EXERCISE 18

What are the good parts of our civilization? First and foremost there are order and safety. If today I have a quarrel with another man, I do not get beaten merely because I am physically weaker and he can knock me it can between the two of us. Thus in disputes between man and man right has taken the place of might. Moreover, the law protects me from robbery and violence. Nobody may come and break into my house, steal my goods or run off with my children. Of course there are burglars but they are very rare, and the law punishes them whenever it catches them.

It is difficult for us to realise how much this safety means. Without safety those higher activities of mankind which make up civilization could not go on. The inventor could not invent, nor the scientist find out or the artist make beautiful things. Hence order and safety although they are not themselves civilization are things without which civilization would be impossible. They

are as necessary to our civilization as the air we breathe is to us; and we have grown so used to them that we do notice them any more than we notice the air.

Another great achievement of our civilization is that today civilized men are largely free from the fear of today civilized men are largely free from the fear of today civilized men are largely free from the fear of today civilized men are largely free from the fear of today civilized men are largely free from the fear of the pain. They still feel ill, but illness is no longer the pain. They still much terrible thing it used to be. And people are ill much terrible thing it used to be civilized—savages less often. To be healthy is not to be civilized—savages

Thirdly our civilization is more secure than any that have gone before it. This is because it is much more widely spread. Most of the previous civilizations known to history came to an end because vigorous but uncivilized peoples broke in upon them and destroyed them. This was the fate of Babylon and Assyria; it happened over and over again in India and China; it brought about the end of Greece and the fall of Rome.

Now, whatever the dangers which threaten our civilization, and they are many, it seems likely to escape this one. Previous civilizations were specialised and limited, they were like oasis in a surrounding desert of savagery. Sooner or later the desert closed in and the oasis was no more. But today it is the oasis which is spreading over the Europe, America and Australia and great parts of Asia and Africa. Practically no part of the world is untouched by it. And owing to the powers of destruction with which science has armed it, it is exceedingly unlikely that such savages or uncivilized peoples as are left in the world could attack it. (561 words)

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