

ence to the whole history of American man. In Europe the student of primitive antiquity is habitually required to discriminate between products of ingenious skill belonging to periods and races widely separated alike by time and by essentially diverse stages of progress in art; for not only do its palaeolithic and neolithic periods long precede the oldest written chronicles, but even its Aryan colonization lies beyond any record of historic beginnings. The civilization which had already grown up around the Mediterranean Sea while the classic nations were in their infancy, extended its influences not only to what was strictly regarded as transalpine Europe, but beyond the English Channel and the Baltic, centuries before the Rhine and Danube formed the boundary of the Roman world. Voltaire remarked long ago when treating of the morals and spirit of nations: "It is not in the nature of man to desire that which he does not know." But it is certainly in his nature, at any rate, to desire much that he does not possess; and the cravings of the rudest outlying tribes of ancient Europe must have been stimulated by many desires of which those of the New World were all unconscious, till the advent of Europeans in the fifteenth century brought them into rude contact with a long matured civilization.

The archaeology of the American continent is, in this respect, at least, simple. Its student is nowhere exposed to misleading or obscuring elements such as baffle the European explorer from the intermingling of relics of widely diverse eras; or even the succession of arts of the most dissimilar character, such as Dr. Schliemann found on the site of the classic Hittite. The history of America cannot repeat that of Europe. Its great river valleys and vast prairies present a totally different condition of things from that in which the distinctive arts, languages and nationalities of Europe have been matured. The physical geography of the latter has necessarily fostered isolation, and so tended to develop the peculiarities of national character, as well as to protect incipient civilization and immature arts from the constant eruptions of barbarism, such as made the steppes of Asia in older centuries the nurseries of hordes of rude warriors, powerful only for spoliation. The evidence of the isolation of the different nations of Europe in early centuries is unmistakable. Scarcely any feature in the history of the ancient world is more strange to us now than the absence of all direct intercourse between countries separated only by the Alps, or even by the Danube or the Rhine. "The geography of Greek experience as exhibited by Homer, is limited, speaking generally, to the Ægean and its coasts, with the Propontis as its limit in the northeast, with Crete for a southern boundary; and with the addition of the western coast of the peninsula and its islands as far northwards as the Lencendian rock. . . . The key to the great contrast between the outer geography and the facts of nature lies in the belief of Homer that a great sea occupied the space where we know the heart of the European continent to lie."* To the early Romans the Celtic nations, closely allied though they were to them in race and language, were known only as warlike nomads whose incursions from beyond the Alpine frontier of their little world were perpetuated in the half legendary tales of their own national childhood. To the Greek even of the days of Herodotus no more was known of them than the rumours brought by seamen and traders whose farthest voyage was to the mouth of the Rhone.

It is, indeed, difficult for us now, amid the intimate relations of the modern world, and the interchange of products of the remotest east and west, to realize a condition of

* Gladstone, *Juventus Mundi*, pp. 474, 479.