

The Outcome of the Present Civilization.

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THE contemplative mind will sometimes ask itself the question: What is to be the outcome of the present civilization, which now embraces for the first time within our knowledge a majority of the human race? Other civilizations have risen within our own historical period, and there are evidences which give undisputed proof of many prior ones. But both the former and the latter have decayed, and, in the natural course of events, been wiped out in the advance of races rendered, or kept more vigorous than they by the natural selection, or survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence of barbarous humanity.

Our present European races, composed mainly of descendants of a people who, a few centuries ago, were barbarians,* still show only the earlier signs of that physical decay which must eventually come upon them. The more vigorous individuals among them, like the Roman of the early Empire, are quite able to hold their own against savage races in spite of that gradual failing

of teeth, nerves, eyesight, and digestive apparatus, which is coming more plainly into evidence with each decade of the civilized existence of their race. Moreover, by the help of an increasing proficiency in cookery, surgery, and medicine, combined with enlightened use of exercise and suitable diet, a certain amount of vitality is likely to be assured for a long future period if these favourable circumstances can be depended upon; especially as, unlike the older and smaller civilizations, our present one is too large to be suddenly overrun by a more hardy and numerous people. The invention and improvement of machinery, steam, fire-arms, etc., has also done much to equalize the struggle between effeminate and vigorous nationalities.

But all this is not putting off the chief evil, but even hastening the race-degeneration. Science now teaches that all bodily organs of animated beings which are not necessary in the struggle for existence have a tendency to degenerate and fail. In our present civilization some of our important organs are not necessary, and many of them need not even nearly be in a sound condition. A man can now live to old age with a weak stomach and no teeth, whilst begetting children to inherit, increase, and transmit those infirmities. This carried on unchecked in an uncivilized tribe would soon cause the latter to be swept from the face of the earth

*At least, the vigorous nations. There was no doubt a numerous remnant of the Roman provincials (Celtic and Tiberian) left in Spain, southern Italy, and parts of France, but their treatment in the hands of their Vandal, Gothic, Frankish, Lombard, and Arab conquerors, would soon sweep away most of the traces of physical degeneration by killing all the weakly off.