History of Commerce and Industry

Herrick Cheesman Abiah
HISTORY OF COMMERCE
AND INDUSTRY
MACMILLAN'S COMMERCIAL SERIES

EDITED BY CHEESMAN A. HERRICK
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PREFACE

This book is an outgrowth of eleven years' experience in teaching history to commercial classes at the Philadelphia Central High School. In preparing it the aim has been the same as the aim of the teaching: viz., to present the essentials of history from the commercial and industrial point of view. The purpose has been to furnish the history of a great movement or tendency rather than the history of nations. It will be obvious to those who use the book that the writer's interests have been primarily in commercial history.

The writer accepts as true a recent statement of Canon Henson, that knowledge of the past is a great emancipating power of the present, and that ignorance of the past is one of the present's greatest curses. History treated as a record of social progress may become "one of the great cementing forces of society."

With what aspect of the past shall history deal? It is quite correct to say that history is the outgrowth of the age in which it is written and that the various interpretations which have been given it are but reflections of the varying and dominant interests of society. Not many years ago, Edward A. Freeman's famous dictum, "history is past politics and politics are present history," found general acceptance; but this sentiment is no longer generally approved. Clearly there is at present a desire to select those interests of the past which most bear on the present. For a considerable time, the tendency has been obvious for both writers and teachers to emphasize economic and social history rather than the history of war or of the evolution of governmental systems.

Another significant illustration of aims in historical study is presented by the World War which began in 1914. The emphasis upon nationality and the treatment of history as a too
great exaltation of the political existence of one's own nation to
the disregard of other powers and interests, rightly have been
held answerable for much misconception in the world at large,
and have led seriously to the question whether there has not
been "too much history." To this there can be, of course, but
one answer,—not too much history, but history of the wrong
sort, or directed to wrong ends.

The conception of history suggested above absolutely forces
a consideration of the economic and industrial aspects of the
subject. Nor is such a study to be condemned as utilitarian or
materialistic. The history of commerce and industry shows
how men have transformed the conditions under which they
have lived, and have wrought out the physical means of human
progress. To those who are to do the practical work of the
world, a study of the steps by which this progress has been
accomplished is of supreme importance. Business men and
women are no exception to the rule that mankind is dependent
on a study of the past for both knowledge and ideals.

The list of those to whom the writer is indebted is long.
First he acknowledges his obligation to his former teachers,
Professors James Harvey Robinson, John Bach McMaster, and
Edward Potts Cheyney. Professors Howland, Lingelbach, and
McKinley of the University of Pennsylvania have read parts of
the book in manuscript or proof, and have made valuable sugges-
tions. Dr. William Fairley, Principal of the Commercial
High School in Brooklyn, and Mr. Charles L. Reed of the Me-
chanic Arts High School in Boston read parts of the manu-
script and similarly helped with suggestions as to subject matter
and form of presentation. Mr. Paterson Du Bois read all of
the manuscript and made many suggestions as to form. But
the greatest obligation is to Mr. D. Montfort Melchior and Mr.
Morris Wolf, teachers of history in Girard College, who have
been most helpful in the preparation of the manuscript and in
seeing the book through the press.

C. A. H.

JUNE 15, 1917.
SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

Two methods are possible in studying the relations between the past and the present. The history of a movement or institution may be traced from the present backward to its origin, or the roots of the present may be found in the past and the process followed by which the past unfolds. In either case, present interest is the guide in the selection of material. Which of these methods is chosen is not so important as the spirit in which the study is pursued.

The earlier practice of presenting history as a study entirely cut off from present interest has largely disappeared. Our general histories have recognized the need of selecting for study those aspects of earlier times which have the most direct bearing upon present problems. If this is true of general history, it is true also, more largely, of the history of commerce and industry.

The tendency to give less emphasis to the earlier periods should not mean that they be entirely neglected. Schools owe to students a fair knowledge of the past of the society of which they are a part. The change that is now taking place is one of emphasis and method of presentation. The history of the ancient and medieval periods is being more and more summarized and presented in outline.

A caution should be given against the slavish following of any single method of study. Even the division of history into periods is likely to mislead pupils as to the unity of the subject and the vital relations of the parts. The study of history as a unity and a regard for the parts as interrelated and interdependent should go far toward overcoming that "appetite for disconnected facts" which Robert Louis Stevenson once likened to "the savage's love of stringing beads."

The writer would urge the value of the topic and problem methods of study in the history of commerce and industry.
Suggestions for Study

The book suggests in section headings and various subdivisions many suitable topics, and the books for reference given at the conclusions of the chapters offer additional material for investigation. The preparation and presentation of these topics as student lectures, supplemented with questions and discussion by the class and the teacher, will give good results. The interest will be increased if the pupils are permitted to select their topics and to follow their own interest as far as possible. A continuity of topics may be observed. The topics in the earlier periods may be treated in outline, thus reserving additional time for the more detailed study of the last hundred years.

A study of this book should give some insight into social evolution. In the chapter on "Greek Industry and Commerce," attention is drawn to the remarkable intellectual development of the Athenians. A recent writer on Evolution and Environment accepts the conclusions of Galton and earlier scholars as to the high development of the Athenians compared with that of the citizens of modern countries, but finds that progress has come from social evolution. The earth has become a great neighborhood. Men now feel an interest in and responsibility for others, even for those who live on the other side of the world. The methods of study used with this book should intensify this interest, and create a new consciousness of the dependence and interdependence of peoples.

The questions at the close of the chapters are not meant to be either exhaustive or complete. In the main, they are on matters outside of the text and they are designed as "thought provokers," or "discussion breeders," rather than as a means of searching the pupil's knowledge of the text. Most teachers will supply questions on the text which will be more satisfactory than stereotyped questions which the book might present. If, however, by citations from other books, and questions in the broader but related field, the student's interest can be stimulated, the questions will serve a highly useful purpose. Pupils will get special profit from the formulation of their own questions on assigned sections of the book.

Attention is drawn to the desirability of making use of maps
Suggestions for Study

for representing the studies of the book. Trade routes, commercial centers, distribution of agricultural and other products, centers of manufacture, locations of colonies, indications of spheres of influence, and other data, may be most easily fixed in the mind through the use of outline maps. The series of outline maps of the McKinley Publishing Company (Philadelphia) furnishes an inexpensive and satisfactory supply of materials of this sort.

Tabular arrangements of the sort shown on pages 11 and 216 are helpful for furnishing comparisons over considerable periods; lists of products and means of transport may be similarly shown. The index of the book is quite inclusive and can be used to advantage for topical study. Pictures may be collected to give the study more vivid interest. Citations from contemporary records can be accumulated, and will furnish a contact with the periods studied that can be secured in no other way.

The lists of "Books for Consultation" at the close of the chapters present materials for further study. The lists are not meant to be exhaustive, and they do not include the books which the writer used in the preparation of his manuscript. Many of the works mentioned in these lists have more complete and pretentious bibliographies than have seemed desirable for this book. The books that are considered of special value are marked with double asterisks, those that are recommended but thought to be of less value are marked with single asterisks, and those of more general interest are enumerated without special emphasis.

Small Reference Collection

It is highly desirable that every class that undertakes a study of the History of Commerce and Industry should have access to at least the following books:

Ploetz, Epitome of Ancient, Medieval and Modern History, revised to 1914, Boston, Houghton, Mifflin and Co.: 1914. $3.