



and Euphrates. Perhaps because the Nile Valley was better protected, a higher civilization subsequently developed there. More or less independently, civilizations sprang up in the Indus Delta, in the Wei Ho Valley in East Central China, in Northern Mexico, in Guatemala and in Peru.

What caused these cradles of civilization to stagnate? Why is there today not a single highly developed country in the tropics or subtropics? One reason must have been parasites (mainly internal parasites) similar to those which infect most of the inhabitants of these lands today.⁵

Prior to the establishment of the first settlement, man attained control of parasites through: (a) a nomadic way of life which breaks the life cycle of most internal parasites, (b) low population densities, (c) little or no peaceful contact with strangers from other lands. Once the settlers became established, technol-

ogy accumulated at a faster rate, since horticultural practices, seeds, and installations could be passed down from generation to generation. However, as technology accumulated, the land could support higher population densities. Specialization and the development of metal tools led to trade. This paper hypothesizes that these factors led to the proliferation of parasites, which stagnated the cradles of civilization.⁶

⁵ The word parasite is used here in the broad meaning as per Webster: "A plant or animal living in, on, or with some other living organism (its host) at whose expense it obtains food, shelter, etc."

⁶ David Causey, *Uninvited Guests* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1932) pp. 29-30. This knowledge regarding the life-cycles of parasites is so new and yet so taken for granted that we are likely to forget how its absence influenced the destinies, not of nations merely, but of civilizations. We forget that with great civilizations come great cities and great massing of peoples, that contact is inevitable, and that the problems of wholesome food and of proper disposal of wastes is difficult. Yet all these problems must be met, else the machine breaks down. Add to this burden of a civilization the appearance of this or that parasite having a dangerous, perhaps lethal, effect upon the host. With no real understanding of its control, the machine falls