

**THE MAN OF THE NORTH
AND THE MAN OF THE
SOUTH; OR, THE INFLUENCE
OF CLIMATE, PP. 10-200**

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The Man of the North and the Man of the South; Or, The Influence of Climate, pp. 10-200 by
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CHARLES VICTOR DE BONSTETTEN

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

THE MAN OF THE NORTH,
AND
THE MAN OF THE SOUTH ;
OR
THE INFLUENCE OF CLIMATE.

Translated from the French of
CH-VICTOR DE BONSTETTEN.

Ce serait à tort que l'on voudrait séparer la Politique des circonstances générales de race, de climat, de configuration géographique, de traditions historiques de toute nature dont elle est à beaucoup d'égards une résultante. BAUDRILLANT.

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purely philosophical, like those of the Stoics, may override it. Moreover, what is North and South when the question of climate occurs? A polar altitude is but one element of climate, and a vertical altitude another. Both Greenland and Lapland may be found among the Swiss Alps, and if Northern people prized sheltered localities more, we would sometimes encounter in the North the climate of Italy. Has not the Reformation appeared here and there in Southern mountains, and do we not find despotism existing in the North?

Man's history is like a piece of tapestry on which diverse colored threads appear and disappear as they traverse the meshes of its woof. Climate is a thread of this description, appearing and disappearing at the bidding of the great disposer of all things.

In discussing facts due to a multiplicity of causes, it sometimes happens that one cause becomes isolated, which, in the nature of things, cannot act independently. Human actions never being wholly traceable to climatic agency, we must possess full knowledge of every cause affecting them before we can assign to any a special influence. Until this knowledge is obtained abstractions are pointless; it is neces-

sary to accept life's phenomena collectively, as they present themselves to the observer's attention. Selecting the continent of Europe as a field of observation, I propose to note some of the modifications produced by climate on man in that region.

The first perceptible effect of climate on man in Europe is the feeling of renewed life, which every traveller experiences on crossing the Alps to visit the south of Europe. He is conscious of a sudden change, and, if he is watchful of his emotions, he finds himself another being according as he is on this or the other side of these grand barriers. On entering Italy its brilliant sky impresses him, its luxuriant vegetation, and the garlands of vines suspended from tree to tree above the waving grain. The colors of the landscape vary, and the mountains no longer present the same hue; the deep valleys of the Alps are gone, while naked rocks towering upwards in jagged summits seem to form a line of separation between the two skies of Italy and Switzerland. The tones of a musical and sonorous language fill the ear, accompanied with ceaseless pantomime, and a mobility of expression which excites the astonishment of the Man of the North.

The sky of the South at night is often of a deep blue, its dark mantle glittering with innumerable stars, whilst the Northern firmament is always grey, and, approaching the pole, as lifeless as the desert soil beneath it. In Italy the public worship and majestic temples, the monk's dress and gay processions, the paintings and statues, the sacred chants, the motley uniforms, the animated gesticulations of the people, everything in short through which the senses can affect a northern meditative nature, draws the spirit away from self-consciousness, leading it to act harmoniously with impressions derived from outward things.

I know not why it is one experiences among the Italians, a sentiment of personal independence never completely realized in the North! There is in Italy no annoyance from curiosity, while to the north of the Alps one is gauged, and measured according to the petty standard of every petty town he happens to pass through. In Italy people appear to be absorbed with their own impressions, to such a degree as to leave no room for intolerance, everybody acting consistently with his own proclivities. Add to this an expansion of one's nature, a development of the organs through which they

operate, and a feeling of independence ensues that never dies.

Pass the Apennines on the way to Rome or Naples, and the characteristics of the South become more marked. The traveller imperceptibly enters volcanic regions; he finds the mountains, especially the rocks, assuming new shapes. Instead of sharp pinnacles peculiar to the Alps, he gazes on rounded summits, while caverns of mysterious depth, subterranean passages, and catacombs filled with the dead, open their shadowy portals before him. The lines of the distant prospect grow soft and harmonious; the boundaries of earth and sky seem to commingle; the seasons disappear in perennial verdure, and vegetation thrives with the utmost luxuriance.

The clouds of the sky of Rome display mountainous forms and aerial valleys of surpassing grandeur, and in the rosy light of sunset suggest visions of a magic land floating in space, and radiant with purple and gold. On summer nights dancing fireflies illumine the woods and fields, flashing over them by millions, concealing the earth as it were with a mantle of stars. At Naples and again in Sicily the volcano adds its magnificence to a landscape

already surcharged with richness. The smoke from its colossal form rises in artificial clouds grander, more poetical, and often more terrible than the tempest-cloud; in a calm atmosphere, as it rests on the peak of the mountain, a stupendous inverted pyramid, its dark o'erhanging mass seems to threaten the earth with its downfall. Standing on Vesuvius' side during an eruption I beheld the landscape of Naples, its bay, the sea, and the islands, suddenly illuminated by the grand fiery jet of the angry crater; as the fitful flame of deep ruddy hue arose, accompanied with subterranean thunder, the sea and land beneath glowed as if overspread with a carpet of fire; profound darkness immediately followed, and the earth trembled under my feet.

To such sublime spectacles add the vestiges of former ages, the apparitions so to say of all centuries arising in every direction, and in every diverse form of ruin. It is not without emotion that on approaching these your hand rests as it were on the ages of Nero and Constantine.

Now pass the Alps from South to North. On entering Switzerland, the traveller is struck with the repose of its grand masses of moun-