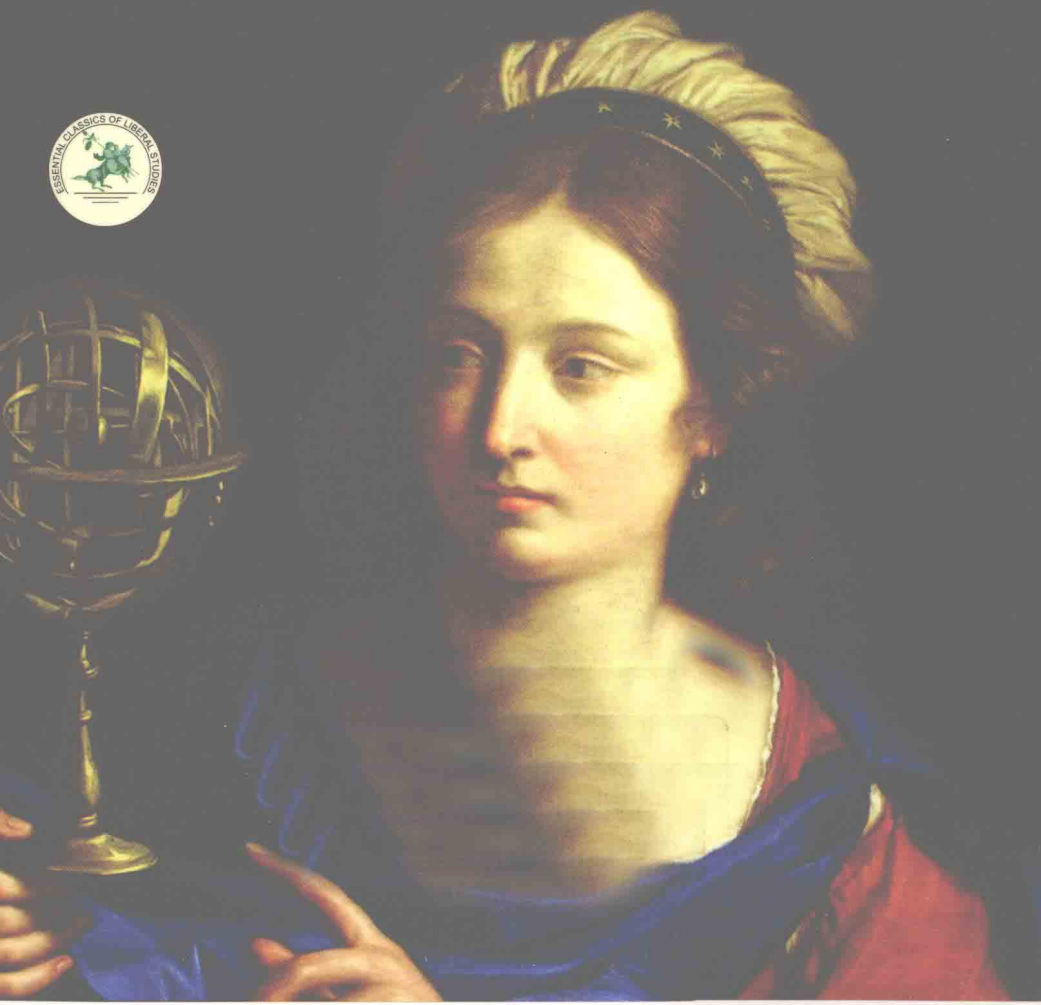
Hendrik Willem

VAN LOON

Tolerance



Essential Classics of Liberal Studies

全国百佳出版社
中央编译出版社
CCTP Central Compilation & Translation Press

Essential Classics of Liberal Studies

HENDRIK WILLEM

VAN LOON

TOLERANCE

全国百佳出版社
中央编译出版社
CCTP Central Compilation & Translation Press

Hendrik van Loon
TOLERANCE

Boni & Liveright, New York, 1927

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

宽容 : 英文 / (美) 房龙 (Van Loon, H. W.) 著. --
北京 : 中央编译出版社, 2010.8
ISBN 978-7-5117-0466-5

Ⅰ. ①宽… Ⅱ. ①房… Ⅲ. ①英语—语言读物②思想史—世界 Ⅳ. ①H319.4: B

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2010)第133482号

宽容(英文版)

出 版 人	和 龑
策 划	韩慧强
责任编辑	刘文利
责任印制	尹 珺
出版发行	中央编译出版社
地 址	北京西单西斜街36号(100032)
电 话	(010) 66509360 (总编室) (010) 66509405 (编辑部) (010) 66509364 (发行部) (010) 66509618 (读者服务部)
网 址	www.cctpbook.com
经 销	全国新华书店
印 刷	北京中印联印务有限公司
开 本	880×1230毫米 1/32
字 数	344千字
印 张	13.125印张
版 次	2010年11月第1版第1次印刷
定 价	29.00元

本社常年法律顾问：北京大成律师事务所首席顾问律师鲁哈达

凡有印装质量问题，本社负责调换。电话：010-66509618

PROLOGUE

HAPPILY lived Mankind in the peaceful Valley of Ignorance.

To the north, to the south, to the west and to the east stretched the ridges of the Hills Everlasting.

A little stream of Knowledge trickled slowly through a deep worn gully.

It came out of the Mountains of the Past.

It lost itself in the Marshes of the Future.

It was not much, as rivers go.But it was enough for the humble needs of the villagers.

In the evening, when they had watered their cattle and had filled their casks, they were content to sit down to enjoy life.

The Old Men Who Knew were brought forth from the shady corners where they had spent their day, pondering over the mysterious pages of an old book.

They mumbled strange words to their grandchildren, who would have preferred to play with the pretty pebbles, brought down from distant lands.

Often these words were not very clear.

But they were writ a thousand years ago by a forgotten race. Hence they were holy.

For in the Valley of Ignorance, whatever was old was venerable.And those who dared to gainsay the wisdom of the fathers were shunned by all decent people.

And so they kept their peace.

Fear was ever with them.What if they should be refused the common share of the products of the garden?

Vague stories there were, whispered at night among the narrow streets of the little town, vague stories of men and women who had dared to ask questions.

They had gone forth, and never again had they been seen.

A few had tried to scale the high walls of the rocky range that hid the sun.

Their whitened bones lay at the foot of the cliffs.

The years came and the years went by.

Happily lived Mankind in the peaceful Valley of Ignorance.

Out of the darkness crept a man.

The nails of his hands were torn.

His feet were covered with rags, red with the blood of long marches.

He stumbled to the door of the nearest hut and knocked.

Then he fainted.By the light of a frightened candle, he was carried to a cot.

In the morning throughout the village it was known:"He has come back."

The neighbors stood around and shook their heads.They had always known that this was to be the end.

Defeat and surrender awaited those who dared to stroll away from the foot of the mountains.

And in one corner of the village the Old Men shook their heads and whispered burning words.

They did not mean to be cruel, but the Law was the Law. Bitterly this man had sinned against the wishes of Those Who

Knew.

As soon as his wounds were healed he must be brought to trial.

They meant to be lenient.

They remembered the strange, burning eyes of his mother. They recalled the tragedy of his father, lost in the desert these thirty years ago.

The Law, however, was the Law; and the Law must be obeyed.

The Men Who Knew would see to that.

They carried the wanderer to the Market Place, and the people stood around in respectful silence.

He was still weak from hunger and thirst and the Elders bade him sit down.

He refused.

They ordered him to be silent.

But he spoke.

Upon the Old Men he turned his back and his eyes sought those who but a short time before had been his comrades.

"Listen to me, " he implored."Listen to me and be rejoiced.I have come back from beyond the mountains.My feet have trod a fresh soil.My hands have felt the touch of other races.My eyes have seen wondrous sights.

"When I was a child, my world was the garden of my father.

"To the west and to the east, to the south and to the north lay the ranges from the Beginning of Time.

"When I asked what they were hiding, there was a hush and a hasty shaking of heads.When I insisted, I was taken to the rocks and shown the bleached bones of those who had dared to defy

the Gods.

"When I cried out and said, 'It is a lie! The Gods love those who are brave!' the Men Who Knew came and read to me from their sacred books.The Law, they explained, had ordained all things of Heaven and Earth.The Valley was ours to have and to hold.The animals and the flowers, the fruit and the fishes were ours, to do our bidding. But the mountains were of the Gods. What lay beyond was to remain unknown until the End of Time.

"So they spoke, and they lied.They lied to me, even as they have lied to you.

"There are pastures in those hills.Meadows too, as rich as any. And men and women of our own flesh and blood.And cities resplendent with the glories of a thousand years of labor.

"I have found the road to a better home.I have seen the promise of a happier life.Follow me and I shall lead you thither.For the smile of the Gods is the same there as here and everywhere."

He stopped and there went up a great cry of horror.

"Blasphemy!"cried the Old Men."Blasphemy and sacrilege!A fit punishment for his crime!He has lost his reason.He dares to scoff at the Law as it was written down a thousand years ago. He deserves to die!"

And they took up heavy stones.

And they killed him.

And his body they threw at the foot of the cliffs, that it might lie there as a warning to all who questioned the wisdom of the ancestors.

Then it happened a short time later that there was a great drought.The little Brook of Knowledge ran dry.The cattle died of thirst.The harvest perished in the fields, and there was hunger in the Valley of Ignorance.

The Old Men Who Knew, however, were not disheartened. Everything would all come right in the end, they prophesied, for so it was writ in their most Holy Chapters.

Besides, they themselves needed but little food.They were so very old.

Winter came.

The village was deserted.

More than half of the populace died from sheer want.

The only hope for those who survived lay beyond the mountains.

But the Law said "No!"

And the Law must be obeyed.

One night there was a rebellion.

Despair gave courage to those whom fear had forced into silence.

Feebly the Old Men protested.

They were pushed aside.They complained of their lot.They bewailed the ingratitude of their children, but when the last wagon pulled out of the village, they stopped the driver and forced him to take them along.

The flight into the unknown had begun.

It was many years since the Wanderer had returned.It was no easy task to discover the road he had mapped out.

Thousands fell a victim to hunger and thirst before the first cairn was found.

From there on the trip was less difficult.

The careful pioneer had blazed a clear trail through the woods and amidst the endless wilderness of rock.

By easy stages it led to the green pastures of the new land.

Silently the people looked at each other.

"He was right after all, "they said."He was right, and the Old Men were wrong...

"He spoke the truth, and the Old Men lied...

"His bones lie rotting at the foot of the cliffs, but the Old Men sit in our carts and chant their ancient lays...

"He saved us, and we slew him....

"We are sorry that it happened, but of course, if we could have known at the time..."

Then they unharnessed their horses and their oxen and they drove their cows and their goats into the pastures and they built themselves houses and laid out their fields and they lived happily for a long time afterwards.

A few years later an attempt was made to bury the brave pioneer in the fine new edifice which had been erected as a home for the Wise Old Men.

A solemn procession went back to the now deserted valley, but when the spot was reached where his body ought to have been, it was no longer there.

A hungry jackal had dragged it to his lair.

A small stone was then placed at the foot of the trail (now a magnificent highway).It gave the name of the man who had first defied the dark terror of the unknown, that his people might be

guided into a new freedom.

And it stated that it had been erected by a grateful posterity.

As it was in the beginning—as it is now—and as some day (so we hope) it shall no longer be.

CONTENTS

PROLOGUE 1

CHAPTER 1 THE TYRANNY OF IGNORANCE 1
CHAPTER 2 THE GREEKS 12
CHAPTER 3 THE BEGINNING OF RESTRAINT 53
CHAPTER 4 THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS 66
CHAPTER 5 IMPRISONMENT 91
CHAPTER 6 THE PURE OF LIFE 102
CHAPTER 7 THE INQUISITION 114
CHAPTER 8 THE CURIOUS ONES 135
CHAPTER 9 THE WAR UPON THE PRINTED WORD 149
CHAPTER 10 CONCERNING THE WRITING OF HISTORY IN GENERAL AND THIS BOOK IN PARTICULAR 158
CHAPTER 11 RENAISSANCE 162
CHAPTER 12 THE REFORMATION 171
CHAPTER 13 ERASMUS 186
CHAPTER 14 RABELAIS 203
CHAPTER 15 NEW SIGNBOARDS FOR OLD 214
CHAPTER 16 THE ANABAPTISTS 237
CHAPTER 17 THE SOZZINI FAMILY 248

CHAPTER 18 MONTAIGNE 260
CHAPTER 19 ARMINIUS 267
CHAPTER 20 BRUNO 279
CHAPTER 21 SPINOZA 286
CHAPTER 22 THE NEW ZION 301
CHAPTER 23 THE SUN KING 316
CHAPTER 24 FREDERICK THE GREAT 321
CHAPTER 25 VOLTAIRE 325
CHAPTER 26 THE ENCYCLOPEDIA 348
CHAPTER 27 THE INTOLERANCE OF REVOLUTION ... 357
CHAPTER 28 LESSING 368
CHAPTER 29 TOM PAINE 383
CHAPTER 30 THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS 390
THE LIFE OF HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON 397

CHAPTER 1

THE TYRANNY OF IGNORANCE

IN the year 527 Flavius Anicius Justinianus became ruler of the eastern half of the Roman Empire.

This Serbian peasant (he came from Uskub, the much disputed railroad junction of the late war) had no use for "book-learnin." It was by his orders that the ancient Athenian school of philosophy was finally suppressed. And it was he who closed the doors of the only Egyptian temple that had continued to do business centuries after the valley of the Nile had been invaded by the monks of the new Christian faith.

This temple stood on a little island called Philae, not far from the first great waterfall of the Nile. Ever since men could remember, the spot had been dedicated to the worship of Isis and for some curious reason, the Goddess had survived where all her African and Greek and Roman rivals had miserably perished. Until finally, in the sixth century, the island was the only spot where the old and most holy art of picture writing was still understood and where a small number of priests continued to practice a trade which had been forgotten in every other part of the land of Cheops.

And now, by order of an illiterate farmhand, known as His Imperial Majesty, the temple and the adjoining school were declared state property, the statues and images were sent to the museum of Constantinople and the priests and the writing-

masters were thrown into jail. And when the last of them had died from hunger and neglect, the age-old trade of making hieroglyphics had become a lost art.

All this was a great pity.

If Justinian (a plague upon his head!) had been a little less thorough and had saved just a few of those old picture experts in a sort of literary Noah's Ark, he would have made the task of the historian a great deal easier. For while (owing to the genius of Champollion) we can once more spell out the strange Egyptian words, it remains exceedingly difficult for us to understand the inner meaning of their message to posterity.

And the same holds true for all other nations of the ancient world.

What did those strangely bearded Babylonians, who left us whole brickyards full of religious tracts, have in mind when they exclaimed piously, "Who shall ever be able to understand the counsel of the Gods in Heaven?" How did they feel towards those divine spirits which they invoked so continually, whose laws they endeavored to interpret, whose commands they engraved upon the granite shafts of their most holy city? Why were they at once the most tolerant of men, encouraging their priests to study the high heavens, and to explore the land and the sea, and at the same time the most cruel of executioners, inflicting hideous punishments upon those of their neighbors who had committed some breach of divine etiquette which today would pass unnoticed?

Until recently we did not know.

We sent expeditions to Nineveh, we dug holes in the sand of Sinai and deciphered miles of cuneiform tablets. And everywhere in Mesopotamia and Egypt we did our best to find

the key that should unlock the front door of this mysterious store-house of wisdom.

And then, suddenly and almost by accident, we discovered that the back door had been wide open all the time and that we could enter the premises at will.

But that convenient little gate was not situated in the neighborhood of Akkad or Memphis.

It stood in the very heart of the jungle.

And it was almost hidden by the wooden pillars of a pagan temple.

Our ancestors, in search of easy plunder, had come in contact with what they were pleased to call "wild men" or "savages."

The meeting had not been a pleasant one.

The poor heathen, misunderstanding the intentions of the white men, had welcomed them with a salvo of spears and arrows.

The visitors had retaliated with their blunderbusses.

After that there had been little chance for a quiet and unprejudiced exchange of ideas.

The savage was invariably depicted as a dirty, lazy, good-for-nothing loafer who worshiped crocodiles and dead trees and deserved all that was coming to him.

Then came the reaction of the eighteenth century. Jean Jacques Rousseau began to contemplate the world through a haze of sentimental tears. His contemporaries, much impressed by his ideas, pulled out their handkerchiefs and joined in the weeping.

The benighted heathen was one of their most favorite subjects. In their hands (although they had never seen one) he

became the unfortunate victim of circumstances and the true representative of all those manifold virtues of which the human race had been deprived by three thousand years of a corrupt system of civilization.

Today, at least in this particular field of investigation, we know better.

We study primitive man as we study the higher domesticated animals, from which as a rule he is not so very far removed.

In most instances we are fully repaid for our trouble. The savage, but for the grace of God, is our own self under much less favorable conditions. By examining him carefully we begin to understand the early society of the valley of the Nile and of the peninsula of Mesopotamia and by knowing him thoroughly we get a glimpse of many of those strange hidden instincts which lie buried deep down beneath the thin crust of manners and customs which our own species of mammal has acquired during the last five thousand years.

This encounter is not always flattering to our pride. On the other hand a realization of the conditions from which we have escaped, together with an appreciation of the many things that have actually been accomplished, can only tend to give us new courage for the work in hand and if anything it will make us a little more tolerant towards those among our distant cousins who have failed to keep up the pace.

This is not a handbook of anthropology.

It is a volume dedicated to the subject of tolerance.

But tolerance is a very broad theme.

The temptation to wander will be great. And once we leave the beaten track, Heaven alone knows where we will land.

I therefore suggest that I be given half a page to state exactly

and specifically what I mean by tolerance.

Language is one of the most deceptive inventions of the human race and all definitions are bound to be arbitrary. It therefore behooves an humble student to go to that authority which is accepted as final by the largest number of those who speak the language in which this book is written.

I refer to the Encyclopedia Britannica.

There on page 1052 of volume XXVI stands written: "Tolerance (from Latin *tolerare*—to endure):—The allowance of freedom of action or judgment to other people, the patient and unprejudiced endurance of dissent from one's own or the generally received course or view."

There may be other definitions but for the purpose of this book I shall let myself be guided by the words of the Britannica.

And having committed myself (for better or worse) to a definite policy, I shall return to my savages and tell you what I have been able to discover about tolerance in the earliest forms of society of which we have any record.

It is still generally believed that primitive society was very simple, that primitive language consisted of a few simple grunts and that primitive man possessed a degree of liberty which was lost only when the world became "complex."

The investigations of the last fifty years made by explorers and missionaries and doctors among the aborigines of central Africa and the Polar regions and Polynesia show the exact opposite. Primitive society was exceedingly complicated, primitive language had more forms and tenses and declensions than Russian or Arabic, and primitive man was a slave not only to the present, but also to the past and to the future;in short,