

Monarchy

INTRODUCTION

OF all the traditionally recognized forms of government, monarchy is the easiest to define and to identify. As the word indicates, it is government by one man. It is indifferent whether that man is called king or prince, Caesar or Czar. Of all such titles, "king" is the most frequent; and in consequence monarchy is often called kingship or referred to as the royal form of government.

When monarchy is thus defined in terms of the principle of *unity*, other forms of government, such as aristocracy or oligarchy and democracy, tend to be characterized as government by the few or the many. But the numerical criterion by itself is obviously inadequate. To those who distinguish between aristocracy and oligarchy, it makes a difference whether the few who rule are selected for their pre-eminence in virtue or in wealth. A tyranny, like a monarchy, may be government by one man. Hence those who wish to use the word "monarch" or "king" eulogistically cannot be satisfied with a definition that fails to distinguish between king and tyrant.

It has been said—by Aristotle, for example—that the perversion of, or "deviation from, monarchy is tyranny; for both are forms of one-man rule. But," he adds, "there is the greatest difference between them; the tyrant looks to his own advantage, the king to that of his subjects." Both Aristotle and Plato also say that as tyranny is the worst form of government, so monarchy at the opposite extreme is the best. But though in their opinion tyranny is *always* the worst form of government, Aristotle at least does not seem to think that monarchy is always—*under all conditions*—best.

Further complications appear when other views are taken into consideration. The chap-

ters on CITIZEN, CONSTITUTION, and GOVERNMENT discuss the basic opposition between absolute and limited government in the various terms in which that opposition is traditionally expressed: royal as opposed to political, despotic as opposed to constitutional government; or government by men as opposed to government by law. That opposition seems to be relevant to the theory of monarchy, certainly to any conception of monarchy which tends to identify it with absolute rule, or which sees some affinity between royal and despotic government.

The word "despotic" is, of course, sometimes used in a purely descriptive rather than a disparaging sense. Used descriptively, it designates the absolute rule exercised by the head of a household over children and slaves, neither of whom have any voice in their own government. Aristotle sometimes characterizes the royal government of a political community as despotic to signify its resemblance to the absolute rule of the father or master. He expresses the same comparison in reverse when he says that "the rule of a father over his children is royal."

The derogatory sense of "despotic" would seem to apply to those cases in which grown men are ruled as if they were children, or freemen as if they were slaves. The great issue concerning monarchy, therefore, is whether royal government is despotic in this sense. Always, or only under certain conditions? And if despotic, is it also tyrannical? Is monarchy in principle the foe of human liberties? To all these questions there are opposite answers in the great books of political theory. Where Hegel says that "public freedom in general and an hereditary monarchy guarantee each

other," others, like Rousseau and J. S. Mill, identify the freedom of citizenship with republican or representative government.

This central issue is complicated not only by the various meanings of "despotism" (discussed in the chapter on TYRANNY AND DESPOTISM), but also by variations in the meaning of the word "monarchy" as it is used by different writers. The word is even used by the same writer in a number of senses. Rousseau, for example, says in one place that "every legitimate government is republican," and in another that "monarchical always ranks below republican government." But he also treats monarchy or royal rule as one form of legitimate government. He describes the king, in whose hands all political power is concentrated, as only having "the right to dispose of it in accordance with the laws." He distinguishes not only between king and tyrant, but also between king and despot.

To avoid what may be only verbal difficulties here, Kant suggests the use of the word "autocrat" to signify "one who has *all* power" and who in his own person "*is* the Sovereign." In contradistinction "monarch" should signify the king or chief magistrate (sometimes called "president") who "merely represents the sovereignty" or the people who "are themselves sovereign."

SOME POLITICAL theorists distinguish between absolute and limited (or constitutional) monarchy. This in turn raises new problems of definition and evaluation.

Is absolute government always monarchical in form, so that absolute government and absolute monarchy can be treated as identical? Hobbes, who seems to think that government by its very nature must be absolute, nevertheless treats aristocracy and democracy along with monarchy as forms of absolute government. Furthermore, as Rousseau points out, "the Roman Empire saw as many as eight emperors at once, without it being possible to say that the Empire was split up." The absolutism of the government was not diminished by the fact that two or more Caesars often held power at the same time. The triumvirates were also absolute dictatorships.

It would seem, therefore, that the principle of absolute government can be separated from the principle of monarchy. But can monarchy as a form of government be separated from absolute rule?

The question is not whether, in a republic, the monarchical principle is present in the sense that *one* man may hold the office of chief executive. On the issue of a single as opposed to a plural executive, Hamilton and Madison—and with them Jefferson—emphatically favor the principle of unity in the executive branch of the government. "Energy in government," according to *The Federalist*, "requires not only a certain duration of power, but the execution of it by a single hand." The qualities essential to a good executive, such as "decision, activity, secrecy, and dispatch," Hamilton says, "will generally characterize the proceedings of one man in a much more eminent degree than the proceedings of any greater number; and in proportion as the number is increased, these qualities will be diminished."

Yet the authors of *The Federalist*, and Jefferson too, are equally emphatic in insisting upon the difference in kind, not degree, between the power granted the president of the United States and that enjoyed by the king of Great Britain. For them, monarchies and republics are fundamentally opposed in the spirit of their institutions. Despotism is inherent in the nature of monarchy—not only absolute, but even limited monarchy.

According to Weber, "a president elected according to fixed rules can formally legitimize the governmental actions of the respective victorious party as 'lawful,' just as well as a parliamentary monarch. But the monarch, in addition to such legitimation, can perform a function which an elected president can not fulfil: a parliamentary monarch formally delimits the politicians' quest for power, because the highest position in the state is occupied once and for all." For Weber, "this essentially negative function . . . is of the greatest practical importance."

If the Constitution of the United States does not set up a constitutional monarchy, even though it provides for one man as chief ex-

ecutive, then a constitutional monarchy must have some other principle in it which distinguishes it from a republic. That may be hereditary succession to the throne; or it may be a certain symbolic identification of the king with the state. But in a monarchy, no matter how attenuated, so long as it does not become purely and simply constitutional government, the king also seems to retain some degree of despotic power—the absolute power exercised by a sovereign person who is free from the supervision of law.

Aristotle takes a similar view. Enumerating five types of kingly rule, he sets one form apart from all the rest—the form in which one man “has the disposal of everything . . . This form corresponds to the control of a household. For as household management is the kingly rule of a family, so kingly rule is the household management of a city or of a nation.” The other forms are all, in one way or another, kingships according to law. Of these, most clearly exemplified in the Spartan constitution, Aristotle says that “the so-called limited monarchy, or kingship according to law . . . is not a distinct form of government, for under all governments, as for example, in a democracy or aristocracy, there may be a general holding office for life, and one person is often made supreme over the administration of a state.”

Whether or not there is a supreme commander or a chief magistrate, elected or hereditary, the government is not distinctively royal if the man called “king” is subject to the laws and if the other men in the state are not his subjects but his fellow citizens. For somewhat different reasons, Hobbes agrees with the view that only absolute monarchy is monarchy. When the king is limited in power, he says, the sovereignty is always “in that assembly which had the right to limit him; and by consequence the government is not monarchy, but either democracy or aristocracy; as of old time in Sparta, where the kings had a privilege to lead their armies, but the sovereignty was in the *Ephori*.” Hobbes uses the government of one people over another people—the mother country over colonies, or the conqueror over a subjugated nation—to illustrate what he

means by absolute monarchy. This suggests a significant parallelism between the problems of monarchy and the problems of empire.

IF THERE WERE universal agreement on the point that only absolute monarchy is truly monarchy, the issue concerning monarchy could be readily translated into the basic opposition between rule by men and rule by law. But such agreement seems to be wanting, and the problems of monarchy are, in consequence, further complicated.

Plato, for example, distinguishes in the *Statesman* between three forms of government according to established laws, of which one is monarchy. Monarchy is better than aristocracy and democracy, obviously not with respect to the principle of the supremacy of law, but simply because government by one seems to be more efficient than government by a few or many; just as tyranny is the worst form of government because, in violating or overthrowing the laws, one man can succeed in going further than a multitude, which is “unable to do either any great good or any great evil.”

But all these forms of government, good and bad, better and worse, are compared by Plato with a form of government which he says “excels them all, and is among States what God is among men.” It seems to be monarchical in type; but, though not lawless like tyranny, it is entirely above the need of written or customary rules of law. “The best thing of all,” Plato writes, “is not that the law should rule, but that a man should rule, supposing him to have wisdom and royal power.” Whether such government can ever exist apart from divine rule, or perhaps the advent of the “philosopher king,” the point remains that Plato seems to conceive monarchy in two quite distinct ways—both as an absolute rule and also as one of the legally limited forms of government.

Montesquieu separates monarchy from absolute government entirely. At the same time, he distinguishes it from republics, whether aristocracies or democracies. According to him, monarchy is as much a government by law, as much opposed to despotism or absolute government, as are republics. Monar-

chies and republics are the two main kinds of constitutional government, just as aristocracies and democracies are the two main kinds of republic.

Where Aristotle holds that constitutional monarchy is not a distinct type of government, Montesquieu holds that absolute monarchy does not deserve the name of "monarchy," but should be called "despotism" instead. He criticizes Aristotle's fivefold classification of kingships, saying that "among the number of monarchies, he [Aristotle] ranks the Persian empire and the kingdom of Sparta. But is it not evident," he asks, "that the one was a despotic state and the other a republic?" Since Montesquieu's own view of monarchy involves, in addition to a king, a body of nobles in whom intermediate and subordinate powers are vested, he thinks no true notion of monarchy can be found in the ancient world.

Hegel agrees with Montesquieu that constitutional monarchy is the very opposite of despotism, but he goes much further than Montesquieu in the direction of identifying monarchy with constitutional government. For him constitutional monarchy is the ultimately true form of government. "The development of the state to constitutional monarchy is the achievement of the modern world." He thinks Montesquieu was right in recognizing that the ancient world knew only the patriarchal type of monarchy, a kind of transference of familial government to larger communities still organized on the domestic pattern. But according to Hegel, Montesquieu himself, in stressing the role of the nobility, shows that he understands, not the type of monarchy which is "organized into an objective constitution" and in which "the monarch is the absolute apex of an organically developed state," but only "feudal monarchy, the type in which the relationships recognized in its constitutional law are crystallized into the rights of private property and the privileges of individuals and corporations."

It may be questioned, however, whether Hegel's theory of constitutional monarchy avoids the issue raised by republicans who think that monarchy is inseparable from some form of absolutism, or that monarchy, if

entirely devoid of absolutism, has no special character as a form of government. In spite of his acceptance of the traditional distinction between constitutional government and despotism, Hegel seems to regard the sovereignty of the state as absolute in relation to its own subjects at home—no less absolute than is its sovereignty in external affairs vis-à-vis foreign states. The crown is the personification of the absolute sovereignty of the state at home. The absolute power of the state comes into existence only in the person of a monarch who has the final decision in all matters.

"The sovereignty of the people," writes Hegel, "is one of the confused notions based on the wild idea of the 'people.' Taken without its monarchy and the articulation of the whole which is the indispensable and direct concomitant of monarchy, the people is a formless mass and no longer a state." Hegel thus dismisses the notion of popular sovereignty (which to Rousseau, Kant, and the Federalists is of the essence of republican government) as inconsistent with "the Idea of the state in its full development." A profound opposition, therefore, exists between Hegel's theory of constitutional monarchy and republican theories of constitutional government. Even though the issue cannot be stated in terms of government by men versus government by laws, a monarchy as opposed to a republic still seems to represent the principle of absolutism in government.

THERE IS STILL another conception of a type of government which is neither a pure republic nor an absolute monarchy. What the medieval writers call a "mixed regime" is not a constitutional monarchy in the Hegelian sense, nor is it what Aristotle means when he uses that term. The medieval mixed regime is a combination of two distinct principles of government—the *royal principle*, according to which absolute power is vested in the sovereign personality of an individual man; and the *political principle*, according to which the supremacy of law reflects the sovereignty of the people, who have the power of making laws either directly or through their representatives.

This conception of a mixed regime—of gov-

ernment which is *both royal and political*—appears at first to be self-contradictory. In Aristotle's terms, it would seem impossible to combine the supremacy of law, which is the essence of constitutional government, with the supremacy of a sovereign person, which is the essence of royal government. The mixed regime would also seem to be impossible in terms of Hobbes's theory of the indivisibility of sovereignty. Impossible in theory, the mixed regime nevertheless existed as a matter of historic fact in the typical medieval kingdom, which derived its character from the feudal conditions under which it developed.

Does not the fact of its historic existence refute the incompatibility of the principles which the mixed regime combines? The answer may be that, like a mixture of oil and water, royal and political government can only exist as a mixture in unstable equilibrium. Originating under feudal conditions, the mixed regime tends toward dissolution as these conditions disappear with the rise of the modern nation-state. It first tends to be supplanted by a movement toward absolute monarchy. Then, in the course of reaction and revolution, it tends toward constitutional monarchies or republics through added limitations on the power of the throne.

These historic developments seem to indicate that the principles of the mixed regime are ultimately as irreconcilable in fact as they are in theory.

Montesquieu's remark that the ancients "had not a clear idea of monarchy" can be interpreted to mean that they did not have the conception of a mixed regime. Before the accidents of history brought it into existence, it is unlikely that anyone would have conceived of a government both royal and political. Montesquieu does not adopt the medieval description of a mixed regime, which, as stated by Aquinas, is "partly kingdom, since there is one at the head of all; partly aristocracy, in so far as a number of persons are set in authority; and partly democracy, *i.e.*, government by the people, in so far as the rulers can be chosen by the people, and the people have the right to choose their rulers." Yet Montesquieu's theory of monarchy seems to be determined

by characteristics peculiar to the medieval kingdom.

This seems to be the point of Hegel's observation, already quoted, that Montesquieu's theory of monarchy identifies it with the feudal kingdom. The point is confirmed in another way by the fact that Montesquieu's ideal of monarchy is the government of England at the end of the 17th century, which, he says, "may be justly called a republic, disguised under the form of a monarchy." Locke's conception of the English government in his own day tends to clarify this point.

The form of a government, says Locke, "depends upon the placing of the supreme power, which is the legislative." When the power of making laws is placed in the hands of one man, then it is a monarchy. But, according to Locke, "the legislative and executive power are in distinct hands . . . in all moderated monarchies and well-framed governments."

What Locke here calls a "moderated monarchy" (intending to describe the government of England), seems to be the mixed regime, the form of government which John Fortescue had earlier called a "political kingdom," and Henry de Bracton a *regimen regale et politicum*. The legislative power is in the hands of the people or their representatives. If it belonged exclusively to the king as a right vested in his sovereign person, and not merely as the people's representative—or, in the language of Aquinas, their vicegerent—the government would be in form an absolute monarchy. If, on the other hand, the king were merely a representative, the government would be a republic.

The sovereign character of the king in a mixed regime seems to stem from his unique relation to the laws of the land. In one way, he is above the laws, and has certain powers not limited by law; in another way, his whole power is limited by the fact that he does not have the power to make laws in his own right or authority. When a people are free and able to make their own laws, Aquinas writes, "the consent of the whole people expressed by custom counts far more in favor of a particular observance, than does the authority of the sovereign, who has not the power to frame laws, except as representing the people." But

Aquinas also says that the sovereign is "*exempt from the law*, as to its coercive power; since, properly speaking, no man is coerced by himself, and law has no coercive power save from the authority of the sovereign."

The coercive power of the law belongs to the sovereign as executive, not legislator. Admitting the king to a share in legislative power, Locke conceives his essential function—that which belongs to him alone—as executive. The absoluteness of this executive power Locke defines in terms of the royal prerogative, that "being nothing but a power in the hands of the prince to provide for the public good in such cases which, depending upon unforeseen and uncertain occurrences, certain and unalterable laws could not safely direct." Prerogative, he then goes on to say, is the power "to act according to discretion for the public good without the prescription of law, and sometimes even against it."

Locke thus gives us a picture of the mixed regime in which the king's sovereign power is limited to the exercise of an absolute prerogative in performing the executive functions of government. In the executive sphere, the king's power is absolute, yet his sovereignty is not absolute; for in the legislative sphere, he either has no voice at all where ancient customs prevail, or, in the making of new laws, he can count himself merely as one representative of the people among others.

The extent of the prerogative permitted the king depends upon the extent to which matters are explicitly regulated by law. When in the infancy of governments the laws were few in number, "the government was almost all prerogative," as Locke sees it. He thinks that "they have a very wrong notion of government who say that the people have encroached upon the prerogative when they have got any part of it to be defined by positive laws. For in so doing they have not pulled from the prince anything that of right belonged to him, but only declared that that power which they indefinitely left in his or his ancestors' hands, to be exercised for their good, was not a thing they intended him, when he used it otherwise."

Here we see the seed of conflict between sovereign king and sovereign people in the

combination of incompatible principles that constitute a mixed regime. As the king, jealous of his prerogative, tries to maintain or even extend his power, royal and political government tends toward absolute monarchy. As the people, jealous of their sovereignty, try to safeguard their legislative power from royal usurpations, the mixed regime tends to dissolve in the other direction. This happens as it moves toward republican government through various stages of limited or constitutional monarchy in which the sovereignty of the king becomes more and more attenuated.

When the king's prerogative includes the power of calling parliament into session, nothing short of revolution may resolve the issue; for, as Locke observes, "between an executive power in being, with such a prerogative, and a legislative that depends upon his will for their convening, there can be no judge on earth."

IN THE DISCUSSION of monarchy, as in the discussion of democracy or other forms of government, the fundamental terms and issues do not have the same meaning in the various epochs of western thought. The continuity of discussion in the tradition of the great books must be qualified, especially in the field of political theory, by reference to the differing historic institutions with which their authors are acquainted and concerned. Ancient and modern controversies over the merits of monarchy in relation to other forms of government seem to be comparing institutions of government as different as the ancient and modern forms of the democratic constitution.

In the ancient world, the choice between purely royal and purely political government underlies the meaning and evaluation of monarchy. In the modern world, with its heritage from the feudal institutions of the Middle Ages, either the mixed regime or constitutional monarchy is thought to offer a third alternative. The praise of monarchy may therefore be the corollary of a justification of absolute government or the absolute state, as with Hobbes and Hegel; it may be accompanied by an attack on absolute or despotic power, as with Locke and Montesquieu; or in defense of purely republican principles, monarchy may be

attacked, as by Rousseau and the Federalists, without differentiation between its absolute and limited forms.

This does not mean that there is no continuity between ancient and modern discussion. It seems to exist with respect to both elements in the idea of monarchy—the unification of government through its having one head, and the rightness of absolute power. On the point of unity, Plato's argument that monarchy is the most efficient of the several forms of government which are otherwise equally just, seems to be paralleled by modern arguments for a unified executive in the constitution of a republic. It is also reflected in the reasoning of Montesquieu and Rousseau concerning the greater competence of monarchies to govern extensive territories. On the point of absolute power, there is some continuity between ancient and modern discussions of government by men versus government by law. But here there seems to be greater similarity between ancient and modern arguments against giving sovereignty to an individual human being than there is between the modern defense of monarchy and ancient speculations concerning royal government.

Taking different shape in Hobbes and Hegel, the argument for the *necessity* of absolute government seems to be peculiarly modern. It is not simply the point made by the ancients, that under certain circumstances it may be right for the man of superior wisdom to govern his inferiors in an absolute manner, as a father governs children, or a god men. The point is rather that the very nature of government and the state requires a unified repository of absolute power. Hobbes does not ask whether the monarch in whose hands such power is placed deserves this by reason of personal superiority to his subjects. Hegel explicitly repudiates the relevance of any consideration of the monarch's particular character. Neither Hobbes nor Hegel argues for the divine right of kings, or their divine appointment; though Hegel does insist that the constitution itself, which establishes the supremacy of the crown, is not something made by man, but "divine and constant, and exalted above the sphere of things that are made."

That kings have absolute power by divine right is another peculiarly modern argument for absolute monarchy. "Not all the water from the rough rude sea," says Shakespeare's Richard II, "can wash the balm off from an anointed king. The breath of worldly men cannot depose the deputy elected by the Lord." According to the theory of divine right, the king is God's vicar, not, as Aquinas thinks, the vicegerent of the people. The theory of the divine right of kings does not seem to be a medieval doctrine. It appears later in such tracts as those by William Barclay and Robert Filmer, which Locke undertakes to answer.

The controversy involves its adversaries in dispute over the interpretation of Holy Writ. The anointing of Christian kings is supposed to draw its significance from the establishment of this practice among the ancient Hebrews. But the story of the origin of the Hebrew kingship can be given an opposite interpretation.

The people of Israel, after the leadership of Moses and Aaron, first submitted their affairs to the government of judges, and "there was no king in Israel, but every one did that which seemed right to himself." Later they went to Samuel, their judge, saying: "Make us a king to judge us like all the nations." This displeased Samuel. Samuel prayed unto the Lord, and the Lord said unto Samuel: "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." The Lord then describes the tribulations the people will suffer at the hands of an earthly ruler with absolute power, a punishment they deserve for wanting to be ruled by a king, instead of by God and God's law, administered for them by judges.

THE GREAT POEMS and histories of ancient Greece and Rome would seem to indicate that the divinity of kings is not a modern notion. The deification of emperors and kings certainly appears to be a common practice. But the assumption of divinity by kings is not supposed to signify divine appointment, or election by the gods; nor do the rulers of the ancient world justify their absolute power as a god-given right.

Furthermore, in the political theory of Plato and Aristotle, the analogy between royal rule and divine government works in the opposite direction. According to their view, the right to absolute government depends upon a radical inequality between ruler and ruled. If a god were to rule men on earth, as in the myth retold in Plato's *Statesman*, he would govern them absolutely, deciding everything by his wisdom and without recourse to written laws or established customs. If there were a godlike man, or if a true philosopher were to become king, he too would deserve to be an absolute monarch. It would be unjust, says Aristotle, to treat the godlike man merely as a citizen, and so to treat him as no more than "the equal of those who are so far inferior to him in virtue and in political capacity." It would also seem to be unjust for a man who does not have great superiority over his fellowmen to rule them like a king, instead of being merely a citizen entitled to hold public office for a time.

Aristotle frequently refers to royal government as the divine sort of government, but he does not justify its existence except when one man stands to others as a god to men. Though some of the historic kingships which Aristotle classifies are absolute monarchies, none is royal government of the divine sort. That seems to remain for Aristotle, as for Plato, a purely hypothetical construction.

Actual royal government has a patriarchal rather than a divine origin. It is the kind of government which is appropriate to the village community rather than to the city-state. The kingly form of government prevails in the village because it is an outgrowth of the family. That is why, says Aristotle, "the Hellenic states were originally governed by kings; the Hellenes were under royal rule before they came together, as the barbarians still are."

In thinking that absolute or despotic government befits the servile Asiatics, but not the freemen of the Greek city-states, Aristotle takes a position which has a certain counterpart in the views of Montesquieu and Mill. These modern opponents of absolute monarchy do not assert that constitutional government is unconditionally better than despotism.

For certain peoples, under certain conditions, self-government may not be possible or advantageous. "A rude people," Mill writes, "though in some degree alive to the benefits of civilized society, may be unable to practice the forbearance which it demands: their passions may be too violent, or their personal pride too exacting, to forego private conflict, and leave to the laws the avenging of their real or supposed wrongs. In such a case, a civilized government, to be really advantageous to them, will require to be in a considerable degree despotic; to be one over which they do not themselves exercise control, and which imposes a great amount of forcible restraint upon their actions." Montesquieu seems further to suppose that different races—largely as a result of the climate in which they live—are by nature inclined toward freedom or servitude. The Asiatics are for him a people whose spirit perpetually dooms them to live under despotism.

In contrast, Mill's conditional justification of absolute government demands that despotism serve only a temporary purpose. It must seek not merely to keep order, but by gradual steps to prepare the people it rules for self-government. "Leading-strings are only admissible," he says, "as a means of gradually training the people to walk alone." When they have reached that stage of development where they are able to govern themselves, the despotic ruler must either abdicate or be overthrown.

There is a deeper contrast between Mill on the one hand, and Aristotle and Plato on the other, one which goes to the very heart of the issue concerning royal and political government. Both Aristotle and Plato seem to be saying that if the superior or godlike man existed, then royal government would be better than the best republic, even for the civilized Greeks. In calling royal rule the divine form of government, they imply that it is the ideal, even if it can never be realized. This Mill most emphatically denies.

The notion that "if a good despot could be ensured, despotic monarchy would be the best form of government, I look upon," he writes, "as a radical and most pernicious conception of what good government is." The point

at issue is not whether the good despot—the godlike ruler or philosopher king—can be found. Suppose him to exist. The point then to be made is that the people ruled by “one man of superhuman mental activity” would of necessity have to be entirely passive. “Their passivity is implied in the very idea of absolute

power . . . What sort of human beings,” Mill asks, “can be formed under such a regimen?” Men must actually engage in self-government in order to pass from political infancy to maturity. Whenever it is possible, representative or constitutional government is therefore better than absolute monarchy.