European Civilization

A Political, Social and Cultural History

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Preface

European Civilization is an attempt to provide a history which stresses pertinent political, social and cultural developments.

It is a large book but it is difficult to see how six thousand years of civilization can be intelligibly treated in less dimensions without the sacrifice of important information or of that interpretation that is so essential to an understanding of the significance of the events of history.

The institutions and the culture which we enjoy are not gifts; they are trusts for us of today to preserve and to develop for the future. Nor can we understand this inheritance unless we know how the civilization of today was formed and developed. This book is dedicated to this task.

A sincere effort has been made to maintain a proper balance between mass and quality, between fact and meaning, and to avoid abstract generalizations. It is hoped that a freshness of approach will be found in the work and that it will be stimulating and interesting to both student and teacher. The events of history are carried up to the present, and the treatment reflects, as far as possible, the most recent information that has come to light.

The Authors.

Berkeley, Cal.
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INTRODUCTION

History has been defined, simply but effectively, as the record of answers to the questions, Who did What, When, Where and Why? The infinite variety in the recorded replies is the result of differences in interpretations, in the answers to the question, Why? For many centuries historians believed that men did what they did because of some power outside of, and greater than themselves. In the eighteenth century there was a gradual shift of opinion, and the question, Why, was answered in terms of human responsibility. It was thought then that men acted as they did because they wanted to. The revolutionary advances in the domains of the earth sciences (geology, geography) and the life sciences (botany, zoology), within the nineteenth century, greatly affected the writing of history. Men became so aware of their surroundings that the immediate and remote causes of all human activity were traced by some authorities to environment. Men acted as they did, so they believed, because of natural resources, topography, climate, vegetation and animal life around them. Their occupations, their institutions, their thoughts were all attributed to environment. This interpretation, in recent years, has been challenged by those who would add other causes for human action. Economist, psychologist, and sociologist have given new bases for interpretation, with the result that the reader of history has a wide selection of answers to the question, Why?

What is History?

It is desirable to locate each human action in space. This is especially true of an action which produced a change, since a clue to the reason for the action may be derived from the place at which it occurred. One may disregard the place factor for actions which are regular, or habitual, as the seasonal migration of the shepherd from valley to mountain and back again, the use of the bow and arrow, or the custom of burying the dead. But if actions become erratic, or unusual, the historian, like the investigator of a crime or an accident, seeks to locate the exact place of change in the subject of investigation.

In like manner the time factor is important to the student of history. Location in time helps to determine the causes of action, which must have occurred before the action, as well as the results of the action, which must have followed it. The answer to the question, When? is significant for actions which indicate change. There was no meaning in a certain famous diary for the

days when the entry read, "Got up, washed, went to bed." But when the entry noted some variation from this hygienic routine, the date was worth remembering.

The first part of the definition needs little explanation. It is true that the varieties of actions included in human history are economic, social and cultural as well as military and political. It is also true that the human actors are no longer limited to the saints, kings, generals, and statesmen who used to grace the pages of the older histories. Captains of industry, inventors, scholars, and artists, together with races, classes, and other groups have been assigned roles in the drama of history.

Finally, it should be noted that the record of human action is now considered to include everything made by human hands, every trace of human life. The beginning has been pushed far beyond the day when writing was invented, and in those dim and distant regions of the past the historian seeks the origins of European civilization.

The prelude to human history

Scholars, who once declared that environment determines and has determined all that men have done, are willing now to grant that it offers only possibilities which men may accept, or reject wholly or in part. Still, even the most ardent disciples of the theory of possibility agree that at no other period has the influence of environment been more pronounced than at the beginning. The student of primitive man finds the subject of his study the plaything, if not the victim, of natural forces. He fled before the flood or drought. Barriers of mountain, forest, swamp or sea blocked his advance or retreat. He was compelled to follow the vegetation, or the animals, upon which he depended for food. In fact, the earlier part of that process which is called civilization is simply a series of steps towards emancipation from this slavery to environment.

The beginnings of this servitude still remain eras of scanty facts and numerous guesses. They include the uncounted millennia of geographic change. Within that time the surface of the earth was slowly acquiring the land and water masses, the highland and lowland areas with which we are familiar. In all probability, man existed then, but undisputed proof of human life has not been found in strata which antedate the Ice Age. There have been meager finds, apparently pre-glacial, in Rhodesia, Java, and Britain. The fairly wide distribution of the human genus in glacial times is also cited as proof of earlier life. Recorded history, however, begins with the Ice Age.

The Ice Age

That period of violent climatic changes which alternated tropical and arctic conditions over a large part of the north temperate zone, has been divided into four stages of advance and retreat of ice. These oscillations were accompanied by corresponding shifts in a belt of storms immediately south of the arctic front, and a belt of calms still further south. As the belts moved from north to south and back again, the characteristic

vegetation moved with them. In these vast processions and recessions man took part, following the animals he hunted, as the latter kept pace with the vegetation upon which they lived.

The stage setting

The origin and development of European civilization is limited to the northwestern quarter of the eastern hemisphere. The area as a whole may be described as a part of the Asiatic land mass, with two farflung projections, Europe and Africa north of the Tropic of Cancer. The chief divisions are a northern lowland extending from central Siberia to the Arctic, the Baltic, and the North seas. South of that lies a central highland, definite and continuous in the east, but increasingly irregular in its westward extension. Clear breaks in this continental backbone occur in the Rhone valley, the eastern Alps, the Sea of Marmora, and in the plateau lying east of the Caspian. These breaks give access to the third division, a southern lowland, which includes the Arabian peninsula, east and central North Africa, and the Sahara.

Temperature and rainfall were the factors which determined the vegetation of these three divisions. Moisture without warmth produced the great ice sheets of the northern flatland and of the high mountain ranges. Warmth without moisture brought desiccation and aridity. Moisture and warmth covered flatland and highland with forest growth except in the scattered deposits of loess, or sandy clay. It was in these loess plains or grasslands in Europe that men of the inter-glacial periods lived and worked.

The actors

Many of the groups of men of the Ice Age do not come within the field of this study. The red man of the western hemisphere, the yellow man of Asia, and the black man of Africa have contributed little or nothing to the growth of European civilization. Negroid and mongoloid element, indeed, must be included in a history of Europe, but the area to be studied (Europe, western Asia and northern Africa) has been dominated from the beginning by the white race.

Classification of the white race

The problem of classification of the white race has not yet been solved. One of the most widely used divisions is based on language. Modern Europeans, with but few exceptions, speak languages which are derivatives of a long lost tongue. The name itself is unknown. The word, Indo-European, is not the name of a language, but a term which describes the extent of the derivatives. Parsi, Persian, Greek, the Slavic, Teutonic, and Romance languages are all members of the Indo-European family. The word Aryan, sometimes used as a synonym for Indo-European, is limited by philologists to the southeastern quarter of the Indo-European area. The second division, called Semitic, includes Hebrew, Egyptian, Babylonian, Assyrian, and Arabic. The third division, Hamitic, was used by the natives of North Africa. It still persists in the dialects of some of the nomad tribes of the Sahara.

The division of men into those speaking Hamitic, Semitic, or Indo-Euro-

pean languages has both values and dangers. It is sometimes possible, for example, to trace the wanderings of a people and to determine their original home through the evidence of language. But evidence of this kind cannot be used in every case, since many tongues have been irretrievably lost. Others, as ancient Cretan and modern Basque, have remained unclassifiable. The greatest danger, perhaps, lies in the habit of considering language and race as having the same limits.

The relative impermanence of language and the ability of men to exchange one language for another have encouraged scholars to establish another basis of classification. Physical characteristics are more stable and may be examined in the skeletal and artistic remains of men whose speech has not survived. Three general types of the white race have been identified, (1) the short brunet with long head, Mediterranean man, (2) the somewhat stockier, but still short, brunet with round head, Alpine man, together with his taller, more slender cousin, Armenoid man, and (3) the tall blond with long head, Nordic man. The names given to the three types do not imply origin within an area, or limitation of the type to an area. Migrations have produced a confusion of varieties with innumerable gradations of size, coloring, and cephalic index, or skull measurement. The three types themselves are doubtless outgrowths of combinations in prehistoric days. But in lowland areas near the sea, the infants most apt to survive are those with the characteristics of Mediterranean man. In the highland areas, the Alpine and Armenoid babies have the better chance of living, while in the flatlands of the north, the blonds with long heads have the advantage. Without the artificial aid of migration the exotic types might eventually disappear. But migration has been a constant factor in human history. No group absolutely uniform in type is known. Thus any civilizations, or any contributions to a common culture, should be described as the gifts of a people predominantly, not wholly, Mediterranean, Alpine, or Nordic.

The calendar of the Ice Age

Man of the Ice Age had no calendar. One of the most difficult tasks of scholars, therefore, has been the arrangement in time sequence of prehistoric finds. In the absence of a written record, historians are dependent upon the methods used in other fields of research. The geologist, for example, has given a framework of eras (Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, etc.) into which the progressive changes of the earth's surface are divided. If skeletal remains, or the work of human hands, artifacts, are found in soil deposits which antedate the Ice Age, they are ascribed to the late Tertiary area. The geologist has determined many subdivisions for the following or Quaternary era. This is the era of the Ice, and glacial and interglacial periods have been assigned their proper place in a relative chronology. Many efforts have been made to translate this rough calendar of the geologist into centuries or millennia. They are based on studies of verves, that is the former shore lines of lakes and seas; on studies of the

rate of rivers in building up their deltas, in carving gorges, and in cutting through rock ledges.

The paleontologist also helps, as does the paleobotanist, for they, too, are seeking a time sequence for their material. Their researches have supplemented and corrected the results of the geologist. Hence, since men, animals, and plants were so closely associated, the time schedules of the three scientists have been applied to the early parts of the human story.

As the student approaches historic times, the records of human life are greater in variety and number. A time sequence has been developed on the basis of improvement in the technique of making flint implements, of increase in the variety of ornaments, and, best of all, in the development of pottery. Clay vessels, once broken, are more easily replaced than repaired. Fragments of pottery resist the destructive forces of nature, and are most likely to be discarded in one spot. Ceramic material thus forms the largest single product of excavation, and its arrangement, in the order of improvement, furnishes the most widely used foundation for the relative chronology of man of the neolithic (new stone) age. The Sequence Dates set up for prehistoric Egypt by Sir W. M. Flinders Petrie are derived from this arrangement of material, as are the divisions Erech I (the earliest) to Erech VI (the latest), Troy I to IX, etc. Sir Arthur Evans has classified Cretan material into Early, Middle, and Late Minoan, with three subdivisions for each class.

The presence of foreign objects in an area is used to connect it with the area from which the imported article came. A Cretan vase found in Troy hints at, if it does not establish, a connection, at a given time, between the two separate culture centers. Other time relations spring from the diffusion theory. This theory, simply stated, is that no invention or discovery has been made independently in two different places. There are some apparent duplications which are extremely difficult to explain, but the theory is still widely accepted. Clay seals, for example, have been found in the Indus, the Tigris-Euphrates, and the Nile Valleys. Diffusionists locate the point of discovery either in Egypt, or in the Persian plateau. If the first be true, seals came later to the Tigris-Euphrates country, and last of all to India. If the second be true, India and Mesopotamia may have received the invention at the same time, but the use in Egypt was certainly later than that in Mesopotamia. The invention of a perforated battle axe head is attributed to men of the Near East who were using copper or bronze for weapons. It follows that stone duplicates of this type of axe found in Scandinavia are copies of, and later in time than the Near Eastern axes. From studies of all these types of evidence come parts of the complex answer to the question, When did men of the Ice Age live?

The diffusion theory

Primitive man was a hunter, the chief in a world of hunters and victims. Missile and striking weapons were made from a flint core or flakes chipped therefrom (paleoliths), and gave him superiority over his rivals. The hides

of his victims offered protection against cold and storm. Implements of bone improved his handiwork, and the barbed hook made fishing easier for him. His ability to produce and to maintain fire gave him immediate security from animal attack and partial control of an extremely useful natural force.

Paleolithic man

Additional information concerning primitive man comes from a variety of sources. The accounts by civilized observers of tribes still in a primitive stage, and the survivals of savage customs which have persisted in the literature of groups emerging from barbarism, are also used. The story is not a simple one, since there are great differences in the rate and character of development of human groups. Still, it is agreed that these Ice Age hunters, whether they lived in Western Europe, Bulgaria, South Russia, Syria, or the Nile Valley, made some use of their leisure time to improve along cultural and social lines.

Paleolithic man reproduced on the walls of his cave home and on the smooth surface of bone the vivid memories of incidents in his life work, the pursuit of game. The skill developed in design and in the use of color was remarkable. The product was not so much art for art's sake as art for magic's sake. It was thought that a picture of success in the hunt might bring real success. The same practice, called imitative magic, employed by primitive groups today, lends credence to this hypothesis. Belief in a future life is also inferred, although the only direct proof of thought about immortality in the mind of paleolithic man is the fact that he buried his dead.

Cultural beginnings

The most obvious organization of primitive hunters would be that of a hunting pack, with the single object of securing an adequate supply of food, with the single ideal to establish an equilibrium between food supply and food demand. All of the institutions of the group would be developed to attain that ideal. The best extant illustration of a series of social regulations with maintenance of equilibrium as its end is found in the totemic groups of Australia. These groups have preserved, in unchanging surroundings, a stage of development shared by all primitive hunters. Paleolithic men needed and accepted a leader. They established permanent homes, or headquarters, and exchanged their surplus for the surplus of other hunters. They separated women's work from men's, and recognized the rights of some individuals to ownership of weapons and clothing. They had acquired some ideas of private property, and had made the first steps in political and economic organization. The interpreters of the forces and the phenomena of nature, that is, the priests or medicine men, had been singled out from the group. Specialization of tasks was the most influential of these accomplishments. It gave the women opportunity to exploit the fruits, nuts, vegetables, and grasses around the permanent camp; it fixed the women, children, and aged in a sort of home where the products of the hunt and other

Social advance

additions to the food supply could be secured and preserved; and it no doubt was the immediate predecessor of the manufacture of vessels (of hides, gourds, or woven grasses) in which food could be stored. The control by nature over man was giving way slowly to a control by man over his environment.

Epipaleolithic, or late Old Stone Age in Europe

The final retreat of the ice brought great changes in climate and vegetation to the northwestern quarter of the eastern hemisphere. As the belt of storms moved northward, the southern grasslands became arid, forcing the hunters to the water sources, the oases and the great river valleys. In the northern section, forests gradually filled the plains which had supported the hunters' prey. The movements of men were much more complicated than those in the south. Some refugees from the encroaching forests settled on the shores of seas or lakes where they maintained life on fish and other sea food. Others migrated to the east along the loess plains which extended to the Hindu Kush range. They were accompanied, or followed, by refugees from the Saharan drought who found new homes in the small unforested clearings of western and central Europe. The changes in environment were too violent and too drastic to be overcome by the hunters. On the whole, the period was one of disaster and of the lethargy of defeat for the hunters of Europe, which long remained a cultural backwater. The remains of the late Old Stone Age are those of decadence. In order to find traces of progress, one must turn to areas where climatic change was more gradual. It was in North Africa and the Near East that the transition from primitive to civilized life began.

Neolithic man

The transition was one of advance along many lines. Man of the New Stone (Neolithic) Age, of the polished instead of the chipped flint, is distinguished from his predecessor by his increasing control over nature. This included improvement in the methods of handling inanimate matter. His tools were more efficient. He applied fire to the hardening of clay into pottery, and, later, to the reduction of metallic ores. Boats and carts reduced the terrors and difficulties of his journeys. This improvement in means of communications meant the sharing of inventions and discoveries by many human groups. The domestication of animals was another line of development. Man and dog had long been associated in the hunt. But neolithic man domesticated other animals for their milk, or meat, for their muscle power, and for their ability to carry him easily and rapidly. Plants were domesticated for the food and clothing materials which they supplied.

The advance was decidedly irregular. There are even exceptions to the rule which makes the polishing of flints the first step, and there are many instances in which the domestication of animals was a practical impossibility. The presence of the plant or animal to be domesticated, and the ease with which the process of domestication could be accomplished, had a great deal to do with the advance from the hunting stage to the pastoral or the agricul-

tural stage. Thus, men of the grasslands became pastoral nomads with domesticated animals but with few or no domesticated plants. Men of the open woodland domesticated plants, but still looked to game as the chief source of food supply. On the other hand, tillable soil, the presence of the nobler grasses (wheat, millet, barley), and animals which could be domesticated, transformed hunters into farmers and animal users. This ideal combination was found in the valleys of the Nile, the Tigris-Euphrates and the Indus rivers.

Absence of paleolithic evidence in Near East

At first glance, these areas appear much more promising than the forests of Europe for students of man's development. There is a greater expectancy of continuity in the record where continuity of residence is a probability. Diggings at Anau in Turkestan, at Susa and Ur near the head of the Persian Gulf, at Badari and Deir Tasa on the Nile and at Knossus in Crete, have established the existence of neolithic culture from one to two millennia before the use of polished flints in Europe. But the eastern sites have revealed no trace of paleolithic man. The Aegean area is similarly barren, and even in Egypt where both old stone and new stone implements have been found, the transition period is not fully documented. Until the time when additional evidence has been uncovered, the student of history must fill with inference the gap between the Paleolithic and the Neolithic Age.

Effects of animal and plant domestication

Although the transition itself cannot be described, there is ample proof of the great social difference between paleolithic hunter and neolithic herder and farmer. The pastoral nomad owned animals which he had to defend and control. He had relatively little work to perform, no great need for specialization. The tendency to remain in small groups was marked, although a temporary union of larger numbers might be formed for raids, or for defense against a common enemy. Experience and skill were superior to strength; hence the oldest member of the group ruled the others. His power was recognized in every sphere of life, making him the economic, judicial, political, and religious leader.

Domestication and cultivation of plants were much more difficult tasks. They required co-operation, provision for the future and division of labor. They held men in one locality and forced them to build homes and barns. Larger groups were desirable and practicable. Political organization varied, although centralization and the rule of one man seem to have been the ideals of the neolithic farmer.

The use of leisure

The added leisure of herder or of farmer brought further advance along at least three lines, each one the result of individual thought. The successful leader used his leisure to find ways and means of procuring more food, better methods of storing food. He sought to increase trade with other groups, to regulate trade within the group, and to improve its organization. Either the leader or some other individual concerned himself with the relationship between the group and the unknown. An expla-