MEDIEVAL AND MODERN TIMES

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF WESTERN EUROPE FROM THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE TO THE OPENING OF THE GREAT WAR OF 1914

BY

JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON, PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

GINN AND COMPANY

BOSTON · NEW YORK · CHICAGO · LONDON

ATLANTA · DALLAS · COLUMBUS · SAN FRANCISCO

516.6

The Athenæum Press
GINN AND COMPANY · PROPRIETORS · BOSTON · U.S.A.

PREFACE

This volume is a very careful and thoroughgoing revision of the author's *Introduction to the History of Western Europe*, which first appeared in 1902. The presentation has been simplified so as to adapt the book especially to use in high schools and preparatory schools, although it can readily be employed in colleges as the basis of an introductory course in general European history, when supplemented by outside reading. The treatment of medieval times, especially of the Church, has been considerably reduced with a view of permitting a more adequate discussion of recent times. This saving of space and other condensations and omissions have made it possible to devote a hundred pages more than in the original edition to the developments of the past hundred years.

The illustrations have been selected with great care from the standpoint of their educational value. The explanatory legend under each of them serves to add much information which it would have been awkward to include in the general narrative. These numerous cuts have inevitably added to the length of the volume, but it should be noted that the narrative itself is somewhat shorter than that in the original edition.

In the revision and expansion of the latter part of the book the author is under great obligations to his friends and colleagues, Professors Charles A. Beard and James T. Shotwell. A great deal of time and thought has been given to the selection of suitable illustrations, and in this Mr. Edward K. Robinson of Boston has given us constant aid and advice.

J. H. R.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK CITY

CONTENTS

MEDIEVAL AND MODERN TIMES

CHAPTER I

WESTERN EUROPE BEFORE THE BARBARIAN INVASIONS

PRELUDE

Object of this volume

1. History, in the broadest sense of the word, is all that we know about everything that man has ever done, or thought, or hoped, or felt. It is the study of past human affairs. The present volume deals with only a small, but for us most important, part of the history of the world. Its object is to give a very brief, clear account of the great changes which have taken place in western Europe since the German barbarians, some fifteen hundred years ago, overcame the armies of the Roman Empire and set up kingdoms of their own, out of which the present countries of France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, and England have grown.

History no longer "a record of past events"

History used to be defined as "the record of past *events*." And most of the older textbooks tell about scarcely anything except events — how battles were fought, how kings came to the throne one after another, how treaties were concluded and the boundary lines between states were changed from time to time. But nowadays we are beginning to see that the history of past *conditions* and *institutions* is far more important than that of mere events. We want to know how people lived, what kind of buildings they built, what kind of books they read, how much they knew and what they thought about science and religion; how they were governed, what they manufactured and how they carried on their business.

Illustrations of what is meant by past conditions and institutions

It is important to understand clearly what is meant by events, conditions, and institutions, since history deals with all three. An event is an occurrence, such as the death of Queen Victoria or the battle of Gettysburg. A condition is a more or less permanent state of affairs, such as the scarcity of money in the early Middle Ages or the fact that a hundred years ago only a small part of the English people could read. By institution we usually mean such things as the English Parliament, public schools, or trial by jury. Both conditions and institutions often endure for hundreds of years. Events happen in a short time but often produce great results, as did the invention of printing and the discovery of America.

Value of the newer kind of history

The newer kind of history, which deals with past conditions as well as events, enables us really to understand the past and to compare it with the present, and in that way we come to understand the conditions in which we live much better than we should otherwise do. We see where our ideas and beliefs and inventions came from, how slowly most of them developed, and how men have changed their ways of living as they learned more.

Impossibility of dividing the past into clearly defined periods

It is impossible to divide the past into distinct, clearly defined periods and prove that one age ended and another began in a particular year, such as 476, or 1453, or 1789. Men do not and cannot change their habits and ways of doing things all at once, no matter what happens. It is true that a single event, such as an important battle which results in the loss of a nation's independence, may produce an abrupt change in the government. This in turn may either encourage or discourage trade and manufactures, and modify the language and alter the interests of a people. But these deeper changes take place only very gradually. After a battle or a revolution the farmer will sow and reap in his old way; the artisan will take up his familiar tasks, and the merchant his buying and selling. The scholar will study and write as he formerly did, and the household will go on under the new government just as it did under the old.

All general changes take place gradually

So a change in government affects the habits of a people but slowly in any case, and it may leave them quite unaltered.

The unity o continuity o history

This tendency of mankind to do, in general, this year what it did last, in spite of changes in some one department of life, — such as substituting a president for a king, traveling by rail instead of on horseback, or getting the news from a newspaper instead of from a neighbor, — results in what is called the *unity* or *continuity of history*. The truth that no sudden change has ever taken place in all the customs of a people, and that it cannot, in the nature of things, take place, is perhaps the most fundamental lesson that history teaches.

General changes do not occur o fixed dates

Historians sometimes seem to forget this principle, when they undertake to begin and end their books at precise dates. We find histories of Europe from 476 to 918, from 1270 to 1492, as if the accession of a capable German king in 918, or the death of a famous French king in 1270, or the discovery of America in 1492, marked a *general* change in European affairs. In reality, however, no general change took place at these dates or in any other single year. It would doubtless have proved a great convenience to the readers and writers of history if the world had agreed to carry out a definite program and alter its habits at precise dates, preferably at the opening of each century. But no such agreement has ever been adopted, and the historical student must take things as he finds them. He must recognize that nations retain their old customs while they adopt new ones, and that a small portion of a nation may advance while the greater part of it stays behind.

Meaning of the term "Middle Ages"

We cannot, therefore, hope to fix any year or event which may properly be taken as the beginning of that long period which followed the break-up of the Roman Empire in western Europe and which is commonly called the Middle Ages. Beyond the northern and eastern boundaries of the Roman Empire, which embraced the whole civilized world from the Euphrates to Britain, mysterious peoples moved about whose history before they came into occasional contact with the Romans is practically unknown.

These Germans, or "barbarians," as the Romans called them, were destined to put an end to the Roman Empire in western Europe. They had first begun to make trouble about a hundred years before Christ, when a great army of them was defeated by the Roman general Marius. Julius Cæsar narrates in polished Latin, familiar to all who begin the study of that language, how fifty years later he drove back other bands. Five hundred years elapsed, however, before German chieftains succeeded in founding kingdoms within the boundaries of the Empire. With their establishment the Roman government in western Europe may be said to have come to an end and the Middle Ages to have begun.

Most medieval notions to be found in the late Roman Empire

Yet it would be a great mistake to suppose that this means that the Roman civilization suddenly disappeared at this time. Long before the German conquest, art and literature had begun to decline toward the level that they reached in the Middle Ages. Many of the ideas and conditions which prevailed after the coming of the barbarians were common enough before. Even the ignorance and strange ideas which we associate particularly with the Middle Ages are to be found in the later Roman Empire.

The term "Middle Ages" will be used in this volume to mean, roughly speaking, the period of over a thousand years that elapsed between the fifth century, when the disorder of the barbarian invasions was becoming general, and the opening of the sixteenth century, when Europe was well on its way to recover all that had been lost since the break-up of the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire and its Government

2. Before we begin our study of the history of western Europe since the break-up of the Roman Empire we must stop to consider briefly the way in which people were living before the German leaders succeeded in establishing their kingdoms.

Extent of the Roman Empire

At the opening of the fifth century there were no separate, independent states in western Europe such as we find on the map to-day. The whole area now occupied by England, France, Spain,

and Italy formed at that time only a part of the vast realms ruled over by the Roman emperor and his host of officials. As for Germany, most of it was still familiar only to the half-savage tribes who inhabited it. The Romans had tried in vain to conquer this part of Europe, but finally had to content themselves with keeping the German hordes out of the Empire by means of fortifications and guards along the Rhine and Danube rivers.

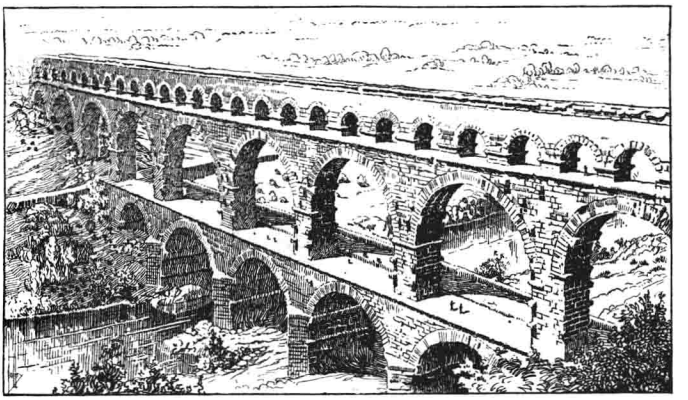

FIG. 1. ROMAN AQUEDUCT NEAR NÎMES

This structure was built by the Romans about the year 20 A.D. to supply the Roman colony of Nemausus (now called Nîmes) in southern France with water from two excellent springs twenty-five miles distant. It is nearly 900 feet long and 160 feet high, and carried the water over the valley of the river Gard. The channel for the water is at the very top, and one can still walk through it. The miles of aqueduct on either side of this bridge have almost disappeared

Great diversity of races included within the Empire

The Roman Empire, which embraced southern and western Europe, western Asia, and even the northern portion of Africa (see map), included the most diverse peoples and races. Egyptians, Arabs, Jews, Greeks, Italians, Gauls, Britons, Iberians,—all alike were under the sovereign rule of Rome. One great state embraced the nomad shepherds who spread their tents on the borders of Sahara, the mountaineers in the fastnesses of

Wales, and the citizens of Athens, Alexandria, and Rome, heirs to all the luxury and learning of the ages. Whether one lived in York or Jerusalem, Memphis or Vienna, he paid his taxes into the same treasury, he was tried by the same law, and looked to the same armies for protection.

Bonds which held the Empire together

At first it seems incredible that this huge Empire, which included African and Asiatic peoples as well as the most various races of Europe in all stages of civilization, could have held together for five centuries instead of falling to pieces, as might have been expected, long before the barbarians came in sufficient strength to establish their own kingdoms in its midst.

When, however, we consider the bonds of union which held the state together, it is easy to understand why the Empire endured so long. These were (1) the wonderfully organized government with its officials in every part of the realm, watching everything and allowing nothing to escape them; (2) the worship of the head of the Empire, the emperor; (3) the hardy legions of soldiers who had made Rome's conquests and could be used to put down revolt and keep out the barbarians; (4) the Roman law in force everywhere; (5) the admirable roads, which enabled the soldiers to march quickly from place to place; and, lastly, (6) the Roman colonies and the teachers sent out by the government, for through them the same ideas and ways of doing things were carried to even the most distant parts of the Empire.

The Roman government attempted to regulate everything

Let us first glance at the government and the emperor. His decrees were dispatched throughout the length and breadth of the Roman dominions; whatsoever pleased him became law, according to the well-known principle of the Roman constitution. While the cities were permitted some freedom in the management of their own affairs, the emperor and his innumerable officials kept an eye upon even the humblest citizen. The Roman government, besides keeping order, settling law cases, and defending the boundaries, assumed many other responsibilities. It watched the grain dealers, butchers, and bakers, and saw to it that they properly supplied the public and never deserted their

occupation. In some cases it forced the son to follow the profession of his father. If it could have had its way, it would have had every one belong to a definite class of society, and his children after him. It kept the unruly poorer classes in the towns quiet by furnishing them with bread, and sometimes with wine, meat, and clothes. It provided amusement for them by expensive entertainments, such as races and gladiatorial combats (see Fig. 3). In a word, the Roman government was not only wonderfully organized, so that its power was felt throughout its whole extent, but it attempted to regulate almost every interest in life.

The worship of the emperor

Every one was required to join in the worship of the emperor because he stood for the majesty and glory of the Roman dominion. The inhabitants of each province might revere their particular gods, undisturbed by the government, but all were obliged, as good citizens, to join in the official sacrifices to the head of the State, as if he were a god. The early Christians were persecuted, not only because their religion was different from that of their fellows, but because they refused to reverence the images of the emperor, and openly prophesied the downfall of the Roman State. Their religion seemed incompatible with good citizenship, since it forbade them to show the usual respect for the government.

The Roman law

As there was one government, so there was one law for all the civilized world. The same principles of reason, justice, and humanity were believed to hold whether the Roman citizen lived upon the Euphrates or the Thames. The law of the Roman Empire is its chief legacy to posterity. Its provisions are still in force in many of the states of Europe to-day, and it is one of the subjects of study in our American universities. Wives and children were protected from the cruelty of the head of the house, who, in earlier centuries, had been privileged to treat the members of his family as slaves. The law held that it was better that a guilty person should escape than that an innocent person should be condemned. It conceived mankind, not as a group of nations and tribes, each with its own laws, but as one

people included in one great empire and subject to a single system of law based upon fairness and reason.

Roads

Magnificent roads were constructed, which enabled the messengers of the government and its armies to reach every part of the Empire with what at that time seemed incredible speed.

FIG. 2. ROMAN BRIDGE AT ST. CHAMAS

This Roman bridge with its handsome portals, at St. Chamas in southern France, was built in the time of the Emperor Augustus; that is, about the beginning of the Christian era

These highways made trade comparatively easy and encouraged merchants and travelers to visit the most distant portions of the realm. Everywhere they found the same coins and the same system of weights and measures.

Colonies, public buildings

Colonies were sent out to the confines of the Empire, and the remains of great public buildings, of theaters and bridges, of sumptuous villas and baths at places like Treves, Cologne, Bath, and Salzburg, indicate how thoroughly the influence and civilization of Rome penetrated to the utmost parts of the territory subject to her rule. The illustrations in this chapter will show what wonderfully fine towns the Roman colonies were.

The government encouraged education by supporting at least three teachers in every town of any considerable importance. They taught rhetoric and oratory and explained the works of the