

Atlantis: The Antediluvian World

Part III The Civilization Of The Old World And New Compared.

Chapter I.

Civilization An Inheritance.

Material civilization might be defined to be the result of a series of inventions and discoveries, whereby man improves his condition, and controls the forces of nature for his own advantage.

The savage man is a pitiable creature; as Menabosbu says, in the Chippeway legends, he is pursued by a "perpetual hunger;" he is exposed unprotected to the blasts of winter and the heats of summer. A great terror sits upon his soul; for every manifestation of nature--the storm, the wind, the thunder, the lightning, the cold, the heat--all are threatening and dangerous demons. The seasons bring him neither seed-time nor harvest; pinched with hunger, appeasing in part the everlasting craving of his stomach with seeds, berries, and creeping things, he sees the animals of the forest dash by him, and he has no means to arrest their flight. He is powerless and miserable in the midst of plenty. Every step toward civilization is a step of conquest over nature. The invention of the bow and arrow was, in its time, a far greater stride forward for the human race than the steam-engine or the telegraph. The savage could now reach his game--his insatiable hunger could be satisfied; the very eagle, "towering in its pride of place," was not beyond the reach of this new and wonderful weapon. The discovery of fire and the art of cooking was another immense step forward. The savage, having nothing but wooden vessels in which to cook, covered the wood with clay; the day hardened in the fire. The savage gradually learned that he could dispense with the wood, and thus pottery was invented. Then some one (if we are to believe the Chippeway legends, on the shores of Lake Superior) found fragments of the pure copper of that region, beat them into shape, and the art of metallurgy was begun; iron was first worked in the same way by shaping meteoric iron into spear-heads.

But it must not be supposed that these inventions followed one another in rapid succession. Thousands, and perhaps tens of thousands, of years intervened between each step; many savage races have not to this day achieved some of these steps. Prof. Richard Owen says, "Unprepossessed and sober

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experience teaches that arts, language, literature are of slow growth, the results of gradual development."

I shall undertake to show hereafter that nearly all the arts essential to civilization which we possess date back to the time of Atlantis--certainly to that ancient Egyptian civilization which was coeval with, and an outgrowth from, Atlantis.

In six thousand years the world made no advance on the civilization which it received from Atlantis.

Phoenicia, Egypt, Chaldea, India, Greece, and Rome passed the torch of civilization from one to the other; but in all that lapse of time they added nothing to the arts which existed at the earliest period of Egyptian history. In architecture, sculpture, painting, engraving, mining, metallurgy, navigation, pottery, glass-ware, the construction of canals, roads, and aqueducts, the arts of Phoenicia and Egypt extended, without material change or improvement, to a period but two or three hundred years ago. The present age has entered upon a new era; it has added a series of wonderful inventions to the Atlantean list; it has subjugated steam and electricity to the uses of man. And its work has but commenced: it will continue until it lifts man to a plane as much higher than the present as the present is above the barbaric condition; and in the future it will be said that between the birth of civilization in Atlantis and the new civilization there stretches a period of many thousands of years, during which mankind did not invent, but simply perpetuated.

Herodotus tells us ("Euterpe," cxlii.) that, according to the information he received from the Egyptian priests, their written history dated back 11,340 years before his era, or nearly 14,000 years prior to this time. They introduced him into a spacious temple, and showed him the statues of 341 high-priests who had in turn succeeded each other; and yet the age of Columbus possessed no arts, except that of printing (which was ancient in China), which was not known to the Egyptians; and the civilization of Egypt at its first appearance was of a higher order than at any subsequent period of its history, thus testifying that it drew its greatness from a fountain higher than itself. It was in its early days that Egypt worshipped one only God; in the later ages this simple and sublime belief was buried under the corruptions of polytheism. The greatest pyramids were built by the Fourth Dynasty, and so universal was education at that time among the people that the stones with which they were built retain to this day the writing of the workmen. The first king was Menes.

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"At the epoch of Menes," says Winchell, "the Egyptians were already a civilized and numerous people. Manetho tells us that Athotis, the son of this first king, Menes, built the palace at Memphis; that he was a physician, and left anatomical books. All these statements imply that even at this early period the Egyptians were in a high state of civilization." (Winchell's "Preadamites," p. 120.) "In the time of Menes the Egyptians had long been architects, sculptors, painters, mythologists, and theologians." Professor Richard Owen says, "Egypt is recorded to have been a civilized and governed community *before* the time of Menes. The pastoral community of a group of nomad families, as portrayed in the Pentateuch, may be admitted as an early step in civilization. But how far in advance of this stage is a nation administered by a kingly government, consisting of grades of society, with divisions of labor, of which one kind, assigned to the priesthood, was to record or chronicle the names and dynasties of the kings, the duration and chief events of their reigns!" Ernest Renan points out that "Egypt at the beginning appears mature, old, and entirely without mythical and heroic ages, as if the country had never known youth. Its civilization has no infancy, and its art no archaic period. The civilization of the Old Monarchy did not begin with infancy. It was already mature."

We shall attempt to show that it matured in Atlantis, and that the Egyptian people were unable to maintain it at the high standard at which they had received it, as depicted in the pages of Plato. What king of Assyria, or Greece, or Rome, or even of these modern nations, has ever devoted himself to the study of medicine and the writing of medical books for the benefit of mankind? Their mission has been to kill, not to heal the people; yet here, at the very dawn of Mediterranean history, we find the son of the first king of Egypt recorded "as a physician, and as having left anatomical books."

I hold it to be incontestable that, in some region of the earth, primitive mankind must have existed during vast spaces of time, and under most favorable circumstances, to create, invent, and discover those arts and things which constitute civilization. When we have it before our eyes that for six thousand years mankind in Europe, Asia, and Africa, even when led by great nations, and illuminated by marvellous minds, did not advance one inch beyond the arts of Egypt, we may conceive what lapses, what aeons, of time it must have required to bring savage man to that condition of refinement and civilization possessed by Egypt when it first comes within the purview of history.

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That illustrious Frenchman, H. A. Taine ("History of English Literature," p. 23), sees the unity of the Indo-European races manifest in their languages, literature, and philosophies, and argues that these pre-eminent traits are "the great marks of an original model," and that when we meet with them "fifteen, twenty, thirty centuries before our era, in an Aryan, an Egyptian, a Chinese, they represent the work of a great many ages, perhaps of several myriads of centuries. . . . Such is the first and richest source of these master faculties from which historical events take their rise; and one sees that if it be powerful it is because this is no simple spring, but a kind of lake, a deep reservoir, wherein other springs have, for a multitude of centuries, discharged their several streams." In other words, the capacity of the Egyptian, Aryan, Chaldean, Chinese, Saxon, and Celt to maintain civilization is simply the result of civilized training during "myriads of centuries" in some original home of the race.

I cannot believe that the great inventions were duplicated spontaneously, as some would have us believe, in different countries; there is no truth in the theory that men pressed by necessity will always hit upon the same invention to relieve their wants. If this were so, all savages would have invented the boomerang; all savages would possess pottery, bows and arrows, slings, tents, and canoes; in short, all races would have risen to civilization, for certainly the comforts of life are as agreeable to one people as another.

Civilization is not communicable to all; many savage tribes are incapable of it. There are two great divisions of mankind, the civilized and the savage; and, as we shall show, every civilized race in the world has had something of civilization from the earliest ages; and as "all roads lead to Rome," so all the converging lines of civilization lead to Atlantis. The abyss between the civilized man and the savage is simply incalculable; it represents not alone a difference in arts and methods of life, but in the mental constitution, the instincts, and the predispositions of the soul. The child of the civilized races in his sports manufactures water-wheels, wagons, and houses of cobs; the savage boy amuses himself with bows and arrows: the one belongs to a building and creating race; the other to a wild, hunting stock. This abyss between savagery and civilization has never been passed by any nation through its own original force, and without external influences, during the Historic Period; those who were savages at the dawn of history are savages still; barbarian slaves may have been taught something of the arts of their masters, and conquered races have shared some of the advantages possessed by their conquerors; but we will seek in vain for any example of a savage people developing civilization of and

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among themselves. I may be reminded of the Gauls, Goths, and Britons; but these were not savages, they possessed written languages, poetry, oratory, and history; they were controlled by religious ideas; they believed in God and the immortality of the soul, and in a state of rewards and punishments after death. Wherever the Romans came in contact with Gauls, or Britons, or German tribes, they found them armed with weapons of iron. The Scots, according to Tacitus, used chariots and iron swords in the battle of the Grampians-- "enormes gladii sine mucrone." The Celts of Gaul are stated by Diodorus Siculus to have used iron-headed spears and coats-of-mail, and the Gauls who encountered the Roman arms in B.C. 222 were armed with soft iron swords, as well as at the time when Caesar conquered their country. Among the Gauls men would lend money to be repaid in the next world, and, we need not add, that no Christian people has yet reached that sublime height of faith; they cultivated the ground, built houses and walled towns, wove cloth, and employed wheeled vehicles; they possessed nearly all the cereals and domestic animals we have, and they wrought in iron, bronze, and steel. The Gauls had even invented a machine on wheels to cut their grain, thus anticipating our reapers and mowers by two thousand years. The difference between the civilization of the Romans under Julius Caesar and the Gauls under Vercingetorix was a difference in degree and not in kind. The Roman civilization was simply a development and perfection of the civilization possessed by all the European populations; it was drawn from the common fountain of Atlantis.

If we find on both sides of the Atlantic precisely the same arts, sciences, religious beliefs, habits, customs, and traditions, it is absurd to say that the peoples of the two continents arrived separately, by precisely the same steps, at precisely the same ends. When we consider the resemblance of the civilizations of the Mediterranean nations to one another, no man is silly enough to pretend that Rome, Greece, Egypt, Assyria, Phoenicia, each spontaneously and separately invented the arts, sciences, habits, and opinions in which they agreed; but we proceed to trace out the thread of descent or connection from one to another. Why should a rule of interpretation prevail, as between the two sides of the Atlantic, different from that which holds good as to the two sides of the Mediterranean Sea? If, in the one case, similarity of origin has unquestionably produced similarity of arts, customs, and condition, why, in the other, should not similarity of arts, customs, and condition prove similarity of origin? Is there any instance in the world of two peoples, without knowledge of or intercourse with each other, happening upon the same invention, whether that invention be an arrow-head or a steam-engine? If it

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required of mankind a lapse of at least six thousand years before it began anew the work of invention, and took up the thread of original thought where Atlantis dropped it, what probability is there of three or four separate nations all advancing at the same speed to precisely the same arts and opinions? The proposition is untenable.

If, then, we prove that, on both sides of the Atlantic, civilizations were found substantially identical, we have demonstrated that they must have descended one from the other, or have radiated from some common source.