History

Introduction (1909)

The Lecture Series on the contents of The Harvard Classics ought to do much to open that collection of literary materials to many ambitious young men and women whose education was cut short by the necessity of contributing in early life to the family earnings, or of supporting themselves, “and who must therefore reach the standing of a cultivated man or woman through the pleasurable devotion of a few minutes a day through many years to the reading of good literature.” (Introduction to The Harvard Classics.) The Series will also assist many readers to cultivate “a taste for serious reading of the highest quality outside of The Harvard Classics as well as within them.” (Ibid.) *It will certainly promote the accomplishment of the educational object I had in mind when I made the collection.*

Charles W. Eliot. (1909)

Meanwhile in the 21st Century

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I. General Introduction

By Professor Robert Matteson Johnston

History alone, of all modes of thought, places the reader above his author. While the historian more or less diligently plods along his own narrow path, perhaps the one millionth part of all history, every avenue opens wide to the imagination of those who read him. To them history may mean anything that concerns man and that has a past; not politics only, but art, and science, and music have had their birth and growth; not institutions only, but legends and chronicles and all the masterpieces of literature, reflect the clash of nations and the tragedies of great men. And it is just because the reader is merely a reader that the full joy of history is open to him. He wears no fetters, so that even were he bent on mastering the constitutional documents of the United States he could turn aside with a calm conscience to listen to the echoes of dying Roland's horn in the gorge of Roncevaux or to stand by Cnut watching the North Sea tide as it lapped the old Dane's feet.

In all directions, in almost every branch of literature, history may be discovered, a multiform chameleon; and yet history does not really exist. No one has yet composed a record of humanity; and no one ever will, for it is beyond man's powers. Macaulay's history covered forty years; that of Thucydides embraced only the Peloponnesian war; Gibbon, a giant among the moderns, succeeded in spanning ten centuries after a fashion, but has found no imitators. The truth is there is no subject, save perhaps astronomy, that is quite so vast and quite so little known. Its outline, save in the sham history of text books, is entirely wanting. Its details, where really known to students, are infinitely difficult to bring into relation, For this reason it may be worth while to attempt, in the space of one short essay, to coordinate the great epochs of history, from the earliest to the most recent times.

The practical limit of history extends over a period of about three thousand years, goes back, in other words, to about 1000 B. C. Beyond that we have merely scraps of archaeological evidence; names of pictures engraved on stone, to show that in periods very remote considerable monarchies flourished in Egypt, along the Euphrates, and in other directions. It was not these people who were to set their imprint on later ages, it was rather what were then merely untutored and unknown wandering tribes of Aryans, which, working their way through the great plains of the Volga, the Dnieper, and the Danube, eventually forced their way into the Balkan and the Italian peninsulas. There, with the sea barring their further progress, they took on more settled habits, and formed, at some distant epoch, cities, among which Athens and Rome were to rise to the greatest celebrity. And about the year 1000 B. C., or a little later, Greece emerges from obscurity with Homer.

Just as Greece burst from her chrysalis, a Semitic people, the Jews, were producing their counterpart to Homer. In the Book of Joshua they narrated in the somber mood of their race the conquest of Palestine by their twelve nomad tribes, and in the Pentateuch and later writings they recorded their law and their religion. From this starting point, Homer and Joshua, whose dates come near enough for our purpose, we will follow the history of the Mediterranean and of the West.

The Leadership of Greece

First the great rivers, the Nile and the Euphrates, later the great inland sea that stretched westward to the Atlantic, were the avenues of commerce, of luxury, of civilization. Tyre, Phocaea, Carthage, and Marseilles were the early traders, who brought to the more military Aryans not only all the wares of east and west but language itself, the alphabet. Never was a greater gift bestowed on a greater race.

With it the Greeks developed a wonderful literature that was to leave a deep impress on all Western civilization. They wove their early legends into the chaste and elegant verse of the Homeric epics, into the gloomy

and poignant drama of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. They then turned to history and philosophy. In the former they produced a masterpiece of composition with Thucydides and one of the most delightful of narratives with Herodotus. In the latter they achieved their most important results.

Greek philosophy was to prove the greatest intellectual asset of humanity. No other civilization or language before the Greek had invented the abstract ideas: time, will, space, beauty, truth, and the others. And from these wonderful, though imperfect, word ideas the vigorous and subtle Greek intellect rapidly raised a structure which found its supreme expression in Plato, Aristotle, and Zeno. But from the close of the Fourth Century before Christ, the time of Aristotle and his pupil Alexander the Great, Greek began to lose its vitality and to decay.

This decadence coincided with events of immense political importance. Alexander created a great Greek Empire, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Indus. After his death this empire was split into a number of monarchies, the Greek kingdoms of the East, of which the last to survive was that of the Ptolemies in Egypt. This perished when Augustus defeated Cleopatra and Antony at Actium in B. C. 31, exactly three hundred years after Alexander's final victory over Darius at Arbela.

The Domination Of Rome

During these three hundred years a more western branch of the Aryans, the Romans, had gradually forced their way to supremacy. It was not until about B. C. 200 that Rome broke down the power of Carthage, got control of the western Mediterranean, and then suddenly stretched out her hand over its eastern half. In less than two centuries more she had completed the conquest of the Balkans, Asia Minor, and Egypt, and the Mediterranean had become a Roman lake.

The city of Rome may go back to B, C. 1000, and the legends and history of the Republic afford an outline of facts since about B. C. 500, but it was

only after establishing con tact with the civilization and language of Greece that the Romans really found literary expression. Their tongue had not the elasticity and harmony of the Greek, nor had it the wealth of vocabulary, the abstract terms; it was more fitted, by its terseness, clearness, and gravity, to be the medium of the legislator and administrator. Under the influence of foreign conquest and of Greek civilization, Rome, however, quickly evolved a literature of her own, an echo of the superior and riper one produced by the people she had conquered; it tinged with glory the last years of the Republic and the early ones of the Empire, the age of Augustus. Virgil produced a highly polished, if not convincing, imitation of Homer. Lucretius philosophized a crude materialistic uni verse in moderate hexameters. Cicero, with better success and some native quality, modeled himself on Demosthenes; while the historians alone equaled their Greek masters, and in the statesmanlike instinct and poisoned irony of Tacitus revealed a worthy rival of Thucydides.

Latin and Greek were the two common languages of the Mediterranean just as the unwieldy Republic of Rome was turning to imperialism. The Greek universities, Athens, Pergamon, and Alexandria, dictated the fashions of intellectualism, and gave preeminence to a decadent and subtilized criticism and philosophy perversely derived from the Greek masters of the golden age. But a third influence was on the point of making itself felt in the newly organized Mediterranean political system—that of the Jews.

The Contribution Of The Jews

To understand the part the Jews were now to play, it is necessary first of all to look back upon the general character of the social and political struggles of those ancient centuries. At the time of Homer’s heroes, and, in a way, until that of Alexander the Great, states were small, generally a city or a group of cities. War was constant, and generally accompanied by destruction and slavery. As the centuries slipped by, the scale increased. Athens tried to create a colonial empire as did Carthage, and the great

continental states, Macedon and Rome, followed close at their heels. In the last century or so before Christ, war was nearly continuous on a vast scale, and it was attended by at least one circumstance that demands special consideration.

Social inequality was a fundamental conception of the ancient world. The Greek cities in their origin had been communities ruled by a small caste of high-bred families. The social hierarchy proceeded down from them to the slave, and war was waged on a slave basis, the victor acquiring the vanquished. The great wars of the Roman Republic against the Greek monarchies were huge treasure-seeking and slave-driving enterprises that reduced to servitude the most able and most refined part of the population of the conquered countries. Rome had created a great Mediterranean state, but at a terrible price. The civilization she had set up had no religion save an empty formalism, and no heart at all. It was the Jews who were to remedy this defect.

All through the East and in some parts of the West the Jewish merchants formed conspicuous communities in the cities of the Empire, giving an example of spiritual faith, of seriousness and rectitude, that contrasted strongly with what prevailed in the community. For materialism and Epicureanism were the natural outcome of a period of economic prosperity; religion was at its best formalistic, at its worst orgiastic; ethical elements were almost wholly lacking. Yet a revolt against the soullessness and iniquities of the times was proceeding and men were prepared to turn to whatever leaders could give them a system large enough to satisfy the cravings of long-outraged conscience, and large enough to fill the bounds of the Mediterranean Empire. Three Jews—Jesus, Paul, and Philo—came forward to do this work.

Jesus was the example, the man of conscience, the redeemer God. For in this last capacity he could readily be made to fit in with the Asiatic cults of the sun and of redemption which were at that time the most active and hopeful lines of religious thought. Paul was the Jew turned Roman, an imperialist, a statesman, of wide view and missionary fervor. Philo was the

Jew turned Greek, the angel of the Alexandrian schools, who had infused Hebraic elements into the moribund philosophizing of the Egyptian Greeks, and thereby given it a renewed lease of life. That lease was to run just long enough to pour the Alexandrian thought into the Christian mold and give the new religion its peculiar dogmatic apparatus.

For three centuries, until A. D. 312, Christianity was nothing in the Mediterranean world save a curious sect differing widely from the hundreds of other sects that claimed the allegiance of the motley population sheltering under the aegis of the Emperors. During those three centuries the Mediterranean was a peaceful avenue of imperial administration, of trade, of civilizing intercourse. Its great ports teemed with a medley of people in whom the blood of all races from the Sahara to the German forests, and from Gibraltar to the valley of the Euphrates, was transfused. The little clans of high-bred men who had laid the foundations of this huge international empire had practically disappeared. The machine carried itself on by its own momentum, while wars remained on distant frontiers, the work of mercenaries, insufficient to stimulate military virtues in the heart of the Empire. It was, in fact, the economic vices that prevailed, materialism, irreligion, and cowardice.

The feeble constitution of the Empire was too slight a framework to support the vast edifice. Emperor succeeded emperor, good, bad, and indifferent, with now and again a monster, and now and again a saint. But the elements of decay were always present, and made steady progress. The army had to be recruited from the barbarians; the emperor's crown became the chief reward of the universal struggle for spoils; the Empire became so unwieldy that it tended to fall apart, and many competitors sprang up to win it by force of arms,

The Christianizing Of Rome

In 312 such a struggle was proceeding, and Constantine, one of the competitors, casting about for some means to fortify his cause against his opponents, turned to Christianity and placed himself under the protection

of the Cross. What ever his actual religious convictions may have been, there can be no doubt that Constantine's step was politic. While the pagan cults still retained the mass of the people through habit and the sensuous appeal, Christianity had now drawn to itself, especially in the western parts of the Empire, the serious minded and better class. Administrators, merchants, men of position and influence were Christian. Constantine needed their aid, and fulfilled the one condition on which he could obtain it by adopting their faith.

Thus suddenly Christianity, after its long struggle and many persecutions, became the official religion of the Empire. But Christianity was exclusive and the Emperor was its head; so conformity was required of all citizens: of the Empire, and conformity could only be obtained by paying a price. The masses were wedded to their ancient cults, their ancient gods, their ancient temples, their ancient rites. To sweep them away at one stroke and to substitute something different was not possible. So a compromise was effected. The priests, the temples, the ritual, the statues, remained, but they were relabeled with Christian labels, under cover of which Christian ideas were slipped in. A great metamorphosis took place of which the intelligent traveler and reader of to-day can still find traces :—

> "The fair form, the lovely pageant that had entwined the Mediterranean with sculptured marble, and garlands of roses, and human emotion, was fading into stuff for the fantasies of dreamers. The white-robed priest and smoking altar, the riotous procession and mystic ritual would no longer chain the affections of mankind. No longer would the shepherd blow his rude tibia in honor of Cybele, no longer would a thousand delicious fables, fine wrought webs of poetic imagination, haunt the sacred groves and colonnades of the gods. Day after day, night after night, as constantly as Apollo and Diana ran their course in heaven, had all these things run their course on earth; now, under the spell of the man of Galilee, they had shivered into a rainbow vapor, a mist of times past, unreal, unthinkable, save where the historian may reconstruct a few ruins or the poet relive past lives. And yet the externals in great part remained. For it was at the heart that

paganism was struck, and it was there it was weakest. It had attempted, but had failed, to acquire a conscience, while the new faith had founded itself on that strong rock. Christianity had triumphed through the revolt of the individual conscience; it was now to attempt the dangerous task of creating a collective one." *(1)*

The Fall Of Rome

The establishment of Christianity at Rome came not a moment too soon to infuse a little life into the fast-decaying Empire. Constantine himself helped to break it in two, a Roman and a Greek half, by creating a new capital, Constantinople. More ominous yet was the constant pressure of the Teutons at the frontier, a pressure that could now no longer be resisted. By gradual stages they burst through the bounds, and at the time Christianity was becoming the official religion of the Mediterranean world, Germanic tribes had already extorted by force of arms a right to occupy lands within the sacred line of the Rhine and of the Danube. From that moment, for a century or more, the processes of Germanic penetration and of Roman disintegration were continuous, culminating in 375 with the great Germanic migrations and in 410 with the sack of Rome by Alaric and the Goths.

During the terrible half century that followed, the Roman world was parceled out among a number of Germanic princes, and of the old order only two things were left standing, a fragmentary empire of the East centering in Constantinople, and a bishopric of Rome of vastly increased importance that was soon to be known as the Papacy, and that already showed symptoms of attempting to regain by new means the universal dominion which the Emperors had lost.

The Germans were crude and military; the Latins were subtle and peaceful, and when the storm of conquest swept through the West they sought safety in the cloister. "There, under the protection of the Latin cross, a symbol the barbarians dare not violate, what was left of Roman

intellectualism could cower while the storm blew over, presently to reissue as the army of Christ to conquer, with new-forged weapons, lands that the legions of their fathers had not even beheld." *(2)*

The Latin churchmen quickly learned how to play.on the credulity and the superstition of the simple German, while setting before him the lofty ideals and ethics of Christianity. They not only held him through religion but they soon be came the civil administrators, the legislators, the guiding spirits of the Germanic kingdoms.

Civilization had now taken on a marked change, had be come a composite in which Christianity and Teutonism were large factors. Perhaps this was all clear gain; but in the economic and material sense there had been great losses, Enormous wealth had been destroyed or scattered, and imperial communication had broken down. The trader was no longer safe on the Mediterranean; the great roads of Rome were going to ruin; boundaries of military states barred old channels of intercourse. Under these conditions civilization could only be more localized, weaker than before. And in fact the Teutonic kingdoms pursued for some time an extremely checkered course.

The Rise Of Islam

Then came, in the seventh century, a new and even more terrible blast of devastation. Mohammed arose, created Islam, and started the great movement of Arab conquest. Within almost a few years of his death the fanaticized hosts of Arabia and the East were knocking at the gates of Constantinople, and swept westward along the southern shores of the Mediterranean until the Atlantic barred their steps. They turned to Spain, destroyed the Visigothic kingdom, crossed the Pyrenees, and reached the center of Gaul before they were at last checked. The Franks under Charles Martel defeated them at Tours in 732, and perhaps by that victory saved Christendom. Had the Arabs succeeded in this last ordeal, who knows what the result might not have been? As Gibbon characteristically wrote: "A victorious line of march had been prolonged above a thousand miles

from the rock of Gibraltar to the banks of the Loire; the repetition of an equal space would have carried the Saracens to the confines of Poland and the Highlands of Scotland; the Rhine is not more impassable than the Nile or Euphrates, and the Arabian fleet might have sailed without a naval combat into the mouth of the Thames. Perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet."

On the wreck of the Arab hopes the descendants of Charles Martel founded a monarchy which blazed into ephemeral power and glory under Charlemagne. In the year 800 the greatest of Frankish rulers revived the imperial title, and was crowned by the Pope in the basilica of St. Peter's. But the old Empire could not be resuscitated, nor for the matter of that could the Frankish monarchy long maintain the preeminent position it had reached. A new visitation was at hand, and Charlemagne before he died saw the horizon of his northern seas flecked by the venturesome keels of the first of the northern pirates.

The Feudal System

For about two centuries Europe passed through an epoch of the deepest misery. Danes and Scandinavians ravaged Her from the northwest, Saracens from the south, so that only the upper Rhine and Danube, harboring a rich Teutonic civilization, escaped destruction. The Carlovingian Empire broke into pieces, Frankish, Lothringian or Burgundian, and Germanic, with the last of which went the imperial title. And this disintegration might have continued indefinitely to chaos had not feudalism appeared to fortify and steady declining civilization.

Only force could successfully resist force, and at every threatened point the same mode of local resistance sprang up. Men willing and able to fight protected the community, and exacted in return certain services. They soon began to build castles and to transmit their powers, together with their lands, to their heirs. Lands soon came to be viewed as related to

other lands on conditions of military and other services. The Church followed the example, until, finally, by the eleventh century, one general formula underlay western European ideas: that every individual belonged to a class, and enjoyed certain rights on the performance of various services to a superior class, and that at the head of this ladder of rank stood either the Emperor, or the Pope, or both. The last step was a highly controversial one; on the first all men were agreed.

By this time feudalism had done its best work in restoring more settled conditions, and bringing to a conclusion the northern and southern piracy. From Sicily to the marches of Scotland, Europe was now one mass of small military principalities, only here and there held together in more or less efficient fashion by monarchies like those of France and England, or by the Empire itself. Every trade route was flanked by fortifications whence baronial exactions could be levied on the traders. And when, under more peaceful conditions, great trading cities came into existence —in Italy, Germany, the Netherlands—a fierce struggle arose for mastery between burghers and feudal potentates.

Meanwhile the Church itself had developed great ambitions and suffered the worst vicissitudes. While under the Frankish protection, Rome had acquired the temporal domain she was to hold until September 20, 1870, when she was dispossessed by the newly formed Kingdom of Italy. With this territorial standing, and impelled forward by the mighty traditions of ancient Rome and of the Church, she deliberately stretched out her hand under Gregory VII (Hildebrand) in an attempt to grasp the feudalized scepter of Europe. The Germanic Empire, the offshoot of the greater domain of Charlemagne, resisted. The great parties of Guelphs and of Ghibellines, imperialists and papalists, came into existence, and for a long period tore Germany and Italy in vain attempts at universal supremacy.

Inextricably bound up with the feudal movement, and with the enthusiasm for the service of the Church that Rome for a while succeeded in creating, came an interlude, religious, chivalrous, economic, the Crusades. Out of superabundant supplies of feudal soldiers great armies

were formed to relieve the Holy Places from the profaning presence of the infidels. The East was deeply scarred with religious war and its attendant butcheries, and little remained in permanent results, save on the debit side. For the Crusades had proved a huge transportation and trading enterprise for the thrifty republics of Genoa and Venice, and led to a great expansion of oriental trade; while the West had once more been to school to the East and had come back less religious, more skeptical. And from the close of the period of the Crusades (1270) to the outbreak of the Reformation, two hundred and fifty years later, economic activity and the growth of skepticism are among the most prominent facts, while immediately alongside of them may be noted the birth of the new languages, and, partly resulting from all these forces, the Renaissance.

The Renaissance

For a while the Papacy, spent by its great effort of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, went to pieces. The Latin ideas for which it stood began to lose ground rapidly as Dante created the Italian language (1300), and as, in the course of the next two centuries, French, English, and Ger man assumed definite literary shape. There was not only a loss of faith in Latin forms, but a desire to transmute religious doctrine into the new modes of language, and especially to have a vernacular Bible. Assailed in this manner, Rome stimulated theological studies, helped to create the medieval universities, and tried to revivify the philosophy which Alexandria had given her in the creeds by going back to the texts of the golden age of Greece with Aquinas.

It was of no avail. Europe felt a new life, a new nationalism moving within her. Voyages of discovery to India, to America first stirred imaginations, and later poured into the itching palms of ambitious statesmen, soldiers, artists, vast stores of gold. The pulse of the world beat quicker. Constantinople fell, a thousand years after its foundation, into the hands of the Turk, and its stores of manuscripts, of art, of craftsmen, poured into Italy. Men became inventors, innovators, artists, revolutionaries. Cesare

Borgia attempted, but failed, to create an Italian empire. Martin Luther attempted to secede from the Church, and succeeded.

He declared that a man could save his soul by the grace of God only, and on that basis started a wrangle of ideals and of wordy disputations that plunged Europe once more into an inferno of warfare. It lasted until 1648, the peace of Westphalia, when it was found that on the whole the northern parts of Europe had become Protestant and the southern had remained Catholic.

France And England

At this very moment Louis XIV was beginning the reign that was to mark out for France the great position she held in the Europe of the last two centuries. The age of feudalism was fast passing. The last great feudatories had worn out their strength in the wars of religion. The monarchy had gained what they had lost, and now set to work in the splendor and pageantry of Versailles to reduce the once semi-independent feudal soldier into a mincing courtier. The Bourbons succeeded in large part. They remained the autocrats of France, with the privileged orders of the clergy and aristocracy at a low level beneath them, and in unchecked control of the machinery of government. That machinery they soon began to abuse. Its complete breakdown came with the French Revolution in 1789.

This dramatic event resulted from a large number of convergent and slow-acting causes. Among them we may note the fearful mismanagement of the Bourbon finances, inadequate food supply, and the unrest of a highly educated middle class deprived of all influence and opportunity in matters of government. That class got control of the States General which became a national assembly, and set to work to destroy Bourbonism in the name of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Between the inexperience of this assembly and the impotence of the Court, rose the wild force of the Parisian mob, which eventually drove France into war with outraged

Europe, and brought the Bourbons, with thousands of the noblest and best as well as a few of the worst people of France, to the guillotine.

War which became successful, and the feebleness of the republican government that succeeded the Reign of Terror, inevitably made for a military dictatorship and a restoration . of the monarchy. Napoleon Bonaparte, the greatest upstart in history, held France by his magnetic gaze and iron grasp for fifteen years, while he organized her as no European country had ever been organized, and with her might in his control darted from torrid Egypt to arctic Russia in a megalomaniac frenzy of conquest. He fell, leaving France so exhausted that, for a brief spell, the Bourbons returned.

It had taken all Europe to pull down France and Napoleon, and in the end distant Russia had dealt the most fatal wound. Yet it was England that had proved the most constant, the most stubborn, and the most triumphant enemy. And the quarrel between these two countries, France and England, was that which went furthest back in history.

For a while, during the dark epoch that followed Charlemagne, the Normans had held by conquest a sort of middle country between France and England. Under their duke, William, they conquered England itself in 1066, and there set up a strong insular monarchy. Their foothold in France, however, brought the Anglo-Norman kings in conflict with their neighbor, and wars were to rage between the two countries with only rare intermissions until 1815. At first their object was largely territorial possession; later economic factors grew more apparent, until in the eighteenth century and under Napoleon the struggle had become one for over sea colonial empire.

Spain And The House Of Hapsburg

In the sixteenth century, with the House of Tudor on the English throne, the perennial struggle of the English sovereigns against France became complicated by the appearance of a new continential power that might

under given circumstances join hands with the older enemy. This was Spain,

Since their defeat by the Franks at Tours, in 732, the Arabs had steadily lost ground. For several centuries, however, they had prospered in Spain, and there they had developed learning and the arts with splendid success, at a moment when Christian Europe was still plunged in darkness. But presently the feudal principalities lodged in the Pyrenees and Asturian mountains began to gain ground, and finally toward the end of the fifteenth century these states came together in a united monarchy that conquered the last Arab kingdom and founded modern Spain.

At this very moment, by one of the most remarkable coincidences in European history, marriage alliances and other circumstances almost suddenly threw the Spanish kingdom, the great inheritance of the dukes of Burgundy, and the kingdom of Hungary, into the hands of the Hapsburg dukes of Austria, who were to seat their ruling princes on the imperial throne of Germany almost uninterruptedly until the old Germanic empire closed its days in 1806.

This huge concentration of power in the hands of the Emperor, Charles V (1519-1556), gave a marked turn to the situation created by the outbreak of the Reformation. For France, which remained Catholic, and England, which became Protestant, had both to face the problem of the over-topping of the European equilibrium by the inflated do minions of the Hapsburgs. This accounted for much in the constantly shifting political adjustments of that age. It was not until the close of the reign of Louis XIV (Treaty of Utrecht, 1713) that the Hapsburg power was about balanced by the placing of a Bourbon prince on the throne of Spain. From that moment France and Spain tended to act together against England.

In England the religious upheaval lasted roughly about a century, from Henry VIII to Cromwell; on the whole, it was less violent than on the Continent. Its chief results were the establishment of the Anglican Church

and of those more markedly Protestant sects from among which came the sturdy settlers of New England.

The Founding Of The British Empire

It was during the wars of religion that England came into a struggle with the new Hapsburg-Spanish power. It had its tremendously dramatic episodes in the cruise of the Great Armada, and its fascinatingly romantic ones in the voyages of discovery and semi-piratical exploits of the British seamen who burst the paper walls that Spain had attempted to raise around the southern seas. The broad ocean, the gold of the Indies, the plantations of sugar, of tobacco, of coffee, the growing settlements and countries of a new world, these became the subject of strife from that time on. And as Spain declined in her vigor after the Armada, and a century later became the client of France, so the struggle narrowed itself to one between the latter power and England.

In the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), England established her supremacy in this world-wide struggle, and although in the next war she lost her American colonies, yet when she met France again in 1793, her trade and manufactures, her unrivaled geographical and economic situation, and her politic and businesslike statesmanship, had placed her at the head of the nations of Europe. She joined the European alliance against France in 1793, and with only two short intervals remained in the field against her until at Waterloo, twenty-two years later, Napoleon was finally defeated by Wellington and, Blücher.

During this gigantic struggle France faced two problems, that of the sea and England, that of the land and the three great military powers of northeast Europe—Austria, Russia, Prussia. Toward the end, after Napoleon had failed in Spain and got into a death grapple with Russia, it was the Continental issue that obscured the other. But England kept her eye firmly fixed on the sea, on colonies, on water borne trade; so that when at the Congress of Vienna (1815) the powers parceled out the

shattered empire, England was left by common consent the only great sea and colonial power.

Modern Europe

A period of reaction followed the fall of Napoleon, but in 1848 it came to a close in a storm of revolution. Population had grown, means of communication were multiplying fast and promoting intellectual as well as economic activity, political privileges were unduly restricted, governments were old-fashioned. In Italy, and in Germany where the old empire had perished in 1806, were the seeds of a new nationalism. From Palermo to Paris, and from Paris to Vienna, a train of revolutionary explosions was fired, and for two years Europe was convulsed. A new Bonaparte empire arose ‘in France, and in Italy and Germany a national idea was founded, though not for the moment brought to its con summation. That was to take twenty years more, and to be vastly helped by the tortuous ambitions of Napoleon III ably turned to use by Cavour and by Bismarck.

In 1859 France helped the House of Savoy to drive Austria from the valley of the Po, and thereby cleared the way for the liberation and fusion of all Italy by Cavour and Garibaldi. In 1866 Prussia expelled the House of Hapsburg from Germany, and four years later consolidated her work by marching to the walls of Paris at the head of a united German host which there acclaimed William of Hohenzollern chief of a new Germanic empire.

What has happened since then, and chiefly the scramble for colonies or for establishing economic suzerainty, belongs more to the field of present politics than of history. For that reason it may be left out of account. And so indeed has much else been left out of account for which the limit of space fixed for this essay has proved altogether too narrow. If a last word may be added to help the reader to gather in the harvest from that trampled and mutilated field which we call history let it be this, that everything turns on a point of view, on a mental attitude. The reader is the spectator of the pageant; he must be cool to judge and discriminate,

with no bias toward praise or blame, content merely to observe as the constant stream unfolds itself in all its changing colors, but with a mind ready to judge human actions and motives, an imagination ready to seize on the ever-living drama of fact, and a heart ready to respond to those countless acts of heroism that have ennobled great men and great races, and with them all humanity.

Footnotes

(1) Johnston, "Holy Christian Church," p. 146.
(2) Johnston, "Holy Christian Church," p. 162.

II. Ancient History

By Professor William Scott Ferguson, Ph.D.
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Of the three periods of approximately fifteen hundred years each into which the history of the Western World falls, two belong to the domain of antiquity.

The first of these “links in the chain of eternity” includes the rise, maturity, and decay of the Oriental civilization at its three distinct but interconnected centers, Egypt, Babylonia, and Crete-Mycenz. The second reaches from 1200 B. C. to 300 A. D., and it too is filled with the growth, fruition, and decline of a civilization—the high material and intellectual culture of the Greeks and Romans, Overlapping this for several centuries, the third or Christian period runs down to our own time. The nineteenth century of our era may be regarded as the opening of a fourth period, one of untold possibilities for human development.

The Greeks, like the Christians, went to school for many centuries to their predecessors, Their earliest poems, the “Iliad” and “Odyssey” of Homer, are in one sense a legacy from the Cretan-Mycenaean age, in which the scene of their action is laid. None the less, like the peoples of medieval and modern Europe, the Greeks owed the production of their most characteristic things to their own native effort.

It was in the eighth and seventh centuries B. C. that the Greeks became a new species of mankind. In this, the time of their expansion from an Aegean into a Mediterranean people, they shook off the bonds which had shackled the Oriental spirit, and, trusting to their own intellects, faced without flinching the grave problems of human life. When they then awoke to a realization of their position, they found themselves in the possession of cities which were at the same time states, Political connection between them there was none, and slender indeed were the

ties of sentiment, language, and religion which bound to one another the Hellenes of Miletus, Corinth, Syracuse, Marseilles, and the hundreds of other Greek city-states then in existence. The complexity of the map may be appreciated by observing that Crete alone had twenty-three distinct states. In Greece, as elsewhere, cities in which life was at once national and municipal proved the most favorable soil for the growth of free institutions.

The Individualism Of Greece

The keynote of the formative age of Greece was the rise of individualism. Poets freed themselves from the Homeric conventions, and dealt not as of yore with the deeds of ancient heroes, but with their own emotions, ideas, and experiences. They laid aside the measure and diction of the Epos and wrote every man and woman in his native rhythm and dialect. Sculptors and painters, long since accustomed to work in the spirit of a school, and to elaborate more and more scrupulously certain types of art, now became conscious that so much of their work was of their own creation that they began laying claim to it by adding their signatures.

The problems of religion were no longer satisfactorily settled by the Homeric revelation. They forced themselves directly upon the attention of every thinking individual. One man remained orthodox, another took refuge in the emotional cults of Dionysos and Demeter, another revolted and sought to explain the world as a product of natural laws and not of divine creation. Men who had earlier been obscured by their respective families, clans, and brotherhoods, now severed themselves for all public purposes from these associations, recognizing only the authority of a state which threw open its privileges to all alike. There were revolters in politics as there were revolters in religion and in art: the tyrants are the kinsmen of the personal poets, Archilochus, Sappho, Alcaeus, and of scientists like Thales of Miletus and the Ionian pyhsicists.

The Asiatic Greeks were in general the leaders at this time, and Miletus was the greatest city in the entire Greek world.

Sparta—-Athens—Thebes

The sixth century which followed was an age of reaction. Men shrank from the violent outbreaks of the preceding generations. It was the time of the “seven wise men,” of the precept “nothing in excess,” of the curbing of aristocracies with their claim to be a law unto themselves. During this epoch of repression a rich and diversified culture which had developed in Sparta was narrowed down to one single imperious interest —war and preparation for war. With the leveling down of the Spartan aristocracy went the decay of the art and letters of which it had been the bearer. The Spartan people became an armed camp living a life of soldierly comradeship and of puritanical austerity, ever solicitous lest its serfs (there were fifteen of them to every Spartan) should revolt and massacre, ever watchful lest the leadership which it had established in Greek affairs (there were 15,000 Spartans and 3,000,000 Greeks) should be imperiled. In Athens the course of development had been directly the opposite of this. There, too, the nobles were ousted from their monopoly of political rights, but on the other hand, the serfs were admitted to citizenship. The men who molded Athens in its period of democratic growth were themselves aristocrats who never doubted for a moment that the culture of their order would ennoble the life of the masses. Hence no pains or expenses were spared by them to build and maintain—at their own cost—public *palaestrae* and *gymnasia* in which poor and rich alike could obtain a suppleness and grace of body that added charm and vigor to their movements; and to institute so-called musical contests in which the people generally had to participate, and the preparation for which incited all classes to study literature and art—above all to learn the words and the music of lyric and dramatic choruses. The aristocracy died down in Athens, but the Athenians became the aristocracy of all Greece.

That they did so was largely the work of their most brilliant statesman, Themistocles, whose “Life” by Plutarch is included in The Harvard Classics. (1) Under his far-sighted guidance Athens built an invincible fleet at great financial sacrifice, cooperated with Sparta with singular devotion and

unparalleled heroism in beating off the Persians, and established her maritime empire. Aristides (2) was at first his unsuccessful rival and later his faithful collaborator, and Pericles,(3) whose interest in science, philosophy, jurisprudence, art, and literature makes him the best exponent of the culminating epoch of Greek development, profited sagaciously by their work. He both perfected the institutions of Athenian democracy and defined and organized its imperial mission. No man in high place ever took more seriously the doctrine that all citizens were equally capacitated for public service, yet no more ardent imperialist than he ever lived. The truth is that Athenian democracy with all that it implies was impossible without the Athenian maritime empire. The subject allies were as indispensable to the Athenians as the slaves, mechanics, and traders are to the citizens of Plato's ideal republic.

This empire Sparta sought to destroy, and to this end waged fruitless war on Athens for ten years (431-421 B.C.). What she failed to accomplish, Alcibiades, the evil genius of Athens, effected, for at his insistence the democrats embarked on the fatal Sicilian expedition. After the dreadful disaster which they sustained before Syracuse (413 B.C.), their dependencies revolted and ceased paying them tribute; whereupon, unable to make head against the Sicilians, Spartans, and Persians, who had joined forces against her, Athens succumbed in 405 B. C. It is doubtful whether any other city of 50,000 adult males ever undertook works of peace and war of similar magnitude. Athens led Greece when Greece led the world.

The Spartans took her place, but they held it only through the support given them by their confederates, Persia and Syracuse. When they quarreled with the Persians they at once lost it; regained it by the Kings (4) Peace of 387 B. C., but only to fall before Thebes sixteen years later. Thebes depended solely upon her great warrior-statesman, Epaminondas. His death in battle, in 362 B. C., meant the downfall of the Theban supremacy, and at the birth of Alexander the Great in 356 B. C. the claim could be made that what the

Greeks had sought for two hundred years had now been accomplished: all the European Greek cities, great and small, were again free as they had been in the seventh century. In reality, as Plutarch's biography of Demosthenes (5) shows, they lived rent by factional struggles, in constant fear and envy of one another, and under the shadow of a great peril which union, not disunion, could alone avert.

Macedon

Philip of Macedon united Greece under his own leadership, and with the power thus secured Alexander the Great laid the Persian Empire prostrate and open for swift and persistent Greek colonization. As Machiavelli in his "Prince" (6) points out, "his successors had to meet no other difficulty than that which arose among themselves from their own ambitions." This was sufficient, however. It led to a thirty years' war such as had never before been seen. At its end the Greco-Macedonian world was paralyzed by an unstable balance of power in which Egypt, under the Ptolemies, by using its great wealth to maintain a magnificent fleet held Macedon and Asia in check. The unification of Italy under Rome (343-270 B. C.) and the subsequent destruction of the Carthaginian Empire (264-201 B. C.) brought into hostile conflict with Egypt's enemies a military state which was far stronger than any individual Greek kingdom. This state had a population of 5,000,000, an army list of 750,000, and it could keep 100,000 men in the field for many years at a stretch. Such a force could be stopped only by a federation of the entire Greek world. The Greeks again paid the just penalty for their disunion, and after a bitter struggle they sank under the Roman sway.

The Rise Of Rome

The Romans who conquered the Greeks were not "gentlemen" like Cicero (7) and Cesar (8) and their contemporaries of a hundred and fifty years later. Their temper is only partially revealed in Plutarch's "Coriolanus," (9) in which a legend— which, however, the Romans and Greeks of Plutarch's time (46-125 A. D.) believed to be a fact—is made to illustrate the alleged

uncompromising character of their political struggles and the lofty virtues of their domestic life. In fact, they had many of the qualities of Iroquois, and when they took by storm a hostile city, their soldiers —uncultured peasants, once the iron bonds of discipline were relaxed — often slew every living thing which came in their way: men, women, children, and even animals. The world was not subdued by Rome with rosewater or modern humanitarian methods.

Five generations later the Italians were in a fair way to being Hellenized, so powerful had been the reaction of the eastern provinces upon them in the interval. During this epoch of rapid denationalization, the Roman aristocracy, which had guided the state first to internal harmony, then to stable leadership in Italy, and finally to world-empire, became divided against itself. The empire had nurtured a stock of contractors, money lenders, grain and slave dealers — the so-called equestrian order — which pushed the great landed proprietors, who constituted the senate, from position to position; wrested from them control of the provinces which it then pillaged most outrageously, and helped on the paralysis of government from which the rule of the emperors was the only escape. The youth of Cicero coincided with the suicidal strife between the agrarian and the commercial wings of the aristocracy. Cicero, being a "new man," had to attach himself to great personages like Pompey, in order to make his way in politics, so that his political course and his political views were both "wobbly"; but he had at least one fixed policy, that the "harmony of the orders" must be restored at all costs. (10) This, however, was impracticable.

The Achievements Of Julius And Augustus Caesar

The empire had also bred a standing army, and the necessity that this be used against the Teutons, Italians, Greeks, and Gauls bred leader after leader who could dictate terms to the civil government. The last of these was Julius Cesar. He was the last because he decided not to coerce the senate, but to put himself in its place. His short reign (49-44 B.C.) is a memorable episode in the development of Rome, in that it was the first

reappearance of a world monarchy since Alexander the Great's death. Caesar is greeted in contemporary Greek documents as "the Savior of the entire race of men." After his murder a quarrel arose between rival candidates for the command of the troops—Caesar's troops, as the assassins found to their sorrow. Antony, (11) his master of horse, finally took one half of them with him to the East, to finish Caesar's projected campaign against the Parthians, to live in Alexandria at the feet of Cleopatra, Caesar's royal mistress—who was not only an able and unscrupulous woman, but also the heir of a bad political tradition—to bring Egypt into the Roman Empire by annexing the Roman Empire to the Egyptian crown. The most that can be said for him is that he was a kind of bastard Cesar. On the other hand, Augustus, Caesar's adopted son, to whom the command of the rest of the troops fell, proved to be a statesman of the highest order. He roused national and republican feeling in Italy against Antony and his Egyptian "harlot";

After defeating them at Actium in 31 B. C., he had to reckon with the demon—or was it a ghost?—which he had conjured up. This he did by establishing a peculiar com- promise between republicanism and monarchy called the principate, which lasted, with fitful reversions to Caesar's model, and gradual degeneracy toward a more and more complete despotism, until the great military revolt of the third century A. D. occurred, when the Roman system of government, and with it the Greco-Roman civilization, sank in rapid decay. For two hundred and fifty years sixty mil- lions of people had enjoyed the material blessings of peace and orderly government. They had cut down forests, made the desert a garden, built cities by the hundreds, and created eternal monuments of the sense for justice and magnificence which penetrated from Rome to the ends of the known world. Then they became the helpless prey of a few hundred thousand native and barbarian soldiers. The decline of the Roman Empire is the greatest tragedy in history.

During the principate the prince or emperor seemed to be the source of all actions, good and bad. Upon the will and character of a single individual hung suspended, apparently, the life and weal of every human

being. It was, therefore, natural for this age to be interested in Biography. Hence Plutarch is at once a “document” for the time in which he lived and a charming “betrayer” of the Greco-Roman world on which he looked back.

Footnotes

(1) Harvard Classics, xii, 5.
(2) H. C., xii, 80.
(3) H. C., xii, 36.
(4) H. C., xii, 110.
(5) H. C., xii, 197.
(6) H. C., xxxvi,
(7) H. C., xii, 225.
(8) H. C., xii, 274.
(9) H. C., xii, 152.
(10) See Cicero’s “Letters” in Harvard Classics, ix, 81.
(11) H, C., xii, 334.

III. The Renaissance

By Professor Murray Anthony Potter (1909)

The Renaissance followed what is, even now, sometimes called the Dark Ages. The almost inevitable inference is that a period of darkness was succeeded by one of light. The veil of night rent asunder, the world, rejoicing in the sun's rays, with glad energy again took up its work. But much of the darkness of what are more fitly called the Middle Ages is due to the dimness of vision of those who have baptized the period with a forbidding name, and if we called the Renaissance an age of light, is it not because we are dazzled by mere glamour? After all, the Renaissance was the offspring of the Middle Ages, and a child must frequently bear the burdens of its parents.

One of the burdens of the Middle Ages was obscurantism, and obscurantism is that which "prevents enlightenment, or hinders the progress of knowledge and wisdom." Instead of dying at the close of the Middle Ages, it lived through the Renaissance, wary and alert, its eyes ever fixed on those whom it regarded as enemies, falling upon them from ambush when because of age or weakness their courage flagged, and it triumphed in the sixteenth century. It can never die as long as there are men. Neither can superstition die, nor fear, nor inveterate evil passions, which, if they smolder for a time, will unfailingly burst forth and rage with greater fury. If such be your pleasure, you can, with some plausibility, represent the Renaissance as darker than the Middle Ages. Machiavelli, (1) the Medicis, and the Borgias have long been regarded as sin incarnate in odious forms. Making all due allowances for exaggeration and perversion of truth, the Renaissance was not a golden age, and the dramas of horror (2) are something more than the nightmares of a madman. And yet it is a luminous age. The sun has its spots, and the light of the Renaissance is all the more intense because of the blackness of the intermingling shadows,

The Individualism Of The Renaissance

No age can be adequately defined by a short phrase, but it was a happy thought which prompted the statement that the Renaissance was the age of the discovery of man. Add the importance, not only of man in general, but of the individual. It is true that men of marked individuality abounded in the Middle Ages. You have only to think of Gregory the Great, Gregory of Tours, Charlemagne, Liutprand, Abelard, and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. What is new is a general awakening to the fact that the perfection of individuality is so important, and the desire to force your contemporaries and posterity to regard you as different from other men.

It might be said, with a certain amount of exaggeration of course, that the medieval man was Plato's dweller in the cave, who succeeded at last in making his escape into the light of day, and so doing became the Renaissance man enraptured by what lay within his field of vision, and allured by the infinite promise of what lay beyond. And as if the actual world cramped him, he must discover ideal realms and live in the past and the future as well as the present.

The Revival Of Classical Antiquity

His interest in antiquity is well known. With the ardor of treasure hunters, scholars sought for classical manuscripts and antiquities, in France, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, and the East, and the enthusiasm excited by their success could not have been greater had they discovered El Dorado. They were generous with their treasures, door after door opening upon antiquity was thrown back, and men swarmed through them eager to become better acquainted with their idols and obtain from them information which their teachers of the Middle Ages were powerless to furnish, Some were so dazzled and docile that, instead of freeing themselves from bondage, they merely chose new masters, but, after all, more gracious ones.

Petrarch, anticipating Andrew Lang, writes letters to dead authors. Of Cicero he says: “Ignoring the space of time which separates us, I addressed him with a familiarity springing from my sympathy with his genius.” And in his letter to Livy: “I should wish (if it were permitted from on high), either that I had been born in thine age, or thou in ours; in the latter case, our age itself, and in the former, I personally should have been the better for it.” Montaigne says that he had been brought up from infancy with the dead, and that he had knowledge of the affairs of Rome “long before he had any of those of his own house; he knew the capitol and its plan before he knew the Louvre, and the Tiber before he knew the Seine.” (3)

The Renaissance Curiosity

This infatuation for antiquity may seem bizarre, but it did not exclude intense interest on the part of the Renaissance man for the world about him, his town, his country, and remote as well as neighboring nations. Petrarch likes to speak of the marvels of India and Ceylon. There were drops of gypsy blood in his veins, but he was afraid of stealing time from his beloved books, and remains an excellent example of the “far-gone” fireside traveler, who in his study roamed through distant parts, spared the inclemency of the weather and the incommodities and dangers of the road.

Montaigne, who loved “rain and mud like a duck,” was of stronger fiber. “Nature,” he says, “has placed us in the world free and unbound; we imprison ourselves in certain straits.” “Travel is, in my opinion, a very profitable exercise; the soul is then continually employed in observing new and unknown things, and I do not know, as I have often remarked, a better school wherein to model life than by incessantly exposing to it the diversity of so many other lives, fancies and usances, and by making it relish so perpetual a variety of forms of human nature.” :

From one source or another, then, the Renaissance men acquired an immense number of facts, and were able to retain them; for much is said

about their inexhaustible memory. The important thing to know is what they did with them. Was their passion for facts that of a miser for his gold, of a savage for shiny, many-colored beads?

A fact is a delightful, wholesome thing. To the everlasting credit of the Renaissance men they appreciated its value, and worked hard to acquire it, thus grappling with reality. No longer would they merely scan the surface of things; they would pierce, as Dante said, to the very marrow with the eyes of the mind. Two or more centuries later than Dante, Machiavelli complained that his contemporaries loved antiquity, but failed to profit by the lessons which are implicit in its history. But Machiavelli was not entirely just. The Renaissance men were tender gardeners, and in their loving care every fact, every theory, every suggestion burgeoned, flowered, and bore fruit.

Some of them, it is true, recognized limitations to the versatility characteristic of the spirit of the age. Pier Paolo Vergerio, after reviewing the principal branches of study, states that a liberal education does not presuppose acquaintance with them all; “for a thorough mastery of even one of them might fairly be the achievement of a lifetime. Most of us, too, must learn to be content with modest capacity as with modest fortune. Perhaps we do wisely to pursue that study which we find most suited to our intelligence and our tastes, though it is true we cannot rightly understand one subject unless we can perceive its relation to the rest.” These words might well have been written to-day. Very probably they were equally apposite in the Renaissance; yet they seem cautious, almost overtimorous, in a period when so many men were not only accomplished scholars, authors of repute, capable public servants or statesmen, connoisseurs of the fine arts, painters, sculptors, and architects themselves. There seems to have been nothing that they could not do if they wished,

The Age Of Discovery

Every interest was turned to account. In their pursuit of perfection they required an ampler environment. The age of the Renaissance is the age of the great discoveries, of Diaz, Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Vespucci, the Cabots, Magellan, Francis Drake,(4) and others, whose journeys were undertaken with a far different purpose than the mere satisfying of restless curiosity.

Equally practical was the study of the heavens. The stars had long been regarded as flaming beacons in the sky, prophets and guides for man to his ultimate goal. Their influence, benign or malignant, determined the fates of individuals and nations. It behooved the prudent man to con- sult them, and he studied the hidden workings of nature not only to comprehend them, but to make them serve his purpose. There were many failures, but if the Renaissance is the age of Faust, it is also that of Copernicus.

In the study of the world about him, of the firmament, of the past and the future, the Renaissance man felt his subject was something created. In his turn he took up the role of creator, To escape from an importunate world he called into existence the Arcadia of the pastorals, the fairyland of the adult man. It has almost vanished from our sight, but its music and fragrance still hover in the air. Another manifestation of dissatisfaction with the actual world, more practical, is the creation of ideal commonwealths, Cities of the Sun, or Utopias.(5)

The Worship Of Beauty

The lover of beauty, nowadays shrinks from the Utopias of the Renaissance, but the practical men of that age cherished beauty with an affection we can hardly conceive. It was bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. It was the one guest ever sure of welcome. Dante, in the tornata of his first ode, says: “Ode! I believe that they shall be but rare who shall rightly understand thy meaning, so intricate and knotty is thy utterance of it. Wherefore, if perchance it come about that thou take thy way into the presence of folk who seem not rightly to perceive it; then I

pray thee to take heart again, and say to them, O my beloved lastling: 'Give heed, at least, how beautiful I am.'" They would give heed, and to such extremes did many Renaissance men go in their worship of beauty that they prostituted her and debased themselves. The majority remained sound of heart, and though tortured with doubts, and stumbling again and . again, they succeeded in making themselves worthy of communion with God.

Last of all, the question might be asked: is the Renaissance more than a period of storm and stress, a link between the Middle Ages and Modern Times? Like every age, it is one of transition, but it is also one of glorious achievement. If any one doubts this, let him remember only a few names of the imposing roll call—Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ariosto, Machiavelli, Rabelais, Montaigne, Calderon,(6) Lope de Vega, Cervantes,(7) Shakespeare,(8) and in their ranks Dante (9) takes his place with the same serene and august confidence with which he joined the company of Virgil and Homer.

Footnotes

(1) For Machiavelli's political ideals, see his "Prince" in Harvard Classics, xxxvi, 5, and Macaulay's essay "On Machiavelli" in Harvard Classics, Xxvii, 381. HCL-1
(2) See, for example, Webster's "Duchess of Malfi" in Harvard Classics, xlvii, 719. HCL—2
(3) Cf. Montaigne's "Institution and Education of Children" in Harvard Classics, xxxii, 29-73; and especially on his own education, pp. 67-71. See also Sainte-Betive's essay "On Montaigne" in Harvard Classics, xxxii, 109.
(4) For the narratives of these explorers see H. C.,, xliii, 22ff., xxxiii, 133ff.
(5) See, for example, Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" in H. C., xxxvi, 142.
(6)H. C., xxvi, 3ff,
(7) H. C., xiv.
(8) For works by Shakespeare and his contemporaries in the Elizabethan drama, see H. xlvi and xlvii.
(9) H. C., xx.

IV. The French Revolution

By Professor Robert Matteson Johnston, M.A.

The French Revolution concentrates within the narrow space of five years, from the 5th of May, 1789, to the 9th of Thermidor, 1794, all that man can conceive as most dramatic, repulsive, uplifting, terrifying, glorious, and disheartening. There is never a happy medium about it, nothing balanced or discriminating; everything is extreme, human emotion rising to the most intense collective utterance at the pangs of starvation, of murder, of oppression, of tyranny, at the joy of decisive action and of climbing the heights whence liberty and betterment can be seen streaking the horizon with hope. That is why the Revolution fascinates the ordinary reader more than perhaps any other period of history. It sets before him the bounds of the sublime and of the ignoble, of all that lies undeveloped in himself never, in all probability, to find expression.

The Contrasts Of The Revolution

How extraordinarily difficult to interpret such a movement! Even Carlyle, with all his his passionate humanity, fails to catch the figure of that unfortunate woman who tramped through the empty streets of Paris at dawn one gray autumn day, starvation and despair in her eyes, mechanically tap- ping her drum and lugubriously chanting: “Du pain! Du pain!” (“Bread! Bread!”) That distressing figure, poignant in all its naked emotions, was to uproot the Bourbons from Versailles, to make of Paris once more the capital of France, and by that deed to divert the whole current of French history from a channel of two centuries. And that is the contrast, the difficulty, at every point. Mirabeau is a venal and corrupt individual whose turpitude insistently pursues us, and yet at moments he is the statesman of grand vision whose eye unerringly pierces through the veil of time. Charlotte Corday is but a:simple and quite unimportant young woman from the country; she drives a knife into , Marat’s heart, and with that heroic gesture flashes light to the very depths of a terrific crisis.

Histories Of The Revolution

A curious fact about the French Revolution, but not so strange as it would seem when one thinks the matter over, is that there should be no good history of it. The three outstanding books are those of Michelet, Carlyle, and Taine; and all three are destined to live long as masterpieces, intellectual and artistic; yet not one of them is wholly satisfactory to the present age, whether for its statement of facts, for its literary method, or for its mentality; while there is no sign at the present day that we are likely soon to get an- other great history of the Revolution. On the contrary, the tendency is for historians to concentrate their attention on the endless details or varied aspects of the movement, finding in each of these a sufficient object for the exercise of their industry and talents. Following that example, we may here perhaps best touch on the reaction between France and England in terms of the Revolution, and particularly in regard to those two famous books, Voltaire's "Letters on the English."(1) and Burke's "Reflections on the French Revolution." (2)

The Revolution Of Ideas

The early part of the eighteenth century witnessed a great change in the current of ideas in France. The death of Louis XIV, and the coming to power of Philippe Duc d'Orléans as regent, dispelled all the old prestige of glittering Versailles, and gave France a wit and debauchee for ruler who cared nothing for pomp or etiquette. He enjoyed life after his own unedifying fashion; he gambled and encouraged stock exchange speculation; he relaxed the muzzle and let slip the courtier's leash with which Louis had curbed the great men of letters of his epoch. And immediately French writers dashed away into' the boundless field of political satire and criticism. Montesquieu led off with his "Lettres Persanes," in 1721, and Voltaire followed hard at his heels with his "Letters on the English," in 1734. The hounds of spring were at winter's traces.

Voltaire's Daring

Montesquieu's violent arraignment of the old order passed only because he seasoned it more than generously with a *sauce piquante* that titillated the depraved taste of the Regent to a nicety. Voltaire's book was in even worse case; it was immediately condemned, and an order was issued to arrest the author and imprison him in the Bastille. Voltaire had to fly for safety. And yet, to a modern reader, the "Letters on the English" doubtless seems a perfectly mild affair,

It is only by bearing in mind the conditions of political despotism that then existed in France that one can realize the boldness of the book. In it Voltaire gives his impressions of England in his supremely lucid style, but after the fashion of the man who throws a ball at some object from which he tries to catch it on the rebound. He is writing of England, but he is thinking of France; and in the customs and institutions of the former he seeks the examples from which he can measure those of his own country.

Voltaire is, on the whole, inclined to think well of the strange people whom he visited across the Channel, though he cannot avoid the conclusion that their philosophy, liberty, and climate lead straight to melancholia. England appears to him the land of contentment, prosperity, order, and good government, Monarchy is restrained by a well-balanced parliamentary system, and above all there is toleration in matters of faith and in matters of opinion. He frankly admires, and calls on his countrymen to copy, what seems to him the most admirable of models. It may be noted, however, that he is clearly nervous of strictly political questions, and he always prefers getting around to his plea for tolerance by the circuitous road of religion.

An English View Of The Revolution

With Burke, more than half a century later, we get the strongest possible contrast. He admires nothing; he reprobates everything; he foresees the worst. For one thing, the Revolution had now actually broken out. Already its best aspects were becoming obscured, as disorder fast grew, and as the National Assembly deliberately adopted a policy of destruction to defeat Bourbon apathy and insouciance. France appeared to be threatened with anarchy, and that seemed to Burke more intolerable than the long-continued conditions of tyranny and misgovernment that were responsible for it. He was an old man, and more conservative than in his younger days. To him the glorious revolution of William of Orange and the Whigs seemed the perfect model, and the parliamentary institutions of Britain the ideal form of government. The disorders of Paris and the methods of the National Assembly shocked and wounded him, so he turned on them and rent them. He admitted, indeed, that he was not in a position to pronounce judgment: “I do not pretend to know France as correctly as some others,” and so he confined himself to the réle of the advocate. His pleading against the Revolution echoed through the Courts of Europe, carried conviction in almost every quarter where doubt existed, and to this day remains the most effective indictment against the men who made modern France. The success of Burke’s book ‘was in part due to the fact that its publication was followed by the Reign of Terror, which seemed to prove the author’s argument, but above all to its brilliant and noble, if somewhat too ample, style. Of this one example only will be given:

Burke On Marie Antoinette

“It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the ‘Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendor, and joy. Oh! what a Revolution! And what a heart must I have to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic,

distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honor, and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever." (3)

Thus Burke proudly looked down on the miseries of France, while Voltaire had admiringly looked up to the prosperities of England. And we who come more than a century later, while recognizing their preeminence as men of letters, may perceive that as thinkers they were perhaps a little too near their objects. Burke's arguments are always admirable but unconvincing; while Voltaire's often justified praise of the English reposes on an obvious failure to understand them.

Footnotes

(1) Harvard Classics, xxxiv, 65.
(2) H. C., xxiv, 153.
(3) H. C., xxiv, 223-224.

V. The Territorial Development Of The United States

By Professor Frederick Jackson Turner

Expansion has been the very law of American life. In the treaties which record the successive annexations of the territory of the United States we may read the story of the nation's acquisition of its physical basis, a basis comparable in area and resources not to any single European country but to Europe as a whole. If a map of the United States is laid down upon a map of Europe drawn to the same scale, with San Francisco resting on the coast of Spain, Florida will occupy the land of Palestine, Lake Superior will be adjacent to the southern shore of the Baltic, New Orleans below the coast of Asia Minor, and the shores of North Carolina will nearly coincide with the eastern end of the Black Sea. All of Western Europe will lie beyond the Mississippi, the western limits of the United States in 1783. These treaties (1) mark the stages by which the Union acquired an area equal to all nations west of the Black Sea.

The Boundaries Of The New Nation

Freed from the fear of French attack after the peace of 1763, the thirteen colonies declared their independence. Against the wishes of Spain, and even against the pressure of her French ally in the Revolutionary War, the United States secured from England by the treaty of 1783 (2) boundaries which extended along the Great Lakes, west to the Mississippi, and south to Florida, as well as the free navigation of the Mississippi. Spain recovered from Britain Florida, which she had conquered in the course of the war.

But these boundaries were only paper rights, for England failed to give up her posts on the Great Lakes, alleging the neglect of the United States to carry out the provisions of the treaty in regard to loyalists and debts, and Canadian officials encouraged the Indians across the Ohio to resist the

advance of the Americans. In similar fashion on the southwest Spain denied the right of England to convey to the Union the territory between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi, and withheld the navigation of the river by means of her possession of New Orleans. She also, in the period of the weak confederation, intrigued with leaders of the Kentucky and Tennessee settlements to withdraw them from the Union; and, like England, she used her influence over the Indians to restrain the American advance.

While Indian wars were in progress north of the Ohio during Washington's administration, the French Revolution broke out, and England feared not only that the American expeditions against the Indians were in reality directed against the posts which she retained on the Great Lakes, but also that the United States would aid France in a general attack on her, Breaking her historic alliance with Spain, the French Republic, in 1783, tried to involve, first the Government of the United States and then the western frontiersmen in attacks upon Florida and Louisiana.

These were the critical conditions which in 1794 resulted in Jay's mission and treaty by which England agreed to give up the western posts.

The Struggle For The Mississippi

Alarmed at the prospect of a union of England and the United States, Spain not only made peace with France at Basle in 1795, but also, by Pinckney's treaty in that year, conceded to the United States the Mississippi boundary and the navigation of the river. The latter concession was vital to the prosperity of the Mississippi Valley, for only by way of this river could the settlers get their surplus crops to a market.

It had become clear by 1795 that, with rival European nations threatening the flanks of the American advance, interfering in domestic politics, and tampering with the western frontiersmen, the United States was in danger of becoming a mere dependency of the European state system.' Partly to ensure such a dependence of the United States upon herself, and

partly to procure a granary for her West Indian Islands, France now urged Spain to give her Louisiana and Florida, promising protection against the American advance.

The Alleghenies seemed to the leaders of French policy the proper boundaries for the Union. At last, in 1800, Napoleon so far mastered Spain as to force her to yield Louisiana to him; and the Spanish Intendant at New Orleans, pending the arrival of French troops, closed the Mississippi to American commerce, The West was in a flame. It had now acquired a population of over three hundred and eighty thousand, and it threatened the forcible seizure of New Orleans. Even the peaceful and French- loving President Jefferson hinted that he would seek an English alliance, and demanded the possession of the mouth of the Mississippi from France, arguing that whoever held that spot was our natural enemy. Convinced that it was inexpedient to attempt to occupy New Orleans in view of the prospect of facing the sea power of England and an attack by the American settlers, Napoleon capriciously tossed the whole of the Province of Louisiana to Jefferson by the Louisiana Purchase Treaty‘ of 1803, and thereby replenished his exchequer with fifteen million dollars, made friends with the United States, and gave it the possibility of a noble national career by doubling its territory and by yielding it the control of the great central artery of the continent.

Extension Of The Rocky Mountains

The expansive spirit of the West grew by what it fed on. The Ohio valley coveted Canada, and the South wished Florida, where England exercised an influence upon the Spanish administration. It was the West that took the lead —bringing on the war of 1812. In the peace negotiations in 1814 Great Britain tried to establish a neutral zone of Indian country between Canada and the Ohio Valley settlements, but by the treaty (5) the United States retained its former possessions, By the convention of 1818 they extended the boundary between Canada and the United States from the Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains along the forty-ninth parallel,

leaving the disputed Oregon country open to each nation for a term of years without prejudice to the rights of either.

Acquisition Of Florida And Texas

In the same years the United States was pressing Spain to relinquish Florida. Claiming West Florida and Texas as a part of the Louisiana Purchase, the Government annexed the former piecemeal in 1810 and 1812. Taught by General Jackson's successful although unauthorized invasion of Florida in 1818 that she held that position on the Gulf only at the pleasure of the United States, and hopeful perhaps, to avert the threatened recognition of the revolting Spanish-American colonies, Spain ceded Florida in 1819, drawing an irregular line between her possessions and those of the United States which left Texas as well as the other ' southwestern territory in Spain's hands. Recognition of the revolted republics followed in 1823 and thereafter the Union had to deal with Mexico in place of Spain in acquiring mainland possessions. Russia withdrew her claims to territory south of 54° 40' in 1824, and as a result of the negotiations which preceded this action, as well as by the prospect of European intervention in Spanish America, President Monroe in 1823 announced the famous Doctrine (7) which declared the American continents no longer subject ' to European colonization or intervention to oppress them or control their destiny.

Early in the thirties American missionaries entered the Oregon country where the Hudson's Bay Company held sway under the English flag. American settlers, chiefly descendants of the hardy frontiersmen of the Mississippi Valley, also made settlements in Mexico's province of Texas, In 1836 the Texans revolted, declared their independence, and appealed to the United States for annexation. The northeastern boundary was settled by the Webster-Ashburton treaty (8) in 1842, leaving the fate of Oregon still undetermined. In that very year an emigration of American farmers began across the plains and mountains to that distant land, and relations between the Union and England became strained. In Texas also European interests were involved, for in the long interval between the formation of

the Texan Republic and its annexation by the United States, England and France used their influence to keep it independent. California, moreover, furnished reason for apprehension, for England had shown an interest in its fate, as Mexico, torn by internal dissensions, gave evidence that her outlying provinces were likely to drop from her nerveless hands.

The slavery contest now interrupted the old American expansive tendencies, for while the South raised its voice of warning against the possibility of a free Texas under British protectorate and demanded its annexation, the Whigs and anti-slavery men of the North, alarmed at the spread of slavery and the prospect of new slave States, showed opposition to further territorial acquisition in the Southwest. But in the election of 1844, which was fought on the issues of the “reoccupation of Oregon and the reannexation of Texas,” Polk, a Tennessee Scotch-Irishman, representing the historic expansive spirit, won the Presidency. Texas was annexed as a State under a joint resolution of Congress in 1845, before Polk was inaugurated, and immediately thereafter he determined that if Mexico made this annexation an occasion for war, she should be compelled to cede us California and her other Southwestern lands as the price of peace.

To The Pacific

He compromised the Oregon question with England by the Treaty of 1846, accepting the forty-ninth parallel as the boundary, in spite of the campaign cry of “fifty-four forty or fight.” The same year the Mexican war began, in which American troops overran California and the intervening land.

With the American flag floating over the capital of Mexico, a strong movement began to hold Mexico itself, or at least additional territory. But by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (9) in 1848 the line was drawn along the Gila River and from its mouth to the Pacific. Agitation for a southern route to the Pacific led to the further acquisition of a zone south of the Gila by the Gadsden Purchase of 1853.

By these annexations between 1846 and 1853 the United States gained over 1,200,000 square miles of territory. Gold was discovered in California in 1848, and unimagined riches in precious metals, timber, and agricultural resources were later revealed in this vast new empire. But most important of all was the fact that the nation had at last made. its lodgment on the shores of the Pacific, where it was to be involved in the destiny of that ocean and its Asiatic shores,

The South, deprived of the benefits of these great acquisitions by the compromise of 1850, tried in vain to find new outlets by Cuban annexation. But the Civil War resulting from the rivalries of the expanding sections engrossed the energies of the nation. At the close of that war, Russia, which had given moral support to the North when England and France were doubtful, offered the United States her Alaskan territory and, not without opposition, Secretary Seward secured the ratification of a treaty (10) in 1867 by which nearly six hundred thousand square miles were added to our domains, :

For nearly a third of a century after the Civil War the energies of the Union were poured out in the economic conquest of the vast annexations in its continguous territory. In 1892 the Superintendent of the Census announced that the maps of population could no longer depict a frontier line bounding the outer edge of advancing settlement. The era of colonization was terminating. The free lands were being rapidly engrossed and the Union was reaching the condition of other settled states,

The Island Possessions And The Panama Canal

In this era the old expansive movement became manifest in a new form by the Spanish-American War and the acquisition of land oversea. It was the recognition of the independence of Cuba (11) by the United States in 1898 and the intervention to expel Spain which brought about the Spanish-American War; but once involved in that war, the naval exigencies led to the conquest of the Philippines, and Porto Rico as well as Cuba.

Considerations of strategy also facilitated the annexation of Hawaii (12) in 1898.

By the treaty of peace (13) in 1898 Spain ceded the Philippines and Porto Rico and withdrew from Cuba, which obtained its autonomy by the recall of the American troops in 1902.

The events of the war, and especially the dramatic voyage of the *Oregon* around Cape Horn from the Pacific coast to share in the fight off Santiago, gave an impetus to the long debated project of constructing the Isthmian Canal by the United States. With her vastly increased power in the Pacific, her new possessions in the Caribbean Sea, and the astonishing growth on the Pacific coast, the canal seemed a necessity, and almost a part of our coast line. By the Hay-Pauncefote treaty of 1901, England withdrew the obstacles arising from the Clayton-Bulwer treaty of 1850, and the United States acquired the rights of the French Company, which had failed in its undertaking to pierce the isthmus. When in 1903 Colombia rejected a treaty providing for the canal, a revolution broke out in Panama. President Roosevelt with extraordinary promptness recognized the Republic of Panama and secured a treaty (14) from this republic which was ratified in 1904, granting the canal zone and various rights to the United States.

Thus at the beginning of the twentieth century the long process of attrition of the United States upon the Spanish Empire was brought to this striking climax. The feeble Atlantic colonies had won a land extending across the continent, they had acquired dependencies in the Caribbean, in the Pacific, and off the coast of Asia, and they had provided for connecting the two oceans by the Panama Canal.

Footnotes

(1) The references in this lecture are to the volume of American Historical Documents, and especially to the collection of treaties, Harvard Classics, xliii.
(2) H. C., xliii, 185.

(3) Compare “Washington’s Farewell Address,” in H. C., xliii, 255, 256; 261-264.
(4) H. C., xliii, 267.
(5) H. C., xliii, 273
(6) H. C., xiii, 286.
(7) H. C., xliii, 296.
(8) H. C., xliii, 299.
(9) H. C., xliii, 309.
(10) H. C., xliii, 459.
(11) H. C. xliii 467
(12)H. C., xliii, 464.
(13) H. C., xliii, 469.
(14) H. C., xliii, 478.