

Aristocracy

INTRODUCTION

THE FORMS of government have been variously enumerated, differently classified, and given quite contrary evaluations in the great books of political theory. In the actual history of political institutions, as well as in the tradition of political thought, the major practical issues with respect to the forms of government—the choices open, the ideals to be sought, or the evils to be remedied—have shifted with the times.

In an earlier day—not merely in ancient times, but as late as the 18th century—the form of government called “aristocracy” presented a genuine alternative to monarchy and set a standard by which the defects and infirmities of democracy were usually measured. If aristocracy was not always regarded as *the* ideal form of government, the principle of aristocracy always entered into the definition of the political ideal.

Today, both in theory and practice, aristocracy is at the other end of the scale. For a large part of mankind, and for the political philosopher as well as in prevailing popular sentiment, aristocracy (together with monarchy) has become a subject of historical interest. It is a form of government with a past rather than a future. It no longer measures, but is measured by, democracy. If the aristocratic principle still signifies a factor of excellence in government or the state, it does so with a meaning now brought into harmony with democratic standards.

This change accounts for one ambiguity which the word “aristocracy” may have for contemporary readers. Formerly its primary, if not only, significance was to designate a form of government. It is currently used to name a special social class, separated from the

masses by distinctions of birth, talent, property, power, or leisure. We speak of “the aristocracy” as we speak of “the elite” and “the four hundred”; or we follow Marx and Engels in thinking of the “feudal aristocracy” as the class “that was ruined by the bourgeoisie.” The *Communist Manifesto* wastes little sympathy on the aristocrats who, while seeking an ally in the proletariat, forgot that “they [too] exploited under circumstances and conditions that were quite different.” For Marx and Engels, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie alike represent the propertied classes, but they differ in the manner in which they came by their property and power. The landed gentry and the feudal nobility got theirs largely by inheritance, the bourgeoisie by industry and trade.

Today, for the most part, we call a man an “aristocrat” if, justly or unjustly, he *claims* a right to certain social distinctions or privileges. It is in this sense, according to Weber, that the German universities regarded “scientific training” as “the affair of an intellectual aristocracy.” We seldom use the word “aristocrat” today to indicate a man who *deserves* special political status or preeminence, though we do sometimes use it to name the proponent of any form of government which rests upon the political inequality of men.

Since the discussion of aristocracy in the great books is largely political, we shall here be primarily concerned with aristocracy as a form of government. The general consideration of the forms of government will be found in the chapter on GOVERNMENT. Here and in the other chapters which are devoted to particular forms of government, we shall consider each of the several forms, both in itself and in relation to the others.

THERE IS ONE element in the conception of aristocracy which does not change with changing evaluations of aristocratic government. All of the writers of the great political books agree with Plato that aristocracy is a "government of the few," according as the few rather than the one or the many exercise political power and dominate the state. By this criterion of number, aristocracy is always differentiated from monarchy and democracy.

Though he uses the word "oligarchy" to name what others call "aristocracy," Locke defines the three forms of government by reference to numbers. When the majority themselves exercise the whole power of the community, Locke says, "then the form of the government is a perfect democracy." When they put "the power of making laws into the hands of a few select men . . . then it is an oligarchy; or else into the hands of one man, and then it is a monarchy." Kant proceeds similarly, though again in somewhat different language. "The relation of the supreme power to the people," he says, "is conceivable in three different forms: either *one* in the state rules over all; or *some*, united in relation of equality with each other, rule over all the others; or *all* together rule over each individually, including themselves. The form of the state is therefore either *autocratic*, or *aristocratic*, or *democratic*."

Hegel claims, however, that "purely quantitative distinctions like these are only superficial and do not afford the concept of the thing." The criterion of number does not seem to suffice when other forms of government are considered. It fails to distinguish monarchy from tyranny or despotism, which may consist of rule by one man, as has usually been the case historically. Number alone likewise fails to distinguish aristocracy from oligarchy. In the deliberations of the Medean conspirators, which Herodotus reports or invents, the rule of "a certain number of the worthiest" is set against both democracy and monarchy and identified as "oligarchy." How, then, shall aristocracy be distinguished from oligarchy?

There seem to be two answers to this question. In the *Statesman*, Plato adds to the characteristic of number the "criterion of law and

the absence of law." The holders of political power, whatever their number, may govern either according to the established laws, or by arbitrary caprice in violation of them. "To go against the laws, which are based upon long experience, and the wisdom of counsellors who have graciously recommended them and persuaded the multitude to pass them, would be," the Eleatic Stranger declares in the *Statesman*, "a far greater and more ruinous error than any adherence to written law."

Taking the division of governments according to number, "the principle of law and the absence of law will bisect them all." Monarchy divides into "royalty and tyranny" depending on whether "an individual rules according to law . . . or governs neither by law nor by custom, but . . . pretends that he can only act for the best by violating the laws, while in reality appetite and ignorance are the motives." By the same criterion, the rule of the few divides "into aristocracy, which has an auspicious name, and oligarchy." While democracy is subject to the same division, Plato makes the same name apply to both its good and bad forms.

The second way in which aristocracy differs from oligarchy is also brought out in the *Statesman*. Since "the science of government," according to Plato, is "among the greatest of all sciences and most difficult to acquire . . . any true form of government can only be supposed to be the government of one, two, or, at any rate, of a few . . . really found to possess science." Because of this demand for "science," which presupposes virtue and competence in ruling, monarchy and aristocracy came to be defined as government by the single best man or by the few best men in the community.

A high degree of competence or virtue is, however, not the only mark by which the few may be distinguished from the many. The possession of wealth or property in any sizable amount also seems to divide a small class in the community from the rest, and Plato at times refers to aristocracy simply as the government of the rich. Yet if wealth is the criterion by which the few are chosen to govern, then oligarchy results, at least in contrast to that

sense of aristocracy in which the criterion is excellence of mind and character. Aristocracy is called aristocracy, writes Aristotle, "either because the rulers are the best men, or because they have at heart the best interests of the state and of the citizens."

By these additional criteria—never by numbers alone—the ancients conceive aristocracy. When it is so defined, it always appears to be a good form of government, but never the only good form, or even the best. The same criteria also place monarchy among the good forms, and—at least in Plato's *Statesman*—democracy is a third good form, when it is lawful government by the many, the many being competent or virtuous to some degree. In this triad of good forms, aristocracy ranks second best, because government by one man is supposed to be more efficient, or because, in the hierarchy of excellence, the few may be superior, but only the one can be supreme. Aristotle, however, seems to rank aristocracy above monarchy. "If we call the rule of many men, who are all of them good, aristocracy, and the rule of one man royalty," he writes, "then aristocracy will be better for states than royalty."

In the Middle Ages, Huizinga observes, "The life of aristocracies . . . tends to become an all-round game. In order to forget the painful imperfection of reality, the nobles turn to the continual illusion of a high and heroic life. They wear the mask of Lancelot and of Tristram. It is an amazing self-deception."

THE INTRODUCTION of democracy into the comparison tends to complicate the discussion. Not only are the many usually the poor, but they are also seldom considered preeminent in virtue or competence. According to the way in which either wealth or human excellence is distributed, both oligarchy and aristocracy organize the political community in terms of inequalities in status, power, and privilege. This fact leads Rousseau, for example, to use the different kinds of inequality among men as a basis for distinguishing "three sorts of aristocracy—natural, elective, and hereditary."

Natural aristocracy, according to Rousseau, is based on that inequality among men which

is due primarily to age and is found among simple peoples, where "the young bowed without question to the authority of experience." Elective aristocracy arose "in proportion as artificial inequality produced by institutions became predominant over natural inequality, and riches or power were put before age." This form, in Rousseau's opinion, is "the best, and is aristocracy properly so called." The third, which is characterized as "the worst of all governments," came about when "the transmission of the father's power along with his goods to his children, by creating patrician families, made government hereditary."

This emphasis upon inequality radically separates aristocracy from democracy. From Aristotle down to Montesquieu, Rousseau, and our own day, equality has been recognized as the distinctive element of democracy. Disregarding slaves who, for the ancients, were political pariahs, Aristotle makes liberty the other mark of democracy—all freemen having, apart from wealth or virtue, an equal claim to political status. As "the principle of an aristocracy is virtue," Aristotle writes, so wealth is the principle "of an oligarchy, and freedom of a democracy."

To the defenders of democracy, ancient or modern, aristocracy and oligarchy stand together, at least negatively, in their denial of the principle of equality. To the defenders of aristocracy, oligarchy is as far removed as democracy, since both oligarchy and democracy neglect or underestimate the importance of virtue in organizing the state. Yet oligarchy more than democracy is the characteristic perversion of aristocracy. It also puts government in the hands of the few, but it substitutes wealth for virtue as the criterion. The democratic critic of aristocracy usually calls attention to the way in which oligarchy tries to wear the mask of aristocracy. However far apart aristocracy and oligarchy may be in definition, he insists that in actual practice they tend to become identical, in proportion as wealth, or noble birth, or social class is taken as the sign of intrinsic qualities which are thought to deserve special political recognition.

Comparing aristocracy and democracy, Tocqueville writes: "An aristocracy is infinitely

more skillful in the science of legislation than democracy can ever be. Being master of itself, it is not subject to transitory impulses . . . It knows how to make the collective force of all its laws converge on one point at one time. A democracy is not like that; its laws are almost always defective or untimely. Therefore the measures of democracy are more imperfect than those of an aristocracy . . . but its aim is more beneficial."

The defenders of aristocracy have admitted the tendency of aristocratic government to degenerate into oligarchy. Its critics are not satisfied with this admission. They deny that aristocracy has ever existed in purity of principle—they deny that the governing few have ever been chosen solely for their virtue. Machiavelli assumes it to be a generally accepted fact that "the nobles wish to rule and oppress the people . . . and give vent to their ambitions." Montesquieu, although more optimistic about the possibility of a truly virtuous aristocracy, recognizes its tendency to profit at the expense of the people. To overcome this he would have the laws make it "an essential point . . . that the nobles themselves should not levy the taxes . . . and should likewise forbid the nobles all kinds of commerce . . . and abolish the right of primogeniture among the nobles, to the end that by a continual division of the inheritances their fortunes may be always upon a level."

But perhaps the strongest attack upon aristocracy in all of the great political books is made by J. S. Mill in his *Representative Government*. He admits that "the governments which have been remarkable in history for sustained mental ability and vigour in the conduct of affairs have generally been aristocracies." But he claims that, whatever their abilities, such governments were "essentially bureaucracies," and the "dignity and estimation" of their ruling members were "quite different things from the prosperity or happiness of the general body of the citizens, and were often wholly incompatible with it." When their actions are dictated by "sinister interests," as frequently happens, the aristocratic class "assumes to themselves an endless variety of unjust privileges, sometimes benefiting their pockets at

the expense of the people, sometimes merely tending to exalt them above others, or, what is the same thing in different words, to de-grade others below themselves." George Orwell sums it up at the end of *Animal Farm* in the memorable line: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

Yet except by those political thinkers who deny the distinction between good and bad government, and hence the relevance of virtue to institutions which are solely expressions of power, the aristocratic principle is seldom entirely rejected. Even when the notion of a pure aristocracy is dismissed as an ideal which can never be fully realized, the aristocratic principle reappears as a counsel of perfection in the improvement of other forms of government.

Even so, one difficulty remains, which tends to prevent aristocracy from being realized in practice, quite apart from any question of its soundness in principle. It lies in the reluctance of the best men to assume the burdens of public office. The parable told in the Book of Judges applies to aristocracy as much as to monarchy.

The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive tree, Reign thou over us.

But the olive tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honor God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

And the trees said to the fig tree, Come thou, and reign over us.

But the fig tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us.

And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, and reign over us.

And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, then come and put your trust in my shadow: and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

Socrates thinks he has a solution for this problem. In *The Republic*, he proposes a new way to induce good men to rule. Since "money and honor have no attraction for them," necessity, Socrates says, "must be laid upon them, and they must be induced to serve from

fear of punishment . . . Now the worst part of the punishment is that he who refuses to rule is liable to be ruled by one who is worse than himself. And the fear of this, as I conceive, induces the good to take office . . . not under the idea that they are going to have any benefit or enjoyment themselves, but as a necessity, and because they are not able to commit the task of ruling to anyone who is better than themselves, or indeed as good."

THE POLITICAL ISSUES, in which monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy represent the major alternatives, cannot be clarified without recourse to the distinction between government by laws and government by men.

It has already been noted that in the *Statesman* Plato makes respect for the laws and violation of the laws the marks of good and bad government respectively. But he also proposes that "the best thing of all is not that the law should rule, but that a man should rule, supposing him to have wisdom and royal power." The imperfections of law could then be avoided, because one or a few men of almost superhuman wisdom would govern their inferiors even as the gods could direct the affairs of men without the aid of established laws. But if no man is a god in relation to other men, then, in Plato's opinion, it is better for laws or customs to be supreme, and for men to rule in accordance with them.

The larger issue concerning rule by law and rule by men is discussed in the chapters on CONSTITUTION and MONARCHY. But here we must observe how the difference between these two types of rule affects the understanding of all other forms of government. This can be seen in terms of Aristotle's distinction between royal and political government, which closely resembles the modern conception of the difference between absolute and despotic government on the one hand, and limited, constitutional, or republican government on the other.

There are passages in which Aristotle regards absolute rule by one or a few superior men as the divine or godlike form of government. When one man or a few excel "all the others together in virtue, and both rulers

and subjects are fitted, the one to rule, the others to be ruled," it is right, in Aristotle's opinion, for the government to be royal or absolute rather than political or constitutional—whether one man rules or a few. "Royal rule is of the nature of an aristocracy," he says. "It is based upon merit, whether of the individual or of his family."

But in other passages Aristotle seems to regard absolute government as a despotic regime, appropriate to the family and the primitive tribe, but not to the state, in which it is better for equals to rule and be ruled in turn. In either case, it makes a difference to the meaning of aristocracy, as also to monarchy, whether it be conceived as absolute or constitutional government.

When it is conceived as absolute government, aristocracy differs from monarchy only on the point of numbers—the few as opposed to the one. Otherwise, aristocracy and monarchy are defended in the same way. The defense usually takes one of two directions. One line of argument which stems from Plato and Aristotle claims that inequality in wisdom or virtue between ruler and ruled justifies absolute rule by the superior. The other line is followed by those who, like Hobbes, maintain that since sovereignty is absolute, unlimited, and indivisible, the difference between kinds of government "consisteth not in the difference of Power, but in the difference of Convenience, or Aptitude to produce the Peace, and Security of the people." When they are conceived as forms of absolute government, aristocracy and monarchy are attacked for the same reason; to those who regard absolutism or despotism in government as unjust because it violates the basic equality of men, an absolute monarchy and a despotic aristocracy are both unjust.

Aristocracy, however, can also be conceived as a form or aspect of constitutional government. Montesquieu, for example, divides governments into "republican, monarchical, and despotic," and under "republican" places those "in which the body, or only a part, of the people is possessed of the supreme power," thus including both democracy and aristocracy. In both, laws, not men, are supreme, but the spirit of the laws is different. In democ-

mony, the "spring," or principle, "by which it is made to act," is virtue resting on equality; in aristocracy, "moderation is the very soul . . . a moderation . . . founded on virtue, not that which proceeds from indolence and pusillanimity." Hegel's comment on this theory deserves mention. "The fact that 'moderation' is cited as the principle of aristocracy," he writes, "implies the beginning at this point of a divorce between public authority and private interest."

For Aristotle, in contrast to Montesquieu, the two major types of constitution are the democratic and the oligarchic, according as free birth or wealth is made the chief qualification for citizenship and public office. Aristocracy enters the discussion of constitutional governments mainly in connection with the construction of the polity or mixed constitution. Although in most states "the fusion goes no further than the attempt to unite the freedom of the poor and the wealth of the rich," he points out that "there are three grounds on which men claim an equal share in the government, freedom, wealth, and virtue."

When the fusion goes no further than the attempt to unite the freedom of the poor and the wealth of the rich, "the admixture of the two elements," Aristotle says, is "to be called a polity." But sometimes the mixture of democracy with oligarchy may include an ingredient of aristocracy, as in "the distribution of offices according to merit." The union of these three elements "is to be called aristocracy or the government of the best," and "more than any other form of government, except the true and the ideal," it has, in Aristotle's judgment, "a right to this name." Polity and aristocracy, as mixed constitutions, are fusions of some of the same elements; hence, he says, it is "obvious that they are not very unlike."

BEGINNING IN the 18th century, and with the rise of representative government, the discussion of aristocracy as a distinct form of government is largely superseded by the consideration of the role which the aristocratic principle plays in the development of republican institutions.

The writers of *The Federalist*, for example,

respond in several places to the charge that the constitution which they are defending shows tendencies toward aristocracy or oligarchy. Yet in their consideration and defense of the new instrument of government as essentially *republican*, they frequently appeal to principles that are aristocratic in nature.

In giving their own meanings to the terms "republic" and "pure democracy"—that is, government by elected representatives on the one hand, and by the direct participation of the whole people on the other—the Federalists also give an aristocratic bent to the very notion of representation. They seem to share the opinion of Montesquieu that "as most citizens have sufficient ability to choose, though unqualified to be chosen, so the people, though capable of calling others to account for their administration, are incapable of conducting administrations themselves."

Thus Madison praises "the delegation of the government . . . to a small number of citizens elected by the rest" as tending "to refine and enlarge the public views, by passing them through the medium of a chosen body of citizens, whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country." He further points out that "it may well happen that the public voice, pronounced by the representatives of the people, will be more consonant to the public good than if pronounced by the people themselves, convened for the purpose."

On such a view, the people's representatives in the legislature, or other branches of government, are supposed to be not their minions, but their betters. For the American constitutionalists, as for Edmund Burke, the representative serves his constituents by making independent decisions for the common good, not by doing their bidding. This theory of representation, to which Mill and other democratic thinkers agree in part, supposes that the representative knows better than his constituents what is for their good.

The effort to ensure leadership by superior men may involve the aristocratic principle, yet it is also claimed by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay to be a necessary safeguard for popular government. The senate, for instance, is not only to provide elder statesmen but is also

to serve as "a salutary check on the government . . . [which] doubles the security to the people, by requiring the concurrence of two distinct bodies in schemes of usurpation or perfidy, where the ambition or corruption of one would otherwise be sufficient." The electoral college aims directly at placing the immediate election of the president in the hands of "men most capable of analyzing the qualities adapted to the station . . . under circumstances favorable to deliberation." In addition it may serve as an "obstacle . . . opposed to cabal, intrigue, and corruption," which are the "most deadly adversaries of republican government."

In all these respects, as well as in the restrictions on suffrage which it permitted the states to impose, the unamended American constitution appears to have adopted an aristocratic principle in government. Whether the motivation of its proponents was in fact simply aristocratic, or whether it was partly or even largely oligarchic—leadership being the right of men of "good" family and substantial property—will always be a question to be decided in the light of the documents and the relevant historic evidence.

MORE DEMOCRATIC than the American constitutionalists of the 18th century, certainly so with regard to the extension of suffrage, Mill appears to be no less concerned than they are to introduce aristocratic elements into the structure of representative government.

According to Mill, two grave dangers confront a democracy: "Danger of a low grade of intelligence in the representative body, and in the popular opinion which controls it; and danger of class legislation on the part of the numerical majority." Claiming that much of the blame for both dangers lies in the rule of the majority, Mill looks for means to overcome the situation in which "the numerical majority . . . alone possess practically any voice in the State."

His major remedy was a system of proportional representation. This would supposedly constitute a democratic improvement by securing representation for "every minority in the whole nation . . . on principles of equal

justice." But it may also serve to increase an aristocratic element, since it "affords the best security for the intellectual qualifications desirable in the representatives." This would be brought about by making possible the election of "hundreds of able men of independent thought, who would have no chance whatever of being chosen by the majority," with the result that Parliament would contain the "very *élite* of the country."

To make still more certain that men of superior political intelligence exert an effect upon government, Mill also proposes a plurality of votes for the educated and the establishment of an upper legislative chamber based on a specially qualified membership. Such proposals seem to indicate Mill's leanings toward aristocracy, not only because they aim at procuring a "government of the best," but also because they are designed to prevent a government based on a majority of "manual labourers" with the consequent danger of "too low a standard of political intelligence."

THE ISSUES RAISED by the theory of aristocracy, or by the aristocratic principle in government, seem to be basically the same in all centuries, however different the terms or the context in which they are expressed. Even when, as today, a purely aristocratic form of government does not present a genuine political alternative to peoples who have espoused democracy, there remains the sense that pure or unqualified democracy is an equally undesirable extreme. The qualifications proposed usually add an aristocratic leaven.

One issue concerns the equality and inequality of men. The affirmation that all men are created equal does not exclude a recognition of their individual inequalities—the wide diversity of human talents and the uneven distribution of intelligence and other abilities. Nor does it mean that all men use their native endowments to good purpose or in the same degree to acquire skill or knowledge or virtue.

To grasp the double truth—that no man is essentially more human than another, though one may have more of certain human abilities than another—is to see some necessity for the

admixture of democratic and aristocratic principles in constructing a political constitution. But the issue is whether distributive justice requires, as a matter of right, that the best men should rule or hold public office.

Some political philosophers, like Plato and Aristotle, tend to take the aristocratic view that men of superior ability have a right to govern—that for them to be ruled by their inferiors would be unjust. This theory places greater emphasis on the inequality than on the equality of men. Their democratic opponents insist that the equality of men *as men* is the fundamental fact and the only fact having a bearing on the just distribution of suffrage. That certain individuals have superior aptitude for the exercise of political authority does not automatically confer that authority upon them. The inequality of men in merit or talent does not establish a political right, as does their equality in human nature. The selection of the best men for public office is, on this theory, not a matter of justice, but of expediency or prudence.

Another issue concerns the weight to be given the opinion of the majority as against the opinion of the wise or the expert when, as frequently happens, these opinions diverge or conflict. As the chapter on OPINION indicates, the experts themselves disagree about the soundness of the popular judgment.

Where Thucydides believes that "ordinary men usually manage public affairs better than their more gifted fellows," because "the latter are always wanting to appear wiser than the laws," Herodotus observes that "it seems easier to deceive the multitude than one man." Where Hegel holds it to be "a dangerous and a false prejudice, that the People alone have reason and insight, and know what justice is," Jay declares that "the people of any country (if, like the Americans, intelligent and well-informed) seldom adopt and steadily persevere for many years in an erroneous opinion respecting their interests," and Hamilton adds that "the people commonly *intend* the public good."

Sometimes the same author seems to take both sides of the issue, as Aristotle does when, though he says that "a multitude is a better

judge of many things than any individual," he yet prefers government by the one or few who are eminent in wisdom or virtue. Each side, perhaps, contributes only part of the truth. Certainly those who acknowledge a political wisdom in the preponderant voice of the many, but who also recognize another wisdom in the skilled judgment of the few, cannot wish to exclude either from exerting its due influence upon the course of government.

Still another issue has to do with education. Shall educational opportunity be as universal as the franchise? Shall those whose native endowments fit them for political leadership be trained differently or more extensively than their fellow citizens? Shall vocational education be given to the many, and liberal education be reserved for the few?

These questions provide some measure of the extent to which anyone's thinking is aristocratic or democratic—or involves some admixture of both strains. In the great discussion of these questions and issues, there is one ever-present ambiguity. We have already noted it in considering the reality of the line between aristocracy and oligarchy. The agreement or disagreement of Mill and Aristotle, of Burke and Plato, of Hamilton and Paine, of Thorstein Veblen and Vilfredo Pareto, or John Dewey and Matthew Arnold cannot be judged without determining whether the distinction between the many and the few derives from nature or convention.

It is this distinction which Jefferson had in mind when, writing to Adams in 1813, he said, "There is a natural aristocracy among men. The grounds of this are virtue and talents . . . There is also an artificial aristocracy founded on wealth and birth, without either virtue or talents; for with these it would belong to the first class. The natural aristocracy I consider as the most precious gift of nature, for the instruction, the trusts, the government of society . . . The artificial aristocracy is a mischievous ingredient in government, and provision should be made to prevent its ascendancy."

How different from this view of aristocracy is the aristocracy praised by Nietzsche. "The essential thing in a good and healthy

aristocracy" is that it "accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of innumerable men who *for its sake* have to be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments. Its fundamental faith must be that

society should *not* exist for the sake of society but only as foundation and scaffolding upon which a select species of being is able to raise itself to its higher task and in general to a higher *existence*"—that of supermen!