

A GENERAL HISTORY OF EUROPE

FROM THE ORIGINS OF CIVILIZATION
TO THE PRESENT TIME

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PREFACE

In preparing this outline of the whole history of man from the earliest beginnings of civilization down to the present those topics have been chosen which have the greatest interest for us today—those which help us most in understanding our own time. Occasionally it has been necessary to include certain historical facts of no great importance in themselves merely to establish the sequence or because they are deemed matters of “common knowledge” which the student should know because they are often alluded to. Happily these latter cases are few.

The presentation of a satisfactory review of general history in a single volume becomes increasingly difficult. The older manuals gave scanty attention to anything preceding the Greeks and were well-nigh through their task when they reached the year 1870. But the long narrative of the past has been lengthened out at both ends. Recent discoveries of archæologists have altered fundamentally our conception of man’s progress and made vivid and real the long, long ages during which civilization was slowly accumulating before it reached that high degree of refinement which we find among the ancient Egyptians. The so-called “pre-historic” period and the story of the ancient Orient are now full of absorbing interest and can no longer be dismissed in a few introductory pages.

On the other hand our own times have assumed a significance which they did not possess for us prior to the year 1914. The shock of finding the world at war and the multitude of perplexing problems which the war has revealed have led us to realize how ill-understood are the conditions in modern Europe and in the Orient. The story of the World War must therefore be told with some account of its causes and of the questions still awaiting adjustment. Furthermore, it is obviously no longer possible to leave out some account of the Far East in an outline of European

history, for the war clearly showed how close has become the relationship between all peoples of the earth and how delicate and pressing is the problem of international adjustment.

It is obvious that in order to make room for all this new and essential material it has been impossible to include all the events which have usually been found in a general history. The task of selection is a difficult one. It is fair to ask the reader who is disturbed by the omission of some familiar name or topic to consider what portion of the present narrative he would discard in favor of the incident he has in mind.

In the matter of perspective it will be noted that less than half of the book is devoted to the whole history of the Western world down to the sixteenth century. Nearly a quarter of the volume is assigned to the last fifty years. This corresponds to a growing demand that we should study the past in the interest of the present.

The illustrations have been chosen with especial care, and the legends furnish much information which could not have been added to the text without complicating the narrative. The questions at the ends of the chapters will serve as a review and assist the student in summarizing his knowledge. Questions which cannot be answered from the text have sometimes been added in the hope of stimulating the student to carry on a little investigation of his own and to make some application of what he has learned.

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GENERAL HISTORY OF EUROPE

BOOK I. THE ANCIENT WORLD

CHAPTER I

PREHISTORIC MAN

I. HOW MAN HAS BUILT UP CIVILIZATION

1. **Ignorance and Poverty of Earliest Man.** How long man has existed on the earth no one knows. Those who have studied the matter most carefully in recent times make various guesses—some five hundred thousand years, some a million. In the beginning he must have lived without houses or clothes or any means of making a fire. He had to invent even language. There were no books or teachers to help him, and so he had to find out everything for himself. He wandered naked and houseless through the woods and over the plains, picking up a living by looking for wild fruit, seeds, berries, roots, and such animals as he might find dead or could succeed in striking down with a stone or stick. As a great English philosopher long ago remarked, the original life of man must have been "poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

We may imagine one of these naked, brutish forefathers of ours sitting in the shade and amusing himself by picking up a sharp stone and scraping the bark off a stick he had at hand with a view to killing a squirrel that was playing around. He might happen to sharpen the stick and so make a rude spear, which he discovered could be used to *pierce* an animal as well as *hit* him. In some such way the first weapon better than clubs and stones might have been *invented*. Now *to invent* means to "happen on"

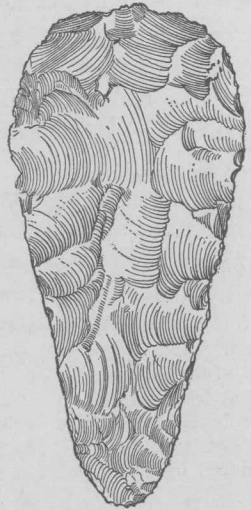
or "discover." Man has happened on and found out accidentally very many things that he has slowly learned through the ages.

2. Man Learns by Imitation. One of the great differences between man and other animals is that what one man invents may be imitated by others and become a tradition of the tribe. An old animal—let us say an elephant or horse—has learned something by experience and is wiser than a young one, but he cannot teach what he knows to the baby elephant or colt. Men and women, however, can teach boys and girls what they have learned. In this way discoveries which have been made from time to time have been passed down from generation to generation and have become more and more numerous, until the descendants of men who could not make a fire or speak a sentence or build a canoe have finally, in modern times, been able to construct an electric furnace hotter than the sun itself, dispat^{ch} messages around the world, and send great steamships back and forth across the sea. Each new invention usually depends on earlier inventions and these on still earlier ones, until, if we could follow the history of civilization back to the very beginning, we might find the man under the tree making the first spear hundreds of thousands of years ago.

3. Civilization the Story of Invention. The history of civilization is the story of how man invented and discovered all those things which we now have and of which at the start he was ignorant. We nowadays think of invention as going on rapidly, so that even a boy or girl can observe that new things are being discovered as he looks around or reads the newspapers and magazines. But in the beginning invention went on very, very slowly, and mankind has spent almost its whole existence in a state of savagery far below that of the most ignorant peoples to be found today in central Africa or the arctic regions.

4. Man's Long History and Slow Progress. If we imagine that man began to make the simplest inventions five hundred thousand years ago, and we let this five hundred thousand years be represented by a line fifty feet long, each foot would correspond to ten thousand years. Forty-nine feet would represent the period

before man learned to raise crops, tame and breed animals, make pottery, and weave cloth; the last six or seven inches, the time that he has been able to write; the last three inches, the period during which he has been studying science; the last half-inch, the time since the printing press became common; and the last fifth of an inch, the period since he discovered he could make the steam engine work for him and carry him about. A great part of the problems of the present day are due to the rapidity with which invention now goes on and changes the conditions in which we live. But our remote ancestors probably lived for thousands and thousands of years without experiencing any great changes due to inventions, for it is only during the past five or six thousand years that civilization finally reached a point where ever more rapid progress could be made. ¶



A FLINT FIST-HATCHET
BELONGING TO THE EARLY
STONE AGE

II. THE EARLY STONE AGE

5. Great Age of Man shown by Stone Tools and Weapons. Of the earliest period of man's existence we have no traces except perhaps a few human bones. It was only when he began to make stone implements by chipping fragments of flint into rude knives and hatchets that he created anything that could last down to our day. How old the most ancient of these stone weapons are we do not know. They may have been made a hundred thousand years ago, perhaps earlier. They are found in England, France, and Belgium and

Rough flint flakes older than the fist-hatchet show us man's earliest efforts at shaping stone. But the fist-hatchet is the earliest well-finished type of tool produced by man. The original is about nine inches long. Handles of wood or horn do not appear until much later

all around the Mediterranean Sea, especially along river banks, where they were dropped and, as the ages went on, deeply buried under sand and soil. Along with them are the bones of tropical animals, for the climate of Europe was warm in those remote times and the hippopotamus, rhinoceros, and elephant lived where Paris and London now stand.



SIMPLEST METHOD
OF MAKING FIRE

A hard stick is rubbed rapidly back and forth on a strip of soft wood. A groove is formed, and the particles of wood rubbed off take fire from the heat produced by the friction

For thousands of years the European savages led the lives of hunters and protected themselves (as best they could) with their stone and wooden weapons against the wild beasts and their fellow savages. They built no huts or shelter so far as we know and slept on the ground wherever darkness overtook them.

6. Fire and Language. Man must have early made use of the fire resulting from volcanoes or from lightning which often set the forests aflame. He was able then to cook his food and keep himself warm. But a long time probably elapsed before he discovered for himself how to *make* fire, as savages still do by rubbing two sticks together.

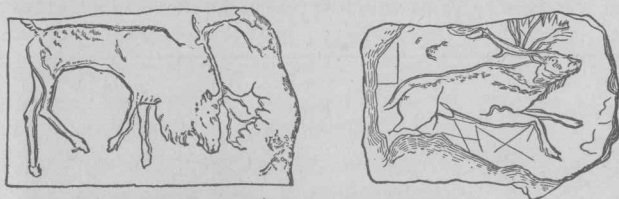
We know nothing of the invention of language, but man could not have gone far without some means of communication with his fellows.

7. Earliest Examples of Art. For reasons that cannot fully be explained the climate grew cold, and the ice and snow (which always cover the high mountains and the region around the north pole) began to creep downward until it covered all England and much of northern Europe. The tropical animals disappeared, and man had to take to living in caves and wearing the skins of animals in order to survive. From the remains now found in the

IVORY NEEDLE OF THE STONE AGE

Such needles are found in the rubbish in the French caverns, where the wives of the prehistoric hunters lost them and failed to find them again twenty thousand years ago. They show that these women were already sewing together the skins of wild animals as clothing

French and Spanish caverns it is clear that man had learned by this time to make flint knives, drills, scrapers, and hammers and with these could work bone and reindeer horn into needles, spoons, and ladles. He also learned to carve pictures on his



DRAWINGS CARVED BY STONE AGE MAN ON IVORY

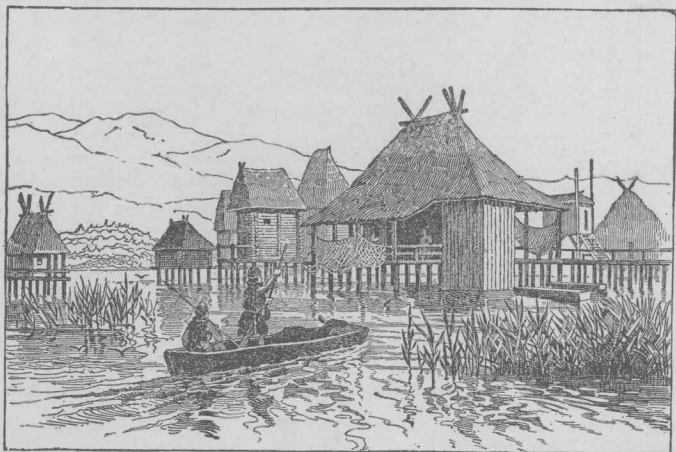
implements and adorn the walls of caves with paintings of fish, bison, deer, and wild horses. These are sometimes beautifully executed and very lifelike. They represent the earliest examples of human art and may go back fifteen or twenty thousand years.¹

III. THE LATE STONE AGE

8. **The Late Stone Age.** At length the climate grew warmer, much as it is today. The traces left by the ice would lead us to think that it withdrew northward for the last time probably some ten thousand years ago. The progress which man had made by this time in a number of important ways marks this period following the final retreat of the ice as the Late Stone Age. During the long, long years known as the *Early Stone Age* man knew only how to chip or flake his stone weapons. Now, however, he had learned that it was possible to grind the edge of a stone ax or chisel, as we grind tools of metal today. He was also able to drill a hole in a stone ax head and insert a handle. With the new tools that he had learned to make he could considerably improve his conditions of living. First, with his ground

¹ According to geologists the ice has advanced and retreated four times. It is now believed that stone implements were first made in the third warm interval, and that it was the cold of the *fourth* glacial period which drove men to their cave life. This period may be called the *Middle Stone Age*. For a fuller account of early man and the glacial periods see Breasted, *Ancient Times*, chap. i.

stone axes, hatchets, and chisels he could now build *wooden* huts. These wooden dwellings of the Late Stone Age are the earliest such shelters in Europe. Sunken fragments of these houses are found along the shores of the Swiss lakes, lying at the bottom among the wooden piles which supported them. Second, pieces of



RESTORATION OF A SWISS LAKE-DWELLERS' SETTLEMENT

The lake-dwellers felled trees with their stone axes and cut them into piles some twenty feet long, sharpened at the lower end. These they drove several feet into the bottom of the lake, in water eight or ten feet deep. On a platform supported by these piles they then built their houses. The platform was connected with the shore by a bridge, which may be seen here on the right. A section of it could be removed at night for protection. The fish nets seen drying on the rail, the "dug-out" boat of the hunters who bring in the deer, and many other things have been found on the lake bottom in recent times

stools, chests, carved dippers, spoons, and the like, of wood, show that these houses were equipped with all ordinary *wooden* furniture. Third, the householder had learned that clay will harden in the fire, and he was making handy *jars*, *bowls*, and *dishes*. Fourth, before his door the women sat spinning flax thread, for the rough skin clothing of his ancestors had been replaced by garments of *woven stuff*. Fifth, the lake-dwellers already enjoyed one of