

#### CHAPTER 4 — THE ORIGIN AND GENESIS OF CIVILIZATION

Whoever will take the trouble (and if he has the time, he will find in it pleasure) to get on friendly and intimate terms with a dog, a cat, a horse or pig, will find many things in which our "poor relations" resemble us, or perhaps rather, we resemble them.

These animals will exhibit traces at least of all human feelings — love and hate, hope and fear, pride and shame, desire and remorse, vanity and curiosity, generosity and cupidity. Even something of our small vices and acquired tastes they may show. Goats that chew tobacco and like their dram are known on shipboard, and dogs that enjoy carriage-rides and like to run to fires, on land. I bought in Calcutta, when a boy, a monkey which all the long way home would pillow her head on mine as I slept, and keep off my face the cockroaches that infested the old Indiaman by catching them with her hands and cramming them into her maw. When I got home, she was so jealous of a little brother that I had to part with her to a lady who had no children. And my own children had in New York a little monkey, sent them from Paraguay, that so endeared herself to us all that when she died from over-indulgence in needle-points and pin-heads it seemed like losing a member of the family. She knew my step before I reached the door on coming home, and when it opened would spring to meet me with chattering caresses, the more prolonged the longer I had been away. She leaped from the shoulder of one to that of another at table; nicely discriminating between those who had been good to her and those who had offended her. At the time for school-children to pass by, she would perch before a front window and cut monkey shins for their amusement, chattering with delight at their laughter and applause, as she sprang from curtain to curtain and showed the convenience of a tail that one may swing by.

One of the most striking differences between man and the lower animals is that which distinguishes man as the unsatisfied animal. Yet I am not sure that this is in itself an original difference; an essential difference of kind. I am, on the contrary, as I come to consider it, inclined rather to think it a result of the endowment of man with the quality of reason that animals lack, than in itself an original difference.

For we see that, to some extent at least, the desires of animals increase as opportunities for gratifying them are afforded. Give a horse lump-sugar and he will come to you again to get it, though in his natural state he aspires to nothing beyond the herbage. The pampered lap-dogs whose tails stick out from warm clothes on the fashionable city avenues in winter seem to enjoy their clothing, though they could never solve the mystery of how to put it on, let alone how to make it. Even man is content with the best he can get until he begins to see he can get better. A handsome woman I have met, who puts on for a ball or opera an earl's ransom in gems, and must have a cockade in her coachman's hat and bicycle tires on her carriage wheels, will tell you that once her greatest desire was for a new wash-tub and a better cooking-stove.

The more we come to know the animals the harder we find it to draw any clear mental line between them and us, except on one point, as to which we may see a clear and profound distinction. This, that animals lack and that men have, is the power of tracing effect to cause, and from cause assuming effect.

Is it not in this power of "thinking things out," of "seeing the way through" — the power of tracing causal relations — that we find the essence of what we call reason, the possession of which constitutes the unmistakable difference, not in degree but in kind, between man and brutes, and enables him, though their fellow on the plane of material existence, to assume mastery and lordship

over them all?

Here is the germ of civilization. It is this power of relating effect to cause and cause to effect which renders the world intelligible to man; which enables him to understand the connection of things around him and the bearings of things above and beyond him; to live not merely in the present, but to pry into the past and to forecast the future; to distinguish not only what are presented to him through the senses, but things of which the senses cannot tell; to recognize as through mists a power from which the world itself and all that exists therein must have proceeded; to know that he himself shall surely die, but to believe that after that he shall live again.

Gifted alone with the power of relating cause and effect, man is among all animals the only producer in the true sense of the term. He is a producer, even in the savage state; and would endeavor to produce even in a world where there was no other man. But the same quality of reason which makes him the producer, also, where ever exchange becomes possible, makes him the exchanger. And it is along this line of exchanging that the body economic is evolved and develops, and that all the advances of civilization are primarily made.

But the first human pair to appear in the world could not have begun to use the higher forms of that power until their numbers had increased. With this increase of numbers the cooperation of efforts in the satisfaction of desires would begin. Aided at first by the natural affections, it would be carried beyond that point by that quality of reason which enables a man to see what the animal cannot, that by parting with what is less desired in exchange for what is more desired, a net increase in satisfaction is obtained.

With the beginning of exchange or trade among man this body economic begins to form, and in its beginning civilization begins. As trade begins in different places and proceeds from different

centers, sending out the network of exchange which relates men to each other through their needs and desires, different bodies economic begin to form and to grow in different places, each with distinguishing characteristics which, like the characteristics of the individual face and voice, are so fine as only to be appreciated relatively, and are better recognized than expressed.

We are accustomed to speak of certain peoples as uncivilized, and of certain other peoples as civilized or fully civilized, but in truth such use of terms is merely relative. To find an utterly uncivilized people we must find a people among whom there is no exchange or trade. Such a people does not exist, and, so far as our knowledge goes, never did. To find a fully civilized people we must find a people among whom exchange or trade is absolutely free and has reached the fullest development to which human desires can carry it. There is, as yet, unfortunately, no such people.