

CHAPTER X.

THE "FALL OF MAN" AND HISTORY.

THE history of art, especially as shown by architecture, in the noblest monuments of the most enlightened nations of antiquity, gives abundant proofs of the upward tendency of man from the rudest and simplest beginnings. Many columns of early Egyptian temples or tombs are but bundles of Nile reeds slightly conventionalized in stone; the temples of Greece, including not only the earliest forms, but the Parthenon itself, while in parts showing an evolution out of Egyptian and Assyrian architecture, exhibit frequent reminiscences and even imitations of earlier constructions in wood; the mediæval cathedrals, while evolved out of Roman and Byzantine structures, constantly show unmistakable survivals of prehistoric construction.*

So, too, general history has come in, illustrating the unknown from the known: the development of man in the prehistoric period from his development within historic times. Nothing is more evident from history than the fact that weaker bodies of men driven out by stronger do not necessarily relapse into barbarism, but frequently rise, even under the most unfavourable circumstances, to a civilization

* As to evolution in architecture, and especially of Greek forms and ornaments out of Egyptian and Assyrian, with survivals in stone architecture of forms obtained in Egypt when reeds were used, and in Greece when wood construction prevailed, see Fergusson's *Handbook of Architecture*, vol. i, pp. 100, 228, 233, and elsewhere; also Otfried Müller, *Ancient Art and its Remains*, English translation, London, 1852, pp. 219, *passim*. For a very brief but thorough statement, see A. Mangnard's paper in the *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society*, October, 1889, entitled *Reminiscences of Egypt in Doric Architecture*. On the general subject, see Hommel, *Babylonien*, ch. i, and Meyer, *Alterthum*, i, § 199.

equal or superior to that from which they have been banished. Out of very many examples showing this law of upward development, a few may be taken as typical. The Slavs, who sank so low under the pressure of stronger races that they gave the modern world a new word to express the most hopeless servitude, have developed powerful civilizations peculiar to themselves; the barbarian tribes who ages ago took refuge amid the sand-banks and morasses of Holland, have developed one of the world's leading centres of civilization; the wretched peasants who about the fifth century took refuge from invading hordes among the lagoons and mud banks of Venetia, developed a power in art, arms, and politics which is among the wonders of human history; the Puritans, driven from the civilization of Great Britain to the unfavourable climate, soil, and circumstances of early New England,—the Huguenots, driven from France, a country admirably fitted for the highest growth of civilization, to various countries far less fitted for such growth,—the Irish peasantry, driven in vast numbers from their own island to other parts of the world on the whole less fitted to them—all are proofs that, as a rule, bodies of men once enlightened, when driven to unfavourable climates and brought under the most depressing circumstances, not only retain what enlightenment they have, but go on increasing it. Besides these, we have such cases as those of criminals banished to various penal colonies, from whose descendants has been developed a better morality; and of pirates, like those of the *Bounty*, whose descendants, in a remote Pacific island, became sober, steady citizens. Thousands of examples show the prevalence of this same rule—that men in masses do not forget the main gains of their civilization, and that, in spite of deteriorations, their tendency is upward.

Another class of historic facts also testifies in the most striking manner to this same upward tendency: the decline and destruction of various civilizations brilliant but hopelessly vitiated. These catastrophes are seen more and more to be but steps in this development. The crumbling away of the great ancient civilizations based upon despotism, whether the despotism of monarch, priest, or mob—the decline and fall of Roman civilization, for example, which, in

his most remarkable generalization, Guizot has shown to have been necessary to the development of the richer civilization of modern Europe; the terrible struggle and loss of the Crusades, which once appeared to be a mere catastrophe, but are now seen to have brought in, with the downfall of feudalism, the beginnings of the centralizing, civilizing monarchical period; the French Revolution, once thought a mere outburst of diabolic passion, but now seen to be an unduly delayed transition from the monarchical to the constitutional epoch: all show that even widespread deterioration and decline—often, indeed, the greatest political and moral catastrophes—so far from leading to a fall of mankind, tend in the long run to raise humanity to higher planes.

Thus, then, Anthropology and its handmaids, Ethnology, Philology, and History, have wrought out, beyond a doubt, proofs of the upward evolution of humanity since the appearance of man upon our planet.

Nor have these researches been confined to progress in man's material condition. Far more important evidences have been found of upward evolution in his family, social, moral, intellectual, and religious relations. The light thrown on this subject by such men as Lubbock, Tylor, Herbert Spencer, Buckle, Draper, Max Müller, and a multitude of others, despite mistakes, haltings, stumblings, and occasional following of delusive paths, is among the greatest glories of the century now ending. From all these investigators in their various fields, holding no brief for any system sacred or secular, but seeking truth as truth, comes the same general testimony of the evolution of higher out of lower. The process has been indeed slow and painful, but this does not prove that it may not become more rapid and less fruitful in sorrow as humanity goes on.*

While, then, it is not denied that many instances of retrogression can be found, the consenting voice of unbiased investigators in all lands has declared more and more that the beginnings of our race must have been low and brutal, and that the tendency has been upward. To combat this

* As to the good effects of migration, see Waitz, *Introduction to Anthropology*, London, 1863, p. 345.

conclusion by examples of decline and deterioration here and there has become impossible: as well try to prove that, because in the Mississippi there are eddies in which the currents flow northward, there is no main stream flowing southward; or that, because trees decay and fall, there is no law of upward growth from germ to trunk, branches, foliage, and fruit.

A very striking evidence that the theological theory had become untenable was seen when its main supporter in the scientific field, Von Martius, in the full ripeness of his powers, publicly declared his conversion to the scientific view.

Yet, while the tendency of enlightened human thought in recent times is unmistakable, the struggle against the older view is not yet ended. The bitterness of the Abbé Hamard in France has been carried to similar and even greater extremes among sundry Protestant bodies in Europe and America. The simple truth of history makes it a necessity, unpleasant though it be, to chronicle two typical examples in the United States.

In the year 1875 a leader in American industrial enterprise endowed at the capital of a Southern State a university which bore his name. It was given into the hands of one of the religious sects most powerful in that region, and a bishop of that sect became its president. To its chair of Geology was called Alexander Winchell, a scholar who had already won eminence as a teacher and writer in that field, a professor greatly beloved and respected in the two universities with which he had been connected, and a member of the sect which the institution of learning above referred to represented.

But his relations to this Southern institution were destined to be brief. That his lectures at the Vanderbilt University were learned, attractive, and stimulating, even his enemies were forced to admit; but he was soon found to believe that there had been men earlier than the period assigned to Adam, and even that all the human race are not descended from Adam. His desire was to reconcile science and Scripture, and he was now treated by a Methodist Episcopal Bishop in Tennessee just as, two centuries before, La Peyrère had been treated, for a similar effort, by a Roman

