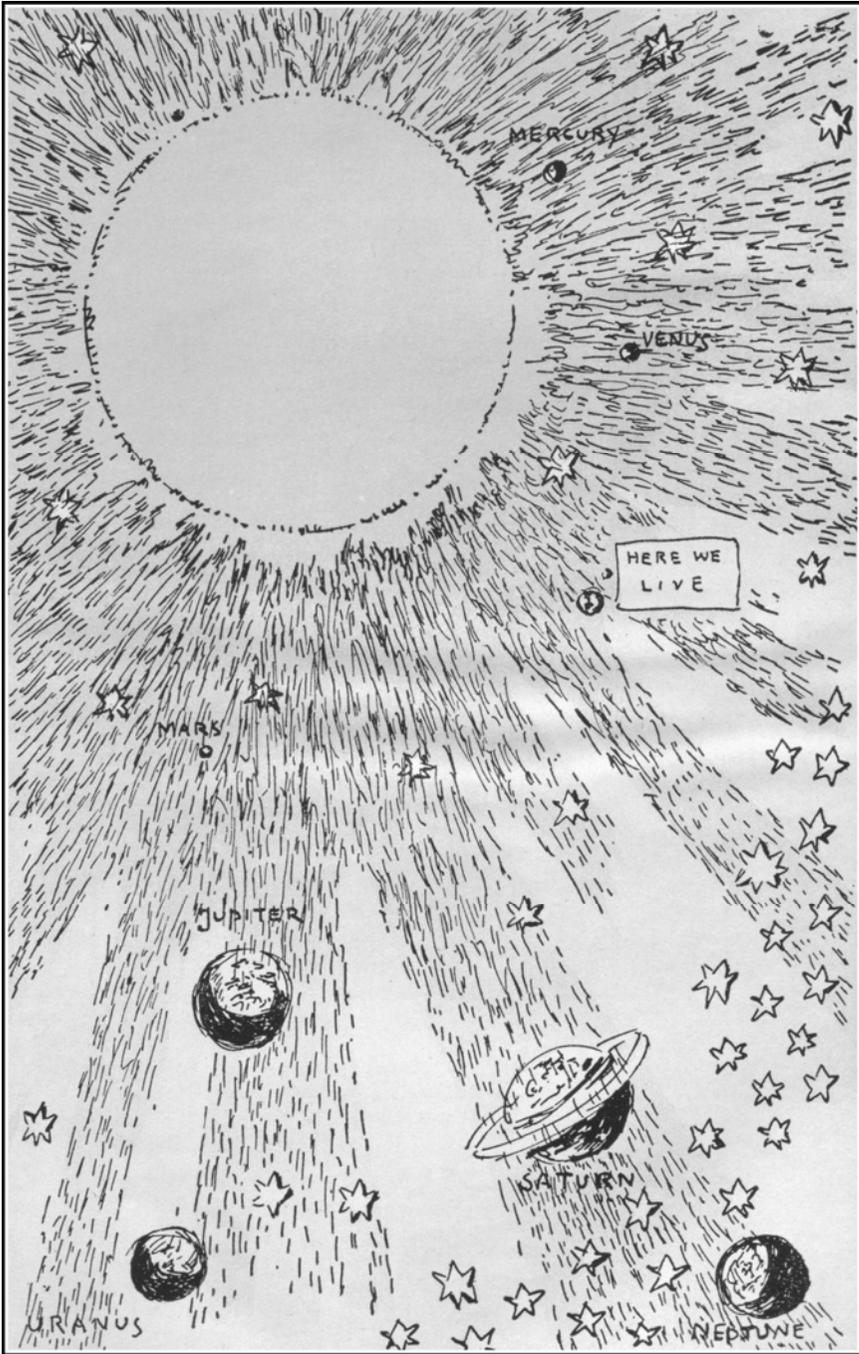
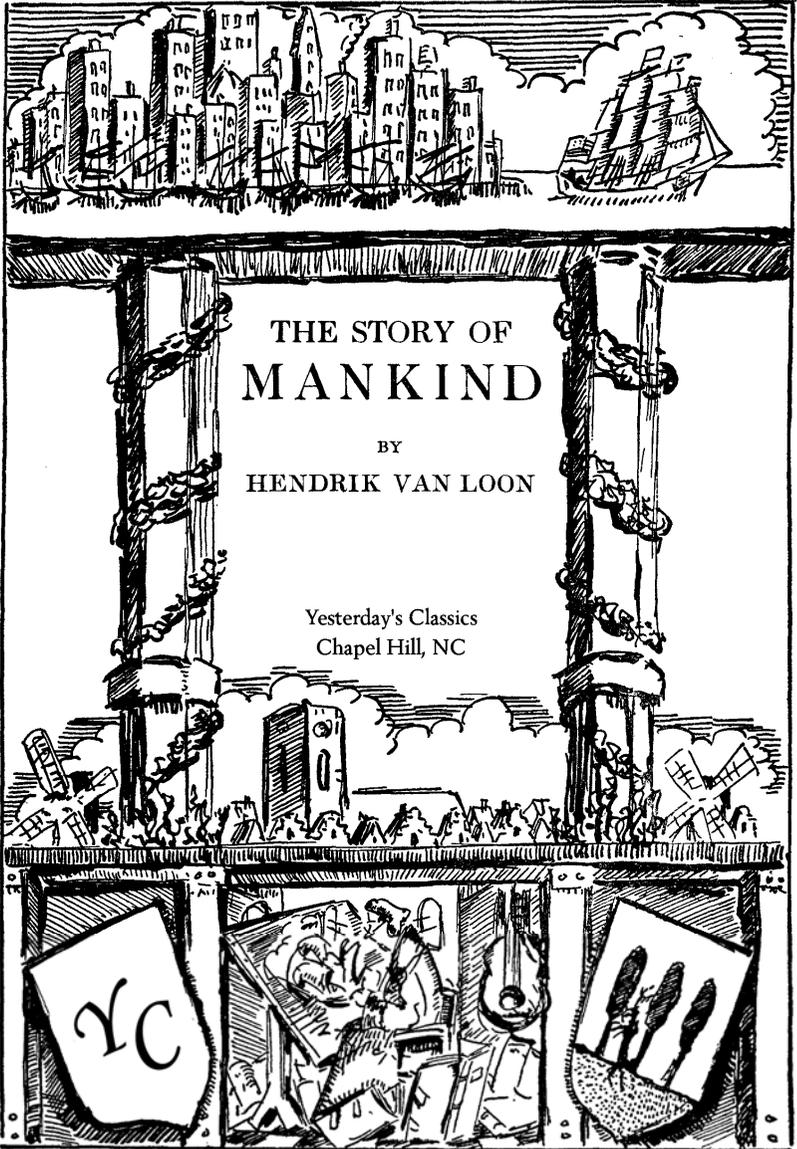


THE STORY OF MANKIND



THE SCENE OF OUR HISTORY IS LAID UPON A LITTLE PLANET, LOST IN THE VASTNESS OF THE UNIVERSE.



Cover and arrangement © 2007 Yesterday's Classics.

This edition, first published in 2007 by Yesterday's Classics, is an unabridged republication of the work originally published by Boni and Liveright, Inc. in 1921. For the complete listing of the books that are published by Yesterday's Classics, please visit www.yesterdaysclassics.com. Yesterday's Classics is the publishing arm of the Baldwin Online Children's Literature Project which presents the complete text of hundreds of classic books for children at www.mainlesson.com.

ISBN-10: 1-59915-211-8

ISBN-13: 978-1-59915-211-0

Yesterday's Classics
PO Box 3418
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

TO JIMMIE

“What is the use of a book without pictures?” said Alice.



FOREWORD

FOR HANSJE AND WILLEM:

WHEN I was twelve or thirteen years old, an uncle of mine who gave me my love for books and pictures promised to take me upon a memorable expedition. I was to go with him to the top of the tower of Old Saint Lawrence in Rotterdam.

And so, one fine day, a sexton with a key as large as that of Saint Peter opened a mysterious door. “Ring the bell,” he said, “when you come back and want to get out,” and with a great grinding of rusty old hinges he separated us from the noise of the busy street and locked us into a world of new and strange experiences.

For the first time in my life I was confronted by the phenomenon of audible silence. When we had climbed the first flight of stairs, I added another discovery to my limited knowledge of natural phenomena—that of tangible darkness. A match showed us where the upward road continued. We went to the next floor and then to the next and the next until I had lost count and then there came still another

floor, and suddenly we had plenty of light. This floor was on an even height with the roof of the church, and it was used as a storeroom. Covered with many inches of dust, there lay the abandoned symbols of a venerable faith which had been discarded by the good people of the city many years ago. That which had meant life and death to our ancestors was here reduced to junk and rubbish. The industrious rat had built his nest among the carved images and the ever watchful spider had opened up shop between the outspread arms of a kindly saint.

The next floor showed us from where we had derived our light. Enormous open windows with heavy iron bars made the high and barren room the roosting place of hundreds of pigeons. The wind blew through the iron bars and the air was filled with a weird and pleasing music. It was the noise of the town below us, but a noise which had been purified and cleansed by the distance. The rumbling of heavy carts and the clinking of horses' hoofs, the winding of cranes and pulleys, the hissing sound of the patient steam which had been set to do the work of man in a thousand different ways—they had all been blended into a softly rustling whisper which provided a beautiful background for the trembling cooing of the pigeons.

Here the stairs came to an end and the ladders began. And after the first ladder (a slippery old thing which made one feel his way with a cautious foot) there was a new and even greater wonder, the town-

clock. I saw the heart of time. I could hear the heavy pulsebeats of the rapid seconds—one—two—three—up to sixty. Then a sudden quivering noise when all the wheels seemed to stop and another minute had been chopped off eternity. Without pause it began again—one—two—three—until at last after a warning rumble and the scraping of many wheels a thunderous voice, high above us, told the world that it was the hour of noon.

On the next floor were the bells. The nice little bells and their terrible sisters. In the centre the big bell, which made me turn stiff with fright when I heard it in the middle of the night telling a story of fire or flood. In solitary grandeur it seemed to reflect upon those six hundred years during which it had shared the joys and the sorrows of the good people of Rotterdam. Around it, neatly arranged like the blue jars in an old-fashioned apothecary shop, hung the little fellows, who twice each week played a merry tune for the benefit of the country-folk who had come to market to buy and sell and hear what the big world had been doing. But in a corner—all alone and shunned by the others—a big black bell, silent and stern, the bell of death.

Then darkness once more and other ladders, steeper and even more dangerous than those we had climbed before, and suddenly the fresh air of the wide heavens. We had reached the highest gallery. Above us the sky. Below us the city—a little toy-town, where busy ants were hastily crawling hither and thither, each

one intent upon his or her particular business, and beyond the jumble of stones, the wide greenness of the open country.

It was my first glimpse of the big world.

Since then, whenever I have had the opportunity, I have gone to the top of the tower and enjoyed myself. It was hard work, but it repaid in full the mere physical exertion of climbing a few stairs.

Besides, I knew what my reward would be. I would see the land and the sky, and I would listen to the stories of my kind friend the watchman, who lived in a small shack, built in a sheltered corner of the gallery. He looked after the clock and was a father to the bells, and he warned of fires, but he enjoyed many free hours and then he smoked a pipe and thought his own peaceful thoughts. He had gone to school almost fifty years before and he had rarely read a book, but he had lived on the top of his tower for so many years that he had absorbed the wisdom of that wide world which surrounded him on all sides.

History he knew well, for it was a living thing with him. "There," he would say, pointing to a bend of the river, "there, my boy, do you see those trees? That is where the Prince of Orange cut the dikes to drown the land and save Leyden." Or he would tell me the tale of the old Meuse, until the broad river ceased to be a convenient harbour and became a wonderful

highroad, carrying the ships of De Ruyter and Tromp upon that famous last voyage, when they gave their lives that the sea might be free to all.

Then there were the little villages, clustering around the protecting church which once, many years ago, had been the home of their Patron Saints. In the distance we could see the leaning tower of Delft. Within sight of its high arches, William the Silent had been murdered and there Grotius had learned to construe his first Latin sentences. And still further away, the long low body of the church of Gouda, the early home of the man whose wit had proved mightier than the armies of many an emperor, the charity-boy whom the world came to know as Erasmus.

Finally the silver line of the endless sea and as a contrast, immediately below us, the patchwork of roofs and chimneys and houses and gardens and hospitals and schools and railways, which we called our home. But the tower showed us the old home in a new light. The confused commotion of the streets and the market-place, of the factories and the workshop, became the well-ordered expression of human energy and purpose. Best of all, the wide view of the glorious past, which surrounded us on all sides, gave us new courage to face the problems of the future when we had gone back to our daily tasks.

History is the mighty Tower of Experience, which Time has built amidst the endless fields of

bygone ages. It is no easy task to reach the top of this ancient structure and get the benefit of the full view. There is no elevator, but young feet are strong and it can be done.

Here I give you the key that will open the door.

When you return, you too will understand the reason for my enthusiasm.

HENDRIK WILLEM VAN LOON.

CONTENTS

1.	THE SETTING OF THE STAGE	1
2.	OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS	9
3.	PREHISTORIC MAN	14
4.	HIEROGLYPHICS	19
5.	THE NILE VALLEY	26
6.	THE STORY OF EGYPT	32
7.	MESOPOTAMIA	35
8.	THE SUMERIANS	37
9.	MOSES	44
10.	THE PHOENICIANS	49
11.	THE INDO-EUROPEANS	52
12.	THE ÆGEAN SEA	56
13.	THE GREEKS	63
14.	THE GREEK CITIES	67
15.	GREEK SELF-GOVERNMENT	72
16.	GREEK LIFE	77
17.	THE GREEK THEATRE	84

18.	THE PERSIAN WARS	88
19.	ATHENS VS. SPARTA	96
20.	ALEXANDER THE GREAT	99
21.	A SUMMARY	103
22.	ROME AND CARTHAGE	107
23.	THE RISE OF ROME	127
24.	THE ROMAN EMPIRE	131
25.	JOSHUA OF NAZARETH	144
26.	THE FALL OF ROME	151
27.	RISE OF THE CHURCH	160
28.	MOHAMMED	170
29.	CHARLEMAGNE	178
30.	THE NORSEMEN	186
31.	FEUDALISM	191
32.	CHIVALRY	197
33.	POPE VS. EMPEROR	201
34.	THE CRUSADES	210
35.	THE MEDIAEVAL CITY	217
36.	MEDIAEVAL SELF-GOVERNMENT	231
37.	THE MEDIAEVAL WORLD	239
38.	MEDIAEVAL TRADE	250
39.	THE RENAISSANCE	260
40.	THE AGE OF EXPRESSION	276

41.	THE GREAT DISCOVERIES	284
42.	BUDDHA AND CONFUCIUS	305
43.	THE REFORMATION	319
44.	RELIGIOUS WARFARE	333
45.	THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION	354
46.	THE BALANCE OF POWER	375
47.	THE RISE OF RUSSIA	382
48.	RUSSIA VS. SWEDEN	392
49.	THE RISE OF PRUSSIA	398
50.	THE MERCANTILE SYSTEM	404
51.	THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION	411
52.	THE FRENCH REVOLUTION	426
53.	NAPOLEON	446
54.	THE HOLY ALLIANCE	462
55.	THE GREAT REACTION	479
56.	NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE	490
57.	THE AGE OF THE ENGINE	518
58.	THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION	533
59.	EMANCIPATION	541
60.	THE AGE OF SCIENCE	551
61.	ART	559
62.	COLONIAL EXPANSION AND WAR	577
63.	A NEW WORLD	590

64.	AS IT EVER SHALL BE	603
65.	ANIMATED CHRONOLOGY	604
66.	CONCERNING THE PICTURES	610
67.	AN HISTORICAL READING LIST FOR CHILDREN	613



HIGH up in the North in the land called Svithjod, there stands a rock. It is a hundred miles high and a hundred miles wide. Once every thousand years a little bird comes to this rock to sharpen its beak.

When the rock has thus been worn away, then a single day of eternity will have gone away.

THE SETTING OF THE STAGE

WE live under the shadow of a gigantic question mark.

Who are we?

Where do we come from?

Whither are we bound?

Slowly, but with persistent courage, we have been pushing this question mark further and further towards that distant line, beyond the horizon, where we hope to find our answer.

We have not gone very far.

We still know very little but we have reached the point where (with a fair degree of accuracy) we can guess at many things.

In this chapter I shall tell you how (according to our best belief) the stage was set for the first appearance of man.

If we represent the time during which it has been possible for animal life to exist upon our planet by a line of this length,

THE STORY OF MANKIND



then the tiny line just below indicates the age during which man (or a creature more or less resembling man) has lived upon this earth.

Man was the last to come but the first to use his brain for the purpose of conquering the forces of nature. That is the reason why we are going to study him, rather than cats or dogs or horses or any of the other animals, who, all in their own way, have a very interesting historical development behind them.



IT RAINED
INCESSANTLY

descended in endless torrents, wearing out the hard granite and carrying the dust to the valleys that lay hidden between the high cliffs of the steaming earth.

Finally the hour came when the sun broke through the clouds and saw how this little planet was covered with a few small puddles which were to

THE SETTING OF THE STAGE

develop into the mighty oceans of the eastern and western hemispheres.

Then one day the great wonder happened. What had been dead, gave birth to life.

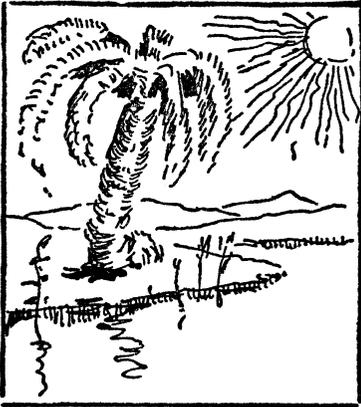
The first living cell floated upon the waters of the sea.

For millions of years it drifted aimlessly with the currents. But during all that time it was developing certain habits that it might survive more easily upon the inhospitable earth. Some of these cells were happiest in the dark depths of the lakes and the pools. They took root in the slimy sediments which had been carried down from the tops of the hills and they became plants. Others preferred to move about and they grew strange jointed legs, like scorpions and began to crawl along the bottom of the sea amidst the plants and the pale green things that looked like jelly-fishes. Still others (covered with scales) depended upon a swimming motion to go from place to place in their search for food, and gradually they populated the ocean with myriads of fishes.

Meanwhile the plants had increased in number and they had to search for new dwelling places. There was no more room for them at the bottom of the sea. Reluctantly they left the water and made a new home in the marshes and on the mud-banks that lay at the foot of the mountains. Twice a day the tides of the ocean covered them with their brine. For the rest of the time, the plants made the best of their uncomfortable situation and tried to survive in the thin air which surrounded the surface of the planet. After centuries

THE STORY OF MANKIND

of training, they learned how to live as comfortably in the air as they had done in the water. They increased in size and became shrubs and trees and at last they learned how to grow lovely flowers which attracted the attention of the busy big bumble-bees and the birds who carried the seeds far and wide until the whole earth had become covered with green pastures, or lay dark under the shadow of the big trees. But some of the fishes too had begun to leave the sea, and they had learned how to breathe with lungs as well as with gills. We call such creatures amphibious, which means that they are able to live with equal ease on the land and in the water. The first frog who crosses your path can tell you all about the pleasures of the double existence of the amphibian.



THE PLANTS LEAVE
THE SEA

Once outside of the water, these animals gradually adapted themselves more and more to life on land. Some became reptiles (creatures who crawl like lizards) and they shared the silence of the forests with the insects. That they might move faster through the soft soil, they improved upon

their legs and their size increased until the world was populated with gigantic forms (which the hand-books of biology list under the names of Ichthyosaurus and Megalosaurus and Brontosaurus) who grew to be thirty

THE SETTING OF THE STAGE

to forty feet long and who could have played with elephants as a full grown cat plays with her kittens.

Some of the members of this reptilian family began to live in the tops of the trees, which were then often more than a hundred feet high. They no longer needed their legs for the purpose of walking, but it was necessary for them to move quickly from branch to branch. And so they changed a part of their skin into a sort of parachute, which stretched between the sides of their bodies and the small toes of their fore-feet, and gradually they covered this skinny parachute with feathers and made their tails into a steering gear and flew from tree to tree and developed into true birds.

Then a strange thing happened. All the gigantic reptiles died within a short time. We do not know the reason. Perhaps it was due to a sudden change in climate. Perhaps they had grown so large that they could neither swim nor walk nor crawl, and they starved to death within sight but not within reach of the big ferns and trees. Whatever the cause, the million year old world-empire of the big reptiles was over.

The world now began to be occupied by very different creatures. They were the descendants of the reptiles but they were quite unlike these because they fed their young from the "mammæ" or the breasts of the mother. Wherefore modern science calls these animals "mammals." They had shed the scales of the fish. They did not adopt the feathers of the bird, but they covered their bodies with hair. The mammals however developed other habits which gave their race a great advantage over the other animals. The female

THE STORY OF MANKIND

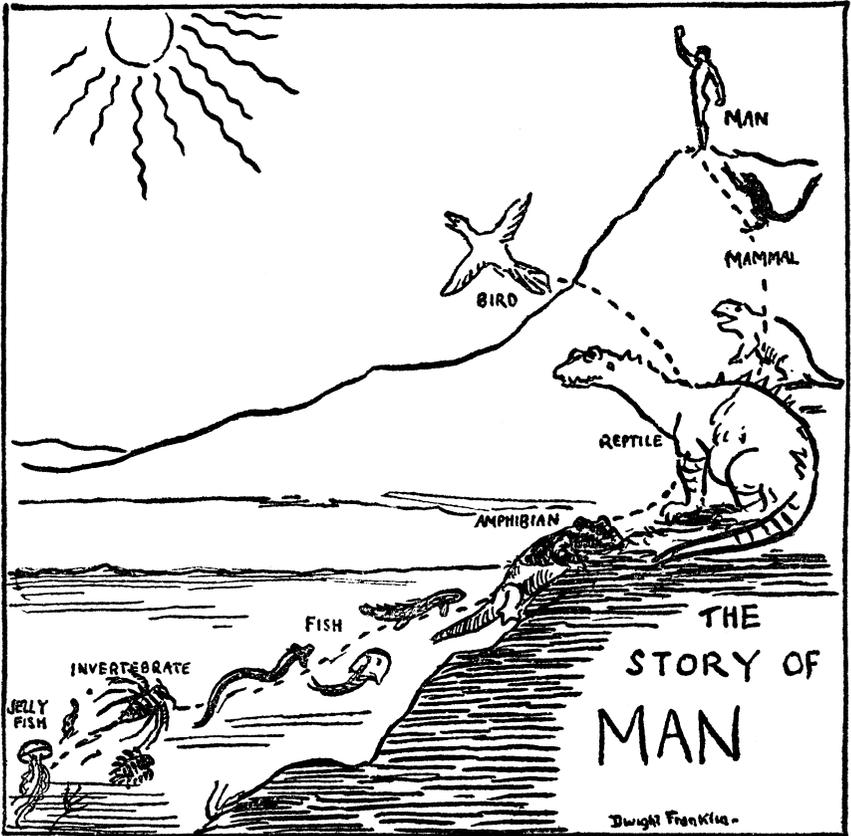
of the species carried the eggs of the young inside her body until they were hatched and while all other living beings, up to that time, had left their children exposed to the dangers of cold and heat, and the attacks of wild beasts, the mammals kept their young with them for a long time and sheltered them while they were still too weak to fight their enemies. In this way the young mammals were given a much better chance to survive, because they learned many things from their mothers, as you will know if you have ever watched a cat teaching her kittens to take care of themselves and how to wash their faces and how to catch mice.

But of these mammals I need not tell you much for you know them well. They surround you on all sides. They are your daily companions in the streets and in your home, and you can see your less familiar cousins behind the bars of the zoological garden.

And now we come to the parting of the ways when man suddenly leaves the endless procession of dumbly living and dying creatures and begins to use his reason to shape the destiny of his race.

One mammal in particular seemed to surpass all others in its ability to find food and shelter. It had learned to use its fore-feet for the purpose of holding its prey, and by dint of practice it had developed a hand-like claw. After innumerable attempts it had learned how to balance the whole of the body upon the hind legs. (This is a difficult act, which every child has to learn anew although the human race has been doing it for over a million years.)

THE SETTING OF THE STAGE



THE ASCENT OF MAN

This creature, half ape and half monkey but superior to both, became the most successful hunter and could make a living in every clime. For greater safety, it usually moved about in groups. It learned how to make strange grunts to warn its young of approaching danger and after many hundreds of thousands of years it began to use these throaty noises for the purpose of talking.

THE STORY OF MANKIND

This creature, though you may hardly believe it, was your first “man-like” ancestor.

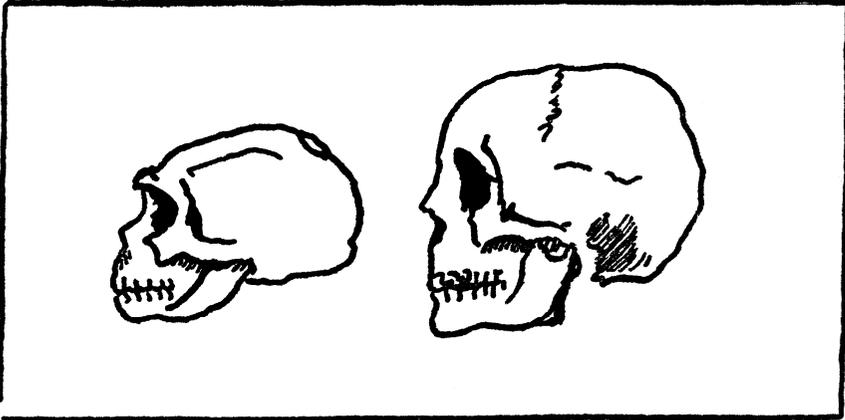
OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS

WE know very little about the first “true” men. We have never seen their pictures. In the deepest layer of clay of an ancient soil we have sometimes found pieces of their bones. These lay buried amidst the broken skeletons of other animals that have long since disappeared from the face of the earth. Anthropologists (learned scientists who devote their lives to the study of man as a member of the animal kingdom) have taken these bones and they have been able to reconstruct our earliest ancestors with a fair degree of accuracy.

The great-great-grandfather of the human race was a very ugly and unattractive mammal. He was quite small, much smaller than the people of today. The heat of the sun and the biting wind of the cold winter had coloured his skin a dark brown. His head and most of his body, his arms and legs too, were covered with long, coarse hair. He had very thin but strong fingers which made his hands look like those of a monkey. His forehead was low and his jaw was like the jaw of a wild animal which uses its teeth both as fork and knife. He wore no clothes. He had seen no

THE STORY OF MANKIND

fire except the flames of the rumbling volcanoes which filled the earth with their smoke and their lava.



THE GROWTH OF THE HUMAN SKULL

He lived in the damp blackness of vast forests, as the pygmies of Africa do to this very day. When he felt the pangs of hunger he ate raw leaves and the roots of plants or he took the eggs away from an angry bird and fed them to his own young. Once in a while, after a long and patient chase, he would catch a sparrow or a small wild dog or perhaps a rabbit. These he would eat raw for he had never discovered that food tasted better when it was cooked.

During the hours of day, this primitive human being prowled about looking for things to eat.

When night descended upon the earth, he hid his wife and his children in a hollow tree or behind some heavy boulders, for he was surrounded on all

OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS

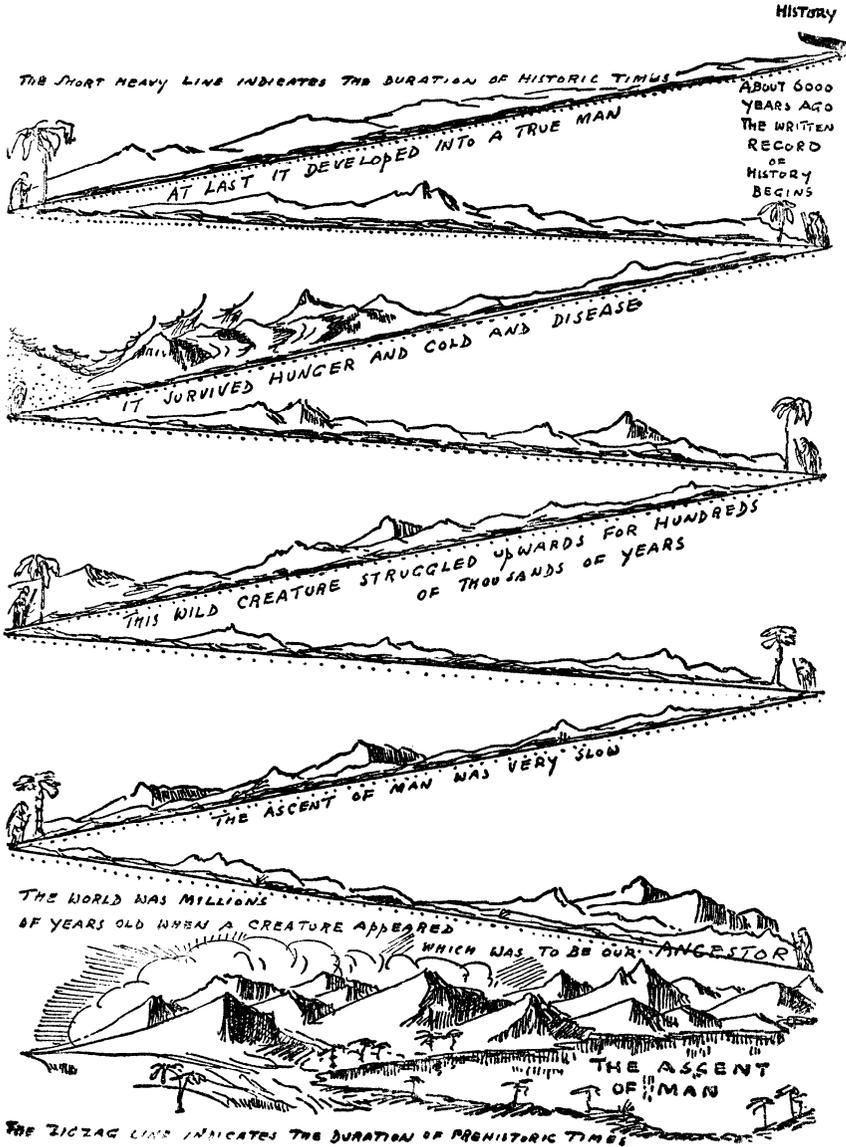
sides by ferocious animals and when it was dark these animals began to prowl about, looking for something to eat for their mates and their own young, and they liked the taste of human beings. It was a world where you must either eat or be eaten, and life was very unhappy because it was full of fear and misery.

In summer, man was exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, and during the winter his children would freeze to death in his arms. When such a creature hurt itself, (and hunting animals are forever breaking their bones or spraining their ankles) he had no one to take care of him and he must die a horrible death.

Like many of the animals who fill the Zoo with their strange noises, early man liked to jabber. That is to say, he endlessly repeated the same unintelligible gibberish because it pleased him to hear the sound of his voice. In due time he learned that he could use this guttural noise to warn his fellow beings whenever danger threatened and he gave certain little shrieks which came to mean "there is a tiger!" or "here come five elephants." Then the others grunted something back at him and their growl meant, "I see them," or "let us run away and hide." And this was probably the origin of all language.

But, as I have said before, of these beginnings we know so very little. Early man had no tools and he built himself no houses. He lived and died and left no trace of his existence except a few collar-bones and a few pieces of his skull. These tell us that many thousands of years ago the world was inhabited by

THE STORY OF MANKIND



PREHISTORY AND HISTORY

OUR EARLIEST ANCESTORS

certain mammals who were quite different from all the other animals—who had probably developed from another unknown ape-like animal which had learned to walk on its hind-legs and use its fore-paws as hands—and who were most probably connected with the creatures who happen to be our own immediate ancestors.

It is little enough we know and the rest is darkness.

PREHISTORIC MAN

PREHISTORIC MAN BEGINS TO MAKE THINGS FOR HIMSELF

EARLY man did not know what time meant. He kept no records of birthdays or wedding anniversaries or the hour of death. He had no idea of days or weeks or even years. But in a general way he kept track of the seasons for he had noticed that the cold winter was invariably followed by the mild spring—that spring grew into the hot summer when fruits ripened and the wild ears of corn were ready to be eaten and that summer ended when sudden gusts of wind swept the leaves from the trees and a number of animals were getting ready for the long hibernal sleep.

But now, something unusual and rather frightening had happened. Something was the matter with the weather. The warm days of summer had come very late. The fruits had not ripened. The tops of the mountains which used to be covered with grass now lay deeply hidden underneath a heavy burden of snow.

Then, one morning, a number of wild people, different from the other creatures who lived in that neighbourhood, came wandering down from the region of the high peaks. They looked lean and

PREHISTORIC MAN

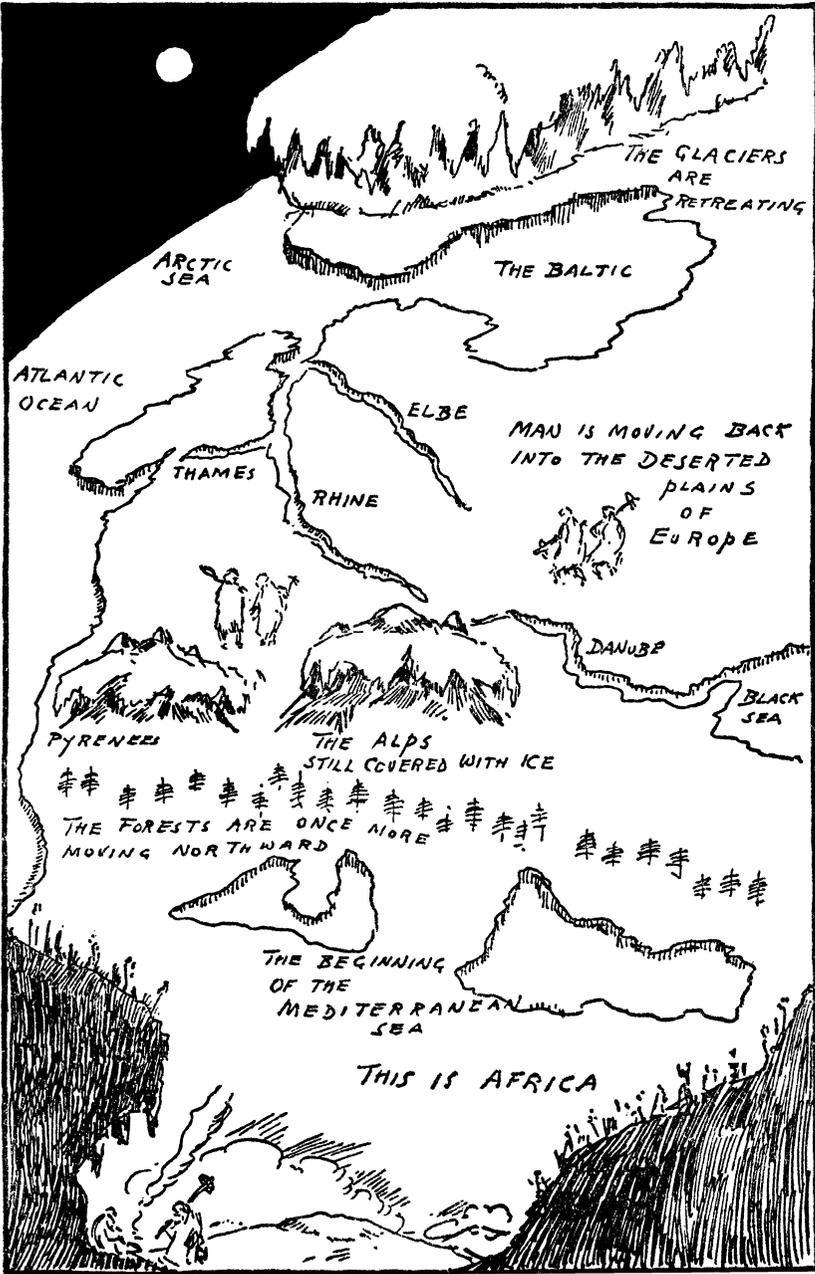
appeared to be starving. They uttered sounds which no one could understand. They seemed to say that they were hungry. There was not food enough for both the old inhabitants and the newcomers. When they tried to stay more than a few days there was a terrible battle with claw-like hands and feet and whole families were killed. The others fled back to their mountain slopes and died in the next blizzard.

But the people in the forest were greatly frightened. All the time the days grew shorter and the nights grew colder than they ought to have been.

Finally, in a gap between two high hills, there appeared a tiny speck of greenish ice. Rapidly it increased in size. A gigantic glacier came sliding downhill. Huge stones were being pushed into the valley. With the noise of a dozen thunderstorms torrents of ice and mud and blocks of granite suddenly tumbled among the people of the forest and killed them while they slept. Century old trees were crushed into kindling wood. And then it began to snow.

It snowed for months and months. All the plants died and the animals fled in search of the southern sun. Man hoisted his young upon his back and followed them. But he could not travel as fast as the wilder creatures and he was forced to choose between quick thinking or quick dying. He seems to have preferred the former for he has managed to survive the terrible glacial periods which upon four different occasions threatened to kill every human being on the face of the earth.

THE STORY OF MANKIND



PREHISTORIC EUROPE

PREHISTORIC MAN

In the first place it was necessary that man clothe himself lest he freeze to death. He learned how to dig holes and cover them with branches and leaves and in these traps he caught bears and hyenas, which he then killed with heavy stones and whose skins he used as coats for himself and his family.

Next came the housing problem. This was simple. Many animals were in the habit of sleeping in dark caves. Man now followed their example, drove the animals out of their warm homes and claimed them for his own.

Even so, the climate was too severe for most people and the old and the young died at a terrible rate. Then a genius bethought himself of the use of fire. Once, while out hunting, he had been caught in a forest-fire. He remembered that he had been almost roasted to death by the flames. Thus far fire had been an enemy. Now it became a friend. A dead tree was dragged into the cave and lighted by means of smouldering branches from a burning wood. This turned the cave into a cozy little room.

And then one evening a dead chicken fell into the fire. It was not rescued until it had been well roasted. Man discovered that meat tasted better when cooked and he then and there discarded one of the old habits which he had shared with the other animals and began to prepare his food.

In this way thousands of years passed. Only the people with the cleverest brains survived. They had to struggle day and night against cold and hunger. They were forced to invent tools. They learned how to

THE STORY OF MANKIND

sharpen stones into axes and how to make hammers. They were obliged to put up large stores of food for the endless days of the winter and they found that clay could be made into bowls and jars and hardened in the rays of the sun. And so the glacial period, which had threatened to destroy the human race, became its greatest teacher because it forced man to use his brain.

HIEROGLYPHICS

THE EGYPTIANS INVENT THE ART OF WRITING AND THE RECORD OF HISTORY BEGINS

THESE earliest ancestors of ours who lived in the great European wilderness were rapidly learning many new things. It is safe to say that in due course of time they would have given up the ways of savages and would have developed a civilisation of their own. But suddenly there came an end to their isolation. They were discovered.

A traveller from an unknown southland who had dared to cross the sea and the high mountain passes had found his way to the wild people of the European continent. He came from Africa. His home was in Egypt.

The valley of the Nile had developed a high stage of civilisation thousands of years before the people of the west had dreamed of the possibilities of a fork or a wheel or a house. And we shall therefore leave our great-great-grandfathers in their caves, while we visit the southern and eastern shores of the

THE STORY OF MANKIND

Mediterranean, where stood the earliest school of the human race.

The Egyptians have taught us many things. They were excellent farmers. They knew all about irrigation. They built temples which were afterwards copied by the Greeks and which served as the earliest models for the churches in which we worship nowadays. They had invented a calendar which proved such a useful instrument for the purpose of measuring time that it has survived with a few changes until today. But most important of all, the Egyptians had learned how to preserve speech for the benefit of future generations. They had invented the art of writing.

We are so accustomed to newspapers and books and magazines that we take it for granted that the world has always been able to read and write. As a matter of fact, writing, the most important of all inventions, is quite new. Without written documents we would be like cats and dogs, who can only teach their kittens and their puppies a few simple things and who, because they cannot write, possess no way in which they can make use of the experience of those generations of cats and dogs that have gone before.

In the first century before our era, when the Romans came to Egypt, they found the valley full of strange little pictures which seemed to have something to do with the history of the country. But the Romans were not interested in "anything foreign" and did not inquire into the origin of these queer figures which covered the walls of the temples and the walls of the

HIEROGLYPHICS

palaces and endless reams of flat sheets made out of the papyrus reed. The last of the Egyptian priests who had understood the holy art of making such pictures had died several years before. Egypt deprived of its independence had become a store-house filled with important historical documents which no one could decipher and which were of no earthly use to either man or beast.

Seventeen centuries went by and Egypt remained a land of mystery. But in the year 1798 a French general by the name of Bonaparte happened to visit eastern Africa to prepare for an attack upon the British Indian Colonies. He did not get beyond the Nile, and his campaign was a failure. But, quite accidentally, the famous French expedition solved the problem of the ancient Egyptian picture-language.

One day a young French officer, much bored by the dreary life of his little fortress on the Rosetta river (a mouth of the Nile) decided to spend a few idle hours rummaging among the ruins of the Nile Delta. And behold! he found a stone which greatly puzzled him. Like everything else in Egypt it was covered with little figures. But this particular slab of black basalt was different from anything that had ever been discovered. It carried three inscriptions. One of these was in Greek. The Greek language was known. "All that is necessary," so he reasoned, "is to compare the Greek text with the Egyptian figures, and they will at once tell their secrets."

The plan sounded simple enough but it took more than twenty years to solve the riddle. In the year

THE STORY OF MANKIND

1802 a French professor by the name of Champollion began to compare the Greek and the Egyptian texts of the famous Rosetta stone. In the year 1823 he announced that he had discovered the meaning of fourteen little figures. A short time later he died from overwork, but the main principles of Egyptian writing had become known. Today the story of the valley of the Nile is better known to us than the story of the Mississippi River. We possess a written record which covers four thousand years of chronicled history.

As the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics (the word means "sacred writing") have played such a very great role in history, (a few of them in modified form have even found their way into our own alphabet,) you ought to know something about the ingenious system which was used fifty centuries ago to preserve the spoken word for the benefit of the coming generations.

Of course, you know what a sign language is. Every Indian story of our western plains has a chapter devoted to strange messages written in the form of little pictures which tell how many buffaloes were killed and how many hunters there were in a certain party. As a rule it is not difficult to understand the meaning of such messages.

Ancient Egyptian, however, was not a sign language. The clever people of the Nile had passed beyond that stage long before. Their pictures meant a great deal more than the object which they represented, as I shall try to explain to you now.

HIEROGLYPHICS

Suppose that you were Champollion, and that you were examining a stack of papyrus sheets, all covered with hieroglyphics. Suddenly you came across a picture of a man with a saw. "Very well," you would say, "that means of course that a farmer went out to cut down a tree." Then you take another papyrus. It tells the story of a queen who had died at the age of eighty-two. In the midst of a sentence appears the picture of the man with the saw. Queens of eighty-two do not handle saws. The picture therefore must mean something else. But what?

That is the riddle which the Frenchman finally solved. He discovered that the Egyptians were the first to use what we now call "phonetic writing"—a system of characters which reproduce the "sound" (or phone) of the spoken word and which make it possible for us to translate all our spoken words into a written form, with the help of only a few dots and dashes and pothooks.

Let us return for a moment to the little fellow with the saw. The word "saw" either means a certain tool which you will find in a carpenter's shop, or it means the past tense of the verb "to see."

This is what had happened to the word during the course of centuries. First of all it had meant only the particular tool which it represented. Then that meaning had been lost and it had become the past participle of a verb. After several hundred years, the Egyptians lost sight of both these meanings and the

THE STORY OF MANKIND



picture  came to stand for a single letter, the letter S. A short sentence will show you what I mean. Here is a modern English sentence as it would have been written in hieroglyphics.



The  either means one of these two round objects in your head, which allow you to see or it means “I,” the person who is talking.



A  is either an insect which gathers honey, or it represents the verb “to be” which means to exist. Again, it may be the first part of a verb like “be-come” or “be-have.” In this particular instance it is followed by



 which means a “leaf” or “leave” or “lieve” (the sound of all three words is the same).

The “eye” you know all about.

HIEROGLYPHICS



Finally you get the picture of a . It is a giraffe. It is part of the old sign-language out of which the hieroglyphics developed.

You can now read that sentence without much difficulty.

“I believe I saw a giraffe.”

Having invented this system the Egyptians developed it during thousands of years until they could write anything they wanted, and they used these “canned words” to send messages to friends, to keep business accounts and to keep a record of the history of their country, that future generations might benefit by the mistakes of the past.

THE NILE VALLEY

THE BEGINNING OF CIVILISATION IN THE VALLEY OF THE NILE

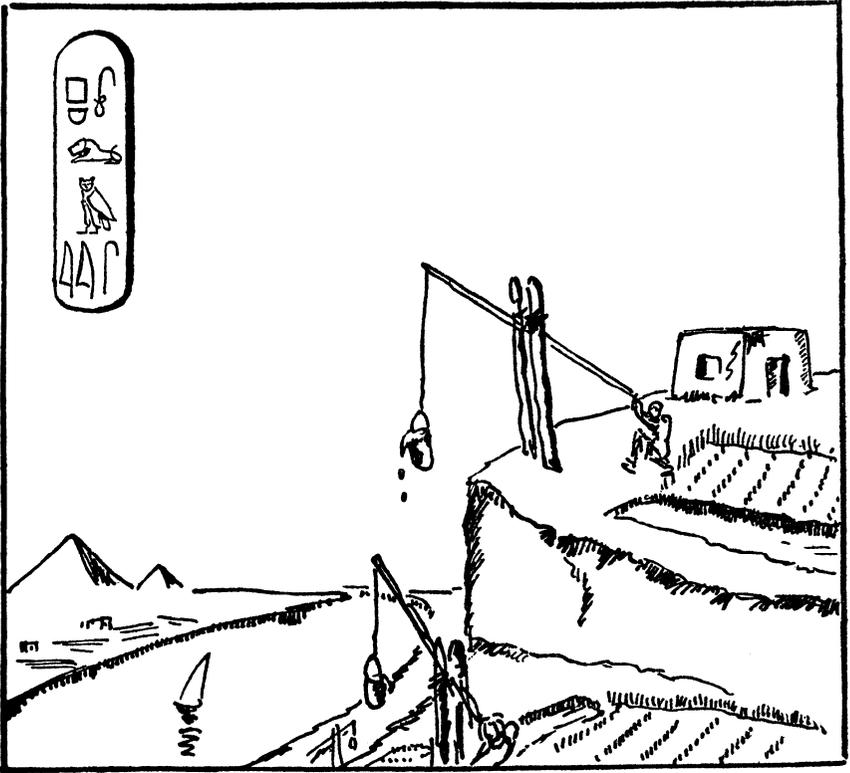
THE history of man is the record of a hungry creature in search of food. Wherever food was plentiful, thither man has travelled to make his home.

The fame of the Valley of the Nile must have spread at an early date. From the interior of Africa and from the desert of Arabia and from the western part of Asia people had flocked to Egypt to claim their share of the rich farms. Together these invaders had formed a new race which called itself "Remi" or "the Men" just as we sometimes call America "God's own country." They had good reason to be grateful to a Fate which had carried them to this narrow strip of land. In the summer of each year the Nile turned the valley into a shallow lake and when the waters receded all the grainfields and the pastures were covered with several inches of the most fertile clay.

In Egypt a kindly river did the work of a million men and made it possible to feed the teeming

THE NILE VALLEY

population of the first large cities of which we have any record. It is true that all the arable land was not in the valley. But a complicated system of small canals and well-sweeps carried water from the river-level to the top of the highest banks and an even more intricate system of irrigation trenches spread it throughout the land.



THE VALLEY OF EGYPT

While man of the prehistoric age had been obliged to spend sixteen hours out of every twenty-

THE STORY OF MANKIND

four gathering food for himself and the members of his tribe, the Egyptian peasant or the inhabitant of the Egyptian city found himself possessed of a certain leisure. He used this spare time to make himself many things that were merely ornamental and not in the least bit useful.

More than that. One day he discovered that his brain was capable of thinking all kinds of thoughts which had nothing to do with the problems of eating and sleeping and finding a home for the children. The Egyptian began to speculate upon many strange problems that confronted him. Where did the stars come from? Who made the noise of the thunder which frightened him so terribly? Who made the River Nile rise with such regularity that it was possible to base the calendar upon the appearance and the disappearance of the annual floods? Who was he, himself, a strange little creature surrounded on all sides by death and sickness and yet happy and full of laughter?

He asked these many questions and certain people obligingly stepped forward to answer these inquiries to the best of their ability. The Egyptians called them "priests" and they became the guardians of his thoughts and gained great respect in the community. They were highly learned men who were entrusted with the sacred task of keeping the written records. They understood that it is not good for man to think only of his immediate advantage in this world and they drew his attention to the days of the future when his soul would dwell beyond the mountains of the west and must give an account of his deeds to Osiris, the mighty God who was the Ruler of the

THE NILE VALLEY

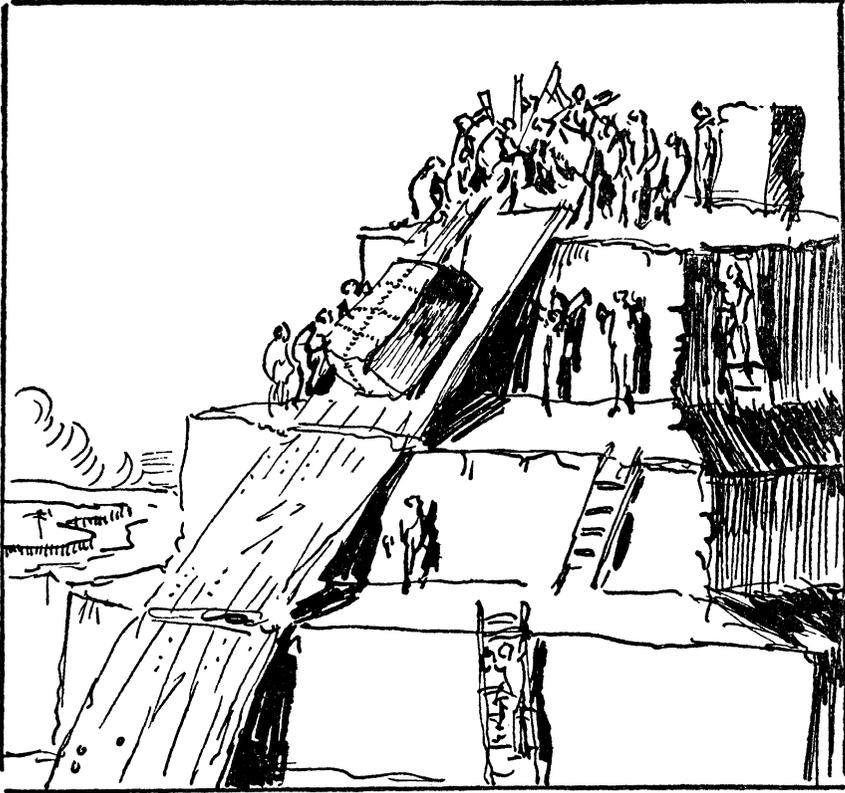
Living and the Dead and who judged the acts of men according to their merits. Indeed, the priests made so much of that future day in the realm of Isis and Osiris that the Egyptians began to regard life merely as a short preparation for the Hereafter and turned the teeming valley of the Nile into a land devoted to the Dead.

In a strange way, the Egyptians had come to believe that no soul could enter the realm of Osiris without the possession of the body which had been its place of residence in this world. Therefore as soon as a man was dead his relatives took his corpse and had it embalmed. For weeks it was soaked in a solution of natron and then it was filled with pitch. The Persian word for pitch was "Mumiai" and the embalmed body was called a "Mummy." It was wrapped in yards and yards of specially prepared linen and it was placed in a specially prepared coffin ready to be removed to its final home. But an Egyptian grave was a real home where the body was surrounded by pieces of furniture and musical instruments (to while away the dreary hours of waiting) and by little statues of cooks and bakers and barbers (that the occupant of this dark home might be decently provided with food and need not go about unshaven).

Originally these graves had been dug into the rocks of the western mountains but as the Egyptians moved northward they were obliged to build their cemeteries in the desert. The desert however is full of wild animals and equally wild robbers and they broke into the graves and disturbed the mummy or stole the jewelry that had been buried with the body. To prevent

THE STORY OF MANKIND

such unholy desecration the Egyptians used to build small mounds of stones on top of the graves. These little mounds gradually grew in size, because the rich



THE BUILDING OF THE PYRAMIDS

people built higher mounds than the poor and there was a good deal of competition to see who could make the highest hill of stones. The record was made by King Khufu, whom the Greeks called Cheops and who lived thirty centuries before our era. His mound, which the Greeks called a pyramid (because the

THE NILE VALLEY

Egyptian word for high was *pir-em-us*) was over five hundred feet high.

It covered more than thirteen acres of desert which is three times as much space as that occupied by the church of St. Peter, the largest edifice of the Christian world.

During twenty years, over a hundred thousand men were busy carrying the necessary stones from the other side of the river—ferrying them across the Nile (how they ever managed to do this, we do not understand), dragging them in many instances a long distance across the desert and finally hoisting them into their correct position. But so well did the King's architects and engineers perform their task that the narrow passage-way which leads to the royal tomb in the heart of the stone monster has never yet been pushed out of shape by the weight of those thousands of tons of stone which press upon it from all sides.

THE STORY OF EGYPT

THE RISE AND FALL OF EGYPT

THE river Nile was a kind friend but occasionally it was a hard taskmaster. It taught the people who lived along its banks the noble art of "team-work." They depended upon each other to build their irrigation trenches and keep their dikes in repair. In this way they learned how to get along with their neighbours and their mutual-benefit-association quite easily developed into an organised state.

Then one man grew more powerful than most of his neighbours and he became the leader of the community and their commander-in-chief when the envious neighbours of western Asia invaded the prosperous valley. In due course of time he became their King and ruled all the land from the Mediterranean to the mountains of the west.

But these political adventures of the old Pharaohs (the word meant "the Man who lived in the Big

THE STORY OF EGYPT

House”) rarely interested the patient and toiling peasant of the grain fields. Provided he was not obliged to pay more taxes to his King than he thought just, he accepted the rule of Pharaoh as he accepted the rule of Mighty Osiris.

It was different however when a foreign invader came and robbed him of his possessions. After twenty centuries of independent life, a savage Arab tribe of shepherds, called the Hyksos, attacked Egypt and for five hundred years they were the masters of the valley of the Nile. They were highly unpopular and great hate was also felt for the Hebrews who came to the land of Goshen to find a shelter after their long wandering through the desert and who helped the foreign usurper by acting as his tax-gatherers and his civil servants.

But shortly after the year 1700 B.C. the people of Thebes began a revolution and after a long struggle the Hyksos were driven out of the country and Egypt was free once more.

A thousand years later, when Assyria conquered all of western Asia, Egypt became part of the empire of Sardanapalus. In the seventh century B.C. it became once more an independent state which obeyed the rule of a king who lived in the city of Sais in the Delta of the Nile. But in the year 525 B.C., Cambyses, the king of the Persians, took possession of Egypt and in the fourth century B.C., when Persia was conquered by Alexander the Great, Egypt too became a Macedonian province. It regained a semblance of independence when one of Alexander’s generals set himself up as king of a new Egyptian state and founded the dynasty

THE STORY OF MANKIND

of the Ptolemies, who resided in the newly built city of Alexandria.

Finally, in the year 39 B.C., the Romans came. The last Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, tried her best to save the country. Her beauty and charm were more dangerous to the Roman generals than half a dozen Egyptian army corps. Twice she was successful in her attacks upon the hearts of her Roman conquerors. But in the year 30 B.C., Augustus, the nephew and heir of Cæsar, landed in Alexandria. He did not share his late uncle's admiration for the lovely princess. He destroyed her armies, but spared her life that he might make her march in his triumph as part of the spoils of war. When Cleopatra heard of this plan, she killed herself by taking poison. And Egypt became a Roman province.

MESOPOTAMIA

MESOPOTAMIA—THE SECOND CENTRE OF EASTERN CIVILISATION

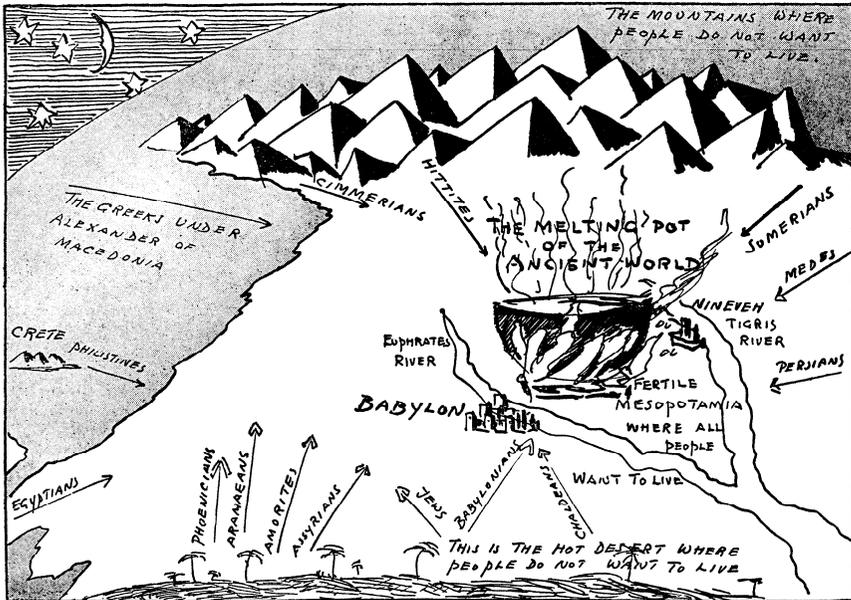
I AM going to take you to the top of the highest pyramid and I am going to ask that you imagine yourself possessed of the eyes of a hawk. Way, way off, in the distance, far beyond the yellow sands of the desert, you will see something green and shimmering. It is a valley situated between two rivers. It is the Paradise of the Old Testament. It is the land of mystery and wonder which the Greeks called Mesopotamia—the “country between the rivers.”

The names of the two rivers are the Euphrates (which the Babylonians called the Purattu) and the Tigris (which was known as the Diklat). They begin their course amidst the snows of the mountains of Armenia where Noah’s Ark found a resting place and slowly they flow through the southern plain until they reach the muddy banks of the Persian gulf. They perform a very useful service. They turn the arid

THE STORY OF MANKIND

regions of western Asia into a fertile garden.

The valley of the Nile had attracted people because it had offered them food upon fairly easy terms. The “land between the rivers” was popular for the same reason. It was a country full of promise and both the inhabitants of the northern mountains and the tribes which roamed through the southern deserts tried to claim this territory as their own and most exclusive possession. The constant rivalry between the mountaineers and the desert-nomads led to endless warfare. Only the strongest and the bravest could hope to survive and that will explain why Mesopotamia became the home of a very strong race of men who were capable of creating a civilisation which was in every respect as important as that of Egypt.



MESOPOTAMIA, THE MELTING POT OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

THE SUMERIANS

THE SUMERIAN NAIL WRITERS, WHOSE CLAY TABLETS TELL US THE STORY OF ASSYRIA AND BABYLONIA, THE GREAT SEMITIC MELTING-POT

THE fifteenth century was an age of great discoveries. Columbus tried to find a way to the island of Kathay and stumbled upon a new and unsuspected continent. An Austrian bishop equipped an expedition which was to travel eastward and find the home of the Grand Duke of Muscovy, a voyage which led to complete failure, for Moscow was not visited by western men until a generation later. Meanwhile a certain Venetian by the name of Barbero had explored the ruins of western Asia and had brought back reports of a most curious language which he had found carved in the rocks of the temples of Shiraz and engraved upon endless pieces of baked clay.

THE STORY OF MANKIND

But Europe was busy with many other things and it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that the first “cuneiform inscriptions” (so-called because the letters were wedge-shaped and wedge is called “Cuneus” in Latin) were brought to Europe by a Danish surveyor, named Niebuhr. Then it took thirty years before a patient German school-master by the name of Grotefend had deciphered the first four letters, the D, the A, the R and the SH, the name of the Persian King Darius. And another twenty years had to go by until a British officer, Henry Rawlinson, who found the famous inscription of Behistun, gave us a workable key to the nail-writing of western Asia.

Compared to the problem of deciphering these nail-writings, the job of Champollion had been an easy one. The Egyptians used pictures. But the Sumerians, the earliest inhabitants of Mesopotamia, who had hit upon the idea of scratching their words in tablets of clay, had discarded pictures entirely and had evolved a system of V-shaped figures which showed little connection with the pictures out of which they had been developed. A few examples will show you what I mean. In the beginning a star, when drawn with a nail



into a brick looked as follows: This sign however was too cumbersome and after a short while when the meaning of “heaven” was added to that of



star the picture was simplified in this way

THE SUMERIANS

which made it even more of a puzzle. In the same way

an ox changed from  into  and a

fish changed from  into . The sun

was originally a plain circle  and became

. If we were using the Sumerian script

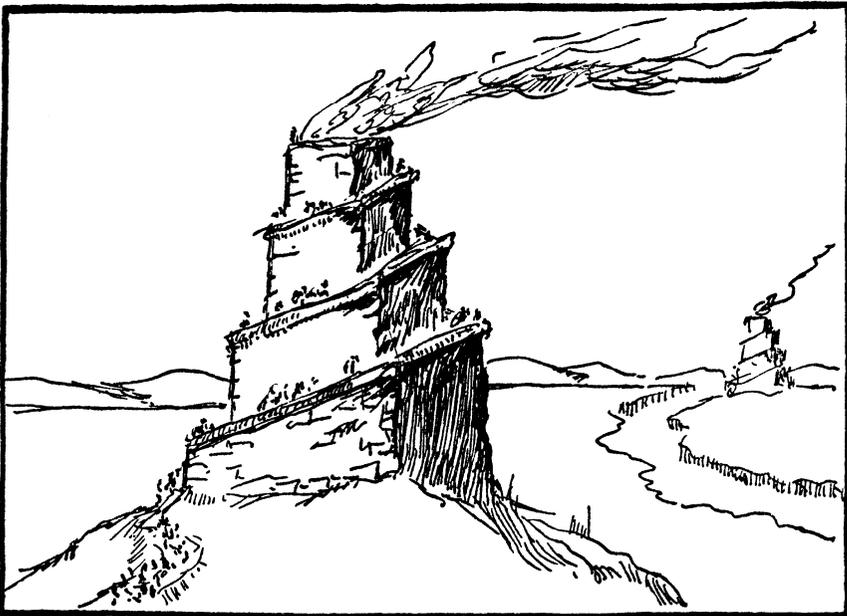
today we would make an  look like

. This system of writing down our ideas

looks rather complicated but for more than thirty centuries it was used by the Sumerians and the Babylonians and the Assyrians and the Persians and all the different races which forced their way into the fertile valley.

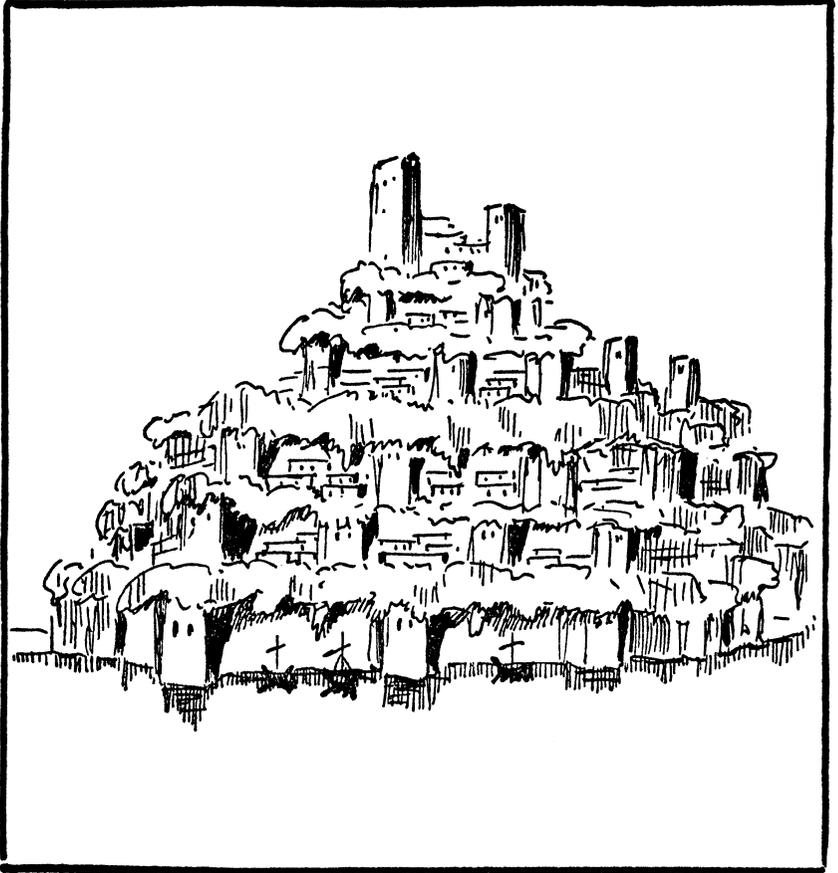
THE STORY OF MANKIND

The story of Mesopotamia is one of endless warfare and conquest. First the Sumerians came from the North. They were a white people who had lived in the mountains. They had been accustomed to worship their Gods on the tops of hills. After they had entered the plain they constructed artificial little hills on top of which they built their altars. They did not know how to build stairs and they therefore surrounded their towers with sloping galleries. Our engineers have borrowed this idea, as you may see in our big railroad stations where ascending galleries lead from one floor to another. We may have borrowed other ideas from the Sumerians but we do not know it. The Sumerians were entirely absorbed by those races that entered the fertile valley at a later date. Their towers however still



A TOWER OF BABEL

THE SUMERIANS



THE HOLY CITY OF BABYLON

stand amidst the ruins of Mesopotamia. The Jews saw them when they went into exile in the land of Babylon and they called them towers of Bab-Illi, or towers of Babel.

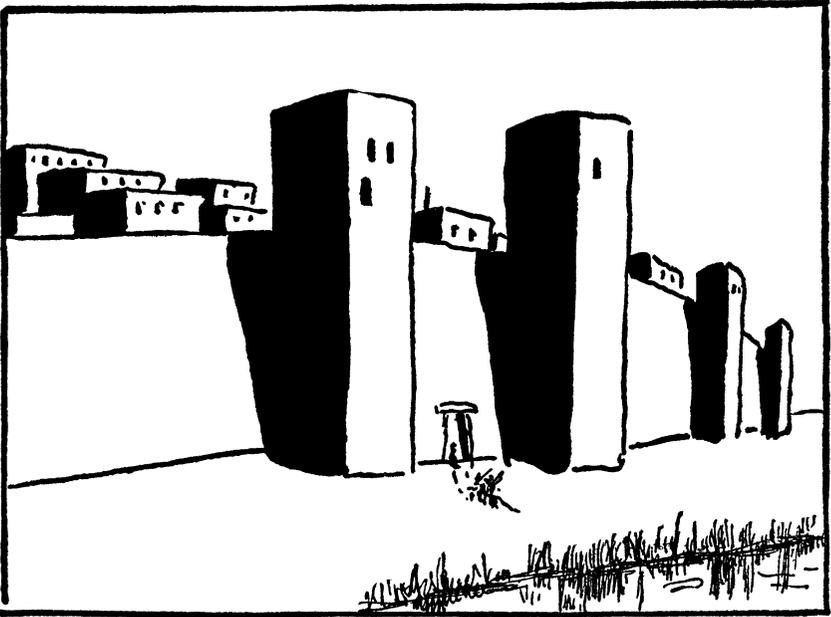
In the fortieth century before our era, the Sumerians had entered Mesopotamia. They were soon

THE STORY OF MANKIND

afterwards over-powered by the Akkadians, one of the many tribes from the desert of Arabia who speak a common dialect and who are known as the "Semites," because in the olden days people believed them to be the direct descendants of Shem, one of the three sons of Noah. A thousand years later, the Akkadians were forced to submit to the rule of the Amorites, another Semitic desert tribe whose great King Hammurabi built himself a magnificent palace in the holy city of Babylon and who gave his people a set of laws which made the Babylonian state the best administered empire of the ancient world. Next the Hittites, whom you will also meet in the Old Testament, over-ran the Fertile Valley and destroyed whatever they could not carry away. They in turn were vanquished by the followers of the great desert God, Ashur, who called themselves Assyrians and who made the city of Nineveh the center of a vast and terrible empire which conquered all of western Asia and Egypt and gathered taxes from countless subject races until the end of the seventh century before the birth of Christ when the Chaldeans, also a Semitic tribe, re-established Babylon and made that city the most important capital of that day. Nebuchadnezzar, the best known of their Kings, encouraged the study of science, and our modern knowledge of astronomy and mathematics is all based upon certain first principles which were discovered by the Chaldeans. In the year 538 B.C. a crude tribe of Persian shepherds invaded this old land and overthrew the empire of the Chaldeans. Two hundred years later, they in turn were overthrown by Alexander the Great, who turned the Fertile Valley, the old melting-pot of so many Semitic races, into a Greek province. Next

THE SUMERIANS

came the Romans and after the Romans, the Turks, and Mesopotamia, the second centre of the world's civilisation, became a vast wilderness where huge mounds of earth told a story of ancient glory.



NINEVEH

MOSES

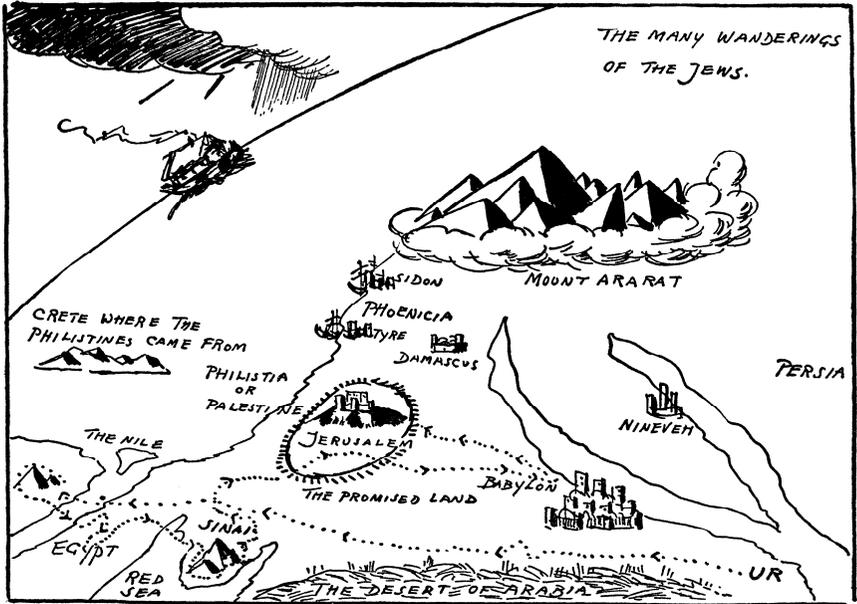
THE STORY OF MOSES, THE LEADER OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

SOME time during the twentieth century before our era, a small and unimportant tribe of Semitic shepherds had left its old home, which was situated in the land of Ur on the mouth of the Euphrates, and had tried to find new pastures within the domain of the Kings of Babylonia. They had been driven away by the royal soldiers and they had moved westward looking for a little piece of unoccupied territory where they might set up their tents.

This tribe of shepherds was known as the Hebrews or, as we call them, the Jews. They had wandered far and wide, and after many years of dreary peregrinations they had been given shelter in Egypt. For more than five centuries they had dwelt among the Egyptians and when their adopted country had been overrun by the Hyksos marauders (as I told you in the story of Egypt) they had managed to make themselves

MOSES

useful to the foreign invader and had been left in the undisturbed possession of their grazing fields. But after a long war of independence the Egyptians had driven the Hyksos out of the valley of the Nile and then the Jews had come upon evil times for they had been degraded to the rank of common slaves and they had been forced to work on the royal roads and on the Pyramids. And as the frontiers were guarded by the Egyptian soldiers it had been impossible for the Jews to escape.



THE WANDERINGS OF THE JEWS

After many years of suffering they were saved from their miserable fate by a young Jew, called Moses, who for a long time had dwelt in the desert and there

THE STORY OF MANKIND

had learned to appreciate the simple virtues of his earliest ancestors, who had kept away from cities and city-life and had refused to let themselves be corrupted by the ease and the luxury of a foreign civilization.



MOSES SEES THE HOLY LAND

Moses decided to bring his people back to a love of the ways of the patriarchs. He succeeded in evading the Egyptian troops that were sent after him and led his fellow tribesmen into the heart of the plain at the foot of Mount Sinai. During his long and lonely life in the desert, he had learned to revere the strength of the great God of the Thunder and the Storm, who ruled the high heavens and upon whom the shepherds depended for life and light and breath. This God, one of the many divinities who were widely worshipped in

MOSES

western Asia, was called Jehovah, and through the teaching of Moses, he became the sole Master of the Hebrew race.

One day, Moses disappeared from the camp of the Jews. It was whispered that he had gone away carrying two tablets of rough-hewn stone. That afternoon, the top of the mountain was lost to sight. The darkness of a terrible storm hid it from the eye of man. But when Moses returned, behold! there stood engraved upon the tablets the words which Jehovah had spoken unto the people of Israel amidst the crash of his thunder and the blinding flashes of his lightning. And from that moment, Jehovah was recognised by all the Jews as the Highest Master of their Fate, the only True God, who had taught them how to live holy lives when he bade them to follow the wise lessons of his Ten Commandments.

They followed Moses when he bade them continue their journey through the desert. They obeyed him when he told them what to eat and drink and what to avoid that they might keep well in the hot climate. And finally after many years of wandering they came to a land which seemed pleasant and prosperous. It was called Palestine, which means the country of the "Pilistu" the Philistines, a small tribe of Cretans who had settled along the coast after they had been driven away from their own island. Unfortunately, the mainland, Palestine, was already inhabited by another Semitic race, called the Canaanites. But the Jews forced their way into the valleys and built themselves cities and constructed a mighty temple in a town which they named Jerusalem, the Home of Peace.

THE STORY OF MANKIND

As for Moses, he was no longer the leader of his people. He had been allowed to see the mountain ridges of Palestine from afar. Then he had closed his tired eyes for all time. He had worked faithfully and hard to please Jehovah. Not only had he guided his brethren out of foreign slavery into the free and independent life of a new home but he had also made the Jews the first of all nations to worship a single God.

THE PHOENICIANS

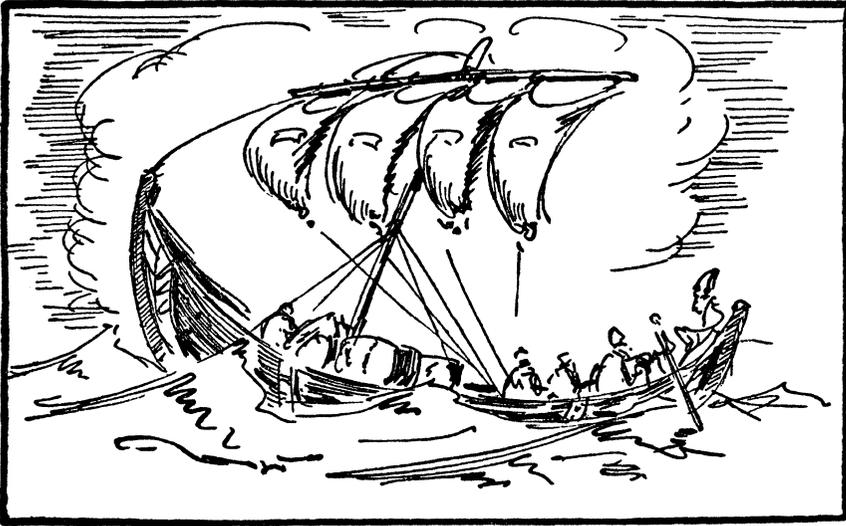
THE PHOENICIANS WHO GAVE US OUR ALPHABET

THE Phœnicians, who were the neighbours of the Jews, were a Semitic tribe which at a very early age had settled along the shores of the Mediterranean. They had built themselves two well-fortified towns, Tyre and Sidon, and within a short time they had gained a monopoly of the trade of the western seas. Their ships went regularly to Greece and Italy and Spain and they even ventured beyond the straits of Gibraltar to visit the Scilly islands where they could buy tin. Wherever they went, they built themselves small trading stations, which they called colonies. Many of these were the origin of modern cities, such as Cadiz and Marseilles.

They bought and sold whatever promised to bring them a good profit. They were not troubled by a conscience. If we are to believe all their neighbours they did not know what the words honesty or integrity meant. They regarded a well-filled treasure chest the

THE STORY OF MANKIND

highest ideal of all good citizens. Indeed they were very unpleasant people and did not have a single friend. Nevertheless they have rendered all coming generations one service of the greatest possible value. They gave us our alphabet.



THE PHOENICIAN TRADER

The Phœnicians had been familiar with the art of writing, invented by the Sumerians. But they regarded these pothooks as a clumsy waste of time. They were practical business men and could not spend hours engraving two or three letters. They set to work and invented a new system of writing which was greatly superior to the old one. They borrowed a few pictures from the Egyptians and they simplified a number of the wedge-shaped figures of the Sumerians. They sacrificed the pretty looks of the older system for

THE PHOENICIANS

the advantage of speed and they reduced the thousands of different images to a short and handy alphabet of twenty-two letters.

In due course of time, this alphabet travelled across the Ægean Sea and entered Greece. The Greeks added a few letters of their own and carried the improved system to Italy. The Romans modified the figures somewhat and in turn taught them to the wild barbarians of western Europe. Those wild barbarians were our own ancestors, and that is the reason why this book is written in characters that are of Phœnician origin and not in the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians or in the nail-script of the Sumerians.

THE INDO-EUROPEANS

THE INDO-EUROPEAN PERSIANS CONQUER THE SEMITIC AND THE EGYPTIAN WORLD

THE world of Egypt and Babylon and Assyria and Phœnicia had existed almost thirty centuries and the venerable races of the Fertile Valley were getting old and tired. Their doom was sealed when a new and more energetic race appeared upon the horizon. We call this race the Indo-European race, because it conquered not only Europe but also made itself the ruling class in the country which is now known as British India.

These Indo-Europeans were white men like the Semites but they spoke a different language which is regarded as the common ancestor of all European tongues with the exception of Hungarian and Finnish and the Basque dialects of Northern Spain.

When we first hear of them, they had been living along the shores of the Caspian Sea for many

THE INDO-EUROPEANS

centuries. But one day they had packed their tents and they had wandered forth in search of a new home. Some of them had moved into the mountains of Central Asia and for many centuries they had lived among the peaks which surround the plateau of Iran and that is why we call them Aryans. Others had followed the setting sun and they had taken possession of the plains of Europe as I shall tell you when I give you the story of Greece and Rome.

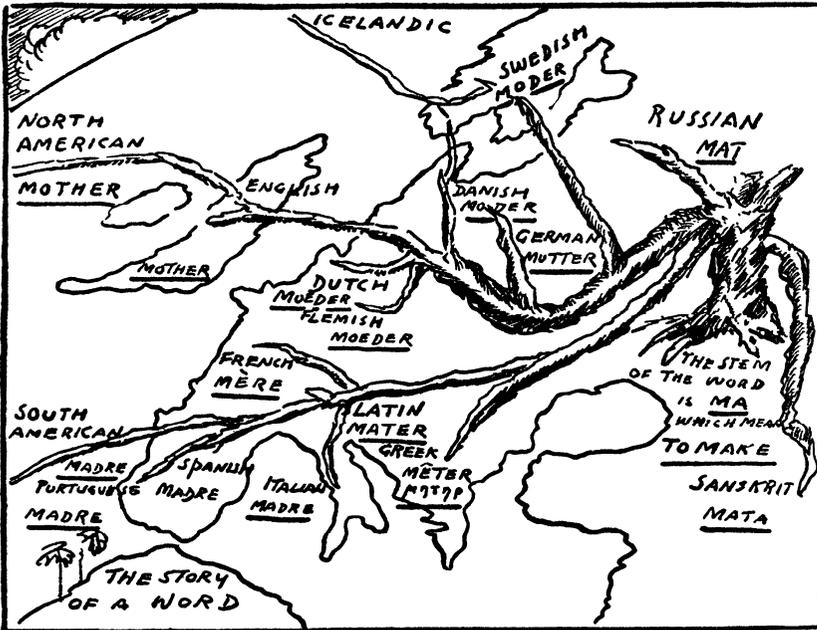
For the moment we must follow the Aryans. Under the leadership of Zarathustra (or Zoroaster) who was their great teacher many of them had left their mountain homes to follow the swiftly flowing Indus river on its way to the sea.

Others had preferred to stay among the hills of western Asia and there they had founded the half-independent communities of the Medes and the Persians, two peoples whose names we have copied from the old Greek history-books. In the seventh century before the birth of Christ, the Medes had established a kingdom of their own called Media, but this perished when Cyrus, the chief of a clan known as the Anshan, made himself king of all the Persian tribes and started upon a career of conquest which soon made him and his children the undisputed masters of the whole of western Asia and of Egypt.

Indeed, with such energy did these Indo-European Persians push their triumphant campaigns in the west that they soon found themselves in serious difficulties with certain other Indo-European tribes which centuries before had moved into Europe and

THE STORY OF MANKIND

had taken possession of the Greek peninsula and the islands of the Ægean Sea.



THE STORY OF A WORD

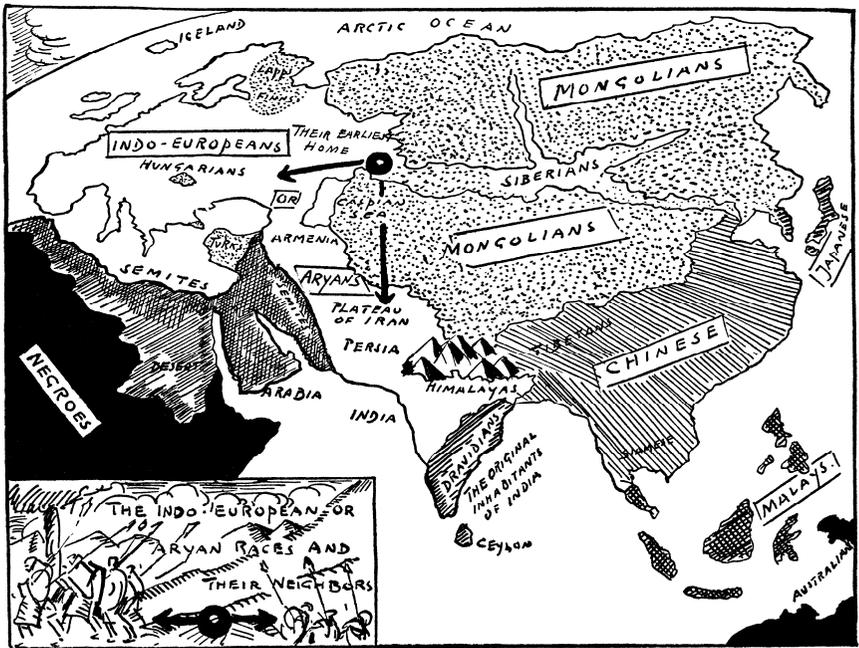
These difficulties led to the three famous wars between Greece and Persia during which King Darius and King Xerxes of Persia invaded the northern part of the peninsula. They ravaged the lands of the Greeks and tried very hard to get a foothold upon the European continent.

But in this they did not succeed. The navy of Athens proved unconquerable. By cutting off the lines

THE INDO-EUROPEANS

of supplies of the Persian armies, the Greek sailors invariably forced the Asiatic rulers to return to their base.

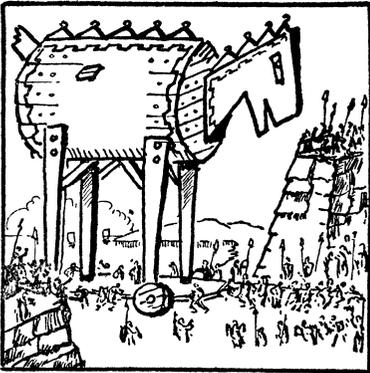
It was the first encounter between Asia, the ancient teacher, and Europe, the young and eager pupil. A great many of the other chapters of this book will tell you how the struggle between east and west has continued until this very day.



THE INDO-EUROPEANS AND THEIR NEIGHBOURS

THE ÆGEAN SEA

THE PEOPLE OF THE ÆGEAN SEA CARRIED THE CIVILISATION OF OLD ASIA INTO THE WILDERNESS OF EUROPE



THE TROJAN HORSE

WHEN Heinrich Schliemann was a little boy his father told him the story of Troy. He liked that story better than anything else he had ever heard and he made up his mind, that as soon as he was big enough to leave home, he would travel to Greece and “find Troy.” That he was the son of a poor country parson in a Mecklenburg village did not bother him. He knew that he would need money but he decided to gather a fortune first and do the digging afterwards. As a matter of fact, he managed to get a

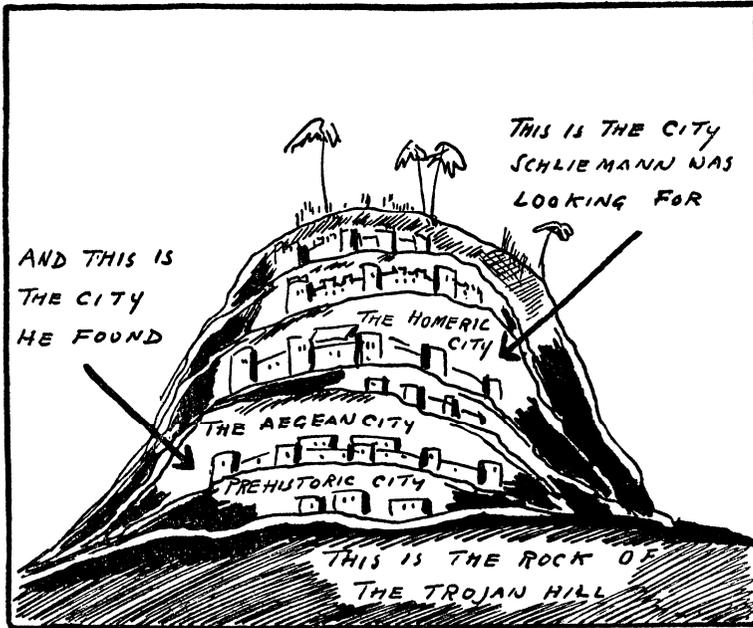
THE ÆGEAN SEA

large fortune within a very short time, and as soon as he had enough money to equip an expedition, he went to the northwest corner of Asia Minor, where he supposed that Troy had been situated.

In that particular nook of old Asia Minor, stood a high mound covered with grainfields. According to tradition it had been the home of Priamus the king of Troy. Schliemann, whose enthusiasm was somewhat greater than his knowledge, wasted no time in preliminary explorations. At once he began to dig. And he dug with such zeal and such speed that his trench went straight through the heart of the city for which he was looking and carried him to the ruins of another buried town which was at least a thousand years older than the Troy of which Homer had written. Then something very interesting occurred. If Schliemann had found a few polished stone hammers and perhaps a few pieces of crude pottery, no one would have been surprised. Instead of discovering such objects, which people had generally associated with the prehistoric men who had lived in these regions before the coming of the Greeks, Schliemann found beautiful statuettes and very costly jewelry and ornamented vases of a pattern that was unknown to the Greeks. He ventured the suggestion that fully ten centuries before the great Trojan war, the coast of the Ægean had been inhabited by a mysterious race of men who in many ways had been the superiors of the wild Greek tribes who had invaded their country and had destroyed their civilisation or absorbed it until it had lost all trace of originality.

THE STORY OF MANKIND

And this proved to be the case. In the late seventies of the last century, Schliemann visited the ruins of Mycenæ, ruins which were so old that Roman guide-books marvelled at their antiquity. There again, beneath the flat slabs of stone of a small round



SCHLIEMANN DIGS FOR TROY

enclosure, Schliemann stumbled upon a wonderful treasure-trove, which had been left behind by those mysterious people who had covered the Greek coast with their cities and who had built walls, so big and so heavy and so strong, that the Greeks called them the work of the Titans, those god-like giants who in very olden days had used to play ball with mountain peaks.

THE ÆGEAN SEA

A very careful study of these many relics has done away with some of the romantic features of the story. The makers of these early works of art and the builders of these strong fortresses were no sorcerers, but simple sailors and traders. They had lived in Crete, and on the many small islands of the Ægean Sea. They had been hardy mariners and they had turned the Ægean into a center of commerce for the exchange of goods between the highly civilised east and the slowly developing wilderness of the European mainland.

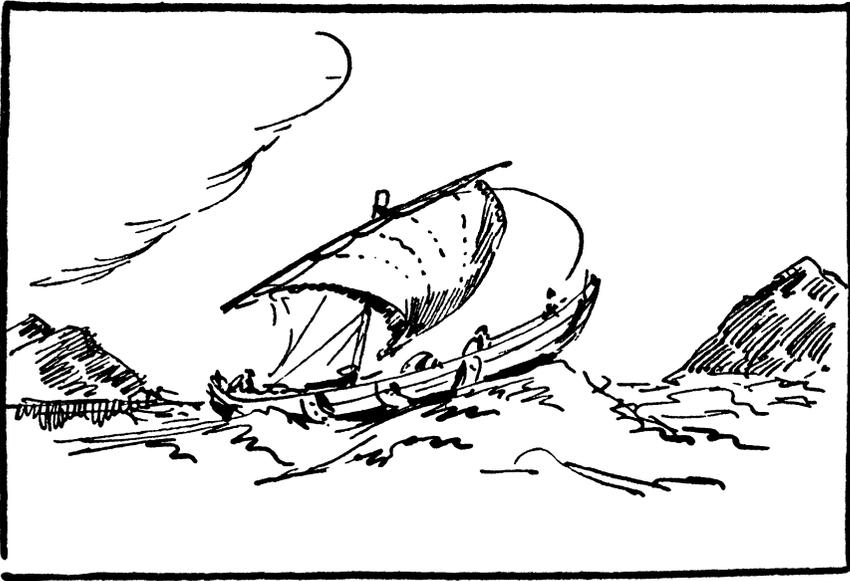


MYCENÆ IN ARGOLIS

For more than a thousand years they had maintained an island empire which had developed a very high form of art. Indeed their most important city,

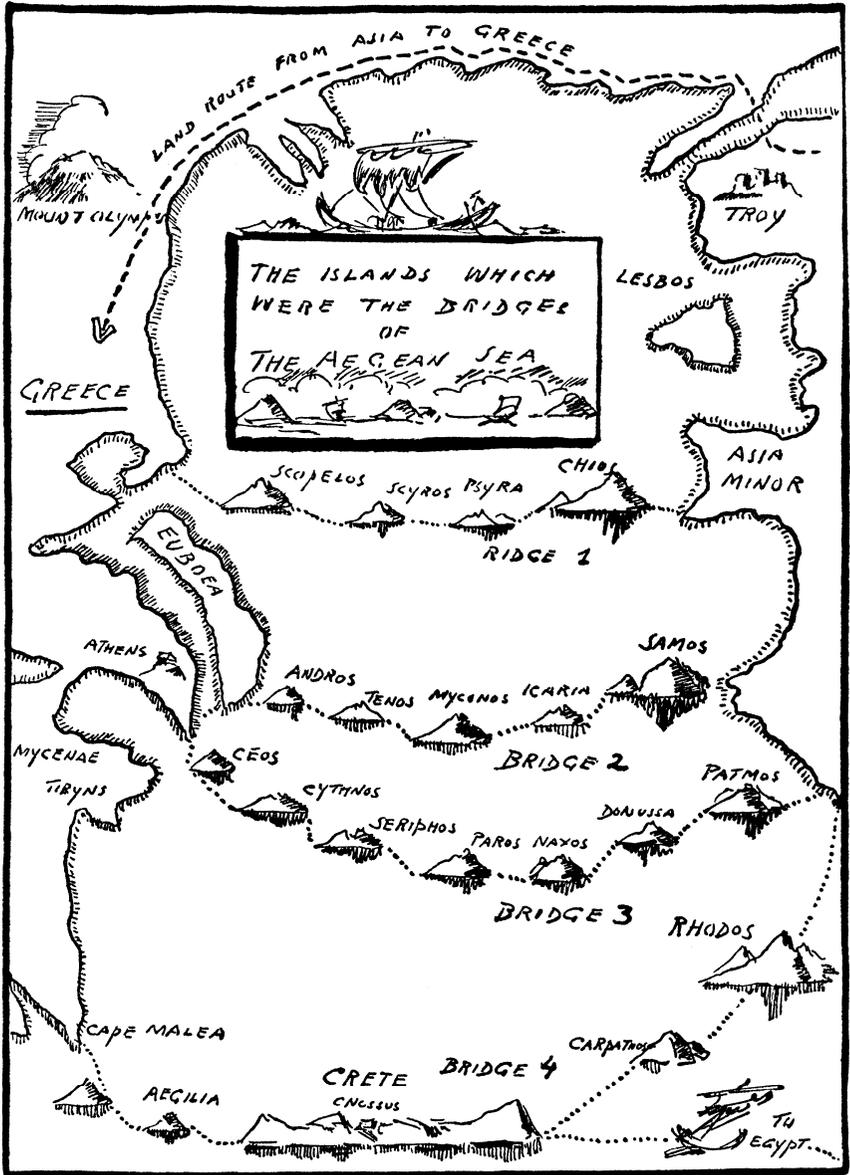
THE STORY OF MANKIND

Cnossus, on the northern coast of Crete, had been entirely modern in its insistence upon hygiene and comfort. The palace had been properly drained and the houses had been provided with stoves and the Cnossians had been the first people to make a daily use of the hitherto unknown bathtub. The palace of their King had been famous for its winding staircases and its large banqueting hall. The cellars underneath this palace, where the wine and the grain and the olive-oil were stored, had been so vast and had so greatly impressed the first Greek visitors, that they had given rise to the story of the "labyrinth," the name which we give to a structure with so many complicated passages that it is almost impossible to find our way out, once the front door has closed upon our frightened selves.



THE ÆGEAN SEA

THE ÆGEAN SEA



THE ISLAND-BRIDGES BETWEEN ASIA AND EUROPE

THE STORY OF MANKIND

But what finally became of this great Ægean Empire and what caused its sudden downfall, that I can not tell.

The Cretans were familiar with the art of writing, but no one has yet been able to decipher their inscriptions. Their history therefore is unknown to us. We have to reconstruct the record of their adventures from the ruins which the Ægeans have left behind. These ruins make it clear that the Ægean world was suddenly conquered by a less civilised race which had recently come from the plains of northern Europe. Unless we are very much mistaken, the savages who were responsible for the destruction of the Cretan and the Ægean civilisation were none other than certain tribes of wandering shepherds who had just taken possession of the rocky peninsula between the Adriatic and the Ægean seas and who are known to us as Greeks.

THE GREEKS

MEANWHILE THE INDO-EUROPEAN TRIBE OF THE HELLENES WAS TAKING POSSESSION OF GREECE

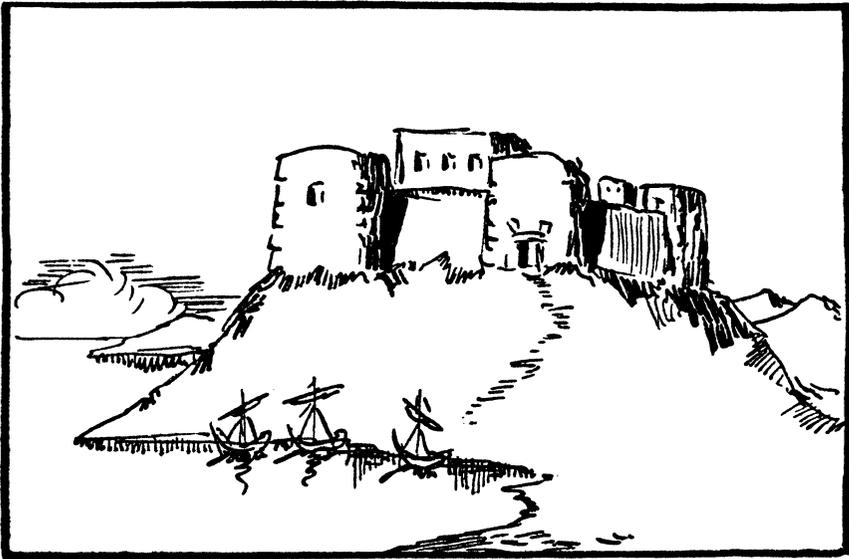
THE Pyramids were a thousand years old and were beginning to show the first signs of decay, and Hammurabi, the wise king of Babylon, had been dead and buried several centuries, when a small tribe of shepherds left their homes along the banks of the River Danube and wandered southward in search of fresh pastures. They called themselves Hellenes, after Hellen, the son of Deucalion and Pyrrha. According to the old myths these were the only two human beings who had escaped the great flood, which countless years before had destroyed all the people of the world, when they had grown so wicked that they disgusted Zeus, the mighty God, who lived on Mount Olympus.

Of these early Hellenes we know nothing. Thucydides, the historian of the fall of Athens, describing his earliest ancestors, said that they “did not amount to very much,” and this was probably true. They were

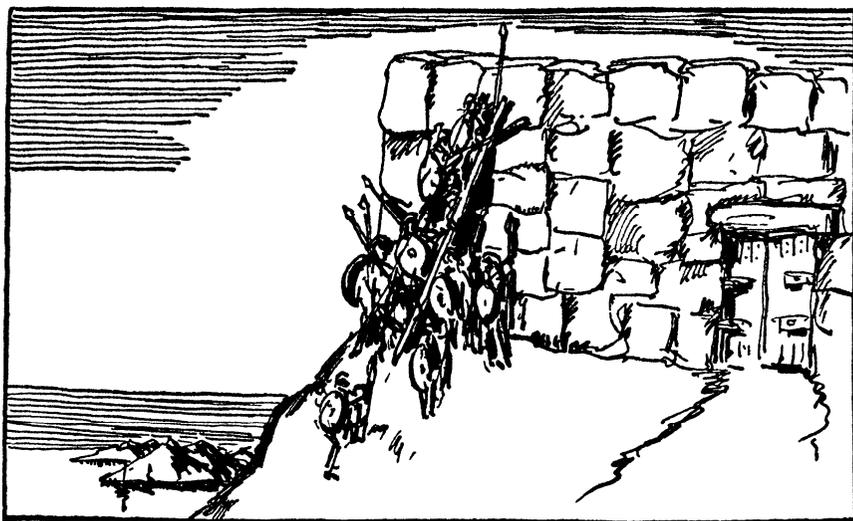
THE STORY OF MANKIND

very ill-mannered. They lived like pigs and threw the bodies of their enemies to the wild dogs who guarded their sheep. They had very little respect for other people's rights, and they killed the natives of the Greek peninsula (who were called the Pelasgians) and stole their farms and took their cattle and made their wives and daughters slaves and wrote endless songs praising the courage of the clan of the Achæans, who had led the Hellenic advance-guard into the mountains of Thessaly and the Peloponnesus.

But here and there, on the tops of high rocks, they saw the castles of the Ægeans and those they did not attack for they feared the metal swords and the spears of the Ægean soldiers and knew that they could not hope to defeat them with their clumsy stone axes.



AN ÆGEAN CITY ON THE GREEK MAINLAND



THE ACHÆANS TAKE AN ÆGEAN CITY

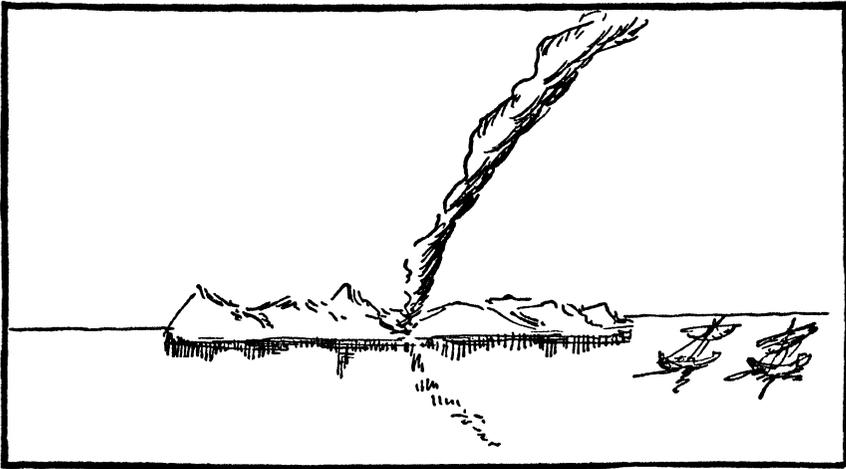
For many centuries they continued to wander from valley to valley and from mountain side to mountain side. Then the whole of the land had been occupied and the migration had come to an end.

That moment was the beginning of Greek civilisation. The Greek farmer, living within sight of the Ægean colonies, was finally driven by curiosity to visit his haughty neighbours. He discovered that he could learn many useful things from the men who dwelt behind the high stone walls of Mycenæ, and Tiryns.

He was a clever pupil. Within a short time he mastered the art of handling those strange iron weapons which the Ægeans had brought from Babylon and from Thebes. He came to understand the mysteries of navigation. He began to build little boats for his own use.

THE STORY OF MANKIND

And when he had learned everything the Ægeans could teach him he turned upon his teachers and drove them back to their islands. Soon afterwards he ventured forth upon the sea and conquered all the cities of the Ægean. Finally in the fifteenth century before our era he plundered and ravaged Cnossus and ten centuries after their first appearance upon the scene the Hellenes were the undisputed rulers of Greece, of the Ægean and of the coastal regions of Asia Minor. Troy, the last great commercial stronghold of the older civilisation, was destroyed in the eleventh century B.C. European history was to begin in all seriousness.



THE FALL OF CNOSSUS