

THE CLIMAX OF CIVILISATION

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649508327

The Climax of Civilisation by Correa Moylan Walsh

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CORREA MOYLAN WALSH

**THE CLIMAX OF
CIVILISATION**

SOCIALISM AND FEMINISM

WITH AN INTRODUCTION ON
THE CLIMAX OF CIVILISATION

BY
CORREA MOYLAN WALSH

In three volumes, together \$4.50

SEPARATELY

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PUBLISHED BY

STURGIS AND WALTON CO.

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CORREA MOYLAN WALSH

New York
STURGIS & WALTON
COMPANY
1917

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Set up and electrotyped. Published, October, 1917.

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PREFACE

This little work was originally written as the introductory portion of a larger one to be entitled *Socialism and Feminism, with an Introduction on the Climax of Civilisation*. But the material grew too copious to permit of publication in a single volume, and out of proportion for publication as a single work in two volumes. Therefore it seemed advisable to break it up into its three component parts and publish them as three separate works. This mode of publication also recognises the fact that, though connected, these volumes are independent, and may be separately desired by readers interested mainly in one or in two of the subjects. Yet such readers are begged to bear in mind that each of these works was composed in connection with the others, and a single theme runs through them all as a binding thread.

Standing by itself, the present work is offered as a new exposition of the cyclical theory in the philosophy of history. It attempts to describe the course which all civilisations naturally run, and to locate our position in the cycle of our civilisation. This position is shown to be one near the top, or climax, and to contain premonitions of disintegration and decline. The purpose of the work is to point out these germs of decay, and to emphasise the need of guarding against fomenting and cherishing them. The two most comprehensive sources of trouble are the subjects of the two succeeding works.

Because of its serving as an introduction to these other two works, a few preparatory remarks may here be added concerning the whole series. The work on *Socialism* comes next because dealing with the broader subject, which covers and includes the subject of the other. Yet the final work on *Feminism* has been more fully elaborated, because in our country it is the more obtrusive and menacing. Especially is its entering wedge, woman suffrage, an impending danger.

The two following volumes, then, perform the disagreeable task of cautioning against two things which are presented as

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good, and which on account of their pretensions seem to be good. It would be pleasanter to believe that projects offering reform of existing evils would be effectual. Disillusionment before trial is disagreeable, once hopes have been aroused; yet disillusionment after trial, through failure when the aim appears within reach, will be much more — and in these momentous matters a thousand times more — painful, involving as they may national and racial disaster. A small present disappointment is incomparably less bad than a great future lamentation.

There is an old French saying that the means are more important than the end — more important in consideration; for it is easy to know what one wants, and the difficulty lies in learning how to get it. We all are aware of wrongs in the world around us, and we all desire improvement. Plans of improvement are easy to make; but all the consequences that would ensue if they were put into practice, it is not easy to foresee. It often is hard to tell why many specious plans should not be efficacious. Then people who are in a hurry ask why not? and adopt them because they cannot answer. It is the object of this series to answer this question with regard to two much-promising schemes — to give the reasons why their principles are not justified, and why their methods would not work out successfully.

The connection between these two different subjects, which accounts for the treatment of them, if not in a single work, in a single series of works, is explained in the following pages themselves, both of this volume and of the other two. It may only be premised that they both exhibit a common defect. No social arrangement is right that has not the power of permanence in the world as it is. Something that might be permanent only in the world as it should be, deserves not to be adopted till the world is as it should be. Such are the two subjects here brought together. The world is old enough to have learnt much by experience, and to have established some things solidly. In every science (for nothing is a science till this feat is achieved) some things have been discovered that are unshakable. Yet there are persons who in geometry question the Euclidean axioms, in astronomy doubt the Newtonian law of gravitation, in economics deny the quantity theory of

value. The author is not a radical of this stripe, and in things broad and well-founded he is conservative, although he desires to be progressive in matters reasonable and unobjectionable for their results. The present introductory volume is a prelude intended to show that not all that glitters as new is new or golden, that not all reformation is melioration, and that not all advance or progress is forward or upward. In it the teaching of the past is used to reveal wherein the danger ahead of us lies. The other two volumes carry out the theme, and by analysis of the schemes offered attempt to prove that they would but lead us backward in the downward course previously run by older civilisations.

It is not asserted that the arguments presented in these three volumes cannot be met; but it is contended that it is better to try to meet them than to overlook them. Modification of opinions usually results from a discussion that tries to take all possible points of view.

All of the first two volumes and most of the third was completed in the first draft before the war raging in Europe, which our nation has just entered, had begun. This calamity has necessitated a few alterations in words and a few additions of thought, but has required no modification in the general treatment. For the author was one of those who have long expected this war, and he was surprised less at its occurrence than at its delay. Occasionally some passages would not have been written exactly as they stand, had the work been planned after the commencement of the war. But it has not been convenient, and it was not necessary, to rewrite or reset them.

In conclusion a word of warning may be given, alike for this volume and for the two which accompany it, but more especially for the work on *Feminism*. In this series of works no euphemisms are employed. When there is need to speak of a spade, the name of the spade is spoken. The whole series is addressed more to men than to women, and certainly not to children.

C. M. WALSH.

Bellport, Long Island, N. Y.,
June 4, 1917.

