

CIVILISATION
ITS CAUSE AND CURE
AND OTHER ESSAYS

(NEW AND ENLARGED EDITION)

BY
EDWARD CARPENTER
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"FROM ADAM'S PEAK TO ELEPHANTA," ETC.



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SOME PRESS OPINIONS

"Mr. Carpenter never wrote anything in all his books so good as 'Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure.' It expresses in a delightful manner the best and most charming of all the doubts of our time. Civilisation, having destroyed so many idols, has at last suddenly been discovered to be itself an idol, and a destructible idol; and the true sceptic, who has so often asked in the name of civilisation whether there was any reason why we should care for creeds or traditions or unaccountable loyalties, has finally and logically come to asking, in the name of common sense, if there is any reason why we should care for civilisation."—*Daily News*.

"A strange but suggestive paper, entitled 'Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure,' takes up the greater part of the volume, and gives it its title. The fact of disease, mental and physical, as characteristic of the stage in the evolution of each race, called civilisation, is dwelt on in the first part of the paper. The cause and purpose in history of this failure of human health is treated of in the second part."—*Ruskin Reading Guild*.

"Edward Carpenter is a seer. So say those who know him best; and the reader of this little volume of essays, in which he has put his ripest thoughts, will be inclined to agree with that judgment. He sees into things farther than other men, and has the faculty of looking through the crust of convention and artificiality in which the modern world is embedded. The title of the first essay, which also entitles the book, is a bold one, and suggests the author's aim. He holds that the rather indefinite thing which we mean by civilisation has, if used in the definite sense adopted by writers on primitive society, obscured the real life of man, and brought about an unhealthy change in the structure of human society. In its historic evolution he finds that these bad changes have been coincident with the growth of property and the ideas flowing from it. And he goes on to argue that the social life of the wilder races is more harmonious and compact than that of civilised nations. It may sound startling and paradoxical to say this, but the reader who dismisses such theories as absurd will regret that he has not followed the argument through."—*Bradfield Observer*

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CIVILISATION: ITS CAUSE AND CURE.

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The friendly and flowing savage, who is he? Is he waiting for civilisation, or is he past it, and mastering it?—WHITMAN.

We find ourselves to-day in the midst of a somewhat peculiar state of society, which we call Civilisation, but which even to the most optimistic among us does not seem altogether desirable. Some of us, indeed, are inclined to think that it is a kind of disease which the various races of man have to pass through—as children pass through measles or whooping cough; but if it is a disease, there is this serious consideration to be made, that while History tells us of many nations that have been attacked by it, of many that have succumbed to it, and of some that are still in the throes of it, we know of no single case in which a nation has fairly recovered from and passed through it to a more normal and healthy condition. In other words the development of human society has never yet (that we know of) passed beyond a certain definite and apparently final stage in the process we call Civilisation; at that stage it has always succumbed or been arrested.