

and we know that historical time was occupied by the lives of many successive generations, all of which are now dead, and none of which on the average exceeded a certain fixed limit of seventy or eighty odd years. To us, the conception of human life as a relatively short period, bounded by a known duration, and naturally terminating at a relatively fixed end, is a common and familiar one.

We forget, however, that to the savage all this is quite otherwise. He lives in a small and scattered community, where deaths are rare, and where natural death in particular is comparatively infrequent. Most of his people are killed in war, or devoured by wild beasts, or destroyed by accidents in the chase, or by thirst or starvation. Some are drowned in rapid rivers; some crushed by falling trees or stones; some poisoned by deadly fruits, or bitten by venomous snakes; some massacred by chiefs, or murdered in quarrels with their own tribesmen. In a large majority of instances, there is some open and obvious cause of death; and this cause is generally due either to the hand of man or to some other animal; or failing that, to some apparently active effort of external nature, such as flood, or lightning, or forest fires, or landslip and earthquake. Death by disease is comparatively rare; death by natural decay almost unknown or unrecognised.

Nor has the savage a great historic past behind him. He knows few but his tribesmen, and little of their ancestors save those whom his parents can remember before them. His perspective of the past is extremely limited. Nothing enables him to form that wide idea of the necessity and invariability of death which to us is so familiar. That "all men are mortal" is to civilised man a truism; to very early savages it would necessarily have seemed a startling paradox. No man ever dies within his own experience; ever since he can remember, he has continued to exist as a permanent part of all his adventures. Most of the savage's family have gone on continuously living with him. A death has been a rare and startling occur-