

routes of travel, would be likely enough to amuse himself in some of the enforced torpor of savagery by idly making figures in some more durable medium than pigment on a rock face, or pictographs of direction with a stick on the sand. Such custom of pictorially showing the way is universal among wandering hordes, and, it is said, among tramps and vagabonds. We find one of these guide-posts in the *Great Divide*, a Colorado, U.S., paper of June last, from a painted rock recently observed, and of which we venture a translation: "Two bands of us went towards the west, early morning, in the time of faint sunshine (February), and the remainder in a body, at night, in the first quarter of the wet moon when the wild-geese came (March)."

This crude species of symbolical or pictorial guide-post is not to be confounded with designs intended to narrate and preserve an anecdote. The latter is, however, derived from it. This last we shall call Narrative design. A single figure is not sufficient for its requirements. No events occurred in primeval life except hunting incidents—not now referring to somewhat later time when population had increased and clashing interests produced wars. Naturally, therefore, we should look for hunting adventure in earliest "pictures," and accordingly we find it so. To indicate a hunting event, there must be at least the quarry and the hunter, with his assistants, if any. Something may be vaguely gathered historically as to date even from these rude scrawls. The use of the bow and arrow makes it plain that the time of production was later than the palæolithic age, and the presence of a dog still later. Another fact strikes us forcibly—namely, that in the earliest pictures the human form is represented nude. The first known representation of man's form, still extant, one inch in height, on a butt of deerhorn, found in the Madelaine cave, is nude. Others, much later, are likewise *in cœrpo*, leaving room for the inference that as late as the time when man had attained skill enough to express thoughts by pictured signs, they went naked. From this might be made further deductions as to climate and habit, but not necessary here. Perhaps the next consecutive step in design is that observed in rock etching in Algeria, from which region it is conceded the cave-dwellers came.

Unlike as it appears—from the animal's claws—this may represent a lion hunt. Two other Algerine cuttings are given by Nadaillac, in both of which the human figures are nude. Compare such with an outline painting, thirty feet by seven feet, in durable colours, red, yellow, and blue, discovered some six months since on the inner wall of a "corral," or space enclosed by monoliths, in San Luis, Obispo county, California. The enclosure has evidently been a keep of some forgotten tribe, and the incident some memorable hunting scene. The one-horned hunted animal resembles most a rhinoceros (if the picture can be supposed to bear such antiquity), and that the true rhinoceros once roamed the Pacific coast is proved by a skull having been found within one hundred miles of the spot. The figure is scarcely a tapir, nor a mammoth, while the toes preclude it being a champion "dun cow" or bison, and the presence of the remarkably wooden dog shows that the drawing, although old, was done subsequent to the taming of wolves (coyotes) as aids to man. The similarity of the feathered head-gear to modern Indian *chevelure* carries a shade of suspicion, and,

therefore, by way of hedging as to remote antiquity, we admit it is not wholly impossible that the design may have been the work of some idle cowboy or of some aborigine within a few centuries past.

It is to Egypt that we naturally turn for the development of pictorial art, and there we find it—a wanting! Egyptian mural and monumental embellishments cannot, however be called prehistoric, inasmuch as they themselves were designed to record the incidents of history. Whether they became prevalent in remote antiquity before or later than the building of the first pyramid is not important to the question, but throughout twenty-two hundred years down to at least the twentieth dynasty, when a renaissance, or rather an antenatal indication of true pictorial art became perceptible, there remained one unchanged pattern of low type, unimproved over the earliest, either in outline or colouring. This inferiority may be understood by referring to the social system that changed so slowly, or not at all, during the nation's life. Although caste did not obtain, the bonds of class were strictly drawn. The people, as distinguished from the privileged ranks of royalties, priests, nobles and high military officials, were so strictly divided into classes that the system attracted the notice of Greek travellers. Herodotus makes seven different grades; Diodorus Siculus five—namely, reckoning downwards, land stewards, artificers including painters, herdsmen, boatmen, and fishermen. Occupation was in a great measure hereditary, descending from father to son. While architects, embracing sculptors, stood at the very top of cultivated intellect, artificers, classed as tradesmen-decorators, were the picture-producers. Neither their imagination nor their execution ever escaped from the tyranny of a cramped conventional school. It would seem as if the original models adopted in a rudimentary stage of drawing had been irrevocably cast in a mould and brought out ever afterwards, when there were walls to embellish, during a period of two millenniums, unaltered and unimproved although architecture and its lithic accessories had advanced to a high degree of dignity and æsthetic taste. To an eye possessing the slightest quickness of perception or accuracy of observation, such defects must have been glaringly patent. Walter Crane, in the *Fortnightly Review*, justly says, "The artistic capacity and sense of beauty must be fed by the contemplation of beauty, or both will in time perish." The public eye in Egypt had no chance of self-education, hence the sense of beauty and accuracy of form perished, or had never been evoked. While decoration in one unchanged monotony, absolutely without diversity of design or colour, had been before the eye from time immemorial, it excited no sentiment of any kind more than an old *rococo* wall-paper in a country house does in the inmates who have seen it from infancy. Its unlikeness to nature ceases to appear. Perspective seems to have been above the grasp of the mere mimetic mind, which fact is inexplicable when the vista of columns in great temples was ever before the spectators. Grouping, balance, and a central point of interest (whether pyramidal or not) were equally beyond the painter's conception. The skeleton at an Egyptian banquet has become a stock simile, but Egyptian painters showed an utter unacquaintance with the articulations of the human framework and consequent play of muscles. More-

over, studies were made not from the nude but from clad models, thereby giving undue clumsiness of trunk and elongation to the limbs. Attitude was almost always represented in profile, with both feet, even in processions, flat on the ground. Heads were the least incorrect part of the figures, yet the eye is always as if full-face although the visage is in profile, the ear invariably too high and generally too large. Still life is rarely used as accessory. Interiors are indicated by a faldstool and a vase. Landscape is ignored, or the barbarism is used of fish in the rivers to show which is water and which land. With all this, however, occasionally, but infrequently, a glimmering of caricature peeps out, indicating a desire to get away from the conventional. In the case of animal figures, especially those of the chase, the same effort at escape is apparent. Nor is this difficult to understand. The glimpse of a wild animal is momentary, and the play of its muscles greater than in man, hence it impresses its idea instantly, and with greater force on the mind. This is shown in panels of greyhounds and gazelles, horses at speed, and the like; but in mixed compositions—if they can be so called—the elements of relative harmony are sadly wanting. As to religious paintings and the figures of the gods, it is the absence of cultured fancy that produces distorted dreams, and these came in with idol worship. They were the outcome of crude attempts to personify attributes.

In colour, defects were equally glaring. Patches of vivid primary colour, irrespective of beauty of form, have an attraction for the vulgar, but in such rude ornamentation the effect is more distracting than gorgeous. Egyptian colours were certainly vivid enough, but the range—a kind of distemper with gum as a medium, on a white ground—was circumscribed, and did not embrace crimson, purple, olive, orange, or lilac. Half-tints were unknown, hence the vital element of shadow is a wanting, thereby excluding such pictures from the domain of true art. Male countenances were depicted of a flat reddish hue and female of a saffron brown, showing a wider difference of tint than probably existed between the sexes. Folds of drapery were indicated by lines of brown or yellow. The vital want—as it was among all early peoples—was absence of individuality of design; that is to say, of diversity. This could scarcely be blamed on the producers. Pictures to-day on the walls of the Academy address themselves to the prevailing taste of the time, thereby indicating to posterity what particular phase was prevalent in the year or the decade, and demand in that special taste will produce an over-abundant supply. The very low standard of scenic effect which from time immemorial satisfied the Egyptian public, showing an utter want of exaltation and an absence of the sense of beauty, demanded nothing better than they had continually before their eyes. Hence, after all, designs by "artificers" were not a criterion of their own aspirations, but remain a gauge of the public taste that received them. Herein is no trace of artistic craving, and in this view art did not dawn in Egypt until after two millenniums of wall-painting, and in its first glimmering was extinguished by foreign invasion of the kingdom. And, truly, art proper cannot be looked for until, with large population, general culture, and consequent grasp of mind, the mimetic has passed into the