

MODERN TIMES AND THE LIVING PAST

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PREFACE

To present the history of the world in a single volume and to make the story at the same time attractive and useful to young readers is a most difficult task. Only the general sweep of the great current of events can be followed; only the salient features that contributed most to the development of the nations can be included.

The two questions that must constantly be in the mind of the writer are, first, what to choose for the text, and second, how to present it. As to the first, he must be able to appraise historic values; he must present that which will lead the reader to visualize the past so as best to grasp the problems that contributed most to the social, moral, economic, and political development of the peoples whom he is studying. Thus by acquiring a correct knowledge of his historical inheritance, the reader will understand and appreciate the principles on which are based the ideals and institutions of the civilization of the present.

As to the second, the method of presenting history, especially for young readers, these facts must be borne in mind: The great majority of high-school pupils will never become specialists in history. Intensive scientific study from the sources is therefore out of place in the secondary schools, except for an occasional diversion. It is recommended that classes be led to dip now and then into the source fountains; but if confined to this form of study, pupils will leave school with no knowledge of the great march of human events, and with little or no interest to continue the study in the future. Moreover, they will miss the culture and the intense interest that pertains to the great human story.

In preparing this book I have given large space to the social and industrial life of the people, their achievements and their progress; at the same time I have endeavored to retain the thread of the political narrative, especially in the accounts of

ancient Greece and Rome and of the great nations of modern Europe. The study of modern Europe is given in cross sections with constant reference to the relations of the various countries with one another. As the history of our own country is a study by itself, it is not included in this volume.

More space has been given to the study of England than to that of any other country, because of its greater importance to American students, and in order to obviate the necessity of making it a separate study in the crowded curriculum of the high school.

To the modern period I have given much greater space than to the ancient and medieval periods. Every intelligent citizen must have some knowledge of what we owe to the far past; but more vital is a knowledge of the great problems of our own times, and to these a fuller treatment has been given.

The wars of the world could not be omitted because of the great part they have played in human progress, but the account of them has been condensed to the smallest space.

Wherever possible I have kept the human interest in the foreground and have deemed it best to give considerable space to the leading characters in history at the expense of leaving unmentioned the names of many who usually find a place even in condensed histories.

The same is true in the narration of events. Great numbers of facts usually told in books of this character have been omitted to gain space for a fuller treatment of the greater movements that have most affected the development of the nations.

My constant aim has been to present a book that will be easy to teach and at the same time interesting as well as useful to the youthful reader. It is hoped, furthermore, that this book may be useful to the general reader, may prove a pleasant review to those who already know the history, and may furnish to busy people, who have not the time to pursue the subject further, an intelligent elemental knowledge of the great story of the development of human civilization.

HENRY W. ELSON.

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MODERN TIMES AND THE LIVING PAST

CHAPTER I

PREHISTORIC MAN

I. STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

1. **Historic and Prehistoric Times.** — There was a time, many ages ago, when not a man in the world could read. There were no books, no writing, no alphabet. At length, after thousands of years, we know not how many thousands, men began to invent an alphabet and to make books. They then began to leave a written record of their own doings. This we call History.

The long ages preceding the time when men learned to write are called Prehistoric Times. The period since men began to write is known as Historic Times.

The various nations emerged from the prehistoric period to the historic period at different times. The people of the Nile Valley and those of the Euphrates (u-frā'tēz) Valley reached the historic period several thousand years before the time of Christ (B.C.), the Greeks about 900 B.C., the Romans 600 or 700 B.C., and the Teutonic peoples more than a thousand years later. There are many tribes on the earth who have not yet reached the historic stage. Among these are some of the American Indians, some Negroes of Africa, the "Black Fellows" of Australia, and many of the natives of the East Indies.

2. **Prehistoric Man and the Animals.** — Through unknown ages man has made his way on and up to his present stage of enlightenment. In many respects man is inferior to the lower animals. He has not the strength of the ox nor the eyesight of the eagle; he lacks the speed of the deer and the bloodhound's power

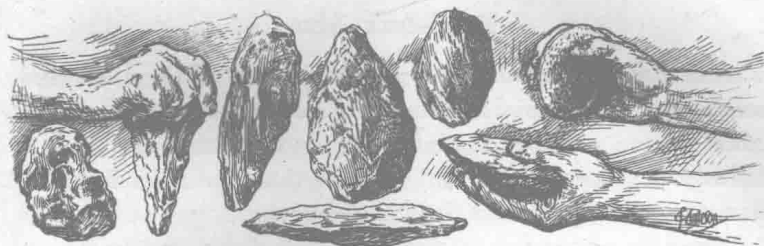
of scent. But he stands immeasurably above all these creatures because of his superior intelligence, his cunning, his reasoning power. Man is the only creature on the earth that uses tools or fire or wears clothing, the only creature that speaks an articulate language, the only creature that has a moral and religious instinct. All these characteristics of man developed slowly during the prehistoric ages.

3. Epochs of Development. — The long period of man's advance in the use of tools and weapons is divided into four ages: (1) the Rough Stone age, (2) the Polished Stone age, (3) the Bronze age, and (4) the Iron age.

During the rough stone or paleolithic (pā-le-o-līth'ic, which means old stone) age man lived almost as the animals about him. His implements of war and of the chase were made of rough stone or of bones. Many thousands of such relics have been found in the past half century in France and other countries. As time passed man learned to polish the stones, to shape them into knives, arrowheads, and stone axes or "tomahawks," as the American Indians called them. This age of polished stone implements is sometimes called the neolithic (or new stone) age. Thus primeval man gradually passed from one "age" to another, but how many thousands of years he remained in each we have no means of knowing.

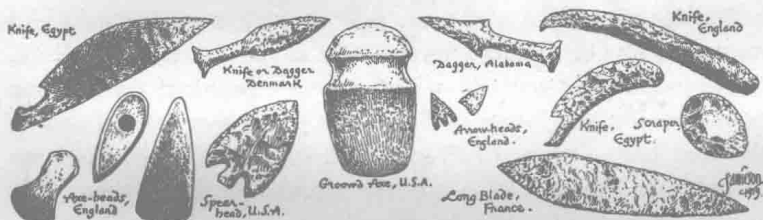
At length man came to learn the use of metals, when and how no one knows. He first used copper, but copper is too soft to make good tools. In some way it was discovered that by mixing copper with a little tin a metal is formed which is much better than either for the making of implements. The mixture is called bronze. For many centuries, known as the bronze age, this metal was used in ever-increasing quantities.

Finally, man discovered how to make use of iron, which is the most useful of all metals, and happily the most abundant. The use of metals has been of immense importance in the development of the human race. Without it our present civilization would be impossible.



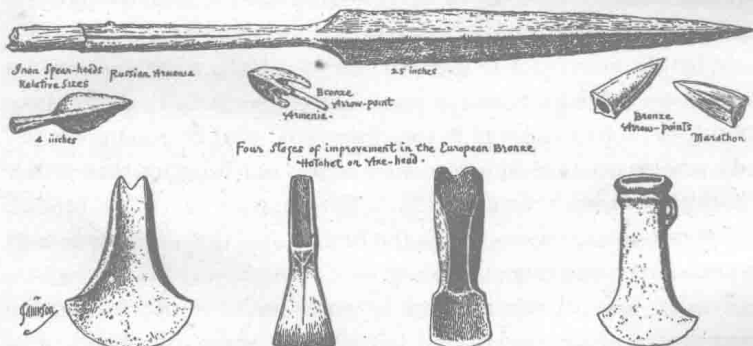
IMPLEMENTS OF THE ROUGH STONE AGE

Fist hatchets and knives. Such implements were made by splitting and chipping stones, using another stone as a hammer for this purpose. At the right of this picture a stone knife, in the lower hand, is being shaped by chipping blows struck with the stone in the upper hand.



IMPLEMENTS OF THE POLISHED STONE AGE

These tools, after being chipped roughly into shape, were finished by grinding and polishing.



EARLY BRONZE AND IRON IMPLEMENTS

The handle of a hatchet was a forked or bent stick to which the hatchet was securely bound.

4. **Economic Progress.** — Again, with respect to man's economic progress, his methods of getting a living, we may divide his career into five stages; (1) the Hunting and Fishing stage; (2) the Pastoral or Shepherd stage; (3) the Agricultural stage; (4) the Handicraft stage; and (5) the Industrial stage.



MAN OF THE LATE NEOLITHIC AGE

Restoration made under the direction of a Belgian scientist. Notice the polished stone ax with wooden handle, the stone dagger, and the flint-headed arrows. Notice also that this man has untrimmed hair and beard, and wears a necklace of teeth — trophies of the chase.

During the hunting and fishing stage men lived chiefly on game and fish. They lived in caves or rude huts, or they wandered from place to place without a fixed home. Passing from the rough stone age to the polished stone age during this time, they invented the bow and arrow, which they found of great advantage in the chase or when striving with an enemy in battle. They had no

domestic animals except the dog, which, before being tamed, was a wild jackal or wolf. In this stage were many of the American Indians when discovered by the white men.

As time passed man discovered that it was far easier to make his living by keeping flocks and herds than by depending on his skill in capturing wild animals. Perhaps a hunter returning from the chase brought with him a young calf or kid, which became a pet for his children. As the animal grew the idea occurred to the family that it would be better to domesticate and raise animals than to depend wholly on the chase. Thus began the shepherd stage. The dog was already man's faithful companion. Next came the cow, the sheep, and the goat to furnish him with milk and flesh, and the horse to bear his burdens as a faithful servant. From this time he moved about from place to place less than before. He had a better home and moved only now and then, seeking new pastures. A typical example of man in the pastoral stage was the patriarch Abraham, founder of the Jewish nation.

Still later men became farmers and passed into the agricultural stage. From the beginning, no doubt, man had supplemented his diet of flesh with various grains, fruits, and vegetables as he found them growing wild. When he discovered that by cultivating the soil he could raise far more and far better products than nature furnished direct to hand, he made an important step toward a better and higher mode of life. When men became farmers they built fixed homes and ceased to wander about.

Year after year a man would till the same field and at length he came to look upon it as his own. His neighbors did the same and thus the private ownership of land came to be recognized. The agricultural stage is also characterized by the introduction of slavery. During the hunting and pastoral stages it was not practical to hold slaves, as a master could make use of them only by giving them arms and placing them on a level with himself; but when a man became a farmer he could make use of a captive by putting him to work. Most of the early slaves were captives taken in war. Before this stage captives were usually put to

death. Plato was not far wrong in saying that the introduction of slavery was a humane act and an advance in civilization. The ancient Greeks and Romans and the European peoples of the Middle Ages lived in the agricultural stage.

Next came the handicraft stage, during which man slowly advanced in the production of goods and implements. Manufacturing was done by hand (as the word signifies) and each family supplied nearly all of its own wants. In this stage we find the American colonists before the war of the Revolution.

Finally, we have the industrial stage. This is characterized by great inventions, by world-wide commercial activity, and by the production of goods in colossal quantities. It is the stage in which we are living.

5. Political Evolution. — Man is a social being. Like the buffaloes that roam in herds, or the birds that flock together, man seeks the companionship of his fellows. It is impossible for men to live alone and independent of one another. The large group in which they live we call society.

Social life is impossible without a code of rules or laws by which the individual is restrained from doing things that would injure his fellows, and through which the social body may do for the individual what he cannot do for himself, such as constructing roads and bridges, building schoolhouses, and defending him against enemies. The regulating of the social group is called government. All our nearest interests are inseparably connected with government.

The origin of human government lies far back in the past, even beyond the dawn of history. The earliest governments were no doubt those of mere family groups, the father, sometimes the mother, being the head of the family or clan. Next followed the patriarchal form, which included also more distant kindred and servants, as in the case of Abraham. Later came the government of the tribe, a union of many clans or families, and finally the government of the state or nation, formed by the union and commingling of many tribes. The nations are usually separated

from one another by differences in language or religion, or by geographical boundaries.

6. Language and Fire. — In modern times no tribe of men, however savage and wild, has been found without language. Man is not endowed by nature with the gift of language, but with the power of speech, and he must make his own language. The making of a language is a spontaneous process covering a long period of time.¹

The use of fire is no doubt of very early origin; as in the case of language, no tribe of men is without it. Perhaps the first use of fire was learned through fires caused by lightning; but at length man learned to kindle a fire by rubbing sticks together. None of the lower animals has the intelligence to use fire. It is said that when an African traveler leaves his camp fire, the monkeys will sometimes gather about it and rub their hands in glee. As the fire dies out, they look on sadly, not one of them having intelligence enough to throw on a stick of wood. The ancient Greeks had a legend that the hero Prometheus (pro-mē'-thūs) brought fire from heaven and taught man its use; and that for this he was severely punished, because the gods were jealous of the growing importance of man (sec. 56).



AUSTRALIAN FIRE DRILLER

This shows how an Australian native, or "black fellow" kindles a fire. Our remote ancestors used similar methods. Some American Boy Scouts can perform this feat.

¹ It is well known that children will often make words with which to express themselves. From Albany, New York, an unusual example is reported. Two children but little past two years of age invented a considerable vocabulary and used it constantly in conversing with each other. Thus *gar* meant horse; *peer*, a ball; *odo*, to send for; *pama*, to go to sleep, and so on. No doubt language was made in this way in the infancy of the human race. See Wright's *Origin and Antiquity of Man*, p. 94.

At length man discovered that by the use of fire he could harden clay and make pottery, could make his food better by cooking it, and could smelt ores and make metal tools and weapons.



EUROPEAN POTTERY OF THE NEOLITHIC AND BRONZE AGES

In the British Museum. Many such dishes have been found in burial mounds where they were no doubt placed, well filled, to provide food for the dead in their journey to the next world.

It is a notable fact that the use of fire and metals, and language — all of which are indispensable to our modern civilized life — have come down to us as an inheritance from prehistoric times.

7. History. — The known record of the ages of the past is what we call history. It is a study of mankind in groups or nations. But history is more than a record of events; it is a study of human nature, the most interesting of all studies, and is second only to the study of the life of our times.

History is like a coral growth. Each generation builds its fabric of civilization on that which it inherits from the past, and there are few things that we enjoy in our everyday life for which we are not indebted to the past. If you sit down to write a letter, the pen and paper you use, the table, the chair on which you sit,

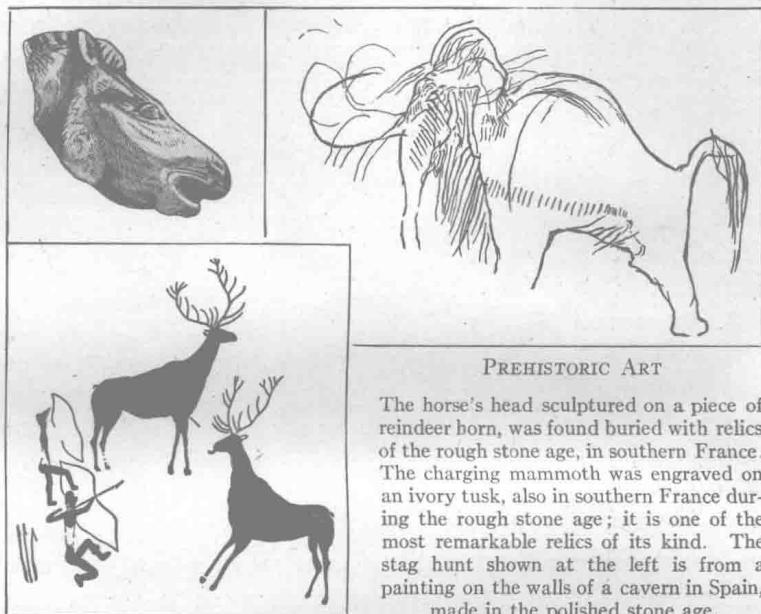
even the clothes you wear, are the products of machinery that required centuries to develop; and the alphabet you employ is the inheritance of thousands of years. Were it possible to blot out the past, man would be reduced to a state of savagery, without machinery or clothing, without language or tradition.

It is through history that we learn what we owe to the generations that have gone before, and can study the origin and growth of the institutions we enjoy. A knowledge of the past enables us the better to understand the duties of the present.

8. Sources of History. — Though the prehistoric races left no consciously-prepared history, modern scholarship has done much toward revealing the secrets of those early times. Weapons and tools have been unearthed in great numbers, and each one brings its mute message from the long past years.¹ Suppose an excavator of an ancient city finds a skeleton with a filled tooth in the jaw. He learns from this that a certain metal was in use at the time the person lived, and that some progress had been made in the practice of dentistry. Important facts can be learned from the earliest examples of sculpture and drawing. Inscriptions on monuments have been deciphered, and great numbers of tablets, unearthed from the ruins of buried cities, have been read by scholars who devote their lives to such studies. Songs, legends, and traditions are also of some value to the student of history. The evidences are put together piece by piece until a fairly accurate knowledge is gained of the habits, doings, and mode of life of the ancient peoples.

The American Indians wrote no books, but we learn something of how they lived and what they did before the coming of the white man by studying the mounds they built and the flint arrowheads and stone axes or tomahawks which they made, also from the rude carvings of their artists.

¹ More than a thousand swords, lances, and daggers were found in Schleswig in a single pit. Near Hallstatt, Austria, 980 tombs were opened, revealing great numbers of bronze and iron implements; but as there were no Roman coins, it is inferred that the tombs were made before the invasion of that country by the Romans. See Seignobos, *History of Ancient Civilization*, pp. 8, 9.



PREHISTORIC ART

The horse's head sculptured on a piece of reindeer horn, was found buried with relics of the rough stone age, in southern France. The charging mammoth was engraved on an ivory tusk, also in southern France during the rough stone age; it is one of the most remarkable relics of its kind. The stag hunt shown at the left is from a painting on the walls of a cavern in Spain, made in the polished stone age.

However much we may learn from prehistoric implements and art, written records constitute the chief source of history. These may be consciously-written historic accounts, as those of Herodotus, Jose'phus, or Tacitus (tă's'i-tus); or they may be sacred books which give history incidentally, as the Aves'ta of the Persians, or the Old Testament of the Jews; or they may be records of kings as found on tablets and monuments.

By far the greater part of our knowledge of the historic period is drawn from the written records; hence most of the matter in this book will be taken from these sources.

9. Invention of Writing. — Man never took a greater step in the direction of civilization and culture than when he invented the means of writing. In the childhood of the race the form of writing invented is what we call picture writing, in which the drawings represent things or ideas. Among the Indian tribes we find many specimens of picture writing.