

or all of the miscellaneous collection of magazines and papers found in the reading room.

Of the objects already mentioned it ought to be remembered by the student that his regular term work is unquestionably of the most importance; yet it is a poor plan to be on intimate terms with Virgil or Horace, and scarce know the master minds of to-day whose influence is felt so strongly on the pulse of our public life.

For one to be up with the times, it will be by the aid of that mirror of passing events, the newspaper; the earnest persons in the reading room gathered around the morning papers, show, if not the truth, at least a belief in the truth of what I am saying. But attractive as this work is to many of the readers, it is quite possible, indeed quite common, to give an undue importance to the newspapers. Twenty minutes over a newspaper are sufficient to make it one's own, both news and editorials; and in the abundance of magazines there is little more than temporary interest.

D. H. W. JR.

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#### RELIGION AND CIVILIZATION.

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The Church has never lacked advocates who attempt, by garbled history and collected facts, to show that civilization is the legitimate and inevitable result of her parental care. These misguided champions have the advantage of existing prejudices, and not unfrequently, by substituting feeling for fact and eloquent fiction for argument, do they receive the applause of an unreflecting populace. The scope of the question, however, and the importance of the issue, demand the cool, intrepid logic of facts. But few questions are fraught with greater interest or more important results than the inquiry into the successive steps by which man has raised himself from the state of primitive savagery to the state of comparative civilization in which we now find him. When the results shall

have been reached it will become our duty to increase, as far as may be, those influences by which this change has been wrought and to decrease, if possible, those by which it has been opposed.

The question before us is capable of two distinct and independent solutions, each corroborating the other. One may be called psychological, the other historical. The intellectual development of a race resembles in many respects that of a child. At first the chief characteristics of each are imagination and credulity. Indeed in this regard the race can scarcely yet be said to have finished its childhood. It may be interesting as well as instructive to follow the mental steps by which the race advances from one stage of civilization to the next. The initial step in every case must of necessity be to doubt the propriety of prevailing customs, to call into question the justice of existing laws, to demand proof of the correctness of received opinions. It is idle to talk of improvement so long as ancestral customs are regarded with sacred reverence; legal advancement is impossible so long as the laws are believed to be perfect; it is absurd to talk of intellectual development while men behold with horror anything that tends to overthrow the opinions of their fathers. In other words the first step toward the advancement of civilization is to become sceptical. This general doubt as to the truth of what exists, naturally leads to inquiry, sometimes with no higher motive than to overthrow the cherished faith of the more credulous, but more frequently for the noble purpose of arriving at the truth. The path of inquiry, though leading through poverty and opprobrium, though obstructed by the stake and gibbet, though often obtained with the blood of those who dared to leave the well beaten tracts of the Fathers, yet leads at last to knowledge; and knowledge is the sole motor of civilization. If the foregoing is correct, which I think cannot be successfully denied, we then have the inevitable Sorites, that scepti-