

AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
Western
Civilization
REVISED



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FOREWORD

THE CLASSROOM is the real testing ground of a textbook. Six years of educational experience with *An Introduction to Western Civilization* has brought to its authors the usual cargo of approval, suggestion, and criticism. The present revision of the work has been responsive in large measure to the judgments of those using the book both here at Cincinnati and elsewhere. The march of events has been even more pressing in its demands. Much water has run under the mill since 1933, when the *Introduction* was first published. Events whose significance could be seen but dimly six years ago now appear momentous in their portent for the present and the future. They have made necessary radical changes in those chapters dealing with contemporary events and problems in the fields of economics, politics, and international relations.

The revision has been thoroughgoing throughout the volume. The omission of considerable matter found in the first edition has opened the way for additions of new material designed to enrich the content of the book and enhance its value for both teacher and student. But with all the omissions and additions the original plan and organization remain unchanged. It is the conviction of the authors that the arrangement of materials, tested by results measured in terms of the educational aims originally set up, has proved its value.

For the information of those who may be using the volume for the first time we take the liberty of drawing on the preface to the first edition for a restatement of objectives. The book makes a modest attempt to correlate selected bodies of material from the social sciences. The subject matter has been prepared by men working in the fields of economics, education, geography, history, literature, political science, and sociology. The character of the work has been dictated largely by the desire to provide an adequate preparation for students who will later enter those fields for more detailed study, but in no sense is the work designed as a substitute for the special courses in the social sciences.

The authors believe that the student just entering upon his career in the liberal arts college will carry away from this introductory survey an experience valuable in several ways. It is expected that it will serve as a satisfactory gateway to the social sciences and at the same time provide a background that will promote a higher standard of work in those fields. It is expected that it will help to erase departmental lines between related subjects, and so aid the student to correlate for himself the knowledge which he receives in artificially separated fields. Since the book has been written with the authors' attention fixed constantly upon the world in which the student lives, and more particularly upon the major problems of contemporary society, it is hoped that the student will discover a vitality of relationship between his academic experiences and intelligent living in human society; for education, properly conceived, does not lift the student out of the world of realities, but is essentially an intensification of the process by which he may come more speedily to interpret and evaluate it.

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G. A. H.

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Throughout the volume recognition is accorded a number of individuals, publishers, and museums for permission to reprint

copyrighted materials. Especial mention should be made here of the coöperation of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Pierpont Morgan Library, the Ente Nazionale Industrie Turistiche (ENIT) of New York City, and the Classics Department of the University of Cincinnati in the illustration of this book.

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PART I

PRINCIPLES AND THEORIES RELATING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVILIZATION

INTRODUCTORY: AN APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

AS THE TITLE implies, this book is devoted to a study of Western civilization, roughly the civilization which developed in Europe and later spread to other parts of the globe. The work makes no pretension to being a history. It aims to examine and analyze human culture, to reveal its constituent elements; to describe and explain the forces, human and material, that have combined to fashion and refashion it; to present the great problems arising during the critical periods of human development and the lesser problems that perpetually challenge man in his attempts to satisfy the needs of human existence. Further, the work aims to introduce the reader to certain concepts and principles together with bodies of factual matter designed to provide a foundation and a point of view highly desirable as a preparation for satisfactory performance in the later study of the social sciences.

It is admitted at the outset that in confining our study to Western civilization we are presenting a view both incomplete in its scope and prejudiced in its outlook. For we are largely ignoring the splendid contributions made to human culture by the great Oriental societies—by China, by India, by Japan, and by less conspicuous Oriental lands; and we are ignoring almost completely what has come from the native cultures of Africa, of the New World, and of the islands of

the sea. But the omission does not signify a failure to recognize a great truth with which every reader might well begin such a survey as this, the truth that civilization as we know it today is not the creation of any one people or group of peoples, or of any one time; it is the collective achievement of all peoples and of all time. So conceived, there is no such thing as an English, a French, a German, an American civilization, in the sense that any one of these nationalities created the civilization of which it boasts. The thought might well lead us to pause when we are disposed to swell overmuch with national pride at our own achievements or to look with a sense of superiority at the achievements of other lands.

Western civilization in modern times is a vast heritage from past ages. Many of the contributions enriching that heritage have come from the so-called "dead" civilizations of antiquity. So it comes about that the student of human culture must press his explorations deep into the past, far beyond the earliest written records, retracing, as best he can, the long and devious paths that man has traveled in his struggle upward from savagery to high civilization. The path backward from present civilization is not a path gradually descending from what is sometimes popularly conceived to be the incomparable heights of contemporary civilization to the low levels of the "cave man." The path leads up and down over the intervening centuries. At times it reaches peaks of achievement in certain phases of culture beyond the attainments of our modern age. But however we may evaluate the successive periods comparatively we discover that each had its creative moment of greatness as a contributor to the cultural heritage of man.

A search for the creative source in the achievement of civilization inevitably leads to a study of man himself and the evolutionary process through which he acquired distinctive attributes setting him apart from beasts as the crown of animal creation, the one creature capable of creating and using tools, and, by virtue of that fact, the one creature capable of building and transmitting civilization. Just when man distinguished himself by his first achievements in culture building, and what that primitive culture was like can never be known beyond

rough approximations, rough but highly significant and deeply absorbing in interest to those who would appreciate man's great adventure.

CULTURES OF PREHISTORIC MAN

With the fashioning of man's first rude tools more than a hundred thousand¹ years ago the story of civilization begins. With man's use of tools the divergence of the human manner of living from the manner of the beast becomes accentuated. Millenniums of time pass. Man's tools become more numerous, more varied, more effective. He learns to utilize a wider variety of materials. His technique and his craftsmanship improve and are applied to more and more of the everyday operations incidental to his rude manner of life. At wide intervals great discoveries or inventions are made. Man learns to use fire, to weave cloth, to build houses, to domesticate plants and animals, to cultivate the soil. These achievements, and many more besides, mean that man is slowly equipping himself for the more successful conquest of his environment in the never-ending battle for survival. His life is becoming a bit less harsh, a bit more secure.

These thousand centuries of human effort land us near the dawn of history. Many influences combined to bring the prehistoric age to an end. Most important of all was the invention of writing. The development of the art of writing marks a climax and a turning point in the story of civilization. Prehistory gradually merges into history. A veil of mystery still hides much of the life of Stone Age man. With the accumulation of written records human culture is increasingly illumined. The laborious piecing together of these records by modern scholars has furnished the basis for what is known of the earliest historical periods of Western civilization.

HISTORIC CIVILIZATIONS OF THE WEST

Interestingly enough, the earliest historical periods of Western civilization do not begin in the West, that is, in Europe,

¹For other estimates see pp. 127 and 129, and footnotes.

but in Egypt and in southwestern Asia, the region of the ancient Near East. From the Near East the pathway of civilization leads next to ancient Greece, with its unparalleled achievements in art and thought; then to Rome, great law-giver to mankind and builder of empire. With the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, in the early centuries of the Christian era, we enter the Middle Ages, a period of a thousand years dominated by the universal Christian church and marked by profound changes in the life of Western society. During the early Middle Ages Western Europe seemed largely to have forgotten much of the splendid contributions of the ancient world to European culture; but forces were at work, little understood at the time, destined to create an irresistible curiosity about the civilization of the ancients and a passionate desire to understand and enjoy it. These vitalizing forces of thought and feeling led to the recovery of the elements and the spirit of Classical culture. This intellectual revival reached its climax during the last three centuries of the Middle Ages. The interval is known as the Italian Renaissance. When it had run its course, by the close of the sixteenth century, Western civilization had deviated widely from its medieval prototype, and new institutional landmarks seemed to indicate that Western society had entered a new era. European civilization in its modern dress had begun its course. Its course leads straight down to our own day, the present stopping point in this long journey of mankind from the beginning of culture to the world in which we live.

The journey is marked by many events of great significance in the development of Western civilization. One series of events of transcendent importance must be mentioned here, events leading to the geographical expansion of Western culture. In the beginning, as we have seen, the high civilization from which Western civilization was derived was confined to the narrow areas of the Near East. With the Greeks an advanced civilization developed in the southeastern corner of Europe. Later when the Greeks turned to the sea they dotted the islands and the shores of the Aegean, Black, and Mediterranean seas with colonial plantings of Greek culture. In the

centuries when Greek culture was in decline, Rome, already ruling all Italy, was carrying her imperial conquests throughout the Mediterranean world. When they had come to a close, in the first centuries of the Christian Era, civilization extended from ancient Persia to the British Isles and from the northern borders of the great Sahara to the Rhine and Danube rivers. The Roman world thus became a kind of melting pot in which elements of Greek and Near Eastern civilizations were more or less fused with Roman civilization. It was this amalgamation of Oriental, Greek, and Roman cultures that formed the basis for the later civilization of Europe. With the collapse of Roman civilization in the West in the fifth century A. D. the Middle Ages begin. The Christian Church then took the place of the Roman state in Western Europe as a great civilizing agency. By the close of the medieval period Western civilization had become Christian, and had been extended practically throughout Europe. With the vast colonial and imperialist movements of the modern age the expansion of Western civilization has come to full circle. Every inhabited area of the globe has succumbed, or appears to be in process of succumbing, to the compelling power of Western civilization. As we come to understand this tremendous phenomenon we shall be made aware of its significance in the lives of all members of the world society.

Social institutions

The forward march of civilization, so scantily indicated in the foregoing paragraphs, presents numberless historical facets which cannot be treated in this volume. One broad and fundamental aspect of civilization, however, is to be examined at some length; it has to do with the basic forms of social organization and institutional life. Group life means organized life; and social organization, particularly where it touches things essential for man's survival, commonly results in institutions. Institutions are social instruments, social tools, invented and developed by society to meet individual and community needs. It is through institutions that community life is made possible and desirable. Through social organization