

Agricola Quotes
Hum 110, Reed College

Speech of Calgacus, Briton leader, excerpts, *Agricola*, ch 30 (pp. 80-81)

in them is an arrogance which no submission or good behaviour can escape. Pillagers of the world, they have exhausted the land by their indiscriminate plunder, and now they ransack the sea. A rich enemy excites their cupidity; a poor one, their lust for power. East and West alike have failed to satisfy them. They are the only people on earth to whose covetousness both riches and poverty are equally tempting. To robbery, butchery, and rapine, they give the lying name of "government"; they create desolation and call it peace.

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(continued), ch 32 (p. 82)

Do you imagine that the Romans' bravery in war matches their dissoluteness in time of peace? No! It is our quarrels and dissension that have given them fame. The reputation of the Roman army is based on the faults of its enemies. Look at it, a motley conglomeration of nations, that will be shattered by defeat as surely as it is now held together by success. Or can you seriously think that those Gauls and Germans - and, to our bitter shame, many Britons too - are bound to Rome by genuine loyalty or affection? They may be lending their life-blood now to the foreign tyrant, but they were enemies of Rome for more years than they have been her slaves. Terror and intimidation are poor bonds of attachment: once break them, and where fear ends hatred will begin.

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Agricola, ch. 21 (pp. 72-73)

Agricola had to deal with people living in isolation and ignorance, and therefore prone to fight; and his object was to accustom them to a life of peace and quiet by the provision of amenities. He therefore gave private encouragement and official assistance to the building of temples, public squares, and good houses. He praised the energetic and scolded the slack; and competition for honour proved as effective as compulsion. Furthermore, he educated the sons of chiefs in the liberal arts, and expressed preference for British ability as compared with the trained skills of the Gauls. The result was that instead of loathing the Latin language they became eager to speak it effectively. In the same way, our national dress came into favour and the toga was everywhere to be seen. And so the population was gradually led into the demoralizing temptations of arcades, baths and sumptuous banquets. The unsuspecting Britons spoke of such novelties as 'civilization', when in fact they were only a feature of their enslavement.