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## Introductory Reading for the Great Books Course

By FRANCIS NEILSON

### I

#### The University of Chicago Plan

WHEN DR. ROBERT HUTCHINS, Chancellor of the University of Chicago, announced his program of offering seventy-two books for adult reading classes, he cast a light which may penetrate the gloom that has fallen upon our system of education. In this broad program he hopes to reach 15,000,000 American men and women who are seeking knowledge of the best that has been said and thought in the world. A more laudable enterprise has not been launched for generations in this country. No one will deny the need for this cultural effort, nor will any sensible being underestimate the courage of Hutchins in making it. He realizes its difficulties and knows that his appeal is one all thinking people should consider seriously. He tells us: "The only hurdle you have to get over is that these books are hard. The program provides no short cut to culture."

He speaks from an experience with the courses that have been given under his direction at the university and also for adult classes which have been carried on in the city of Chicago for the past three years. In seventeen cities throughout the country the courses attracted 20,000 volunteer students.

When Sir John Lubbock, about fifty years ago, published his *Hundred Books*, he was no less surprised than the British public itself at the eager demand that was made for the volumes. At that time Great Britain had scarcely a full generation with common school instruction, and it was surprising, to say the least, that without preparation so many of the

middle class read and studied his selection of works. However, in lecturing upon the Lubbock list to working men's institutes, I found that the Bible and Shakespeare were fountains from which the students drew their inspiration to gather more knowledge.

Then afterwards Lord Acton drew up his famous list of essential works. But this was for scholars only, and I doubt whether its appeal went beyond the bounds of the small circles in the universities devoted to the most profound studies. Clement Shorter, in his book, "Immortal Memories,"<sup>1</sup> gives us the Acton list and appends one of his own, which is more to the taste of the serious amateur than the other two.

## II

### Suggested "Aids" to the Hutchins Plan

MY EXPERIENCE in connection with this cultural movement has been a varied one. More than forty years ago I read the Lubbock selections, but probably a fourth of them I had studied previously. I still have several copies of the original set, and only the other day I was looking through my markings made many years ago in Cicero's "The Offices."<sup>2</sup>

I have watched closely the development of the Hutchins plan and I know a good many men and women who have attended his classes. Some of these people have often come to me about volumes they were reading and asked my advice as to how they should proceed. Recently I have been one of a group of men who meet to discuss world affairs, and several have urged me to tell the story of my library and how it came to be collected.

When I thought of Chancellor Hutchins' new project, I considered carefully what he said about the difficulty he knows it will encounter. He realizes that "these books are

<sup>1</sup> London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1907, ch. VIII, pp. 225-83.

<sup>2</sup> Trans. by Thomas Cockman, D.D., London and New York, George Routledge and Sons Limited (Sir John Lubbock's Hundred Books), no date.

hard," and "the program provides no short cut to culture." With this I heartily agree. There is no short cut to culture. There is, however, a way of making things easier for the student who does not possess the background the English masses had when Lubbock gave his Hundred Books to them. Unfortunately our system of education for at least a full generation has been more of a hindrance than a help to culture. Therefore, the approach to an understanding of what Hutchins' great plan really means to grown-up people must be made in such a way that they will know *why* they should devote themselves to the enterprise.

Perhaps I may be of some assistance in recommending a method of procedure that enabled many students during the middle part of the nineteenth century to get into intimate touch with the Greek and Latin classics. Works of scholars which are in the nature of introductions to the Great Books cannot be classified as short cuts, for the hurdle that Hutchins fears has been surmounted by accomplished men who have left the records of their achievement and how they were drawn to the classics and the masters of English literature. Surely it could not be said that *The Cambridge Medieval History* is a short cut to culture, and yet that is indispensable for profound students of the period from Constantine to the Reformation. Neither can *The Encyclopædia Britannica* be ignored for it is a work which has led many a searcher for knowledge to study the volumes named in the bibliographies that are found after the biographies of famous thinkers.

Perhaps one's own experience is a fairly good guide, and I have no fault to find with my own humble way of collecting books and studying them. Let me, then, proceed with what I shall call "aids" to the Hutchins plan, cocktails to the great feast of the classics that he spreads before us. And maybe we shall find that a sharper edge is put upon the appetite of those who will sit at his lavish board.

## III

## The Bible

I STILL BELIEVE the Bible is the first book to be read by the people of western civilization. Begin at the beginning—chapter one of Genesis—and go through to Malachi (in the Douay Bible it is the Machabees), and then read the New Testament. This is absolutely essential if the literature of our era after Wyclif is to be clearly understood. Some of the best-known works in our tongue, from the time of Hooker to the present day, refer to the personages and events of Bible history.

In connection with the Bible, I would advise the student to possess himself of the very latest discoveries that have been presented by the archaeologists and the great biblical scholars. There are: Dr. John Garstang's "The Foundations of Bible History,"<sup>3</sup> Canon W. J. Phythian-Adams' "The Call of Israel,"<sup>4</sup> Dr. T. H. Robinson's "The Decline and Fall of the Hebrew Kingdoms,"<sup>5</sup> and Dr. Sidney Smith's "Isaiah Chapters XI-LV."<sup>6</sup>

Another indispensable work for readers of the Old Testament is "The Bible and Archæology," by Sir Frederic Kenyon, who was Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum.<sup>6a</sup> In addition to reports on the latest archaeological discoveries, it contains chapters on papyri brought to light in recent years and information on other ancient manuscripts.

After the Bible, I would suggest that the student gather some information of the eastern religions and philosophies because I note so many new works which refer to them. For

<sup>3</sup> American ed., New York, Richard R. Smith Inc., 1931; English ed., London, Constable & Company, Ltd., 1931.

<sup>4</sup> Oxford University Press; London, Humphrey Milford, 1934.

<sup>5</sup> Part of "The Clarendon Bible," under the general editorship of The Bishop of Oxford, Bishop Wild and Canon G. H. Box; Old Testament, Vol. III, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, first published 1926, reprinted 1930.

<sup>6</sup> The Schweich Lectures of the British Academy, 1940, London, published for the British Academy by Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1944.

<sup>6a</sup> New York and London, Harper and Brothers, 1940.

the Upanishads I would advise Professor F. Max Müller's "The Vedânta Philosophy." The Confucian "Analects" was included in Lubbock's list. Professor J. H. Breasted's work on Egypt, "The Conquest of Civilization,"<sup>8</sup> should not be overlooked in this place, and Arthur Weigall's two volumes, "A History of the Pharaohs,"<sup>9</sup> will also serve as a valuable introduction to the study of that period.

## IV

## Works on Ancient Greece

WE COME NOW to the Greeks, and for those who have not been fortunate enough to become acquainted with Homer, the philosophers and the dramatists, I would advise the reading of "The Legacy of Greece,"<sup>10</sup> which is a most stimulating series of essays by the profound scholars of our time.

The first one by Gilbert Murray is called "The Value of Greece to the Future of the World." To many this will be a startling idea, but our author regards the Greeks as "our spiritual ancestors" and reminds the student that

... The things that we have called eternal, the things of the spirit and the imagination, always seem to lie more in a process than in a result, and can only be reached and enjoyed by somehow going through the process again. If the value of a particular walk lies in the scenery, you do not get that value by taking a short cut or using a fast motor-car.<sup>11</sup>

Then there is Walter Pater's "Plato and Platonism."<sup>12</sup> Two other works upon the Greeks which I consider essential are: "Early Greek Philosophy," by John Burnet<sup>13</sup> and "Early

<sup>7</sup> "Three Lectures on the Vedânta Philosophy," delivered at the Royal Institution in March, 1894, New York, Bombay, and Calcutta, Longmans, Green, and Co.; first ed., May, 1894; reprinted in the Collected Edition of Prof. Max Müller's Works, April, 1901, August, 1904, and October, 1911.

<sup>8</sup> Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1926.

<sup>9</sup> New York, E. P. Dutton & Company, 1925 and 1927.

<sup>10</sup> Edited by R. W. Livingstone, Oxford, at the Clarendon Press; first ed., 1921, impression of 1928.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> London, Macmillan and Co., 1893; reprinted 1903 and 1912.

<sup>13</sup> London, A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1930; first ed., April, 1892, second ed., June, 1908, third ed., September, 1920, fourth ed., March, 1930.

Greek Philosophy" by Nietzsche.<sup>14</sup> I would add one more: "The Birth of Tragedy,"<sup>15</sup> also by Nietzsche.

There are several fine translations of the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey," and I suppose that the student will choose that closest to hand. But for my taste the prose versions of the "Odyssey" by Samuel H. Butcher and Andrew Lang and the "Iliad" by Andrew Lang, Walter Leaf, and Ernest Myers are the most satisfying. Some of our business men may be surprised to learn that Walter Leaf was a banker; so was Sir John Lubbock. Earlier in the century there was Samuel Rogers, a wealthy banker, who not only gave us excellent verse, but left for our amusement his "Table-Talk,"<sup>16</sup> one of the most entertaining accounts of the leading personages of his period.

Socrates is at his best in the "Republic,"<sup>17</sup> by Plato. In this work, which is devoted to a search for justice, we find not only a clear definition of it but the procedures by which the State is formed.

For the dramatists it is important to read Gilbert Murray's masterful works. These will send the pupil posthaste to study the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles. The satirical comedies of Aristophanes may tempt him later on.

For those who have followed the vicissitudes of the world wars, there are two works that expose the failings of politicians in a searching light. These are: "The History of the Peloponnesian War," by Thucydides<sup>18</sup> and "The Histories" of Polybius.<sup>19</sup> In these masterpieces we learn that men have been fighting the same old wars over and over again, century after

<sup>14</sup> Trans. by Maximilian A. Mügge; vol. II of "The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche," ed. by Dr. Oscar Levy, first published London & Edinburgh, R. N. Foulis, 1911, reprinted New York, The Macmillan Company, 1924.

<sup>15</sup> Trans. by William A. Hausmann; vol. III of "The Complete Works," Edinburgh & London, T. N. Foulis, third ed., May, 1923.

<sup>16</sup> Two volumes, edited by Rev. Alexander Dyce, London, H. A. Rogers, 1837.

<sup>17</sup> "The Works of Plato" (four volumes in one), trans. by B. Jowett, New York, Tudor Publishing Company, no date.

<sup>18</sup> Trans. by Richard Crawley, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., New York, E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc. (Everyman's Library); first published in this ed., 1910; reprinted 1914, 1920, 1926, 1929, 1933, 1936.

<sup>19</sup> Six volumes, trans. by W. R. Paton, London, William Heinemann, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons (The Loeb Classical Library), 1922.

century, and the politicians seldom glean any wisdom from history. An excellent introduction to the conflicts waged by Athens against Sparta is "Thucydides," by Professor John H. Finley.<sup>20</sup>

The two works of Aristotle to be studied are the "Politics"<sup>21</sup> and "The Nicomachean Ethics."<sup>22</sup> These treatises have had perhaps as great an influence upon the thinkers of the Christian era as any but the Bible itself. Still, the student who has first studied his Plato, and particularly the "Republic," will, when he has read the works of Aristotle that I recommend, find the fascinating exercise laid before him of deciding which of the two philosophers came the nearer to the fundamental of justice and the utility of establishing a State based upon the labor of "human tools." This problem has provided me with many hours of deep consideration during the past fifty years.

The casual reader may think this is a matter of little importance, but I can assure him that my career as a politician would have been bereft of some of the most entertaining hours I spent upon the platform if I had not been prepared to answer those barbed shafts thrown by informed working men on these very questions. Moreover, there is a still greater significance in modern controversy with regard to this problem. It lies at the basis of the struggle between Church and State. We may now be entering upon the final stage of that conflict and on the result of it may depend the whole matter of whether this civilization as we have known it for the last five hundred years will survive.

In what I am now attempting to put before the reader I am fully conscious that my remarks are brief and the works

<sup>20</sup> Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1942.

<sup>21</sup> "A Treatise on Government," trans. by William Ellis, London, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., New York, E. P. Dutton & Co. (Everyman's Library), no date.

<sup>22</sup> Trans. by D. P. Chase, London & Toronto, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., New York, E. P. Dutton & Co. (Everyman's Library); first published in this ed. in 1911; reprinted 1915, 1920, 1925, 1928, 1930.

suggested few; but these are aids and beginnings. I pretend to do no more than offer them as such. It would take a long volume to give adequately a survey of the works that I possess and have read and re-read. Over a period of half a century much of my time has been given to the classics, and still I want many more years to satisfy my hunger for them.

## V

## Studies on Ancient Rome

THERE IS SO MUCH to be done in a brief essay that I must hasten on to Rome. Here it is difficult to pick a short list of books to be studied. When one has read Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," he is usually left with the feeling that he is not in possession of the whole story. To begin with the founding of the city, one may read Livy.<sup>23</sup> Here the story is told of Æneas and Antenor and how they escaped after the fall of Troy. The legend is well worth reading. But the Roman history that means so much to us is to be found in Caesar's "The Gallic War and Other Commentaries."<sup>24</sup>

Here again we come to that hurdle which can be easily taken if the reader understands what Caesar's invasion of Gaul meant to European history. It marks an epoch that had a greater significance for the civilization of the west than almost anything that occurred before or in the thousand years which followed it. Its marks have never been effaced. The conquest of Gaul led to the conversion of what were called the barbarians and prepared the way for Augustine, the missionary of Gregory the Great. Moreover, Caesar's expedition to Britain stamped upon its terrain reminders which have endured to this day. The great roads laid by the Romans, the sites of towns and of monuments even now proclaim to the Englishman the might of Imperial Rome.

<sup>23</sup> "The History of Rome," trans. by B. O. Foster, Ph.D. (13 vols.), London, William Heinemann, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons (The Loeb Classical Library), 1919.

<sup>24</sup> Trans. by W. A. McDevitte (Everyman's Library).



One of the most charming works of all the writers of Rome is the "Letters" of Pliny.<sup>25</sup> In these we have placed before us not only the customs and manners of his day but also the characteristics of the famous personages who were his friends. Where is there to be found a more attractive description of a country residence and its surroundings than that he gives in the letter to Domitius Apollinaris in Book V?<sup>26</sup> The pictures he draws of his villa and the landscape are so ingratiating that one wonders why his correspondent did not pack up at once and take a holiday with Pliny.

One other writer I would recommend is Seneca.<sup>27</sup> He lived during the reign of Tiberius. For those who desire a knowledge of the state of Rome when Jesus of Nazareth appeared, Seneca will provide a clear description of it.

One of the most comprehensive volumes that gives an interpretative survey of Greece and Rome is "The Nemesis of Nations," by W. Romaine Paterson.<sup>28</sup> The reader will also find in it essays upon Hindustan and Babylon. This work is no short cut to culture. Indeed, I may venture to say that there are few scholars anywhere today who are capable of devoting the necessary time to delving into the sources from which Paterson has drawn the materials for his historical studies.

## VI

### The Dark Ages

WE NOW ENTER THE PORTAL of what has been called the Dark Ages. But before we take our lamp to search for the outstanding figures of this era, it is necessary to keep in mind what we have learned from the classical civilizations. The

<sup>25</sup> Two volumes, trans. by William Melmoth, revised by W. M. L. Hutchinson, London, William Heinemann, New York, The Macmillan Co. (The Loeb Classical Library), 1915.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 377 *et seq.*

<sup>27</sup> "Ad Lucilium Epistolae Morales" (3 vols.), trans. by Dr. Richard M. Gummere, London, William Heinemann, New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons (The Loeb Classical Library), 1917.

<sup>28</sup> London, J. M. Dent & Co., 1907.

man who wishes to cultivate his mind must seek a wide background where the various growths of thought have taken root and flourished, and from which the seeds blown by winds from all quarters have fertilized the cultures of pastures upon which he has thriven.

One section of my library is devoted to the Early Fathers. These I find difficult to dissociate entirely from the Greeks. Indeed, to me the influence of Plato is one of the most striking features of early Christian thought. Origen and Clement of Alexandria are unique in this respect. Here again it is impossible in a short essay to do justice to the period from the fall of Jerusalem to the conversion of Augustine. Two of the men whose influence has extended all through the Middle Ages and down to our time are Plotinus and the author of "The City of God." Now that the *Enneads* have been given to us by Stephen Mackenna in perfect English, there is no reason for any man of culture saying, as he did heretofore, that the translation is so bad that it is scarcely readable. It would be asking far too much to expect the student to read the whole of Mackenna's work. I have no hesitation, however, in recommending to him the beautiful volume of copious selections from the *Enneads*, entitled "The Essence of Plotinus," that Grace H. Turnbull has compiled.<sup>29</sup>

Here it is necessary to remind the reader that many works on mysticism have been published in recent years and the number of people interested in this subject seems to increase rapidly. In case this question is raised for discussion, the student who knows something of Plotinus will be able to give instruction to his associates, one of the most delightful advantages an informed individual can employ. I have found "The Flowering of Mysticism," by Dr. Rufus Jones,<sup>30</sup> well worthy of a place in the library of a cultured man. It is a beautiful work.

<sup>29</sup> New York, Oxford University Press, 1934.

<sup>30</sup> New York, The Macmillan Company, 1940.

The next towering figure is Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. His work, "The City of God," is one of the famous books of the world. This is so well known that it needs no recommendation from me to bring it to the notice of the reader. However, I might say that a new edition of the John Healey translation has been issued for the Temple Classics.<sup>31</sup>

I hope I may, with becoming modesty, recommend my own essays, "The Roots of Our Learning,"<sup>32</sup> for sketches of those who through the Dark Ages carried the lamp of knowledge when its flame was almost quenched. But what I consider to be the essential work that illumines those gloomy years through which the European peoples groped from the fall of Rome until Alfred in England and Charlemagne on the continent is Dr. W. P. Ker's "Dark Ages."<sup>33</sup> How this amazing story of the struggles of the knights bannerets of literature has been overlooked I cannot understand. It is an essential volume, and I have not known a man or woman who, having begun to read it, found a dull page in it.

For many years the Irish philosopher, Erigena, was merely a name to English students. His monumental work, "The Division of Nature," seemed to be known only to rare scholars. So far as I know, only the first part has been translated. But now we have Henry Bett's book, "Johannes Scotus Erigena,"<sup>34</sup> which presents to us one of the most profound philosophers who flourished before the tenth century. The questions he raised are still being discussed, and his influence in scholastic circles is as great today as it ever was.

## VII

### The Medieval Period

THE RENAISSANCE of learning which took place in England under Alfred and at Aix, under Charlemagne, is dealt with in

<sup>31</sup> London, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., New York, E. P. Dutton & Co. Inc.; first published in this edition in 1931; reprinted 1934, 1940, 1942.

<sup>32</sup> New York, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1946.

<sup>33</sup> Vol. I of the series, "Periods of European Literature," ed. by Prof. Saintsbury, Edinburgh and London, William Blackwood and Sons, 1904.

<sup>34</sup> Cambridge, at the University Press, 1925.

many works easily procurable. But I would recommend for the former R. H. Hodgkin's "A History of the Anglo-Saxons."<sup>35</sup> This marks the true beginning of the period in English culture which survived through centuries of political change and decay.

We must now pass on to other aids that will be found useful. The purists of a few years ago aimed their critical arrows at John Richard Green's "A Short History of the English People,"<sup>36</sup> because they found some small defects in his work. But when later other purists had to place an estimate on it, it was found in the main to be as serviceable a medium of conveying historical information as any English history that existed. The historian never yet lived who was accepted as a perfect specimen of the cult, and I suppose that such a being will never exist. Why Green should be singled out for shortcomings and others who made greater errors escape is difficult to explain, but where (I should like to know) is to be found a more comprehensive study of all that goes to make the history of a people than that which Green wrote? Its real value to the student is its breadth and depth, and the illuminating pages devoted to the growth of English literature are precious. There is scarcely a channel of economic, political, social, or cultural activity that is not dealt with by Green.

No greater tribute could be paid than that which Stubbs himself inscribed:

. . . All his work was real and original work; few people besides those who knew him well would see under the charming ease and vivacity of his style the deep research and sustained industry of the laborious student. But it was so; there was no department of our national records that he had not studied and, I think I may say, mastered. . . . Like other people he made mistakes sometimes; but scarcely ever does the correction of his mistakes affect either the essence of the picture or the force of the argument.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Two volumes, Oxford University Press, London, Humphrey Milford, first ed., 1935; second ed., 1939.

<sup>36</sup> New York, Cincinnati, Chicago, American Book Company, 1916.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. xv-xvi.

Lately we have heard much of Magna Carta, and I am informed that many people saw the copy sent to this country. I possess a rare book entitled "An Historical Essay on the Magna Carta of King John," by Richard Thomson, published in 1829.<sup>38</sup> It is one of the most beautiful tomes in my library. This I found in a secondhand bookshop.

There are many who deserve recognition during the Angevin period, such as Stephen Langton and Roger Bacon, but space shortens with every word and I have yet to deal with other aids that I hope will help the student. Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales"<sup>39</sup> should not be passed over, for the work marks an epoch in English literature. Read the Skeat edition so that you may know the form and structure of your language as it was written in the fourteenth century.

When the Tudors came to the throne there began that amazing activity in the arts which lasted for nearly three hundred years. Erasmus gave us the "Praise of Folly"; More presented us with his "Utopia";<sup>40</sup> and Tyndale gave us a translation of the New Testament. For this period I would recommend "A Portrait of Thomas More," by Algernon Cecil.<sup>41</sup> It is really a survey of the reign of Henry VIII and marks definitely the grave crisis in religious affairs which led to the parting of the ways in the history of the Church.

Then for twenty-five years there burst upon London the genius of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Spenser, and Jonson. During this period Hooker gave us "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,"<sup>42</sup> and Bacon published his "Essays."<sup>43</sup> The shower of these literary meteors fell upon a people thirsting for genius,

<sup>38</sup> London, printed for John Major, Fleet Street; and Robert Jennings, Poultry.

<sup>39</sup> Edited by Rev. Walter W. Skeat, New York (The Modern Library), 1929.

<sup>40</sup> Trans. by Raphe Robyson, London, J. M. Dent and Co., 1904; also in Everyman's Library.

<sup>41</sup> New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1937.

<sup>42</sup> Keble's edition (1836); 7th ed. revised by Church and Paget, 1888. Book V, with a Prolegomena and appendices by Ronald Bayne was published in London and New York, The Macmillan Co., 1902; there is also a two volume ed. in Everyman's Library.

<sup>43</sup> Everyman's Library.

and there has scarcely been a decade since when some writer has not paid glowing tributes to the brilliant company that gave us so many masterpieces.

Forty years later came Milton, and in 1651 Hobbes published "Leviathan."<sup>44</sup> About the same time, Bunyan wrote his "Pilgram's Progress."<sup>45</sup> It was not, however, until 1687 that the "Principia" of Newton<sup>46</sup> appeared.

The works mentioned in the brief summary above may be easily obtained. Many of them are in libraries such as Everyman's, the Temple Classics, and the Modern Library. Perhaps this is the place where I should ask my reader if he has ever known the joy of book hunting in secondhand shops. It is one of the most delightful avocations for him who has planned a library he will collect for himself. This is a pursuit for rich and poor. When I think of what John Burns did in collecting his editions of Thomas More, I wonder that men do not indulge this interesting adventure to a greater extent. Somehow one takes far greater pleasure in a book discovered upon the shelves of a secondhand shop than in the bright new edition costing four or five times the price. Why should not the student form a collection of his own around the basic library of Dr. Hutchins?

### VIII

#### The Industrial Revolution

ONCE WE ENTER UPON the period which has been called the Industrial Revolution, the work for the man of culture increases mightily. When Jonathan Swift appeared upon the scene, he started an almost continuous line of brilliant writers

<sup>44</sup> The standard edition is that of Sir William Molesworth (1839-46); "Leviathan" was also edited by A. R. Waller, 1904, and W. G. Pogson Smith, 1909; the Everyman's Library edition is edited by A. D. Lindsay.

<sup>45</sup> Chicago, Laird and Lee, 1895. A complete record of the editions of this work was kept down to the thirty-fourth, but since then there have been so many that count has been lost.

<sup>46</sup> The editions of this work have been many. Andrew Motte published the first English translation in 1729; and according to the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "the best edition is that of 1803."

of nearly every description, which lasted until the middle of the nineteenth century. The letters of Junius appeared about 1769, and Adam Smith produced "The Theory of Moral Sentiments"<sup>47</sup> and, in 1776, his wonderful work, "The Wealth of Nations."<sup>48</sup>

The English essayists and satirists of this period may be taken at leisure. Sir Richard Steele, Joseph Addison, and many others gave us the finest examples of English prose. Sixty years later came William Hazlitt. Indeed, it may be said that under the aegis of these men and their contemporaries it reached perfection.

## IX

### Other Essential Works

THERE REMAIN what I consider to be many essential aids that a cultured man should read. It is as necessary for him to know these works as it is for him to be familiar with the classics. Here I shall mention briefly those that have been of great use to me.

The historical volumes of Lord Acton<sup>49</sup> are once again under the notice of learned men, for the postwar condition of Europe has forced them to review the past and learn anew from it why its cultural structure has been destroyed. Acton's interpretive works, and particularly "The History of Freedom and Other Essays," are contributions of wisdom from the mind of Europe's greatest scholar. The historical essays are vital and direct our thought to the fundamentals upon which liberty took root and blossomed forth in the

<sup>47</sup> Two volumes, London, printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies; Edinburgh, W. Creech, and Bell and Bradfute, tenth edition, 1804.

<sup>48</sup> The editions are very numerous; two volumes, London, G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., sixth edition, 1912 (Bohn's Standard Library); also one volume (The Modern Library), New York, Random House, Inc., 1937.

<sup>49</sup> "Historical Essays and Studies," ed. by John Neville Figgis and Reginald Vere Laurence, London, Macmillan and Co., 1907; "The History of Freedom and Other Essays," edited with an introduction by John Neville Figgis and Reginald Vere Laurence, London, Macmillan and Co., Limited; first ed., 1907; reprinted 1909, 1919; "Lectures on Modern History," edited with an introduction by John Neville Figgis and Reginald Vere Laurence, London, Macmillan and Co., Limited, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1906.

Gothic splendors of the Middle Ages. The "Inaugural Lecture of the Study of History"<sup>50</sup> is essential reading for all serious students of the achievements of the past that is no more.

The historical works of Edward Freeman<sup>51</sup> are in demand once again. Perhaps Dr. A. J. Toynbee's references to him in "A Study of History"<sup>52</sup> are reviving an interest in Freeman's books that has been dormant for over a generation. Search the shelves of the secondhand bookshops for the volumes of these masters, for only in them can be found a review of Europe's growth from the days of the glories of Greece and Rome down to the time of Washington and Jefferson.

Other works that I keep near me as reference aids range from Ernest Renan to Henry George. Renan's "Averroès and Averroïsme,"<sup>53</sup> is necessary for a proper understanding of the philosophical and theological controversies of the twelfth century and afterwards.

"Seven Centuries of the Problem of Church and State," by Frank Gavin,<sup>54</sup> gives us the history of the ordeals which afflicted many deeply religious minds. A cultured man should know this problem, for it looms large on the horizon of Europe's future.

We have been so busy with things of the flesh and the perfecting of the gadgets of science that we have forgotten the

<sup>50</sup> Delivered at Cambridge, June, 1895; incorporated in the volume, "Lectures on Modern History," *cit. supra*.

<sup>51</sup> Particularly his "General Sketch of European History," which was done in a series of four volumes, entitled "Historical Essays," First Series, Second Series, Third Series, Fourth Series. Each volume went into two or three editions and the series was published in London and New York by Macmillan and Company, 1871-1892. I would also recommend for the perusal of the student Freeman's volume entitled "The Chief Periods of European History," six lectures given at Oxford, 1885, London and New York, Macmillan and Co., 1886.

<sup>52</sup> Six volumes, London, Oxford University Press; Vols. I, II, III, second ed., third impression, 1945; Vols. IV, V, VI, third impression, 1946. The reader may be interested in referring to my critique of this work, which appeared under the title "Toynbee's 'A Study of History'" in *AM. JOUR. ECON SOCIO.*, VI, No. 4 (July, 1947), pp. 451-72.

<sup>53</sup> Paris, Calmann-Lévy, Éditeurs, sixième édition, no date.

<sup>54</sup> Princeton, Princeton University Press, London, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1938.



most interesting periods in our history were those when the concerns of the spirit were held of the greatest moment. I would recommend as a cultural bulwark against the agnostic materialism of our time Etienne Gilson's "The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy."<sup>55</sup>

It would be folly to overlook the importance of the work of Sir Henry Maine, and I would suggest "Ancient Law"<sup>56</sup> and "Village-Communities in the East and West"<sup>57</sup> for the consideration of the student. In these two works will be found conceptions of natural law that will assist the readers of Spengler and Toynbee to understand the growth of cultures and the decay of civilizations.<sup>58</sup>

A new edition of Frederick A. Lange's "The History of Materialism"<sup>59</sup> has been published. This work is a necessary aid because it is a compendium of information on the development of philosophy and of scientific change.

Immanuel Kant cannot be omitted from the catalogue of the cultured reader. Dr. Thomas K. Abbott's book, "Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics,"<sup>60</sup> is undoubtedly the first step to be taken in the approach to the genius of Königsberg. This volume has one of the most interesting memoirs of Kant that I have seen anywhere. If it is possible to find "The Philosophy of Law,"

<sup>55</sup> Gifford Lectures, 1931-1932, trans. by A. H. C. Downes, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936.

<sup>56</sup> Everyman's Library, London & Toronto, J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., New York, E. P. Dutton & Co.; first published in this edition, 1917; reprinted 1927, 1931.

<sup>57</sup> Six lectures delivered at Oxford, New York, Henry Holt and Company, first published, 1871; third ed., 1876.

<sup>58</sup> In addition to the comments on this broad subject to be found in my essay on Toynbee's "A Study of History," *cit. supra*, I have written at some length in "The Decline of Civilizations," published in *AM. JOUR. ECON. SOCIO.*, IV, No. 4 (July, 1945), pp. 479-97.

<sup>59</sup> Part of the series of the International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method, trans. by Ernest Chester Thomas, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd., New York, Harcourt, Brace & Company, Inc., first published in 1873; third ed. (three volumes in one), 1925.

<sup>60</sup> Trans. by Dr. T. K. Abbott, New York, Toronto, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, Longmans, Green, and Co. Ltd., first ed. of this translation, 1873; second ed., 1879; third ed., 1883; fourth ed., 1889; fifth ed., 1898; sixth ed., 1909, new impression, 1923 and 1927.

by Kant,<sup>61</sup> read it studiously because there is so much confusion today in the minds of men as to what *right* is. While we touch upon natural law and the theory of right I may mention some useful aids that have taken my interest: "American Interpretations of Natural Law," by B. F. Wright<sup>62</sup> and "A History of Political Theories," by Dr. W. A. Dunning.<sup>63</sup> A well-informed man cannot dispense with works of their importance.

Blaise Pascal was a great scientist, and it is sometimes forgotten that he created a sensation in religious circles by publishing "The Provincial Letters." As models of style they were welcomed by cultured opponents of the subject they dealt with because they marked a startling advance in the art of writing. The Modern Library gives us an edition which includes "Pensées."<sup>64</sup>

We should not forget "The Divine Comedy," by Dante,<sup>65</sup> nor "Faust," by Goethe.<sup>66</sup> I cannot imagine a man so illiterate as to ignore these two works. Even he who reads light literature must occasionally meet quotations from these poems.

Only the other day I saw a striking reference to "Emperor and Galilean," by Henrik Ibsen.<sup>67</sup> And now that the period of Julian has been revived for historical research, it may be well for Ibsen's work to be studied again.

Not so long ago one of our modern philosophers spoke contemptuously of Schopenhauer. It was an indication of how far astray our mentors have led us. Oddly enough several

<sup>61</sup> An exposition of the fundamental principles of jurisprudence as "The Science of Right," trans. by W. Hastie, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1887.

<sup>62</sup> Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1931.

<sup>63</sup> Three volumes, New York, The Macmillan Company, London, Macmillan & Co., Ltd.; first published, 1902, 1905, 1920; reprinted, 1928, 1930.

<sup>64</sup> "Pensées," trans. by W. F. Trotter and "The Provincial Letters," trans. by Thomas M'Creie (The Modern Library), New York, Random House, Inc., 1941.

<sup>65</sup> Everyman's Library, Cary's translation, specially edited by Edmund Gardner.

<sup>66</sup> Everyman's Library, Parts I and II, trans. and introduction by A. G. Latham.

<sup>67</sup> First published in 1873. There have been many translators and editions in English. One of the best editions of the prose dramas was begun in 1872 by Edmund Gosse and continued by William Archer; there were subsequent editions of these works in 1890, 1891, and 1906.

works appeared about the same time, which revealed a deep appreciation of "The World as Will and Idea."<sup>68</sup> Now I find many references to Schopenhauer's knowledge of the philosophy of the East and, as more works are put out upon oriental religions, it is becoming necessary to follow this trend closely because it may become the subject of general debate.

There are three volumes which must find a place in the library of a student of religious and scientific development of thought. Those which have impressed me deeply in recent years are: "The Two Sources of Morality and Religion," by Henri Bergson;<sup>69</sup> and "God," by John E. Bodin,<sup>70</sup> our greatest philosopher. In this volume Boodin examines the latest pronouncements of scientists as they relate to God's creation and its glorious harmony. There is also a work of outstanding significance, called "The Soul of the Universe," by Gustaf Strömberg.<sup>71</sup>

Let me conclude this list by offering to the students of the Great Books works of wide survey of civilizations and epochs, which have received the attention of our reviewers to such an extent that it is scarcely possible to read a critical monthly without being confronted with their titles. These are: "The Decline of the West," by Oswald Spengler;<sup>72</sup> "A Study of History," by A. J. Toynbee;<sup>73</sup> and "A Cultural History of the Modern Age," by Egon Friedell.<sup>74</sup> The comprehensiveness of these works astonishes the reader, but I would not be without them for anything. They are mines of essential information, and no matter how they may differ from one an-

<sup>68</sup> "The Philosophy of Schopenhauer," edited, with an introduction by Irwin Edman (The Modern Library), New York, 1928.

<sup>69</sup> Trans. by R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton, with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter, London, Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1935.

<sup>70</sup> "God and Creation, A Cosmic Philosophy of Religion," New York, The Macmillan Company, 1934.

<sup>71</sup> Philadelphia, David McKay Company, 1940.

<sup>72</sup> Two volumes, trans. by Charles Francis Atkinson, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1926.

<sup>73</sup> *Vide supra* n. 52.

<sup>74</sup> Three volumes, trans. by Charles Francis Atkinson, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1931.

other in their conceptions of the growths of civilizations and also their decay, they provide the knowledge that the cultured man of two generations ago would have despaired of ever finding.

Finally I come to "Progress and Poverty," by Henry George,<sup>75</sup> the work that sent me in quest of knowledge. Its influence forced me to search the secondhand bookshops. It provided me with economic fundamentals that have guided my actions for more than fifty years. Like Butler's "Analogy of Religion" was to the men of his time—unanswerable—so is "Progress and Poverty" to every serious thinker. I would say that if it is not academic prejudice, it must be unpardonable ignorance which omits George's volume from the list of Great Books. It would indeed be hard to find another work of this century which has been so highly praised by such different thinkers as Lord Acton, Leo Tolstoy, George Bernard Shaw, Albert Einstein, Mark Twain, Viscount Snowden, Sun Yat-sen, and Franz Oppenheimer. These names from a long list are chosen for the purpose of reminding the student that the fame of George is world wide.

In this essay I have given the titles of only a few of the works that keep me young at eighty. I find that by taking care of the nourishment of the spirit, the body looks after itself.

#### X

#### The Application of Knowledge

NOTHING I HAVE SET DOWN here conflicts in any way with the plan of Dr. Hutchins. My intention is to assist in his good work. It will do no harm to associate my kindergarten of cultural pursuits with his school of higher learning. Let my suggestions be merely a preparatory course that will

<sup>75</sup> The author's edition appeared in 1879, and the work was subsequently published in numerous editions and in several languages. The most readily obtainable edition is the Fiftieth Anniversary edition (fourteenth printing), New York, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1942.

stimulate a desire to leap the hurdles that lie in the way of his goal.

Matthew Arnold himself would have agreed, I daresay, that to know the best that has been thought and said in the world is not in itself sufficient to make a cultured man. I cannot imagine that Chancellor Hutchins thinks the reading of the seventy-two books will accomplish this aim. There is something more required in this mission, and that is *knowing how to apply* the knowledge of literary masterpieces to the conditions of the present time. The cultured man is he who understands the tradition of thought and how it has permeated the schools of western civilization. It is in this respect that I consider "The Legacy of Greece"<sup>76</sup> an indispensable primer for those who will take the courses in the classics.

It is not to be supposed that at first the students will be brimful of inclination, for there has been scarcely any background in our system of education that would stimulate the proper desire. In the tests that I have made, I have found the greatest hindrance to progress has been the absurd notion fostered by our instructors that only what they call the "practical" affairs of existence are worth consideration. The absurdity of this has been exposed recently by scientists, architects, and engineers. In England the president of the Institute of Electrical Engineers has made a demand for a wider cultural background. In a letter to *The Times* (London) he quotes from a report from the American Engineers' Council for Professional Development which says that "both the young graduate engineer and the young man entering the profession through its regular work are anxious and willing to obtain that background of non-technical culture which is so necessary to the true professional engineer."<sup>77</sup>

I could cite many other men who seem to be in revolt against the so-called "practical" trends our schools have en-

<sup>76</sup> *Cit. supra* n. 10.

<sup>77</sup> "Science and the Humanities," in *The Times* (London), Sept. 7, 1946.

couraged for over a generation. A great change of thought has taken place, and the position for this cultural movement improves steadily every year. Indeed, it is the one hope that we may cherish in all this turmoil—that a generation of men will come who will renew the spiritual tradition that was broken when pupils were taught that the chief thing in life was to learn how to make a living. That system bequeathed to us years of pain and sorrow and a complexity of economic, political, and social problems that so far defy all the solutions made by our practical men.

*New York*

A LIST OF RECOMMENDED BOOKS FOR INTRODUCTORY READING:

*The Bible and Ancient Civilizations:*

1. The Bible: Old Testament and New Testament
2. John Garstang: "The Foundations of Bible History"
3. W. J. Phythian-Adams: "The Call of Israel"
4. T. H. Robinson: "The Decline and Fall of the Hebrew Kingdoms"
5. Sidney Smith: "Isaiah Chapters XL-LV"
- 5a. Sir Frederic Kenyon: "The Bible and Archæology."
6. F. Max Müller: "The Vedānta Philosophy"
7. J. H. Breasted: "The Conquest of Civilization"
8. Arthur Weigall: "A History of the Pharaohs"

*Greece:*

9. "The Legacy of Greece," edited by R. W. Livingstone
10. Walter Pater: "Plato and Platonism"
11. John Burnet: "Early Greek Philosophy"
12. Nietzsche: "Early Greek Philosophy"
13. Nietzsche: "The Birth of Tragedy"
14. Homer: "Iliad"
15. Homer: "Odyssey"
16. Plato: "Republic"
17. Aeschylus: Tragedies
18. Sophocles: Tragedies
19. Aristophanes: Satirical Comedies
20. Thucydides: "The History of the Peloponnesian War"
21. John H. Finley: "Thucydides"
22. Polybius: "The Histories"
23. Aristotle: "The Nicomachean Ethics"
24. Aristotle: "Politics"

*Rome:*

25. Gibbon: "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"
26. Livy: "The History of Rome"

27. Caesar: "The Gallic War and Other Commentaries"
28. Pliny: "Letters"
29. Seneca: "Letters"
30. W. Romaine Paterson: "The Nemesis of Nations"

*Dark Ages:*

31. Grace H. Turnbull: "The Essence of Plotinus"
32. Rufus Jones: "The Flowering of Mysticism"
33. Augustine: "The City of God"
34. Francis Neilson: "The Roots of Our Learning"
35. W. P. Ker: "Dark Ages"
36. Henry Bett: "Johannes Scotus Erigena"
37. R. H. Hodgkin: "A History of the Anglo-Saxons"

*Renaissance:*

38. J. R. Green: "A Short History of the English People"
39. Richard Thomson: "An Historical Essay on the Magna Carta of King John"
40. Chaucer: "Canterbury Tales"
41. Erasmus: "Praise of Folly"
42. Thomas More: "Utopia"
43. Algernon Cecil: "A Portrait of Thomas More"
44. Hooker: "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity"
45. Bacon: "Essays"
46. Milton: Poetical Works
47. Hobbes: "Leviathan"
48. Bunyan: "Pilgrim's Progress"
49. Newton: "Principia"

*General background works:*

50. Adam Smith: "The Theory of Moral Sentiments"
51. Adam Smith: "The Wealth of Nations"
52. Jonathan Swift: "Gulliver's Travels"
53. Sir Richard Steele: Essays
54. Joseph Addison: Essays
55. William Hazlitt: Essays
56. Lord Acton: "Historical Essays and Studies"
57. Lord Acton: "The History of Freedom and Other Essays"
58. Lord Acton: "Lectures on Modern History"
59. Edward Freeman: "Historical Essays," First, Second, Third, Fourth Series
60. Edward Freeman: "The Chief Periods of European History"
61. Frank Gavin: "Seven Centuries of the Problem of Church and State"
62. Etienne Gilson: "The Spirit of Mediæval Philosophy"
63. Sir Henry Maine: "Ancient Law"
64. Sir Henry Maine: "Village-Communities in the East and West"
65. Frederick A. Lange: "The History of Materialism"
66. "Kant's Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics,"  
trans. by Thomas K. Abbott

67. Kant: "The Philosophy of Law"
68. B. F. Wright: "American Interpretations of Natural Law"
69. W. A. Dunning: "A History of Political Theories"
70. Blaise Pascal: "Pensées" and "The Provincial Letters"
71. Dante: "The Divine Comedy"
72. Goethe: "Faust"
73. Ibsen: "Emperor and Galilean"
74. Schopenhauer: "The World as Will and Idea"
75. Henri Bergson: "The Two Sources of Morality and Religion"
76. John E. Boodin: "God"
77. Gustaf Strömberg: "The Soul of the Universe"
78. Spengler: "The Decline of the West"
79. A. J. Toynbee: "A Study of History"
80. Egon Friedell: "A Cultural History of the Modern Age"
81. Henry George: "Progress and Poverty"