence,¹¹³ and
money receives the highest reverence.¹¹⁴ In the meantime, the
poor client, notwithstanding his faithful services, has little
chance. He obtains his dole with difficulty and ekes out a
miserable existence, while his rich patron dines on the cost-
liest products of the land and sea. Juvenal is very harsh
against the hypocrites of the entire aristocratic class who
are prone to all sorts of vices. The theme of the second
satire is the hypocrisy and degeneracy of the whole class, as
Hight¹¹⁵ points out:

110 Sat., viii. 9-12.

111 Sat., iii. 186-187.

112 Sat., i. 139-141; xi. 11-12, 35-45.

113 Sat., iii. 239-240.

114 Sat., i. 112-113.

115 Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.63.

Although this satire reads like a general denunciation of Rome, it is a quite carefully aimed and calculated attack. Its one target is the Roman aristocracy.

Hight¹¹⁶ continues:

The hypocrites, admirers of Cato and Hercules, are not everyday philosophers, but Stoics, and Stoicism was the doctrine of the aristocrats who opposed the empire and upheld republicanism.... There are several side-blows at the emperor Domitian, who, like the mock Stoics, lived an immoral life while setting himself up as a moral censor.¹¹⁷

In discussing vices, Juvenal has several lessons to teach on morality. He has vehemently stated, with crushing conviction and appropriate examples, two important truths which mankind constantly forgets and constantly must relearn: wealth without responsibility brings softness and decay, and uncontrolled powers bring cruelty and madness.¹¹⁸ Juvenal feels that the prevalence of vices is due to the great increase of wealth among the people. "Since Roman poverty departed," he says, "every lust is in our midst."¹¹⁹ Also, Juvenal thinks that the influx of foreigners, who brought with them effeminacy and debauchery, was another contributing factor in the spreading

116 Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, pp.63-64.

117 Hight refers to Sat. ii. 29-33; censura, 63; censore, 121.

118 Sat., xiv. 120-137; vi. 292-305.

119 Sat., vi. 294-295.

of vices.¹²⁰ Moreover, he bitterly asks:

Who can sleep for thinking of a money-loving daughter-in-law seduced, of brides that have lost their virtue, or adulterers not out of their teens?¹²¹

Juvenal appears to be trying to teach truths as well as to paint pictures; and if perhaps his Satires are too rich in the imagery and presentation of vices, it is because, as Pearson and Strong¹²² point out,

the man who walked Rome with his heart boiling at what he saw, took in every group and gesture and act that had moral significance.

Wealth and Poverty

The old standards of social behaviour had disappeared, and men in Juvenal's time employed new criteria by which to judge fellow-men and regulate the traditional relationship between client and patron. Money (Juvenal says) reigned supreme. It was able to confer social prestige on anyone who possessed it; without it, a man was nothing but an ignored client. In fact, money had become the goddess Pecunia, encroaching on the Roman pantheon:

Let money carry the day; let the sacred office give way to one who came but yesterday with whitened feet into our city. For no deity is held in such reverence amongst us as Wealth; though as yet,

¹²⁰ Sat., vi. 295-298.

¹²¹ Sat., i. 77-78.

¹²² Pearson and Strong, op. cit., Introd., p.35.

O baneful money, thou hast no temple of thine own;
not yet have we reared altars to Money in like
manner as we worship Peace and Honour, Victory
and Virtue, or that Concord that clatters when
we salute her nest.¹²³

Considerable mention is made of the problems of money, its value, of the undesirable habits which it causes, the blessings that proper use of it can bring, and, generally, how it affects rich and poor alike. The general theme of Satire One is money.¹²⁴ In order to portray the importance of money and the general materialism of the day, the satirist focuses on the scene of the sportula,¹²⁵ where he represents several types of people as justification for his wrath: the indigent client¹²⁶ who depends on the sportula for his subsistence;¹²⁷ the down-at-heels Roman nobility, the Troiugenae and the political officials;¹²⁸ and the upstart foreigner who has acquired a position of prestige by unscrupulous economic practices.¹²⁹ Among all these, money or the lack of it is obviously the common element. Juvenal feels that good birth clothes one with sacred honour, but the grandeur of wealth

123 Sat., i. 109-116.

124 Sat., i. 87-147.

125 Sat., i. 95-126.

126 Sat., i. 96.

127 Sat., i. 119.

128 Sat., i. 100.

129 Sat., i. 102.

possesses a sanctity far beyond the degree of mere inherited nobility.¹³⁰ There are some men who prostituted themselves to the ugliest vices, sacrificing all self-respect, for money.¹³¹ To Juvenal, enough is sufficient. Money in itself brings no happiness.¹³² The love of money breaks up the traditional morality - a point which Juvenal drives home by one of his favourite contrasts of the degenerate present with the simple life of the yeomen who were the strength of early Rome.¹³³

The revolting feature of Roman wealth is not so much the extravagance as the contemptuous disregard for human life, an aspect not of human luxury, but a result of slavery.¹³⁴ Only the rich could afford many slaves, and they, of course, also had the best. As many more Romans became wealthy there was keen competition for skilled and beautiful slaves. "The first question to be asked", said Juvenal, "about any man will be about his wealth, the last about his character. How many slaves does he maintain? How much land does he possess?

130 See Anderson, W. S., "Studies in Juvenal", Yale Classical Studies, XV (1957), p.40.

131 Sat., xi. passim.

132 Sat., xiv. 107-137.

133 Sat., xiv. 138-188.

134 Friedländer, op. cit., p.221.

How many are his dessert-dishes? A man's word is believed in exact proportion to the amount of cash which he keeps in his strong-box."¹³⁵

The pleasures of life, the increasing prosperity and the material conditions of an unhealthy luxury seem to have encouraged idleness and slothfulness. Sleep was the luxury of the rich and happiness was placed in the negation of work.¹³⁶ Many rich men, living on inherited wealth and with no aspirations towards the unattainable, lost initiative and tended to vegetate. Moreover, they were spoiled by friends and clients who flattered and pampered them and who were eager to obey their slightest whim. In Juvenal, we hear that when a rich man's house is burnt down, there is mourning everywhere, and his friends help him furnish a new one.¹³⁷

The entire fifth satire is on the rich. It shows "their utter selfishness, their absurd wastefulness, their empty-headed sensuality, and their half-unconscious, half-calculated cruelty."¹³⁸ Moreover, Juvenal is completely against those who strive to get rich by unfair means. He asks:

135 Sat., iii. 140-144.

136 Sat., iii. 235.

137 Sat., iii. 212-220.

138 Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.84.

What? Is a man who has administered aconite to half a dozen uncles to ride by and look down upon me from his swaying feather-pillow?¹³⁹

It is clear that many a nouveau riche, with no traditions of fine living behind him, thought that vulgar ostentation and profusion marked him out as a man of importance and position.¹⁴⁰

In contrast to the rich the poor lived in dire need.

The earlier books of Juvenal are haunted by poverty - his own and others'. Mended clothes, poor food, miserable lodging, gnawing anxiety, a sense of bitter injustice - all these recur often in the first three books.¹⁴¹ In discussing the cruel hospitality of the patron to his dependants, Juvenal¹⁴² reflects:

The harshest thing to bear in wretched poverty is that it makes a man ridiculous.

In Satire Seven, Juvenal shows how bitterly the poor intellectuals feel their poverty. Lawyers complain that they cannot get a start without being rich, or at least pretending to be rich. If they are poor they get miserable cases to plead. The rising lawyer must hire a jewelled ring to attract the eye while he speaks, wear rich clothes, and have a large retinue

139 Sat., i. 158-159.

140 Sat., i. 26-29. See also Carcopino, op. cit., pp.67-75; Friedländer, op. cit., vol. I, pp.218-227.

141 See Sat., i. 134; iii. 10, 147-151, 166, 167, 168, 200-202, 203-209; iii. 286-287; v. passim; vii. 34-35, 53-71, 119-121.

142 Sat., iii. 152-153.

of slaves, secretaries, and dependants - even if he risks going bankrupt by straining his credit.¹⁴³ Juvenal¹⁴⁴ thus reminds us:

It is no easy matter for a man to rise when poverty stands in the way of his merits.

At times, however, Juvenal seems content with the poor man's lot. He therefore consoles himself by reminding us that a penniless man lives far more comfortably than a millionaire, who, being anxious for his amber, his statues, his ivory, and plaques of tortoise-shell, must be surrounded with fire-alarms, night-watchmen and private detectives.¹⁴⁵

Religion

Juvenal's religious views are quite evident in the Satires. He feels that God guides and guards the world, is over all, and has ordained torment of conscience and slow retribution for sin.¹⁴⁶ He hates the Egyptian cults that work as insidiously as poison in the life of Rome; he rejects the picturesque legends of the afterworld, bred on the fertile imagination of the Greeks. But he is no unbeliever:

It is this that separates us from the dumb herd;
and it is for this that we alone have had allotted
to us a nature worthy of reverence, capable of

143 Sat., vii. 105-149.

144 Sat., iii. 164-165.

145 Sat., xiv. 303-310.

146 Sat., xiii. 192-249.

divine things, fit to acquire and practise the arts of life, and that we have drawn from on high that gift of feeling which is lacking to the beasts that grovel with eyes upon the ground. To them in the beginning of the world our common maker gave only life; to us he gave souls as well, that fellow feeling might bid us ask or proffer aid.¹⁴⁷

According to Sister Stella Marie,¹⁴⁸ Juvenal discriminates with regard to his beliefs in certain gods. She reports:

Juvenal doubts the existence of gods who make no response when men call on them, and scoffs at the idea of swearing an oath by such gods; they were good enough, perhaps for the simple-minded people of olden days.

The gods, taken as a collective body, can be spiteful as well as kind. They readily grant ill-judged requests to man's hurt.¹⁴⁹ Though he attacks various forms of religion, his own religious outlook remains sincere.¹⁵⁰ These attacks are directed to either the newly imported religions of the East¹⁵¹ or the gods

147 Sat., xv. 142-150.

148 Sister Stella Marie, "Prudentius and Juvenal", Phoenix, XVI (1962), p.48. See also Sat., xiii. 38-45.

149 See Sat., x. 7-8, 111.

150 This is now the generally accepted opinion, but G. A. Simcox (A History of Latin Literature, London, Longmans, Green, 1883, vol. 2, p.119) takes a contrary view: he thinks that Juvenal is one of the most irreligious of Roman poets. He seems outdated in thinking that, when Juvenal is serious and reverent, he speaks for the most part, not of the gods, but of nature, or the author of nature, and there is no trace of any piety to traditional worship.

151 See Sat., vi. 489; ix. 22. The temple of Isis is a regular rendezvous for immorality, and the priests of the Egyptian cults exert a baneful influence on the minds of credulous women (vi. 526-541).

of mythology.¹⁵² For the di peregrini and their worshippers his feeling is one of scorn. It is the impious man who calls upon Isis to strike him blind with her sistrum, if only he may keep his ill-gotten gains.¹⁵³ The decline in the faith which men reposed in the traditional religion had led to the introduction of many Eastern cults. Among these Isis and Magna Mater received the worship of great numbers. Juvenal¹⁵⁴ describes with great vividness the entrance to the household of a chorus of frenzied worshippers of Bellona and Magna Mater: at their head, the enormous semivir, who bids the matron fear the coming of September and the South Wind, unless she purifies herself for the year with eggs, and makes him a present of her old cloak.¹⁵⁵

For the old forms of religion, Juvenal does possess a feeling of respect, and he seems to have an interest in the old ceremonial. He mentions the dance of the Salii,¹⁵⁶ and the running of the Luperci,¹⁵⁷ and he remembers that men alone

152 See Sat., vi. 59; ii. 31. Here Mars, Venus, and Jupiter are not really Roman gods but literary Greek characters.

153 Sat., xiii. 92-94.

154 Sat., vi. 511-526.

155 Sat., vi. 520-521. See also vi. 526-531.

156 Sat., ii. 124-126.

157 Sat., ii. 142.

should sacrifice a pig to Silvanus.¹⁵⁸ He thinks that a man is stupid to believe that there are gods in temples or altars,¹⁵⁹ for Mars Ultor was not in his temple to prevent robbers from stealing its treasures.¹⁶⁰ Desecration of temples and statues was quite common,¹⁶¹ but the old gods of Rome, as the Romans knew, were spirits, represented by no graven images.¹⁶²

Juvenal shows great respect for Ceres, a goddess who came from the fields. In Satire Three Umbricius asks Juvenal to invite him to his Ceres and Diana.¹⁶³ He mentions also that there are few women chaste enough to touch the vittae of the goddess,¹⁶⁴ and the evil son sells his perjuries "while touching the altar and the foot of Ceres all the time".¹⁶⁵

The universal practice of sacrificing on all joyful occasions is amply manifested by all classes of society. Even our author, whose personal worship is not confined to Ceres,¹⁶⁶ describes himself as offering sacrifice¹⁶⁷ on the

158 Sat., vi. 445-447.

159 Sat., xiii. 34-37.

160 See Sat., xiv. 261-262.

161 Sat., xiii. 147-152.

162 Jefferis, J. D., "Juvenal and Religion", The Classical Journal, XXXIV (1939), p.231. He also cites Varro, apud Augustinum (De Civ. Dei, iv. 31).

163 Sat., iii. 320.

164 Sat., vi. 50.

165 Sat., xiv. 218-219.

166 The implication of special respect for Ceres may be confirmed by the inscription from Aquinum: CIL. x. 5382.

167 We have some idea of the nature of a sacrifice. Juvenal

safe delivery of his friend Catullus from a storm-tossed voyage and the perils of the sea.¹⁶⁸

Juvenal's religious beliefs are not, however, centred entirely on old Roman deities. Jefferis¹⁶⁹ points out that he is deeply tinged with Stoic views of predestination:

Fata regunt homines (ix. 32). This is an astral determinism; it is fati...hora benigni which weighs more than the commendation of the gods (xvi. 4-6). Fata, the stars and the personified Fortuna, inextricably joined, control the lives of men.¹⁷⁰

Juvenal also speaks of men who believe that everything depends on chance rather than a guiding intelligence:

Sunt in fortunae qui casibus omnia ponant et nullo
credant mundum rectore moveri natura volvente vices
et lucis et anni¹⁷¹

With regard to prayers, the Romans of Juvenal's time, as a whole, prayed to the gods for help. This is shown by the fact that Juvenal, with all seriousness, again and again satirizes prayers offered to the gods.¹⁷² He tells us that

mentions that he sacrificed two lambs and a young ox, and had he been rich he would have substituted a fat steer of noble breed for the ox: Sat., xii. 3-11.

168 Sat., xii. 1-22.

169 Jefferis, op. cit., p.232.

170 See Sat., vii. 194-201.

171 Sat., xiii. 86-88. See also Sister Stella Marie, op. cit., p.48.

172 See Sat., x. 23-25.

prayers answered by the complaisant gods have subverted whole families.¹⁷³ He shows his disgust with the kinds of prayer which his contemporaries offered to their gods - little more than bargains with divinity for questionable ends.¹⁷⁴ The nearest approach to affection in the prayers of Juvenal is in Satire Seven, where, with a delicacy of touch that is rare in the satirist, he writes a kindly word about teachers:

Grant, O Gods, that the earth may lie soft and
light upon the shades of our forefathers: may
the sweet-scented crocus and a perpetual spring-
time bloom over their ashes, who deemed that the
teacher should hold the place of a revered parent!¹⁷⁵

Many of the Stoics denied the efficacy of prayers, or, like Marcus Aurelius, advised men to leave themselves in the hands of gods and pray only for what was really good.¹⁷⁶ Juvenal is just as realistic. He says that one should pray for a heart that has no fear of death, regarding the end of life as one of nature's gifts; a heart that can endure any kind

173 Sejanus, who prayed for honours and wealth overmuch, was overthrown (x. 105-107). The one who prays for length of years is compelled to behold the funeral of his children, his wife, his brothers, and sisters (x. 243-245).

174 The object of one man's prayer is for twenty thousand sesterces in interest, small dishes of plain silver, two sturdy slaves, an engraver (caelator) and a painter (Sat., ix. 137-146). Juvenal calls it a votum miserabile (ix. 147).

175 Sat., vii. 207-210.

176 Friedländer, op. cit., vol. 3, p.144.

of toil, free from anger, covetousness, and luxury.¹⁷⁷ Most important, if you must ask for something, let it be for "a sound mind in a sound body".¹⁷⁸

The popularity of astrology in the Empire was tremendous.¹⁷⁹ The type of astrologer who has the greatest credit is he who has seen the prison-camp and has chains clanging on his arms.¹⁸⁰ Juvenal warns¹⁸¹ against meeting a believer in astrology who has in her hands tritas ephemeridas, who will refuse to accompany her husband to camp, if the numbers of Thrasyllus recall her; who consults her book, if she intends driving merely as far as the first milestone, or if the corner of her eye twitches. Moreover, women of slender means will have their fortunes told at the metae of the Circus;¹⁸² those in more comfortable circumstances will pay for a Phrygian or an Indian augur with a knowledge of the stars and heavens to tell their fortunes.¹⁸³ Also, Juvenal, writing about Sejanus and his inglorious end, mentions "the herd of Chaldaean astrologers" whom he kept.¹⁸⁴

177 Sat., x. 357-362.

178 Sat., x. 356.

179 Burriss, E. E., "The Religious Element in the Satires of Juvenal", The Classical Weekly, XX (1926), p.21. See also Sat., vii. 194-196; vi. 553-564.

180 See Sat., vi. 562-564.

181 Sat., vi. 572-587.

182 Sat., vi. 583. See also vi. 588.

183 Sat., vi. 585-587.

184 Sat., x. 90-94.

Carcopino¹⁸⁵ thus comments on the gross superstition of the Roman people:

When Juvenal therefore makes mock of the Chaldean adepts who trembled with fear to learn of the conjunctions of Saturn, and of the sick women "who if she be ill in bed deems no hour so suitable for taking food as that prescribed to her by Pet-osiris" (vi. 580-581), he was deliberately turning a blind eye to the fact that in every stratum of Roman society the impious and the lukewarm were as much a prey to superstition and taboo as the pious whom he despised.

There is also some mention of magic and soothsaying in Juvenal. He tells us of a man who supplies magical spells, and of another who sells Thessalian charms by which a wife may upset a husband's mind.¹⁸⁶ He mentions also the Armenian or Commagenian sooth-sayer, who, after examining the lungs of a dove, promises a youthful lover to a woman, or an inheritance from a rich childless man. These sooth-sayers predicted the future by scrutinizing the breasts of chickens, or the entrails of animals, or sometimes even of boys.¹⁸⁷

The Satires of Juvenal, then, give a picture of not only the religious beliefs of the Romans, but also of our author himself. He represents himself as a man with an honest

185 Op. cit., p.132.

186 Sat., vi. 610-612.

187 Sat., vi. 548-552.

belief in the old Roman deities, hating new and foreign beliefs.¹⁸⁸ Jefferis¹⁸⁹ concludes that Juvenal believed that the universe was controlled by some power of destiny which is also the power of the gods. He further points out¹⁹⁰ that no charge of atheism can be laid against the author who wrote the words:

Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus quid
conveniat nobis rebusque sit utile nostris.
Nam pro iucundis aptissima quaeque dabunt di:
carior est illis homo quam sibi.¹⁹¹

City-Life

The picture of Rome as a place from which one should emigrate lends itself to so much realistic and dramatic treatment that it forms an unforgettable social document. In Satire Three,

188 Burriss, op. cit., p.24, mentions the following divinities in Juvenal:

(1) Italian: Janus, Jupiter, Diana Nemorensis, Terminus, Mars, Bellona, Quirinus, Vesta, Di Penates, Lares, Genius, Juno, Ceres, Flora, Saturn, Silvanus, Lupercus, Neptune, Egeria, Venus, and the goddesses who were the personification of abstract ideas: Concordia, Pax, Fides, Virtus, Victoria.

(2) Greek: Apollo, Pallas, Priapus (Asia Minor).

(3) Celtic: Epona; and (4) Eastern: Cybele, Isis, Osiris.

He notes that this list shows clearly Juvenal's preference for his native Italian gods, and his neglect of Greek gods. Burriss is not at all surprised that Juvenal continually condemns all things Greek as the source of the ills of Rome.

189 Op. cit., p.233.

190 Loc. cit.

191 Sat., x. 347-350.

Juvenal plans his attack on the city so well that it covers almost a twenty-four hour period - from the insomnia of the "small hours" through the morning crowds, past the lunch-time rush, towards the afternoon traffic whose victim sits shivering on the banks of the River Styx while his household prepares his bath and his dinner.¹⁹²

The attack is put in the mouth of one of the poet's friends, Umbricius, who unburdens his mind just outside the Porta Capena, as he prepares to quit the city with a cartful of household belongings and take the road for Cumae on the Bay of Naples. Umbricius has made this decision because he is sick of the unfairness, dishonesty, and perils of urban life. He feels that anything is better than Rome with its conflagrations and collapse of dilapidated tenements.¹⁹³ His main complaint is that the honest poor cannot prosper in the city.¹⁹⁴ In his maladjustment to contemporary Rome, Umbricius makes a damning indictment of its standards.¹⁹⁵ As if admitting his incompetence, he recites a series of occupations which a more adaptable and unscrupulous person

192 Sat., iii. 261-265.

193 Sat., iii. 6-8.

194 Sat., iii. 21-22.

195 Sat., iii. 41-57.

could turn to good use. Umbricius is frustrated because he cannot lie and flatter like the versatile and adaptable migrant from Greece or the East.¹⁹⁶

In Rome, men are no longer assessed for what they are, but for what they have: it is money not character that counts.¹⁹⁷ The poor man yields to the sons of the most unscrupulous entrepreneurs, brothel-keepers, forgers, and auctioneers.¹⁹⁸ Every inhabitant of Rome is involved in this materialistic system and can escape it only by escaping the city.

Rome was a city of continual noise and bustle.¹⁹⁹ Horace had complained of the turmoil going on night and day, the scurry and the crowding of the streets from which he had to escape into the solitude of the Sabine hills.²⁰⁰ During the first century A.D. as the population and activity had increased, the noise level of the city rose considerably and must have irritated many people in the days of Martial and Juvenal. Before daybreak the bakers would be hawking their loaves, and the shepherds (coming into town from the

196 Sat., iii. 60-80, 86-108, et passim.

197 Sat., iii. 140.

198 Sat., iii. 155-163.

199 Sat., iii. 236-238.

200 See Horace, Sat., II. vi. passim.

surrounding districts) their milk; then, too, the primary schools would begin shouting the alphabet, and the workshops with their hammering and sawing added to the everlasting din. At night, the incessant rumbling of wagons²⁰¹ with timber, brick, building-stone, cement, and all kinds of food supplies and the hum of the noisy crowds during the day condemned the city dweller to everlasting insomnia. Hence Umbricius asks:

What sleep is possible in a lodging?²⁰²

Besides the fires, the falling houses, the bullies and burglars, the high cost of living, the high rents, and the noise,²⁰³ there are also the constant hurrying throngs of the streets of Rome. Juvenal tells us what it feels like to be in the middle of the crowd.²⁰⁴ Carcopino,²⁰⁵ using the description given in Juvenal, vividly portrays that memorable scene for us:

The herd of people which sweeps the poet along proceeds on foot through a scrimmage that is constantly renewed. The crowd ahead impedes his hasty progress, the crowd behind threatens to crush his loins. One man jostles him with his elbow, another with a beam he is carrying, a third bangs his head

201 Wagons were excluded from the city during daylight hours.

202 Sat., iii. 235.

203 In the order given, see Sat., iii. 197-199, 193-195, 278-301, 304-306, 165-184, 223-225, 236-238.

204 Sat., iii. 243-248.

205 Op. cit., pp.50-51.

with a wine-cask. A mighty boot tramps on his foot, a military nail embeds itself in his toe, and his newly mended tunic is torn. Then of a sudden panic ensues: a wagon appears, on top of which a huge log is swaying, another follows loaded with a whole pine tree, yet a third carrying a cargo of Ligurian marble. "If the axle breaks and pours its contents on the crowd, what will be left of their bodies?"²⁰⁶

Juvenal has had Umbricius point out one fault after another - the exaggerated importance of money, the dangers of the city, and the degeneration of one virtue after another. The traditional values have abandoned Rome. Overcome by so many tribulations and swarming with beggarly strangers, Rome has ceased to be itself. From Juvenal's point of view the city seems uninhabitable and unrecognizable. It remains an empty shell, a glittering façade which flaunts its total rejection of the past, and its complete subjection to debased practices, new religions, and foreigners who have no wish to be assimilated. "Although Umbricius does not explicitly foretell it," says Hightet,²⁰⁷ "the fall of Rome has begun."

206 See Sat., iii. 243-259.

207 Hightet, Poets in a Landscape, p.217.

Legacy-Hunters

In the city of Rome, a common occupation of society was legacy-hunting. It had its origin in earlier times and continued on a vaster scale in the second century A.D. as the population increased. This occupation was carried on by a group of people known as legacy-hunters (captatores) - a strange class of schemers who courted and flattered the rich patron (who is usually childless) with the expectation of being given a substantial return in his will. A poor man could not be a captator because he could not afford to ingratiate himself with rich childless people, as the professional captator did, by handsome gifts in the hopes of a legacy; for as Juvenal asks: "Quis pauper scribitur heres?"²⁰⁸ Juvenal speaks disgustedly of the many vows of these hypocrites. For example, if the rich childless millionaire is sick, there are many who will pray loudly for his recovery and would be willing to sacrifice their slaves.²⁰⁹ Moreover, there will be some who would dress out entire porticoes with tablets fastened in due form. There will be others who will vow one hundred

208 Sat., iii. 161.

209 Sat., xii. 115-118.

oxen if elephants are not available.²¹⁰ But on the other hand, "no quail will ever fall for a man who is a father!"²¹¹ Also Juvenal, speaking about Catullus, who has three little heirs of his own, says:

You may wait long enough before you ever find anyone to bestow a sickly hen, just closing her eyes, upon so unprofitable a friend.²¹²

We may well imagine how childless patrons enjoyed the company of captatores. It was therefore worthwhile for a rich man to evade the responsibilities of marriage and fatherhood in order to attract the favours of those who had hopes of a place in his will. Such persons - women as well as men - were assiduously courted²¹³ while the good citizens with heirs of their own blood were neglected because they had no legacies to leave to such dubious friends. The lucky patrons often behaved cleverly so as to encourage adulation. They received costly presents, attentions - delicate and indelicate - from their expectant circle of acquaintance, and often took a sardonic pleasure in leaving behind them a series of testamentary disappointments. Moreover, all these despicable services might be frustrated by the schemers' own predecease or their being outwitted.

210 Sat., xii. 100-102.

211 Sat., xii. 97-98.

212 Sat., xii. 95-97.

213 Sat., iii. 129.

Often, these rich legacy-owners wanted to feed the hopes of the hankerers without satisfying them, to prey on their officiousness, and yet withhold the booty. The greedy captator was often fooled with the promise of a will which was made and remade several times. Rich and poor took a delight in the disillusioned captator and perhaps many people sanctioned the morality of seeing the biter bitten and the hunter hunted.

Perverts

In the city every kind of perversion was apparent everywhere. Along with the hypocrisy and vices of Rome, Juvenal bitterly satirizes the degenerate and antisocial habits of many Romans. In Satire Nine, Juvenal addresses a professional pervert. He asks with a semblance of contemptuous sympathy: "Why does Naevolus look so miserable?"²¹⁴ Naevolus replies that his occupation is gone. He lists his complaints against his former patron, groans with dismay over his uncertain future, and pathetically expounds the hardships of his vocation.²¹⁵ Juvenal reassures him with blasting irony:

Be not afraid; so long as these seven hills of ours stand fast, pathic friends will never fail you: from every quarter, in carriages and ships, those effeminate who scratch their heads with

214 Sat., ix. 1-2.

215 Sat., ix. 27-28.

one finger will flock in.²¹⁶

In this poem Juvenal carefully mentions the life of a pervert. He does this by making Naevolus condemn himself, simply by exposing his own viciousness, his despicable state, and the plight of his profession.²¹⁷ But in Satire Two, he is not a bit sympathetic with homosexuality, as perhaps the psycho-analyst or the psychiatrist would be today. Juvenal generally treats the perverts in Satire Two in a ridiculous and disgusting manner. He says that a few of them, however, are pardonable or pitiable because their perversion is a congenital affliction.²¹⁸

Perversion was often a concealed or open affair in Rome. We hear, therefore, of the hypocrite,²¹⁹ the secret society,²²⁰ the half-revealed homosexual,²²¹ and the type like Gracchus who flaunts his shame.²²²

The secret society was a group of imitation women. Behind closed doors, they dressed like women. They even held services to worship the Good Goddess (Bona Dea) who could be

216 Sat., ix. 130-133.

217 Sat., ix. 45-69.

218 Sat., ii. 15-19: fatis, morbum, furor.

219 Sat., ii. 1-63.

220 Sat., ii. 82-116.

221 Sat., ii. 64-81.

222 Sat., ii. 117-148.

worshipped only by women and to whose rites men were never admitted. Juvenal²²³ describes how they make up like beauties in the powder-room, lengthening their eyebrows with damp soot with the edge of a needle and lifting up their trembling eyes to be painted. They wear gilt hair-nets and fashionable fabrics. He even describes how one carries a mirror handed down to the society by an illustrious pervert, the Emperor Otho, who worried about his make-up even during his campaigns.²²⁴

Some of these male perverts even hold marriage ceremonies and actually think of themselves as performing the woman's part:

Signatae tabulae, dictum "feliciter", ingens
cena sedet, gremio iacuit nova nupta mariti.²²⁵

The satirist informs us that they even go so far as to desire to bear children, but here Nature refuses to indulge their unnatural fancy, and they die sterile.²²⁶

Our author is horrified when a eunuch takes to matrimony²²⁷ and when a man is married to another man.²²⁸ He is disturbed when he hears of a person who intends to attend the wedding ceremony of a friend "who is taking to himself a husband".²²⁹

223 Sat., ii. 82-116.

224 Sat., ii. 99-103.

225 Sat., ii. 119-120.

226 Sat., ii. 137-140.

227 Sat., i. 22.

228 Sat., ii. 129.

229 Sat., ii. 134.

Juvenal points out:

...if we live long enough, we shall see these things done openly: people will wish to see them reported among the news of the day.²³⁰

Homosexuality among women was known in Rome in Juvenal's own time, but he never attacks it. However, he speaks scornfully of the woman with male tendencies.²³¹ His friend, Martial, sneers at a female athlete with Lesbian inclinations.²³² Laronia²³³ symbolizes the natural, ordinary woman who, while immoral and condemned as such, is at least a female. She detests the effeminate behaviour of the male homosexual, who invades the area of feminine activity, to enjoy her dress, sexual relations with men, and pleasure in weaving. A natural hostility therefore existed between the male pervert and the natural female.²³⁴

There was perversion even among the ruling class. A man belonging to one of the most distinguished families of Rome, a Gracchus descended from the Republic house which once bred the people's champions, became a woman, put on a bridal dress and was married to a man publicly in a formal wedding.²³⁵

230 Sat., ii. 135-136.

231 Sat., vi. 418-433.

232 Martial, vii. 67.

233 See Sat., ii. 36-65.

234 See Sat., ii. 60, 63.

235 Sat., ii. 117-120.

Juvenal also mentions the case of a young Armenian nobleman²³⁶ who came to Rome as a hostage and yielded to the love of a Roman officer. Juvenal speculates on the fact that when he returns he will teach his friends the manners of Roman youth and so the infection will spread throughout the world.²³⁷

Juvenal, apparently a morally upright person, seems overwhelmed by the various types of perversion prevalent in Rome. The whole second satire is a carefully aimed attack on the degenerate Roman aristocracy.²³⁸ Generally, he seems to be a spokesman for the "Old Guard" aristocrats and his chief criticism is levelled at the parvenus who have only wealth to recommend them.

Literary Men

In the Rome of Juvenal, there were many poets and men with literary talents. It was a period free from wars and stress and hence we find good and bad literature flourishing everywhere:

It is a foolish clemency, when you jostle against poets at every corner, to spare paper that will be wasted anyhow.²³⁹

236 Sat., ii. 164.

237 Sat., ii. 166-170.

238 See Hightet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.63.

239 Sat., i. 17-18.

The habit of giving and hearing public readings and recitations in the city was the absorbing occupation and perpetual distraction of many cultivated Romans. Impecunious scholars and men of letters, instead of or before publishing their prose or poetry, gave public readings of them. Our poet was tired of always being a listener and he decided to get his revenge by getting in his word too.²⁴⁰

Juvenal defines a poet as one who combines eloquence of words with the harmonies of music, "who spins no hackneyed lays and whose pieces are struck from no common mint".²⁴¹ Despite the fact that there is an abundance of literary men and "poets spouting everywhere especially in the month of August",²⁴² Juvenal says that he cannot find anyone who fits his definition (qualem nequeo monstrare).²⁴³

Literary men in Juvenal's day were generally poor. Juvenal describes the home of a destitute scholar or poet: a short bed and an old chest with divine Greek poems which barbarous mice gnawed, a marble table-top with six little jugs, a tankard (cantharus), and a recumbent Chiron.²⁴⁴ He laments

240 Sat., i. 1.

241 Sat., vii. 53-54.

242 Sat., iii. 9.

243 Sat., vii. 56.

244 Sat., iii. 203-207.

the lot of literary men whose work could be ameliorated had they enjoyed all the amenities of the rich patron. "Poetry", according to Juvenal, must be "the product of a soul free from care, that knows no bitterness, that loves the woodlands, and is fitted to drink at the Muses' spring."²⁴⁵ Juvenal feels that the rich patron does not sufficiently assist and encourage the poets with pecuniary help. Instead they spend huge sums of money on their own luxuries. He mentions one millionaire who refused to send a present to a deserving writer on the edge of starvation, but had enough to feed a tame lion that needed masses of meat. It is as if "the poet's belly is more capacious!"²⁴⁶ At most, the patron merely allowed the use of an empty house or an old studio in which the poet could hold a reading. Also, the patron would tell his freedmen to attend and applaud but would not give enough money to pay for the erection of the platform or for the hire of seats and benches.²⁴⁷

245 Sat., vii. 57-59.

246 Sat., vii. 75-78.

247 Sat., vii. 39-47.

Country Life

The unhealthiness of Rome in the summer and early autumn made country life a delight and even a necessity. We see many of the rich nobles gravitating towards the country for rest, peace of mind, and, in general, to get away from the many frustrating problems of the busy city life. Pliny the Younger has left us a full description of his Laurentine villa,²⁴⁸ one of those country seats within a comparatively short distance of Rome to which a jaded man of affairs could fly when he felt the need of a short respite from the turmoil of the city. Pliny himself valued country life chiefly for the sake of the beauties of nature, and for the opportunities it afforded of following literary pursuits in peace and quietness.

There can be no doubt that Juvenal, too, has his own reasons for admiring country life. He seems sincere in his love and fondness for the country. In his attacks on the city,²⁴⁹ he shows a lively familiarity with the beautiful and cool countryside, and, as he praises the virtues of the simple rustic life, he frequently employs homely terms redolent of

248 Pliny, ii. 17.

249 Sat., iii. passim.

the farm.²⁵⁰

Umbricius, Juvenal's friend, leaves the city to enjoy the pleasures of country life because the townsman who buys a tiny garden in the country "makes himself the master of a single lizard!"²⁵¹ Umbricius, a poor man, gives some very tangible reasons for going to the country to live. There he would be away from the fires, the noise, the traffic, the high cost of living, and the foreigners. There, too, he could have, he says,

a little garden, with a shallow well from which you can easily draw water, with the need of a rope, to bedew your weakly plants. Live there, a friend of the mattock, tending a trim garden to feast a hundred Pythagoreans.²⁵²

250 Caballus, russeus, scofa, olla. See also Sat., xi; xii.

251 Sat., iii. 231.

252 Sat., iii. 226-229.

CHAPTER III

POPULUS ROMANUS

The Nobility

The highest rank of the people was the nobility. Some of them could often trace their families back for many centuries. Some occupied a vital part in the government and administration of the country. The majority of these men occupied a chair in the senate, and to judge by appearances the senate occupied an important place on the political scene. The senate nominated men to offices and gave legal decisions; it administered and legislated; it watched over religion and the public treasury (aerarium); it exercised the most minute police control and made political decisions of the gravest consequences.¹ These aristocrats were largely the upholders of the greatest traditions of the people, and, in spite of their haughtiness, were, for the most part, devoted lovers of their country.

A day in the life of a noble was a very leisurely and easy one. The master was often accompanied by a nomenclator,

¹ Duruy, Victor, History of Rome and the Roman People, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, 1886, vol. 5, p.509.

who prompted him in case he had forgotten the name of anyone who greeted him. If the master did not walk, he was carried in a litter, somewhat like a sedan chair.² The bearers were strong men, by preference Syrians or Cappadocians. When the master rode or walked, his attendants and freedmen accompanied him. At night, as there were no street lights, torches had to be carried by attendants to light the way for him.³

The shortcomings of some individual nobles, who ought to have set the pattern for society, were innumerable. These nobles at the top of the social scale were blameworthy in Juvenal's eyes, perhaps most of all for two reasons: they fell short of his expectation both of the historical standard of the ancient nobility which he revered and of the ethical standard which he set up. He is aghast at the monstrosity of nobles fighting in the arena⁴ or acting on the comic stage;⁵ he is sick at the cruelty of nobly-born provincial governors;⁶ he is disgusted with an audience "that can survey the triple-eyed buffoonery of the patricians, that can listen to Fabius barefooted in a mime".⁷ Talking about the perverts among

2 See Sat., iii. 239-242.

3 See Sat., iii. 284-285.

4 Sat., viii. 200-210.

5 Sat., viii. 185-192.

6 Sat., viii. 87-94.

7 Sat., viii. 191.

these aristocrats, Juvenal asks:

What would Curius and the two Scipios think? or
Fabricius and the spirit of Camillus?⁸

Juvenal's ethical standard for the upper classes is that of Persius.⁹ He loathes the unworthiness and ineffectiveness of Roman nobility. The nobles are afraid of their servants, who know all their secrets;¹⁰ they will not patronize literature;¹¹ they grudge a meal to their dependants;¹² they will not pay their children's tutors,¹³ and they will not resist tyranny.¹⁴

Juvenal's concept of nobility is a more practical one. He disregards the view of some Romans who feel that the height of nobility was to have eminent ancestors.¹⁵ Juvenal feels that mere inheritance of ancient lineage is worthless. One must act nobly - noble is he who nobly acts.¹⁶ One must "be a Paulus or a Cossus or a Drusus in character".¹⁷ "No one",

8 Sat., ii. 153-154.

9 Cf. Persius, Sat., iii. with Juvenal's viii.

10 Sat., ix. 104-108.

11 Sat., vii. 45-47.

12 Sat., v. 153-158.

13 Sat., vii. 175-177.

14 Sat., iv. passim.

15 Sat., viii. 39-77.

16 Sat., viii. 20: Nobilitas sola est atque unica virtus.

17 Sat., viii. 21.

he says, "would call an animal high-bred if it proved degenerate."¹⁸

The Equestrian Order

Between the masses of the people and a small nobility was a large influential middle class devoted mainly to trading and finance, and known to us as the equestrian order, or the Roman knights, or more commonly equites. This second definite order beneath that of the nobility was formed through changed economic conditions brought about by Rome's conquests abroad. By the Claudian law of 218 B.C. senators and senators' sons were formally debarred from speculative undertakings in other countries. A great field of enterprise was thus opened up to the class beneath them consisting of traders (negotiatores) and farmers of taxes who then began to amass vast wealth at the expense of the provincials. It remained for Gaius Gracchus to establish this class of men as a separate order (the equestrian), by giving non-senators, who possessed the qualifying census of four hundred thousand sesterces, the exclusive control of the jury courts and thus setting them in direct antagonism with the senatorial order.

From the time of Gaius Gracchus to the bitter days of

¹⁸ Sat., viii. 30.

Juvenal, this order, recruited from businessmen, tax-collectors, money-lenders, and even, in some cases, Imperial freedmen,¹⁹ continued to be the financially successful class. Money-lending at Rome was an extremely profitable business. Through exorbitant rates of interest, the knights made large fortunes from the practice.

Juvenal, like Martial, has much to say about this middle class, particularly with regard to the coveted census of four hundred thousand sesterces. Time and time again, he gives us various glimpses of the shady ways and mean occupations whereby the qualifying census was obtained.²⁰ He speaks with a great deal of jealousy of their admission to the special equestrian seats in the theatre,²¹ and the right to wear the ring of knighthood²² which was sometimes impudently worn by impostors.

Juvenal is especially bitter about those who lose their knighthood through irresponsibility and loose living.²³

19 The Crispinus mentioned in Juvenal (Sat., i. 27; iv. 1, 14, 108) was given Equestrian status. He rose to be Chief of the Knights: iv. 32. Juvenal calls him "a prodigy of wickedness without a single redeeming virtue": Sat., iv. 1.

20 Sat., i. 64-65.

21 Sat., iii. 154-156. The law of Otho (B.C. 67) reserved for knights the first fourteen rows in the theatre behind the orchestra where the senators sat.

22 Sat., i. 28.

23 See Sat., x. 66-67; i. 58.

He further tells us that in his day young knights, who squandered their family fortunes upon "horse-flesh", had the audacity to think it right and proper to look for the command of a cohort.²⁴

The Masses

Beneath the first two orders came a third, that of the plebs urbana, a motley crowd composed of respectable artisans and small tradesmen, ruined peasants from the country districts, and a miscellaneous rabble attracted to Rome by the prospect of getting from the corn-doles a living which they had not earned. In its ranks would be found members of such professions as teaching, rhetoric, architecture, medicine, as well as many of the different kinds of tradesmen whose callings are so frequently specified on their tombstones. Among these would be included fishmongers, butchers, cooks, pastry-cooks, fishermen, perfumers, gamesters, dancers, and both respectable and rascally shopkeepers.

Among the places the tradesmen frequented was the popular Egeria's grotto.²⁵ Sturtevant²⁶ points out the reasons for its popularity:

The reason why tradesmen chose this spot is suggested by Umbricius' purpose in tarrying here. Many carts

24 Sat., i. 58-61.

25 See Sat., iii. 17.

26 Sturtevant, E. H., "Notes on Juvenal", American Journal of Philology, XXXII (1911), p.323.

besides his were undoubtedly loaded and unloaded near the gate during the first ten hours of the day; the spot was analogous to a modern railway station, at least in so far as it furnished a large number of possible buyers with a few moments to spare. Both buyers and sellers would find the shade of the grove agreeable, and so the poet found a tradesman established under every tree.

In strong contrast to the magnificence and luxury of the upper classes and the opulence of the equites is the poverty of the masses of the people. They seem to have been objects of derision at Rome and are described in disparaging language on many occasions. Juvenal feels considerable contempt, tempered with a fellow-feeling for their poverty,²⁷ and pity for the miserable pittance which was their main source of subsistence, of clothing, and of fuel at home.²⁸ It was the poor folk who were most exposed to the drawbacks and dangers of the city - to rickety homes in unhealthy quarters, to the risks from conflagrations, night roysterers, and drunken footpads.²⁹

Politically, the ordinary citizens no longer counted for anything, nor were they interested in politics. They had lost their right even to sell their votes.³⁰ This was mainly because these plebeians were interested in two things only,

27 Sat., iii. 152-153, 162-167.

28 Sat., i. 119-120.

29 Sat., iii. passim.

30 Sat., x. 77-78.

the corn-dole and free amusements - panem et circenses.³¹

Socially, they seemed negligible. If they could tamely submit to the supercilious contumely of a patron and his slaves, that was sufficient.³²

Juvenal is one of the few ancient Roman authors to tell us something about criminals and their heavy chains. He hints that they were apt to become too numerous. We recall, for example, his reference to robbers:

everytime the Pontine marshes and the Gallinarian forest are secured by an armed guard, all that tribe flocks into Rome as into a fish-preserve. What furnaces, what anvils, are not groaning with the forging of chains? That is how our iron is mostly used; and you may well fear that ere long none will be left for plough-shares, none for hoes and mattocks. Happy, you would say, were the forbears of our great-grandfathers, happy the days of old which under Kings and Tribunes beheld Rome satisfied with a single gaol!³³

Juvenal's realistic power in making scenes live is shown in his description of the masses of society in various walks of life. We can see clearly, for example, the wretched beggar who is graphically described as running beside coaches along the Arician hill, and, in the hope of getting a coin, blowing wheedling kisses to the occupants.³⁴ In like manner are the

31 Sat., x. 81.

32 Sat., i. 95-134.

33 Sat., iii. 306-314.

34 Sat., iv. 116-118.

pictorial begging-letters. Ship-wrecked men, genuine or impostors, regularly used to carry pictures of themselves swimming to land from a wreck on a deep blue sea.³⁵ Such pictures were offered up as votive tablets in the temples, especially to those of Isis, the patroness of shipping.

"Everyone knows", says Juvenal, "that painters live on Isis."³⁶

Take also the case of a certain drunken bully:

The fellow stands up against me, and bids me halt;
obey I must. What else can you do when attacked
by a madman stronger than yourself? 'Where are
you from?' shouts he; '.... What sirrah, no answer?
Speak out, or take that upon your shins! '³⁷

Freedmen and Clients

Freedmen

During Juvenal's time Rome's population became heterogeneous and chaotic through the great mass of slaves who had gained their freedom. In many cases, circumstances determined whether the libertus was to remain in the household, controlling part of its work, or go out into the world to conduct a business. The more industrious slaves were promoted and given their freedom so that they would not be ruled by other slaves.³⁸

35 Sat., xiv. 301-302.

36 Sat., xii. 28.

37 Sat., iii. 290-295.

38 Cowell, F. R., Everyday Life in Ancient Rome, London, Batsford, 1961, p.109.

A freedman had always been regarded as having a status inferior to that of a freeborn citizen. Not only the freedmen but their sons as well ranked below the freeborn; their grandsons became equal. These libertini held a special place in Roman society. Having been slaves, they had always a taint of slavery in them, but in some cases they were enormously wealthy and were courted to the exclusion of the poor man of free birth.³⁹ This is especially true of the freedmen-foreigners. Their riches were in part derived from services in great houses. Mainly Greek and Oriental, freedmen ingratiated themselves in the houses of great men and often made themselves indispensable or dreaded as they were sometimes acquainted with shameful secrets.⁴⁰ In part their opulence came from their Oriental industry and skill in commerce. Juvenal mentions one rich freedman (his Euphratian descent betrayed by the pierced lobes of his ears) who demanded precedence over praetors and tribunes because he had five shops that brought him in four hundred thousand sesterces.⁴¹ In sybaritic luxury they lived better than the most eminent. They, who had once feared the whip, who covered up their weals and brands, or bribed physicians

39 Sandys, J. E., A Companion to Latin Studies, Cambridge, University Press, 1913, p.361.

40 Sat., ix. 104-108.

41 Sat., i. 104-106.

to silence to take their marks out, were to be seen in snow-white togas, Tyrian purple, scarlet shoes of the finest leather, their fingers gleaming with jewels and with their hair scented.⁴² The rich freedman was a type of common upstart who was generally shameless and boastful of his newly acquired wealth.

When such freedmen, working closely with their Imperial masters, made vast fortunes, and had the first families of Rome eating out of their hands, it is no wonder that the Romans of the old school became embittered.⁴³ Freedmen who had risen in the Imperial Service were apt to become intoxicated by their elevation. "They had", Pliny said, "in their own fortune grown insolent."⁴⁴ It is for these rich freedmen that Juvenal reserves his bitterest remarks. These men, to him, were often of vicious, vindictive, and degraded character, and had, in some cases, risen to power by repulsive means.

There is another side to the picture which Butler thinks that Juvenal ignores. The freedman-class supplied Rome with some of the most valuable civil servants, and many must have been worthy of their emancipation and of their rise to power.⁴⁵

42 Sat., i. 111; iv. 108.

43 See Sat., iv.

44 See Pliny, viii. 6. This reference is made by Cowell, op. cit., p.109.

45 Butler, op. cit., p.299.

Clients

Composed largely of freedmen was a large class of people commonly referred to in our author as "clients". The clientela was a solid institution formed and nurtured for the aristocratic class. During all epochs in the history of Rome, the number of men living by clientship, wholly or partially, must have been very great. The first and second centuries A.D. are no exception, and our author, throughout his satires, makes frequent references to them. These men were often attached in a more or less formal and thoroughly honourable manner to the wealthy, or, more precisely, the patricians, who were called their patrons (patroni) or protectors. The clients were entitled to their patron's protection, and to his services as a pleader in the courts. They received these and many other benefits, such as meals or the sportula,⁴⁶ for which they made a return by being generally at the service of their patron. They escorted, applauded, and in other conspicuous or noisy ways supported him. Juvenal describes them as a crowd of mean-spirited men who every morning thronged about the doors of the arrogant and ambitious rich to receive the dole of food or money.⁴⁷ The dole was a sort of bribe by which the patrons daily encouraged their clients. The poor client was therefore

46 Sat., i. 95; iii. 249.

47 Sat., v. passim; i. 96.

glad to buy his patron's hospitality by all kinds of flattery and obsequiousness:

"I", said one of them, "attach myself to those people, who, in spite of a poor disposition, wish to be first in everything. I smile when they make a joke. They say yes, so do I; they say no, I say no too. I must indeed be most unlucky for no one to say to me: Come and have supper with me."⁴⁸

Juvenal heaps scorn on these clients. Even the freedom of a beggar, he suggests, would be more honourable than the slavery of the client; even the food of a dog is better than being the pawn of a rich man.⁴⁹ In Satire Five Juvenal represents Trebius⁵⁰ as a poor client who places a high value on the possession of money and the sensual pleasures of the table which money makes possible. Trebius is pictured as a fool amusing his master at the table and suffering the indignities that court buffoons would never have endured. Indeed, he has become worse than a fool. He is a slave who deserves the buffets and ill-treatment which a slave suffers. His roseate views of himself as a freedman, as a royal guest, show that he still cannot perceive the truth of the situation. The fact of his servility is undeniable.

48 See Duruy, op. cit., p.584.

49 Sat., v. 1-12.

50 Sat., v. 135-137.

The patron generally entertained his client very scornfully.⁵¹ The client, on the other hand, could not be trusted to behave himself; he would steal table-fittings and make outrageous demands on his patron. When the client is invited for a drink from a jewelled cup, a watcher is posted to keep an eye on his sharp fingernails.⁵² The client would like to say what he thinks about this type of treatment but he dares not, as Juvenal points out:

There are many things which a man cannot say when
his coat is worn and threadbare.⁵³

Slaves

Slaves are presented vividly to our notice. They were employed by Romans from the earliest period of their history, but at first their numbers must have been relatively small, proportionately to those of the citizens. By the time of Juvenal, however, their numbers had increased immensely. They came from all parts of the world and were of very different abilities, physical and intellectual. The most intelligent slaves came from Greece. Clever Greeks were to be found in many rich Roman households as doctor, tutor, librarian, musician,

51 Sat., v. 161-173.

52 Sat., v. 40-41.

53 Sat., v. 130-131.

goldsmith, and artist. Generally, slaves were mainly drawn from prisoners of war, captured in conflict with surrounding peoples. The slave supply was also kept up to some extent by children born to slaves.

These slaves remained in the eyes of the law chattels without personal rights and were frequently subjected to the cruellest scourging, branding, and even crucifixion. Juvenal comments scathingly on their maltreatment by some owners. Some gambling masters are so mean as to grudge proper clothes to a shivering slave.⁵⁴ Women, according to Juvenal, are the worst offenders. Some capricious women strap and even sentence their slaves to death.⁵⁵ The lady of the house would have her retinue of slave-girls obey her slightest whim.⁵⁶ On the other hand, some were well treated and given their freedom (manumission). Pliny the Younger speaks of his "long friendship" for a cultivated slave named Zosimus, whom he set free, and, because he was liable to consumption, Pliny sent him to Egypt and the Riviera for the good of his health.⁵⁷

Slaves who were unskilled and uneducated were compelled to perform a variety of menial duties. The ordinary household

54 Sat., i. 93.

55 Sat., vi. 479-484.

56 Sat., vi. 491-495.

57 Pliny, v. 19.

slave is the commonest type in Juvenal. When the master left the house for a journey, to pay a call or dine with friends, he would be accompanied by a body-guard of slaves.⁵⁸ If he went by litter, he had big strapping bearers to carry the lectica.⁵⁹ We hear also of the domestic servants,⁶⁰ the water-carriers,⁶¹ and the pampered lackeys who might, unless bribed, deny a client the chance of calling on a patron.⁶² Often they were held in a high position of trust and honour in the household, and were sometimes on terms of great intimacy with their masters. Some slaves were attractive for their accomplishments or their looks. Others were unprepossessing, like the repulsive blackamoor who waited on the seedy clients at Virro's dinner, "one whom you would not like to meet at dead of night as you are driving past the tombs on the Latin Road".⁶³

Juvenal feels that slaves must stick to their lowly lot in life. He is naturally furious at the saucy slave who feels that

it is beneath him to attend to an old dependant;
he is indignant that you should ask for anything,
and that you should be seated while he stands. All

58 Sat., iii. 284; x. 42.

59 Sat., i. 64-65; x. 41.

60 Sat., iii. 262-263; v. passim; xi. 146-161.

61 Sat., vi. 332.

62 Sat., iii. 131-133.

63 Sat., v. 53-54.

the great houses are full of saucy slaves. See with what a grumble another of them has handed you a bit of hard bread that you can scarce break in two.⁶⁴

Some of these slaves were very shrewd and enterprising.

The slave who had been brought to Rome "with whitened feet" (i.e. marked "for sale")⁶⁵ frequently saved enough peculium to buy his liberty and indulge in big enterprises.

Gladiators

The hero-worship given to athletes nowadays is nothing new. In Rome, school children had an irresistible habit of scribbling the names of their heroes or heroines on the street walls. Amidst these scribbles one is certain to find the name of a gladiator, and, perhaps alongside, some indication of his physical features. In the time of Juvenal, the mob of all ages were ready to make a hero of the man who could perform rare feats of physical strength or agility, and the skilful gladiator, like his colleague of the "Red" or "Green", evidently became a popular hero. The victors in these deadly events were the idols of the mob. Some women earnestly sought out and, at times, eloped with gladiators. If he has lost an ear,

64 Sat., v. 64-68.

65 Sat., i. 111.

if his face is one mass of disfiguring scars, the women run after him all the more. "Never mind that," scolds Juvenal, "he is a gladiator."⁶⁶ His professional record was of public interest, and the number of his victories was often inscribed on his tomb.⁶⁷

Many slaves entered the gladiatorial professions. Others were alien malefactors condemned for outrageous crimes and given a chance of redeeming their lives by prowess in arms in the arena or by the appeal of personal attributes to the emperor and the multitude.

A gladiator who wanted to turn professional engaged himself with a master-gladiator. He then took the gladiator's oath expressing his willingness to suffer death by fire, in chains, under the lash, or by the sword as his master might decide, and to obey as a true gladiator should.⁶⁸

The places where gladiators were kept were called "schools" (ludi).⁶⁹ The training-masters were called lanistae,⁷⁰ and the gladiators sometimes belonged to the trainers who hired

66 Sat., vi. 106-110.

67 See CIL. x. 7364; xii. 5836.

68 See Sat., xi. 8.

69 Sat., viii. 199: Haec ultra quid erit nisi ludus?

70 Sat., xi. 8.

them out for exhibition. Sometimes also there were private citizens who hired lanistae to train them. For meals they ate anything; thus Juvenal calls the food served to gladiators miscellanea.⁷¹

Despite the fact that so few of them survived to get their laurel crowns, their bags of gold, and to anticipate the adulation of the women and of Rome in general, yet, by the time of Juvenal, the taste for these gladiatorial shows increased, and the number of gladiators fighting at the time grew larger.⁷² It was so popular in the second century that there were shows in which women took part. They fought not only against humans like themselves but also against beasts. Juvenal often scorns the free-born ladies and gentlemen who are gladiators and beast-fighters.⁷³ It is a sign of the depravity of the age. He is aghast when Maevia holds a spear in her hand and exposes her breasts to fight a boar.⁷⁴ It is indeed with bitter contempt for these women gladiators that Juvenal asks:

What modesty can you expect in a woman who wears a helmet, abjures her own sex, and delights in feats of strength?⁷⁵

71 Sat., xi. 20.

72 Wilkins, A. S., Roman Antiquities, London, Macmillan, 1896, p.104.

73 Sat., ii. 143-148; iv. 99-101; vi. 257-258; xi. 3-20.

74 Sat., i. 22-23.

75 Sat., vi. 252-253.

With regard to the men, he says that it is a disgrace when Gracchus, clad in a tunic and not even hiding his face, plays the role of a gladiator and wields a trident.⁷⁶

The life of a gladiator often depended upon the whims of the spectators. Though inconceivable in sports nowadays, we find that the Roman spectators were often ruthless with the gladiator. It was they who determined, in many cases, whether he should live or die. If the wounded man was at his adversary's mercy, the spectators, when they wished him to be slain, used to turn up their thumbs;⁷⁷ when they wished him to be spared, they probably waved their handkerchiefs or turned down their thumbs.

Juvenal almost always mentions these gladiatorial games with contempt.⁷⁸ He does not feel that they were cruel so much as vulgar. To Juvenal, the gladiator was the lowest of the low,⁷⁹ as Hight⁸⁰ points out:

76 Sat., viii. 201-210.

77 Sat., iii. 36: verso pollice vulgus quem iubet occidunt populariter. Vertere pollicem, to turn the thumb up, was the signal for dispatching the wounded gladiator; premere pollicem, to turn it down, was the sign that he was to be spared.

78 See sections on games: Sat., iii. 34-37; vi. 352-354; vii. 243; ix. 143-144; x. 36-46; xi. 193-202.

79 See Sat., iii. 155-158; vi. 82-113; vi. 216; viii. 199-210.

80 Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.151.

For him, a gladiator was the lowest type of man, far beneath the slaves. He regarded gladiators as a well-bred woman regards prostitutes.

Greeks and Other Foreigners

During Juvenal's lifetime, men streamed to Rome, with hopes, more or less slender, of making a livelihood by honest means. They might succeed, and make a name in literature⁸¹ or politics; they might fail, and become the restless and degraded dependants of one or more of the great houses.

If Juvenal disliked the disadvantages of city life for the poor man, he was still proud of his Roman heritage and resented foreign interlopers. Juvenal's hatred, often merely racial, was directed primarily against Greek and foreign importations. He did not approve of the new cosmopolitan Rome, filled with inferior peoples from all over the world. He inveighs against "this mud-laden torrent pouring from Orontes into the Tiber".⁸² But the Syrians, whom he so greatly despised, hastened at the first possible moment to assume the guise of Roman civilians; even those who most loudly advertised their xenophobia were themselves more or less newcomers to Rome, seeking to defend

81 The Spanish Martial is a good example.

82 Sat., iii. 62-65.

their adopted homes against fresh incursions.⁸³

Juvenal reminds us that the old Roman customs and manners (which he cherished dearly) were ignored or forgotten by the crowd of pushing and intriguing foreigners who often brought with them their sometimes outlandish many beliefs and practices. The city itself was losing its character amid the flood of these aliens.⁸⁴ He attributes the general corruption in the city to these undesirable foreigners. Rome is no place for Umbricius, precisely because he retains his Roman character; it has become a Greek city, or, even worse, an Oriental city which offers all its opportunities to the adaptable foreigners:

I can't stand, my good Romans, a Rome of Greeks!
.... And what is the Greek! A jack of all trades
scoring by unscrupulous versatility: he turns
professor, rhetorician, mathematician, physician,
painter, masseur, astrologer, rope-dancer, augur,
wizard - everything is your starveling Greek acquainted
with. Tell him to go to heaven and he'll go.⁸⁵

Juvenal seems overtly jealous of these ambitious Greeks. He is frustrated perhaps because they are better at achieving their aims than he. In the first place, they possess a native versatility which enables them to cope with any problem.⁸⁶ In the second, they thrive on every form of deceit, being a

83 See Carcopino, op. cit., p.55.

84 Sat., iii. 60-61.

85 Sat., iii. 61, 74-78.

86 Sat., iii. 74.

nation of actors.⁸⁷ It is almost a crime in Juvenal's eyes to be a foreigner. The Greek is a liar, a base flatterer, a monster of lust, a traitor, and a murderer.⁸⁸ As far as Juvenal is concerned, all moral perversions, luxury in dress, food, building, sexual degradation, public amusement - everything comes from the East, the Hellenistic world. Such is his consistency that he gives Greek names to prostitutes.⁸⁹ Also, in listing the different parts of the Greek world which send greedy immigrants to Rome, he says that one man comes from Sicyon, another from Amydon.⁹⁰

Umbricius (i.e., Juvenal) also explores the poor man's claim.⁹¹ The pauper is a sympathetic person, but he cannot exist in the present Rome as the noble person he once was. Rather, he provides a standard by which we can judge the extent of contemporary degeneracy.

87 Sat., iii. 100: natio comoeda est.

88 Sat., iii. 60-120.

89 See Sat., i. 36; iii. 136; v. 141; vi. 123; x. 237.

90 Sat., iii. 69-70.

91 Sat., iii. 127: pauperis hic meritum.

Egyptians

Of all the foreigners, Juvenal hated the Egyptians most. Speaking as a Roman, he despised and mocked Oriental cults, Oriental vices, and Orientals generally. The Egyptian was the defilement of Rome. One could never forget the Egyptian half-breed, whom the satirist never wearies of mangling: Ecce iterum Crispinus.⁹² This Crispinus wormed himself into the civil service through flattery.⁹³ In time he became princeps equitum. Juvenal's hatred of him stems from the fact that, instead of being a Roman, he is a filthy Egyptian.⁹⁴ In another place, our author is enraged at an Egyptian officer⁹⁵ who has dared to have his triumphal statue set up among the statues of true Roman generals. Juvenal, in order to vent his wrath against the Egyptian, suggests that his statue ought to be used as an open air lavatory.⁹⁶

92 Sat., vi. 1.

93 See Sat., iv. 31-33.

94 Sat., i. 26; iv. 23-33.

95 This officer was Tiberius Julius Alexander, who was one of Vespasian's generals. He was Jewish by origin but Juvenal hated him for his connections with Egypt.

96 Sat., i. 129-131.

The aged poet in Satire Fifteen spurs himself to one last fury against the hated Egyptians. He devotes a whole satire to their activities. It is a description of a case of cannibalism in Egypt, where men live like savages and worse than beasts.⁹⁷ He describes a carefully planned fight among cannibals in the desert.⁹⁸ One of two towns was having a festival with what Juvenal contemptuously described as half-civilized orgies that sometimes lasted for a week on end. Juvenal, as if to prove their barbaric instincts, vividly describes the drunken dance of a gang of Egyptian villagers.⁹⁹ If he had not detested the Egyptians so bitterly, he might have given us further details, but perhaps he wishes to imply that all this savagery is the same to him, and it does not matter which group was the aggressor.

97 See Sat., xv. 13-26, 29-32, 65-71, 115-119, 159-164.

98 Regarding the truth of this incident, Highet in his article, "A Fight in the Desert. Juvenal xv and a Modern Parallel", Classical Journal, XLV (1949), p.96, agrees with the archeological evidence with regard to the sites of the two towns - Ombi and Tentyra. He further says: "The facts narrated by Juvenal have therefore additional probability, because they apparently spring from the folkways of North Africa, which are slow to change and which have altered little since his time. It is a pity that he should have for so long been suspected both of ignorance and rhetorical exaggeration in telling this story about the country he detested, whereas he was evidently both moderate and accurate."

See also Highet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.153.

99 Sat., xv. 47-50.

During the rout one of the Tentyrites fell down and was captured. He was torn to pieces by the victors, and eaten.¹⁰⁰ Characteristically, Juvenal adds that they could not wait to cook him, and that they enjoyed the cannibal meal so much that the late-comers scooped the blood from the ground and licked it off their fingers.¹⁰¹

The fifteenth satire is not simply a general discourse on man's inhumanity to man, but a particular attack on the barbarism of the Egyptian nation.¹⁰² Juvenal is adamant when he sees such crimes done against humans because he feels that, "when Nature gave tears to man, she proclaimed that he was tender-hearted; and tenderness is the best quality in man."¹⁰³ For it is this "that separates us from the dumb herd".¹⁰⁴ As if to show the superiority and greatness of the Roman race, Juvenal further points out:

100 Sat., xv. 77-88.

101 Sat., xv. 89-90.

102 See Highet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.151: "Egypt, that loathsome country - the land that he hated far more than any other Roman who has left a record, is perhaps the land of his early exile."

Note also: Juvenal repeats that the nation is guilty in xv. 29, 31, 126, 129-131, 169-170.

103 Sat., xv. 131-133.

104 Sat., xv. 142-143.

It is for this that we alone have had allotted to us a nature worthy of reverence, capable of divine things, fit to acquire and practise the arts of life, and that we have drawn from on high that gift of feeling which is lacking to the beasts that grovel with eyes upon the ground.¹⁰⁵

Jews

The hatred of the Jews expressed by Pliny the Elder, Quintilian, Tacitus, and Juvenal can be attributed to the feelings engendered by the Jewish War. But, apart from their wild fanaticism which raged during the war, their haughty contempt for other nations, civilizations, and religions, their avoidance of the society of their neighbours and the manner in which they persistently kept to themselves, were sufficient to make them different from all mankind,¹⁰⁶ and to create the impression that they were a class of people filled with the hatred of humanity. According to Juvenal, Moses taught the Jews not to show anyone the way, nor to guide the thirsty traveller to the spring except he were a Jew.¹⁰⁷ Pearson and Strong¹⁰⁸ point out:

105 Sat., xv. 143-147.

106 See I Thess., 2:15: "contrary to all men".

107 Sat., xiv. 103-104.

108 Op. cit., p.27.

His reproach of bitter caste-feeling against the Jews may seem to come with an ill grace from one who certainly would have regarded a marriage between a Jew and a Roman as impure.

These Jews, Juvenal informs us, learned, practised, and revered the Jewish law.¹⁰⁹ They avoided any kind of work on the Sabbath,¹¹⁰ and were accustomed to despise the laws of Rome.¹¹¹ Juvenal mentions baskets filled with hay, in which the food prepared the day before was kept warm, as indispensable articles of furniture even in the poorest Jewish households.¹¹²

The two friends, Umbricius and Juvenal, turn off the road into a little park, Egeria's glen, outside the city walls, to talk in peace. Juvenal remarks that once the grove was a sacred spot, but now it has been ruined by the Jews who are not, as we might expect, merchants, but something much poorer and less stable, beggars and fortune-tellers like gypsies in modern times.¹¹³ They practised the quackery of an absurd religion.¹¹⁴ Juvenal has few moments of levity, and laughter is not his usual weapon, yet these Jews even move the sombre satirist to mirth with their prejudice against pigs and pork.¹¹⁵

109 Sat., xiv. 101.

110 Sat., xiv. 105-106, 96.

111 Sat., xiv. 100.

112 Sat., iii. 14; vi. 542.

113 Sat., iii. 16; vi. 542-547.

114 Sat., vi. 544-547.

115 Sat., vi. 159-160.

It was only later that he saw them as a well-organized religious group with a long tradition.¹¹⁶

On the whole, the Jews are fiercely attacked by Juvenal for their selfish and anti-social exclusiveness,¹¹⁷ for their cut-price venality as interpreters of dreams,¹¹⁸ and for their failure to respect the traditional sacred spots at Rome.¹¹⁹

The Family

The only closely-knit social organization in Rome was the family. The life of the family in the second century A.D. was vastly different from that in the early Republic when the sole legal personality was the pater, who had, theoretically, the power of life and death within the family. In earlier times, too, the father, like a king, was restrained by public opinion and custom, and the Roman matron had a position of dignity and respect in the home.

In Juvenal's time we find the solidarity of the family fading away, and with it the old Roman respect for women, who, like the men, lost their affection for the home and family responsibilities. Hence we find the age rampant with the social

116 Sat., xiv. 96-106.

117 Loc. cit.

118 Sat., vi. 546-547.

119 Sat., iii. 12-14.

evils of frequent divorce, illegitimate birth, illicit love, and childlessness.

We find that in the second century the wife was her husband's equal, his rival, if not his imperatrix.¹²⁰ She seemed to have gained her emancipation and freedom when she married. Thus we find in Juvenal that wives discarded their husbands and abandoned them without scruples after having ruled them with a rod of iron.¹²¹ The very reasons which in Republican times might have doubly bound an affectionate wife to her husband's side - his age, his illness, or his departure for the front - were cynically advanced by some Roman matrons in Juvenal's day as reasons for deserting him.¹²² Juvenal thus points a finger of scorn at one of these Roman matrons:

Thus does she lord it over her husband. Before long she vacates her kingdom; she flits from one home to another, wearing out her bridal veil;.... Thus does the tale of her husbands grow; there will be eight of them in the course of five autumns - a fact worthy of commemoration on her tomb!¹²³

Speaking of another wife, Juvenal says, "forgetful of home, of husband, and of sister, without thought of her country,

120 Sat., vi. 224.

121 Sat., vi. passim.

122 Carcopino, op. cit., p.100.

123 Sat., vi. 224-30.

she shamelessly abandoned her weeping children."¹²⁴

Generally speaking, Roman maidenhood did not last long; as soon as puberty was reached, betrothal and marriage followed. On the whole, marriages were matters of family convenience. Money often determined the selection of the husband or wife as the case may be. The rich married among the rich, the poor among the poor. Bachelorhood and childlessness were discouraged, and people under these categories were deprived of certain privileges. The unmarried were declared incapable of inheriting property or accepting legacies; the childless(orbi) were mulcted of half the amount of such bequests. Juvenal tells us that, in order to escape these difficulties, it was sufficient to have one child born in lawful wedlock.¹²⁵ Moreover, various privileges were reserved in cases where parents were fortunate to have three or more children.¹²⁶

Boissier, who is quoted by Mayor,¹²⁷ pays tribute to Juvenal for his affection for the family:

Personne aussi ne s'est fait dans l'antiquité une idée plus élevée de la famille que Juvénal; personne n'est occupé avec plus de tendresse de l'enfance,

124 Sat., vi. 85-86.

125 Sat., ix. 86-88.

126 Sat., ix. 89.

127 See Mayor, J., Thirteen Satires of Juvenal, New York, Macmillan, 1901, Introd., vol. 1, p.xxii.

du respect qu'on lui doit, des bons exemples qu'il faut mettre sous ses yeux et des spectacles qu'il convient de lui épargner.

Women

Juvenal's sixth satire is a savage denunciation of the vices of womankind. The various types of female degradation are revealed to our gaze with merciless and often revolting clarity. The unchastity of woman is the main theme, but ranked with the adulteress and the wanton are the murderess of her husband or child, the torturer of the slave, the client of the fortune-teller or the astrologer.

Juvenal, writing almost a hundred years later than Ovid, prefaces his denunciation of women with a longing backward glance at the age of Saturn, when rustic chastity still survived on earth. His description of contemporary mores shows that in the first and early part of the second centuries A.D. women had begun to assert and discover themselves, thus breaking away from the old-fashioned restraints and claiming an almost equal liberty with men.¹²⁸ Juvenal's portrayal of women in his day becomes a recital of perversions; every refinement is a further step toward viciousness. "It was Juvenal's vision of corruption",

¹²⁸ Giles, A. F., The Roman Civilization, London, Jack, 1918, p.102.

says Barish,¹²⁹ "rather than Ovid's vision of delight which struck the responsive chord in Jonson."

Perhaps it might be interesting to note Barish's view on a comparison of Ovid with Juvenal on the "Silent Woman":

...Ovid apostrophizes the tactics by which women entice lovers and lovers succeed in their conquests. Juvenal, when confronted with the same reality, turns a glance of scorching ferocity on it. Where Ovid saw beautification, Juvenal sees falsification. Artifice for him becomes artificiality, and every feminine gesture towards adornment of person or cultivation of manners merely supplies further proof of the woman's inner hollowness, further evidence of the degeneracy of a degenerate age.¹³⁰

Juvenal focuses his attack on rich wives. Poor wives are mentioned only now and then. He gives us every possible reason against marriage by describing all the appalling types of wife the unfortunate man is liable to get. Women, according to Juvenal, are drunken, gossipy, profane, affected, domineering, lying, treacherous, and murderous.¹³¹ He accuses women of gross infidelity, which he discusses in unsparing detail. Roman ladies are spectators of indecent pantomime; they will fall in love with players and gladiators.¹³² Then there is the

129 Barish, J. A., "Ovid, Juvenal, and the Silent Woman", Publications of the Modern Language Assoc. of America, LXXI (1956), p.220.

130 Ibid., p.214.

131 Sat., vi. passim.

132 Sat., vi. 67-83.

guilty consort whose hypocritical tears conceal her offence, who brazens out her charge if detected in an amour, and is eloquent where a trained rhetorician would be hard put to it for an excuse.¹³³

Juvenal advises his friend, Postumus, that it is difficult to get married when a man has to make a choice from among the proud heiress, the too perfect woman,¹³⁴ the woman who spouts Greek,¹³⁵ the masterly woman,¹³⁶ the music - or rather the musician - lover,¹³⁷ the opinionated scholar,¹³⁸ the eternal prinker,¹³⁹ the unsexed woman who takes up fencing and the gladiator's art,¹⁴⁰ and the devotee of superstitions who is ready to fall under the influence of every Oriental impostor.¹⁴¹

Wealthy shirkers of motherhood, too, come under the lash for practising birth-control and abortion:

Childbirth is rare upon a gilded bed. So great is the skill, so powerful the drugs of the abortionist, paid to murder mankind within the womb.¹⁴²

133 Sat., vi. 275-285.

134 Sat., vi. 162-166.

135 Sat., vi. 187-191.

136 Sat., vi. 416-417.

137 Sat., vi. 379-391.

138 Sat., vi. 434-456.

139 Sat., vi. 461-466.

140 Sat., vi. 246-253.

141 Sat., vi. 548-587.

142 Sat., vi. 594-597.

The satirist condemned abortion as murder. In the refuse areas one might see unnatural mothers, anxious to rid themselves of an unwanted child, surreptitiously taking advantage of the barbarous law and exposing a new-born infant there; while matrons grieving over their barrenness would hasten no less secretly to snatch the baby, hoping to palm it off on a credulous husband, and thus with a supposititious heir to still the ache in his paternal heart.¹⁴³ Beyond this, he felt, a woman cannot go. She has exhausted all the perverted delights of society, and is charged with all sorts of hideous crimes.¹⁴⁴

In his harsh description of Roman women, Juvenal's keynote is the insanity of any man who contemplates marriage. Juvenal, addressing his friend Postumus, who intends to get married, reminds him that there are many ways to avoid such a disaster, and we are given three possible ways for a Roman to commit suicide: the rope, the open window, and the Aemilian bridge.¹⁴⁵

It is all a lurid picture which Juvenal paints and seems too much overdrawn to be sound history. Doubtless Juvenal could document each of his specimens and their crimes in the life of the metropolis just as similar specimens could be found

143 Sat., vi. 602-609.

144 Sat., vi. 620-661.

145 Sat., vi. 28-32.

in any of our big cities today. If we were to isolate the vile behaviour of individual women in any of our cities, we could easily get the same distorted picture in our society.

Martial's painting is not carried to the point of blackness as in Juvenal. At bottom, however, he forms almost the same estimate. It is clear from what he says that women are quite emancipated from the servitude and seclusion of old. On the other hand, we see a very different kind of woman in the respectable society of the satirist's contemporary, Pliny the Younger, and we can be sure from what Pliny says that there was a preponderance of decent women in Rome at the time of Juvenal.

The wife of Pliny's old friend Macrinus "would have been worthy to set an example, even if she had lived in olden times. She had lived with her husband for thirty-nine years without a quarrel, or a fit of sulks, in unclouded happiness and mutual self-respect."¹⁴⁶ Friedländer mentions that, when Annia Pollita saw her husband Rebellius Plantus (A.D. 62) assassinated by Nero, she embraced his blood-stained neck, kept the stained robe and lived on the bare necessities of life, in deep mourning.¹⁴⁷

146 Pliny, Ep., viii. 5. See also Ep., vi. 24, for another example of the loyalty of a devoted wife.

147 Friedländer, op. cit., vol. 1, p.262.

Let us remember that Roman womanhood included many more than the few so fiercely assailed by the satirists, and that, throughout the centuries of Rome's existence, the ideal of the mother and wife and sister and daughter was an ever-present and living influence, constantly appearing in the flesh. Friedländer¹⁴⁸ tells us that an imperial chamberlain who had gone to Carthage (perhaps in Hadrian's retinue) erected a monument to his wife, 'because she had followed him to Africa'. An inscription about the same time runs thus:

To a virtuous wife, a careful housemistress, the desire of my soul, who had been with me eighteen years, three months and thirteen days. I have lived with her without one complaint....¹⁴⁹

Friedländer¹⁵⁰ records yet another epitaph from imperial times: a slave, a dispensator in Lower Moesia, says of his wife:

She was the patron saint of my home, my hope and my life. Her wishes were mine; her dislikes mine. None of her secret thoughts was concealed from me. She was a busy spinner, economical, but generous to her husband. She did not delight in eating, save with me. She was a good counsellor, prudent and noble.

These are expressions that spring from the emotions of fresh bereavement and we can be certain that they are sincere.

148 Op. cit., vol. 1, p.265.

149 Op. cit., p.266.

150 Loc. cit.

In the sixth satire, then, Juvenal does not seem to be talking from actual facts and one would agree with Hight when he says that

A good deal of what Juvenal says here was apparently selected from the arguments of the rhetorical schools, and some of his examples, too, come from their catalogues.

Quite apart from his own experience, then, Juvenal seems to have been drawing on a large reservoir of working-class and middle-class misogynistic propaganda, on philosophical discussions of marriage (in which he largely ignored the general arguments but used psychological descriptions), and on the debates and illustrations of popular schools of oratory.¹⁵¹

Children and Education

During the time of the Republic, every parent was his child's teacher, and Juvenal often voices the same opinion in his fourteenth satire. He wisely lays his finger on home influence as a cardinal factor in the morality of the child. He deals extensively with the influence of parental example. Gambling, gluttony, cruelty, lust, these and other sins children will pick up from their parents' example. He is quite serious when he warns parents:

maxima debetur puero reverentia.¹⁵²

151 Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.93.

152 Sat., xiv. 47.

In Satire Fourteen, Juvenal develops a view kindred to that of modern science and sociology, that we are all trustees of future generations, and that, if we sin, we incur the responsibility of tempting our children to copy the foul example and inherit the guilty thoughts. He feels that, in Rome, children are unconsciously taught at home what is wrong. He devotes much space to pointing out two aspects of this fact: children readily imitate their parents, and they copy their vices and follies. Juvenal tells us that there is one vice which Romans taught their children deliberately as though it were a virtue. It is the vice of greed: "the insatiable lust of making more and more".¹⁵³ He feels that, when the love of money is taught to the young, it produces crimes from which the parents themselves inevitably suffer since it is their wealth that tempts their own children.¹⁵⁴ Juvenal carefully warns the parent:

Thus you will see the fire, whose sparks you yourself have kindled, blazing far and wide and carrying all before them. Nor will you yourself, poor wretch, meet with any mercy; the pupil lion, with a loud roar, will devour the trembling instructor in his den.¹⁵⁵

153 Sat., xiv. 125.

154 Sat., xiv. 107-122, 173-232.

155 Sat., xiv. 245-247.

With regard to school-life and the training given there, we are told that boys had to go to school early. School opened at dawn and continued without a break till noon. Thus Juvenal refers to boys sitting in school at an hour when no smith, no workman would be at work.¹⁵⁶

Discipline was thoroughly Roman in its severity. Juvenal himself makes a grim reference to the "rod" which he received.¹⁵⁷ Teachers must have had to exercise firm discipline at all times to keep their unruly children properly controlled. We can well imagine that boys and girls received the ferula for various offences, for undone home-work, talking, inattentiveness, general misbehaviour, and gross insolence.

Teachers

Our author informs us that school-masters were kept busy with crowded classes.¹⁵⁸ Students were generally crowded together without distinction of age. In the elementary schools the master's aim was to teach his pupils to read, write, and count.¹⁵⁹ In the secondary schools, eloquence was the aim and

156 Sat., vii. 222-227.

157 Sat., i. 15.

158 Sat., vii. 151.

159 Carcopino, op. cit., p.105.

end of both grammar and rhetoric.¹⁶⁰ The teachers of rhetoric were no better off than their students. They were killed by the deadly monotony of repeated exercises:

When each in turn stands up, and repeats what he has just been conning in his seat, reciting the self-same things in the self-same verses.¹⁶¹

Juvenal gives us a good description of rhetorical training. He represents the professor of rhetoric as complaining of the dull student whose miserable head is filled with the deliberations of Hannibal after the battle of Cannae.¹⁶²

The main complaint of the satirist is that teachers make no money in the profession.¹⁶³ He is especially critical of rich men who could help teachers earn a better living.¹⁶⁴

Juvenal writes sarcastically upon the wretched pittance, the slender fees which both school-master and private tutor extracted with the greatest difficulty from grumbling parents. Teachers had to sue parents for their fees.¹⁶⁵ When the scholastic year comes around he receives as much as a jockey gets for a single race.¹⁶⁶ Teachers, with all their responsibilities, intellectual and moral, many of them working extremely

160 Carcopino, op. cit., p.109.

161 Sat., vii. 151-152.

162 Sat., vii. 161-163.

163 Sat., vii. 217-221.

164 Sat., vii. 175-179.

165 Sat., vii. 228-229.

166 Sat., vii. 242-243.

hard both day and night, gets no better reward than that earned by any artisan or manual worker.¹⁶⁷ With bitter jest Juvenal describes the way in which the pupil's fee, already small, was liable to be nibbled away by the slave or steward who brought it.¹⁶⁸ Yet for this meagre salary, the teacher was expected to prepare students on many useful points and vital issues.

According to Juvenal, parents expected that

he must never be at fault with his grammar; he must know all history, and have all the authorities at his finger-tips. If asked a chance question on his way to the baths, or to the establishment of Phoebus, he must at once tell you who was the nurse of Anchises, what was the name and birth-place of Anchemolus' step-mother, to what age Acestes lived, how many flagons of Sicilian wine he presented to the Trojans. Require of him that he shall mould the young minds as a man moulds a face out of wax with his thumb; insist that he shall be a father to the whole brood, so that they shall play no nasty game, and do no nasty trick - no easy matter to watch the hands and sparkling eyes of so many youngsters!¹⁶⁹

167 Sat., vii. 215-224.

168 Sat., vii. 216-219.

169 Sat., vii. 230-241.

Soldiers

Because of the extraordinary privileges enjoyed by soldiers, Juvenal forcefully lashes out against them. Soldiers seemed to have despised soft civilians. In the city during rush-hours one was likely to be stepped upon by the huge feet of the soldiers, who wore heavy boots with hob nails.¹⁷⁰ Also, in the fragmentary Satire Sixteen, Juvenal begins with a brutal picture of a civilian who after a brawl with a trooper

must hold his tongue and dare not show the judge the teeth that have been knocked out, or the black and blue lumps upon his face, or the one eye left which the doctor holds out no hope of saving.¹⁷¹

Juvenal complains about the special advantages which soldiers enjoyed over the civilians. If a soldier got involved in a police-court case, he was not tried by the ordinary magistrate but by a court-martial in camp. This discouraged civilians and they dared not venture into camp to lodge a complaint before "a hob-nailed centurion with a row of jurors with brawny calves sitting before a big bench".¹⁷²

If a soldier has a lawsuit, it is always taken at the head of the calendar, while civilians have to endure the delays

170 Sat., iii. 248.

171 Sat., xvi. 9-12.

172 Sat., xvi. 14-15.

of court procedure.¹⁷³ The soldier can also get a summary settlement of all his disputes, and, alone of all the Romans, is exempt from the patria potestas. No one dared to bear witness against a soldier.¹⁷⁴ "Sooner", says Juvenal, "you will find a false witness against a civilian than one who would tell the truth against the interest and honour of the soldier."¹⁷⁵

The soldier can also control his earnings and is absolute owner of his military pay and appurtenances, and, unlike civilians, can will such property to anyone he chooses, even during his father's lifetime.¹⁷⁶ Juvenal seems envious because some have become rich through bonuses and awards for distinguished service:

And indeed the general himself is surely interested to see that the most brave should also be the most fortunate, and that all should proudly wear their decorations and necklets.¹⁷⁷

173 Sat., xvi. 42-44.

174 Sat., xvi. 30.

175 Sat., xvi. 32-34.

176 Sat., xvi. 51-54.

177 Sat., xvi. 58-60.

CHAPTER IV

JUVENAL AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

Evidently the best course to make sure whether someone is telling the truth is to compare the opinions of other people in a position to know the facts. The urgent need for moral culture and reform of character as well as for a guiding force in conduct was profoundly felt by all the serious minds of the Flavian Age. This is clearly indicated by their frequent remarks on the society in which they lived.

Let us therefore address ourselves to the contemporaries of Juvenal, to those who were witnesses of the society which he described. They will help us learn whether he accurately reports the events and equitably judges the society.

In this survey we shall examine the works of three of them only, namely, Martial, Tacitus, and Pliny the Younger. First let us begin with a friend of the poet himself, Marcus Valerius Martialis.

Martial

Martial (ca. 38 A.D. to 104 A.D.) came from Spain in 64 A.D. to make his fortune in Rome. He is a Latin writer of brilliant and witty epigrams which constitute a wonderful

gallery of human types from the highest to the lowest in Rome. Martial had a sense of balance, which Juvenal seems to have lacked. There do appear in his pages friends true as well as false, wives faithful as well as unfaithful, poets admirable as well as execrable.

He gives a fair description of the circles in which he moved. He might have said equally with Juvenal: quidquid agunt homines nostri est farrago libelli.¹ It should be noted, however, that the arts of satire and epigram are clearly akin. They differ in length and purpose. Hight points out, "Just as Martial marks the culmination of Roman epigram, so Juvenal marks the culmination of Roman satire; and some at least of Juvenal's best work would have been impossible without Martial."²

Martial does not go beneath the surface, but almost every aspect of the kaleidoscopic world of Rome receives his attention at one time or the other. Martial's kindly temper led him to avoid direct attacks on personalities. His invective is directed against vice, not primarily because it is wicked, but rather because it is grotesque. He asserts the kindliness of his heart and the excellence of his intentions:

1 Sat., i. 85-86.

2 Hight, "Juvenal's Bookcase", American Journal of Philology, LXXII (1951); p.386.

Hunc servare modum nostri novere libelli,
parcere personis, dicere de vitiis.³

With a foreigner's detachment, he described realistically what he saw. Unlike Juvenal's, Martial's satire is free from bitterness, for his outlook on life made him take human nature as he found it. He appears to enjoy life more than our author. Thus, in his poem addressed to Juvenal on his retreat to Spain, he says:

Sic me vivere, sic iuvat perire.⁴

Dill⁵ therefore points out:

Martial, of course, is not a moralist at all; the mere suggestion excites a smile. He is a keen and joyous observer of the faults and follies, the lights and shades, of a highly complex society which is "getting over-ripe". In the power of mere objective description and minute portraiture of social life, Martial is almost unique.

Martial has a marvellously quick and clear power of observation and of vivid presentation. He is, in every sense, like Tacitus and Juvenal, a writer of his age. Indeed life was his subject, not outworn mythologies or tragic nonsense. What a medley of detail that life presents! It lives before us in all its splendour and squalor. He presents almost the

3 Martial, x. 33.

4 Mart., xii. 18, 26.

5 Dill, S., Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius, London, Macmillan, 1905, p.61.

same personalities and scenes as Juvenal - the court, with its atmosphere of grovelling flattery, its gross vices veiled in the garb of respectability; the wealthy official class, with their villas, their favourites, their circle of dependants; fortune-hunters, jockeys, jugglers and acrobats, men of culture, wit and urbanity; the lounge, the reciter, the diner-out and the legacy-hunter; the clients struggling to win their patrons' favour, and the rise in the social scale; the freedman and the slave, with all the petty squabbles that support a parasitic existence on the vices of the upper classes; the noise and the bustle of Rome, its sleepless nights, its cheerless tenements, its noisy streets, loud with the sound of traffic; the shows in the theatre, the races in the circus, the exchange of presents at the Saturnalia, and the pleasant life in the country villa, are all there.

In some instances, however, the judgements which Juvenal and Martial pass on their times are diametrically opposed.

Boissier⁶ says:

While Juvenal proclaims 'that corruption is at its zenith and can go no farther, that, so far as vice is concerned, he defies the future to imagine anything new', Martial considers that, taking all into account, the century in which he lives is a blissful epoch, and that, were only the poets a little better paid, he would have nothing left

6 Boissier, G., Tacitus and other Roman Studies, trans. by W. G. Hutchison, London, Constable, 1906, pp.256-257.

to desire. 'When has Rome been more glorious, more peaceful? When has more liberty been enjoyed?' (v.19)

Boissier⁷ again points out:

Juvenal's realism has an element of violence and exaggeration, whilst that of Martial simply consists in seeing things as they are, and relating them as he sees them.

Martial knows the shameful secrets of Roman life as well as his friend Juvenal does. Since he is lavish with the vilest obscenities, he has no scruples about accusing acquaintances of every variety of unnatural vice. Also, he is not always as indignant at the idiosyncrasies of people as Juvenal.

We see the better side of his character when he talks about his affection for his friends. In poems like the following, there is no doubt that there were people around him who could be trusted:

Si quis erit raros inter numerandus amicos,
 quales prisca fides famaue novit anus,
 Si quis Cecropiae madidus Latiaequae Minervae
 artibus et vera simplicitate bonus,
 Si quis erit recti custos, mirator honesti,
 et nihil arcano qui roget ore deos,
 Si quis erit magnae subnixus robore mentis:
 dispeream si non hic Decianus erit.⁸

Often, too, we encounter a genuine vein of sentiment and sympathy, which shows itself in his grief over the death

7 Boissier, op. cit., p.259.

8 Martial, i. 39.

of a little slave-girl or slave-lad.⁹

Martial is careful never to attack a powerful body such as the foreigners settled in Rome undoubtedly were. We may well imagine that Juvenal's invectives against the Greeks and Egyptians must have exposed him to many enmities. Instead, Martial delighted to ridicule the parasite or dinner-hunter of the city; his characterization of Selius seems to reflect Juvenal's portrayal of a client:

Salva est et uxor sarcinaeque servique,
Nihil colonus vilicus decoxit
Maeroris igitur causa quae? Domi cenat.¹⁰

He shows the amazing relationship existing between patron and client. According to Butler, this relationship

had worked a painful revolution in the manners and tone of society. Wealth was concentrated in comparatively few hands, and with the decrease of the number of patrons the throng of clients proportionally increased. The throng of clients bustling to the early morning salutatio of the patronus, and the struggling with one another for the sportula is familiar to us in the pages of Juvenal and receives fresh and equally vivid illustration from Martial. The worst result of these unnatural relations was a general loss of independence of character and a lamentable growth of bad manners and snobbery.¹¹

9 Martial, v. 34; i. 88.

10 Martial, ii. 11, 8-10.

11 Butler, op. cit., p.277.

Martial, a realist, was of the same school as Juvenal. They were members of very much the same social circles, hence they deal with similar topics. We see them now and again expounding a thought of the other, or repeating a phrase which has passed into the common parlance of the salons. Expressions such as the Di faciles¹² or the allusion to the mushroom with which Claudius was poisoned,¹³ are deliberate borrowings by one of the two writers from the other. Hight¹⁴ declares that Juvenal knew Martial's works book by book, and studied them with great care. Indeed, if we should carefully examine the works of both writers, we could easily find a series of parallel, if not identical, passages.¹⁵

Personally, there are notable differences between the two writers. Martial found it possible to praise Domitian unsparingly, while Juvenal incurred the wrath of 'the bald Nero',¹⁶ whom he attacked when it was no longer fatal to do so.

12 See Juv., x. 8 and Mart., xii. 6.

13 See Juv., v. 147-148 and Mart., i. 20, 4.

14 Hight, "Juvenal's Bookcase", p.386.

15 For some parallel passages, compare the following: Mart., xii. 28 and Juv., v; Mart., xii. 38 and Juv., i. 65; Mart., ii. 29, 7 and Juv., vii. 192; Mart., vii. 28, 6 and Juv., vii. 117; Mart., viii. 5 and Juv., xi. 43; Mart., xi. 27, 9 and Juv., ii. 3 sqq.; Mart., ix. 68 and Juv., vii. 124; Mart., xiv. 59 and Juv., ii. 41.

16 Juvenal, Sat., iv. 38: calvo Neroni.

Martial flattered. Juvenal could not bring himself to do so. Habitually, Martial was not capable of great style. His realism is sometimes devoted to lasciviousness. He appears to delight in nudity because it admits of impure suggestions. Juvenal's realism, on the other hand, is that of a censor, who strips away the dress to expose the secret shame, and lay on the lash.

Tacitus

A famous contemporary of Juvenal pointed to the same diseases which Juvenal dared to explore. This distinguished writer was also a statesman who had lived through the sombre and terrifying Domitianic era in perhaps less actual danger than Juvenal but with almost as much personal suffering. He spent the rest of his life writing the history of the first century of the empire, from the sinister Tiberius through the vile Nero to the terrifying Domitian, in a tone of darkness and pessimism. This was an urban Roman. This was Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 55 A.D. - 120 A.D.).

From the name of Tacitus that of Juvenal is inseparable. Like Juvenal, he saw that the empire by its very nature was corrupt. Tacitus, though a historian primarily, is, like Juvenal, a severe critic of Roman society. He is a writer who is inspired by his antipathies, like Balzac and Thackeray; he always succeeds best in analysing what disgusts him.

Juvenal and Tacitus were utterly disturbed by the social trends of the epoch and a good deal of their burning indignation was formed in the days of Domitian when they dared not express their ideas openly.¹⁷

In examining his points of contact with his contemporaries we note that, although Juvenal and Tacitus never met, yet they had much in common. Thus Bury¹⁸ declares:

In bitterness, in his view of the degeneracy of society, in writing for effect, he resembles Juvenal; while in his taste for pointed epigram he shows that he belongs to the same age as the court-poet Martial.

Syme¹⁹ expresses a similar view when he says that "Tacitus and Juvenal could be regarded as parallel and coeval phenomena. Style, tone, and sentiments are comparable." In the opinion of Hightet,²⁰

They both loathed the imperial system and the corruption which it enforced on all but the best citizens. Both, as Norden said, worked in the "grand manner", and both were retrospective satirists, showing the vileness of the present by exposing the vices and sins of the past. They had much in common, from their fundamental pessimism to the proud and sombre dignity of their style.

17 Grant, op. cit., p.249.

18 Bury, op. cit., p.482.

19 Syme, Ronald, Tacitus, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1958, vol. 2, p.500.

20 Hightet, "Juvenal's Bookcase", p.372.

Mackail²¹ is of the same opinion as the others:

The pictures drawn of the Empire by the historian and the satirist are in such striking accordance that they create a greater plausibility for the common view they hold than could be given by any single representation; and while Juvenal lends additional weight and colour to the Tacitean presentment of the imperial legend, he acquires from it in return an importance which could hardly otherwise have been sustained by his exaggerated and glaring rhetoric.

Roman society as the historian and the satirist see it, is evil without a single mitigating feature. To Tacitus, as to Juvenal, as to many others, decline and disaster seem due to vice. Virtue and vice are constantly emphasised and contrasted in his works. The city Tacitus takes us into is essentially the same in its moral aspect as Juvenal's city, but it is peopled by politicians and courtiers. Tacitus' world is the great world of the court and the senate. The circles which he himself moved in were remote from any Juvenal touched. Speaking of Tacitus and the plebs urbana, Boissier²² says:

Tacitus had no love for the populace, and it must indeed be admitted that the populace he had under his eyes at Rome hardly deserved to be loved. He has drawn marvellous pictures of it at times: he was perhaps the greatest painter of mobs who ever lived.

21 Mackail, J. W., Latin Literature, London, Murray, 1952, p.221.

22 Boissier, op. cit., p.140.

In Juvenal we see the same scenes of the mobs which frequents the circus or amphitheatre. It derives amusement from incidents of sanguinary strife, forgetting that these are not gladiators slaughtering each other under its gaze for pleasure, but that it is the Empire which is being rent asunder by their hands, whilst foreign tribes are rising in revolt, and the country is on the brink of dissolution.

As Syme points out,²³ some argue that Tacitus despised women. He is not so bitter as Juvenal is, but from what he says we can gather that he had certain misgivings about them. He says that women are not the weaker sex - they can be cruel, ambitious, and avid for power.²⁴

Both Juvenal and Tacitus are united in a passionate admiration for the old Roman character, and with regard to the influence of the Greeks on the Roman way of life we note that the frequent scorn of Juvenal underwent some abatement in Tacitus. Tacitus could not deny the intellectual primacy of Hellas, the magnitude of the debt owed by the Romans to their instructors in the arts of peace and learning.²⁵ The Histories show that Tacitus was lenient towards the Greeks.

23 Syme, op. cit., p.534.

24 Tacitus, Ann., iii. 33.3.

25 Syme, op. cit., p.511.

He does not denounce them. He merely chides them for their old habits.²⁶ He is, however, harsh with the other aliens. He tells us that all that is shameful or horrible flows to Rome and there finds a ready welcome.²⁷ It is with the Jews, in particular, that we hear the echo of Juvenal's voice. Tacitus puts them in a separate class because of their segregative tendencies²⁸ and their uncouth customs:

These rites, whatever their origin may have been, are excused by their antiquity; but their other practices, which are unclean and revolting, have been adopted out of sheer depravity.²⁹

All is not adverse in Tacitus, for he strikes a balance when he tells us that

the age was not so barren of all virtue as not to exhibit some noble examples. Mothers followed their sons, wives their husbands, in exile; some kinsmen showed courage, some sons-in-law were faithful; there were slaves who held out staunchly even against torture, and illustrious men who bore doom with fortitude; there were death scenes as noble as those celebrated in antiquity.³⁰

Boissier³¹ feels that the evils about which Juvenal and

26 Tacitus, Hist., ii. 4, 1. 27 Tacitus, Ann., xv. 44.3.

28 Tacitus, Ann., xv. 44, 4; cf. Hist., v. 5, 1.

29 Tacitus, Hist., v. 4; cf. Juv., xiv. 96-106.

30 Tacitus, Hist., i. 3.

31 Boissier, op. cit., p.108.

Tacitus remark with so much force are perhaps those beneath which the Empire finally succumbed. It seems clear that both Tacitus and Juvenal were moved by the evils of the society in which they lived and the picture which they painted of them should at least have some merit. However, we find Edith Hamilton³² discrediting the veracity of both writers:

...monstrous as the deeds are they relate, the reader never doubts that they took place essentially as they are described. For truth, however, more is needed than sincerity joined to accuracy. The power to disengage oneself from one's subject and put personal bias aside is the first prerequisite, and this neither the historian nor the satirist, great as they were, possessed.

Yet she admits:

The picture which Tacitus and Juvenal drew is the one the world accepted. It is so vividly and so powerfully done, the detail so convincing, the colours so sombre and yet so arresting, the impression it makes is overwhelming.³³

Pliny the Younger

In strong contrast to the social evils of the time which Martial, Tacitus, and Juvenal excoriate with such vehemence, let us now turn to the brighter side of the same society as seen by their contemporary, Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus

32 Hamilton, Edith, The Roman Way, New York, Norton, p.246.

33 Loc. cit.

(Pliny the Younger). He lived from 61 A.D. to 114 A.D. and is known especially for his correspondence, which includes three hundred and sixty-eight letters in ten books.

Pliny the Younger is not consistent with Juvenal or Martial or Tacitus. He presents a striking contrast from the bold originality, force, pessimism, and harsh judgements of his contemporaries. The great value of his letters is their refreshing testimony that, apart from the seamy side of life related by the satirist Juvenal and the historian Tacitus, society was marked by many respectable, amiable, and redeeming qualities. In Pliny we see the best side of society at Rome. We hear pleasant gossips. We move in an atmosphere of good taste, cultivation, and high breeding. Here also we feel that we are in the company of "gentlemen". This is not the case with the gloomy and indignant satirist Juvenal who takes us to the worst form of humanity and gives us a picture of utter baseness. The high standard of the society which Pliny has immortalized is balanced with the hideous revelations of contemporary licence in the same class by Juvenal, Martial, and Tacitus. Hence Betty Radice³⁴ points out:

34 See The Letters of the Younger Pliny, translated by Betty Radice, London, Penguin Classics, 1963, Introd., p.26.

It has often been remarked that Pliny acts as a foil for his contemporaries; Juvenal's remorseless castigation of the faults of society, Martial's malicious thrusts at individuals and their vices, and Tacitus's searching analysis of corruption in morals and politics are countered by a picture of the times drawn by someone who lives and works in a world far removed from that of the idle rich and the irresponsible aristocrat.

The friends of Pliny are for the most part contemporaries of the objects of Juvenal's wrath and loathing.³⁵ Although the two men lived side by side during the same years and probably began to write for the public about the same date,³⁶ there is no hint that they ever met. Yet the urbane but somewhat vain Pliny was on friendly terms with both Tacitus and Martial.³⁷ Pliny and Juvenal were socially at opposite poles. They were widely separated by temperament and character. Pliny, living in unusually comfortable and opulent circumstances, and possessing a great store of friendliness, does not stoop to personal attacks. He is a fond husband.³⁸ He is kind to his slaves and looks out for them when they are ill.³⁹ He provides for their old age⁴⁰ and carries out their wills.⁴¹ He is a considerate

35 Sat., i. 170.

36 Nettleship, op. cit., p.131.

37 Pliny, Ep., vii. 33, 20; iii. 21.

38 Ep., vi. 4, 7; vii. 5.

39 Ep., v. 19.

40 Ep., vi. 3.

41 Ep., viii. 16.

landlord.⁴² He is obliging to his friends.⁴³ He gives a dowry to Quintilian's daughter,⁴⁴ pays Martial's passage to Spain,⁴⁵ and helps the philosopher Artemidorus to satisfy his clamorous creditors.⁴⁶ In short, his way of life as seen in his letters provides a specimen of his class of society.

The letters of Pliny are important not only because they provide us with much information about the political history of Rome but also because they add to what Juvenal, Martial, and Tacitus have to say to form a composite picture of Roman society. Moreover, Betty Radice feels that they are more than a source book since "they paint the fullest self-portrait which has survived of any Roman, with the possible exception of Cicero and Horace."⁴⁷

In spite of his charity and optimism, it would not be altogether true to say that Pliny was blind to the faults and vices of his time. Besides his uncompromising hatred of Domitian, he reveals now and again the darker side of Roman society. He scornfully speaks, almost like Juvenal, of the rewards which awaited a calculated childlessness

42 Ep., v. 15; ix. 37; viii. 2.

43 Ep., i. 19.

44 Ep., vi. 32.

45 Ep., iii. 21.

46 Ep., iii. 11.

47 Radice, op. cit., p.27.

and of the eager servility of the legacy-hunter.⁴⁸ In recommending a tutor for the son of Corellia Hipulla, he regards the teacher's stainless character as of paramount importance in an age of dangerous licence, when youth was beset with manifold temptations.⁴⁹ He blushes at the degradation of senatorial character displayed in the obscene entries which were sometimes found on the voting tablets of the august body.⁵⁰ In another instance, a man of praetorian rank named Largius Macedo, who forgot or perhaps too vividly remembered his own servile origin, was known as a cruel and haughty master.⁵¹ Juvenal and Martial poured scorn on the unequal dinners, where the poorer guests were given inferior food, and Pliny, too, expresses his contempt for the vulgar host in terms of unwonted energy.⁵²

Finally, in summing up the characters of both men, Dill⁵³ observes that

48 Ep., viii. 18; iv. 21; viii. 10.

49 Ep., iii. 3.

50 Ep., iv. 25.

51 Ep., iii. 14.

52 See Martial, i. 44; iii. 49; Pliny, Ep., ii. 6; Juv., Sat., v. passim.

53 Dill, op. cit., p.141.

Pliny was a charitable, good-natured man, an aristocrat, living among the elite, with an assured position and easy fortune - a man who, as he admits himself, was inclined to idealise his friends (Ep., vii. 28). He probably shut his eyes to their moral faults, just as he felt bound in honour to extol their third-rate literary efforts. Juvenal was a soured and embittered man, who views the society of the great world only from a distance, and caught up the gossip of the servants' hall.

CHAPTER V

ASSESSMENT AND CONCLUSION

Recapitulation

We have now reached the conclusion of our examination of Roman social life as described in the Satires of Juvenal and we have given some indication of what his contemporaries felt about the same society. We now know something about the inhabitants of Rome in Juvenal's day. We have some idea of the rich man and his wife, his house, his daily life, his recreations, his education, his dress, his food, his intellectual occupations, his vices and his religion. In addition, we have examined the lot of a large middle class and also the lower classes, including foreigners and slaves. We have witnessed the remarkable contrast between the luxury of the few and the grinding poverty of the masses with a middling class so preoccupied with money-making that it has no thought for anything but itself. Moreover, we have discussed the rapture of change to sea-side or country from the hardships and perils of city life with all its fires, its noise, its streets and buildings, its perverts, its poets, its aliens, and its thieves - all of which signify the loss of traditional Roman qualities

and cumulate in a totally negative picture of an uninhabitable city.

Let us now examine the validity of Juvenal's portrayal of Roman social life. Can he be trusted as a social historian? Here are some of the charges made against our author.

The Critics and Re-examination

Highet¹ mentions that the conservatives, the professional scholars and the orthodox are united in criticizing Juvenal on two main grounds: first, that his mind was so prejudiced that he could not see the truth, and, second, that he was so much a rhetorician that he would not utter it. R. W. Browne² feels that the style of Juvenal is, generally speaking, the reflex of his mind. His prejudices were violent; he could see nothing good in Greek or freedman; he hated the new aristocracy with as bitter a hatred of them as Sallust. As a critic, he is ill-natured; as a moralist he is misanthropic.

While Edith Hamilton is quick to point out³ that Horace's eyes were keen to detect the good as well as the bad, and

1 Highet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.162.

2 Browne, op. cit., pp.449-450.

3 Hamilton, op. cit., p.250.

that, with all its follies and frailties, he liked mankind, thus truthfully estimating the world around him, she turns on Juvenal with these words:

His Satires leave one wondering if he ever liked anything, so black and evil as he saw it, was the world he lived in....

Whenever he writes, a flood of hate and furious anger fills him and sweeps him away to include everything in his denunciations. He cannot discriminate; all and everywhere are abominable and all equally abominable.⁴

With regard to Juvenal's portrayal of women, she asserts:⁵

The trustworthiness of his entire picture of Rome can be estimated by the trustworthiness of this picture of the women. He hates them so intensely that he loses all sense of perspective or, more truly, he never had any. Horrible crimes and silly habits are alike damned eternally and whatever happens is the woman's fault.

Those who charge him with misusing rhetoric usually cite two different faults. Sometimes they⁶ point out that he likes criticizing people so intensely that he loses his sense of fairness, and brings in silly eccentricities along with grave crimes. Also, they charge him with being completely insincere and with exaggerating everything.⁷ They point out, too, that he

4 Hamilton, op. cit., p.250.

5 Ibid., p.252.

6 See Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.163.

7 Ibid., p.164.

merely chooses subjects which will sound dramatic and enable him to work up big climaxes without any real convictions of his own.⁸ Some critics have classified him as a rancorous scandalmonger, or a cheap journalist, caring for the thrills and nothing for the facts. They say that he could not appreciate the idiosyncrasies of his countrymen and that his sense of proportion is at fault.⁹ He seems to give the impression of portraying only the bestial perversions of irrationality and leaves us with a feeling that Man has lost his highest potentialities when he claims that Rome has reached the farthest limit of degradation,¹⁰ and when he analyses the moral collapse as due primarily to materialistic values,¹¹ especially the sacrilegious apotheosis of Pecunia.¹²

With Juvenal, two questions inevitably arise: Were these vices as widespread as the satirist believed or would have us believe? and, Is his indignation genuine, or mainly a pose? Perhaps we may be content with the answers that Rome was not quite so vile nor Juvenal quite so indignant as he

8 Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.164.

9 Op. cit., p.162.

10 Juv., Sat., i. 87, 147-149.

11 See Sat., iii. 143-144.

12 See Sat., i. 110-116.

makes us think.¹³ Certainly Rome had its redeeming facets. Certainly it contained some of Pliny's respectable society. For, as Dill¹⁴ remarks,

if society at large had been half as corrupt as it is represented by Juvenal, it would have speedily perished from mere rottenness.

Juvenal's indignation seems, no doubt, to be whipped up by personal disappointments. He emerges as a man with a fierce, hopeless sense of failure and injustice:

What should I do at Rome? I cannot lie....
I am ignorant of the movement of the stars....¹⁵

Then also there is the Juvenalian habit of exaggeration, but this is not necessarily due to insincerity.¹⁶ Butler¹⁷ notes that

his strange violence and lack of proportion seem to stem in part from his rhetorical training, which had warped still further a naturally biased temperament. He had been taught and loved to use the language of hyperbole. And he had lived through the principate of Domitian; it was that above all else which made him cry difficile est saturam non scribere.

13 See Sikes in Cambridge Ancient History, vol. IX, p.723.

14 Dill, op. cit., p.2.

15 Sat., iii. 41-50.

16 Duff, J. W., The Writers of Rome, Milford, Oxford, 1925, p.87.

17 Butler, op. cit., p.303.

To say that Juvenal had a warped mind is to ignore the fact that he was a satirist and our initial definition of satire. But for a more tangible reply to the critics, let us now turn to Gilbert Highet, who feels that both critics and partisans are misguided. He thus points out that

the satirist is a teacher. His purpose is to improve us by shocking us and to teach us by making us laugh. Therefore, as well as selecting what to show us, he will emphasize whatever is amusing and shocking it.... The spectacle of ordinary life does not shock or even divert most of us. We accept it. But the satirist, who sees the faults we miss, must point them out and magnify them and twist them so as to achieve his purpose.¹⁸

Indeed, Juvenal is forcible and impressive. He is realistic, unlike the cloistered Persius. He is violent, and the effect is remote from the urbane mockery of Horace.¹⁹ Thus Highet²⁰ feels that he could not admire Horace, the friend of Octavian, the protégé of Maecenas.²¹ Juvenal thought that "folly was vice and sin was damnable, while Horace thought that most vices were merely follies and most sins excusable. Juvenal hit hard, Horace teased and tickled."²²

18 Highet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.163.

19 Grant, op. cit., p.246.

20 See Highet, "Juvenal's Bookcase", p.388.

21 See Juvenal, Sat., v. 3-4; viii. 241-243.

22 Highet, op. cit., p.388.

It seems difficult, in Juvenal's opinion, to satirize society effectively without personal loathing. "Usually it is a fascinated or amused disgust", says Highet, "in which attraction and repulsion are mingled, and it usually comes from the conflict between the satirist's own ideals and his bitter experience of the world."²³ Still there should be much more than that. Certainly there should be a general truth, and we have to admit that, although Juvenal selects, he does not necessarily falsify. We are reminded, too, of the well-known Italian proverb: *Se non è vero, è ben trovato*.

Those who charge him with misusing rhetoric and distorting the truth seem both to misunderstand his method and to neglect the mass of confirmatory evidence from other contemporary observers of the Roman Empire whom we have noted. Tacitus, Martial, and even Pliny, in some instances, all support the evidence of our satirist in one way or the other. Moreover, no writer, as Highet²⁴ observes, shows us the whole of life. No writer declares the whole truth. Just as the lyric poet deals mainly with love and exultation and grief, so the satirist deals mainly with stupidity, ugliness, vice, and crime.

23 Highet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.162.

24 Loc. cit.

It may be urged, therefore, in Juvenal's defence that satire of a certain sort must necessarily deal with the darker side of life, and that his silence about the better and more hopeful elements in society does not mean that he was unaware of them, and it is absurd to attack a satirist because he is not a scientific social historian. It is from others that we must fill in the gaps which the satirist omits. When we discussed Juvenal's contemporaries we observed that there were definite redeeming elements in Roman society at the time our satirist was writing. Therefore the letters of Pliny the Younger especially and the evidence of tomb-inscriptions bear welcome testimony to what we should in any case assume.

If it is a charge that he makes false statements for the sake of effect, then the critics are mistaken. "There is not a single event or description", says Hightet,²⁵ "in the Satires of Juvenal which is known to be false." Even Edith Hamilton, despite her criticism of Juvenal's distorted delineation, finally admits:

His honesty cannot be questioned. It comes through everything he writes. He is terrifically in earnest, desperately sincere. Certainly he saw all the abominations he says he did, but he was unable both temperamentally and by reason of his misfortunes, to see anything that was not abominable.²⁶

25 Hightet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.164.

26 Hamilton, op. cit., p.253.

The only passages that we cannot trust in his work are the stereotypes from ancient history which he portrays. He seems to exaggerate the contrast, presumably for the sake of making a point, and his descriptions of secret orgies²⁷ are undocumented elsewhere but may be true.²⁸

On the whole, nearly all his most shocking episodes are not only paralleled and confirmed but also surpassed by stories in other writers of the early empire.²⁹ Indeed, all his attacks are far outdone by well-authenticated historical incidents afterwards, and even in the twentieth century,³⁰ or, even better, the last five years of this present civilization.³¹ As Hight points out, "the many other atrocities of our own times would make Juvenal's worst monsters turn pale."³²

In attacking the dead,³³ he attacks certain types of the living. There is always the impression, however, that he is

27 See Sat., ii. 82-116; vi. 314-341.

28 See Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.165.

29 Cf. the philosopher Seneca and the biographer Suetonius.

30 The gas chambers and "scientific experiments" of the Nazi concentration-camps during World War II.

31 The affairs in the Congo, and the fighting in Cyprus.

32 Hight, Juvenal the Satirist, p.165.

33 Sat., i. 171-172.

in reality attacking the first century rather than the second, the reigns of Nero and Domitian rather than the society governed by the "Good" Emperors, Trajan and Hadrian. Strictly speaking, his work was an anachronism and a bit misleading for its time. Juvenal, like Tacitus, had lived through the tyranny of Domitian and felt ever after that the world was out of joint.

We must, in the end, recognize Juvenal's powers of vision and description. Observation of character had taught him the fatal law that the downward path in conduct, once entered upon, is seldom retraced. This moral insight seems to come to Juvenal not from a consciously-held philosophical doctrine, nor from a settled religious faith, but from the harsh realities of the changes in society. The decay in the moral worth of the new senatorial order, together with the growing power of the new moneyed class, the rise to opulence of the freedman and the petty trader, the invasion of Greek and Oriental influences and the perilous and hopeful emancipation, especially of women, from the old Roman conventionality, these are the great facts in the social history of the first century which, under all his rhetoric, stand out clearly to the eye of the careful student of the satirist.

Humour

Could it be that some aspects of what we have been taking seriously were meant by Juvenal facetiously? Perhaps we have been unfair to Juvenal. The harsh critics feel that Juvenal is lacking in humour and that not a ray of sunshine illumines his pages. This is so perhaps because we are indoctrinated to think that he is gloomy and pessimistic. Let us therefore take another look at the Satires from a different point of view. In so doing we must remember that the Satires do not tell everything. Dunn³⁴ thinks that

...many of Juvenal's lines, in which we are taught to find so much satire, may have been robbed of their sting by some facial expression or a certain gesticulation as he read them. If such lines are to be read with a scowl in the face or a menace in the voice, without an occasional relaxation of either, nothing but venom can be found in them. But why picture Juvenal always thus? May we not imagine sometimes a twinkle in the eye, a smile about the corners of the mouth, a mock grimace, a funny gesture, a ludicrous posture?

The very words with which Juvenal introduces himself may have been humorous to his Roman audience: Semper ego auditor tantum?³⁵ When so many people were already wearied by the

³⁴ Dunn, op. cit., p.50.

³⁵ Sat., i. 1.

constant recitations of second-rate poets, Juvenal's very effrontery in joining other poets to get his revenge³⁶ must have elicited immediate laughter from his audience. Also, Juvenal's references to his school-days and the remembrance of having snatched away his hand from beneath the teacher's ferula³⁷ may have brought smiles to all but a psychopath. The pleasures of reliving past adventures, troubles, and gaiety seem to appeal to one and all alike.

The entire passage on the distribution of the sportula at the morning salutatio seems to be more humour than satire.³⁸ It is easy to imagine the impostors, greedy clients and other Romans pushing and shoving to get their coveted sportula parva first. There is a quaint and laughable episode of the bold rascal who brings up a closed litter, insisting that his wife is inside and claiming an extra share for her.³⁹ Dunn⁴⁰ sees it thus:

Imagine a slight pause, giving time for the declaimer to point a finger of inquiry at the suspicious looking lectica, as if the janitor were asking, "What have you got there?" and the impostor retorting in a half-aggrieved tone, "Why! it's my Fanny. Dismiss us quickly. Why don't you give us our shares and let us go?" But the incredulous janitor, scenting mischief from long experience, with intent to probe

36 Sat., i. 3-5.

37 Sat., i. 15.

38 Sat., i. 95-126.

39 Sat., i. 123-126.

40 Dunn, op. cit., p.51.

the supposed conspiracy, exclaims, "Stick out your head, Fanny." Juvenal's audience surely appreciated the farce when the impostor, in alarm and yet probably with consummate skill in acting, is made to step forward and whisper hoarsely, with hand to his mouth, "Sh! don't disturb her, - she's asleep."

Although the third satire is a harsh attack on city-life, yet it contains much humour. We smile when the dirty contents of a wash-basin come as an unwelcome gift to a pedestrian from the high windows;⁴¹ we laugh heartily over Umbricius's account of his adventures in the streets,⁴² and the humour is certainly apparent when Umbricius reverts to the extreme flattery of the Greeks and their adroitness in the art: "If you laugh, your Greek will split his sides with greater hah-hahs."⁴³

These, then, are some of the examples of humour that may be found in the Satires of Juvenal. We should be therefore cautious in thinking that our author is always grim, for he has indeed interspersed his remarks with many a laughable anecdote. Dunn⁴⁴ feels that to regard Juvenal as a confirmed Jeremiah seems unjust and exaggerated, and further points out that, while satire overwhelmingly prevails as his ultimate

41 Sat., iii. 277.

42 Sat., iii. 243-247.

43 Sat., iii. 100-102. See also iii. 102-108 for more laughable traits.

44 Dunn, op. cit., p.50.

medium, he (Dunn) yet finds much in Juvenal that is genuinely humorous.

In concluding our re-examination of the Satires, we must, therefore, on the whole, agree with Butler⁴⁵ who states firmly:

He is never a hypocrite; nor, though he paints exclusively the darkest side of society, is there any reason to accuse him of misrepresentation of facts. He has selected the material most suitable to his peculiar genius: we may complain of his principle of selection, and of his tendency to generalize. There our criticism must end.

The Satires as a Social Document

Looking back on our study of this important social document, we note that it is of no narrow compass but is cosmopolitan in its interest and in its historical importance. This is the peculiar merit of Juvenal. Not only is he gifted beyond ordinary authors, but he is perhaps the greatest of all satirists. For most of what he says is as true of other cities, other civilizations, and other ages, as it was of imperial Rome. Like our own Shakespeare, he speaks for all time. His voice is often harsh, remorseless, even brutal. It has more of indignatio than of suavitas. But what he says is true, and he says it because he believes it; because he is sincere.

45 Butler, op. cit., p.303.

In this regard Mayor voices the opinion of Auguste Vidal:

Affaiblissez par la pensée quelques éclats de sa voix, adoucissez dans certains de ses tableaux quelques couleurs trop chargées, et pour le fond des choses, vous serez constamment dans le vrai. Juvénal n'est pas un satirique de fantaisie, ni un écrivain atrabilaire qui voit la corruption romaine à travers les nuages trompeurs d'un esprit mécontent et pessimiste; non, il n'invente rien, il ne ment pas, il ne calomnie pas; il parle de la dépravation de son temps absolument comme l'histoire en a parlé.

Juvenal looked out upon the world of depravity, sapped by the importation of foreign corruptions, where vices were rampant in the upper classes, and where the injustices and abominations of the Claudian and Flavian Caesars were fresh in men's minds, and spoke of them with great vigour and vitality. The many-sided life of the imperial metropolis with all its aspirations for good and evil, the remorseless rivalry for place, dignity and wealth, the vulgarity, the debauchery and crime that are inseparable from a capital, are the satirist's theme which he treats with directness and his own sort of truthfulness. He knew that the capital was unhealthy and was so far enlightened as to perceive the ugliness of the whole scene. Moreover, he was so influenced with a desire to reform it that he became not only a severe and able censor but also a diligent witness against the vices and follies of the people among whom he lived.

That is why many people in many nations have been reading the Satires for over 1500 years. "They have admired", claims Hightet,⁴⁷ "the strength of will, and the unflinching conviction which, within the corrupt body of a rich, soft empire, enabled Juvenal to create a work of art and thought that endured like stone after the paint and the fat and the flesh disappeared."

Such then, was the social life of Rome which formed a colourful background for the stirring events and the various personalities of the age of Juvenal. Despite his prejudices and the varied views of the critics, the Satires of Juvenal will continue to be read not only on account of his vivid delineation of the historically important facts on the social life of his day, but also because he has for us a message which makes for enlightenment and which pleads for what is manly and honourable and true.

47 Hightet, Juvenal the Satirist, p.178.

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