

An Hour with the Editor

VANISHED CIVILIZATIONS

Bronze is an alloy of copper and tin. It does not occur naturally, but is a manufactured product. Metallic copper is found in many places; metallic tin does not exist naturally. Hence, while the copper contained in ancient bronze may have been found originally in its pure state, the tin, which is mixed with it to form bronze, is an artificial product, and its existence proves a knowledge of ores and their reduction. The degree of knowledge requisite to ascertain that in what is commonly called tin-stone there is a useful metal of itself implies scientific attainment. It could hardly have been an accidental discovery, for the process of extracting tin from the ore is difficult and complicated. Its combination with copper to produce an alloy, that, while easily worked, would be very durable, also implies both investigation and skill. Therefore when we see a piece of bronze we know that it of necessity implies a knowledge by some one of the nature of tin ore and its reduction, of the nature of copper, if not of copper ore, and its utilization, a knowledge of the effect of alloying the two metals and at each stage a sufficient degree of skill and the necessary appliances to perform the several processes successfully. These are the necessary inferences from the existence of a shapeless fragment of bronze.

If we find not only bronze, but an article made of it, which shows great mechanical skill and artistic taste, we have proof of a degree of intellectual advancement as positive as the footprint in the sand was proof to Robinson Crusoe that some one had landed on his island. In Ife, the sacred capital of Yoruba, which is in Southern Nigeria, some remarkably fine bronze articles exist. Of these the most interesting is a head, known as Olofin and deemed sacred by the natives and guarded by priests of their religion. It has been photographed. The full face shows a striking combination of the Oriental and African types. The eyes are very oblique. If the lower part of the face is covered, the remainder of the countenance seems distinctly Oriental; indeed it is rather an exaggeration of the Oriental type. If the upper part is covered, the lower part is distinctly African. In the whole face the African type predominates. The profile is African. As far as can be judged from the photographs, the workmanship is of high order. The head is not complete, the back part above the level of the ears being wanting, what looks like the lower part of a helmet surrounding the head where on a living person the lower part of the hair would reach. The head is hollow. Certainly the production of such a head implies the existence of a high degree of skill, knowledge and culture on the part of those who made it, and those who made the bronze out of which it is formed.

Dr. Frobenius, a German traveler, who has visited Ife, is inclined to think that the existence of this head and other bronze articles exhibiting a high degree of artistic skill, justifies the belief that the Nigerian region was the site of Atlantis, that mysterious country of the past of which Plato wrote. The present residents of the country make no pretence of knowledge as to the origin of these relics, and are quite incapable of producing them. We are under no obligation to accept the German doctor's explanation, but that is immaterial. Their existence implies a vanished civilization, and whether it was the civilization of Atlantis or of some other region is a matter only of curious interest. We have the unquestioned fact that at a period, so remote that tribal traditions do not extend back to it, there were people who understood the reduction of ores, the alloying of metals, the manufacture of articles of art, and who were familiar with a type of the human countenance which is not known to exist today. We are driven to surmise only when we seek to discover whence came the copper and tin out of which the bronze was made. This may require us to concede the existence of a developed commerce. Whatever may be the explanation of all these things, and to whatever date the bronze head referred to may be assigned, its existence in the sacred grove of Ife, cared for by a priest, is absolute proof of a civilization that has long since vanished. We may give in subsequent articles further evidence of the condition of mankind in days before the dawn of history and even of present tradition.

IRISH HISTORY

Irish history may be said to end with "the Cromwellian Settlement." Rarely has so great a disaster ever befallen any people as that which came upon the inhabitants of Ireland then. The country was almost stripped of its native population. Thousands were driven into exile and shiploads of young men and women, as well as boys and girls, were sent to the American colonies, especially to the West Indies. Cromwell seemed to be convinced that the Irish Roman Catholics were absolutely irreconcilable to Protestant rule, and the only method, which he thought at all likely to restore the country to a condition of permanent peace was to rid it of Irishmen altogether. Exile being impossible in many cases, the remainder of the population was driven into the western part of the island, although they were forbidden to settle within several miles of the sea. As many priests were sent abroad as could be captured, but a sufficient number of them remained in the country to keep alive the religious zeal of the people. The most wonderful things in connection with these woe-filled conditions of the Irish was the tenacity with

which they adhered to their religion. Any of them, who were willing to accept Protestantism, were relieved from oppression, but the number who did so was so small as to be practically negligible. When Charles II. came to the throne, the Irish hoped that he would do them justice, especially as much of their suffering had been due to the fact that they had espoused the cause of his father against Parliament; but Charles was almost devoid of gratitude, and while the Court of Claims, which he established, did restore a few estates to their rightful owners, in most cases the confiscatory policy of Cromwell was confirmed. When James II. succeeded to the crown the hopes of the Irish were again aroused, and when William of Orange landed on the shores of the island, thousands of them rallied to the defence of James. That king was unworthy of their support; nevertheless they stood by his cause until the last. The surrender of Limerick ended the campaign. Here a force under the command of Patrick Sarsfield with 20,000 men resisted the victorious army of William so successfully that the English commander agreed to accept its surrender on terms. It was stipulated by Sarsfield that the Irish should enjoy the privileges of their own religion, and that he himself, with as many of his soldiers as chose to follow him, should be free to emigrate to France. The latter part of the treaty was acted on at once, and more than 10,000 men left the shores of Ireland, leaving in many cases their wives and children behind. The provision as to freedom of worship was never ratified by the Irish Parliament; indeed, high clerical dignitaries argued that a Protestant government was under no obligation to keep faith with Papists. At last Ireland was pacified, but it was such a peace as was more terrible than war. It may be thought that Irish historians would take an extreme view of the conditions, which prevailed during the next hundred years, but Green, the historian of the English People, had no prejudice in favor of Ireland, and he wrote:

"For a hundred years the country remained at peace; but it was the peace of despair. No Englishman who loves what is noble in the English temper can tell without shame and sorrow the story of that time of guilt. The work of oppression, it is true, was done not directly by England, but by Irish Protestants, and the cruelty of their rule sprang in great measure from the sense of danger and the atmosphere of panic in which the Protestants lived. But if thoughts such as these relieve the guilt of those who oppressed, they leave the fact of oppression as dark as before. The most terrible legal tyranny under which a nation has ever groaned, avenged the rising under Tyrconnell. The conquered people, in Swift's bitter words of contempt, became 'heavers of wood and drawers of water' to their conquerors. Such as the work was, however, it was thoroughly done. Though local risings of these serfs perpetually spread terror among the English settlers in Ireland, all dream of a national revolt passed away."

The Abbe Perrand in his "Ireland Under British Rule," says that in 1672 the population of the island was 1,100,000, of whom 800,000 were Roman Catholics. Notwithstanding the constant and cruel oppression, and frequent famines, the population increased with some rapidity, for ninety-four years later an official census showed that there were over 435,000 families in the country. In the next sixty-eight years, that is by the year 1834, the population had reached 7,943,940, a very remarkable gain, in view of the great loss by emigration and the countless deaths by famine.

At this point this series of articles may be brought to a close. The terrible sufferings of the people during the frequent famines need not be told; neither need the long list of errors committed by the Irish Parliament and by English administrators be given here. Ireland lost its parliament in 1800, but its history was not such as encourages the belief that its extinction was a calamity. The story of Ireland of the Eighteenth Century is one of the deepest gloom. That of the Nineteenth Century, although it has many dark spots, is brighter, and the Twentieth Century has opened with a promise of better things.

SUPERSTITION

Superstition, as the word is ordinarily used, may be defined to be the association of events with which there is no apparent or rational connection. This eliminates the belief in ghosts and in alleged phenomena of that nature, for although these may or may not be mere superstitions, it is not of such things that it is proposed to speak at this time. Among common superstitions of the kind first referred to, we have that relating to Friday, to the number thirteen, to spilling salt, to seeing the new moon over the left shoulder, to touching wood, to stumbling when going up-stairs, to breaking a looking-glass, to counting your money, to letting an infant see its face in the glass, and so on almost ad infinitum. Most of us do something every day of our lives which someone else thinks unlucky. It is a case where ignorance is bliss, for if we entertained all the superstitions held by all people, we would live in a state of continual peril.

Of course, it is easy enough to cite instances which seem to justify superstitions, but as there are some fifteen hundred millions of people in the world, who are constantly doing something, the number of coincidences that must daily occur must be innumerable. Belief in omens, portents, warnings, and the like, may easily lead to their fulfilment. We are

many-sided in our natures, influenced in ways that we little imagine. That success in any effort depends in a large measure upon the spirit in which we undertake it, every one knows. In the daily experience of every one of us we see instances where singleness of resolve leads to the accomplishment of results that to the wavering man are impossible. Our wills, our courage, our judgment may be weakened by superstition, and we may thereby become the instruments of our own defeat. If we could eliminate from the instances, which seemingly confirm superstitions, those events which are purely coincidences, or easily explainable by natural causes, or that are due to our own weakness or folly, those that remain would doubtless be found to be so few in number that we would ignore them.

None of us is quite free from superstition. This is probably primarily owing to the universal consciousness of mankind of an intelligence external to humanity; but it is very largely due to education, using the word to mean everything that shares in our mental development. Intellectual weakness is not to be inferred from it, for many of the most illustrious men have had exceedingly absurd superstitions, so ingrained that they were influenced by them even though perfectly conscious of their absurdity. Argument, however reasonable, fails in most cases to remove superstitions. It is easy to convince any one that another's superstitions are ridiculous, but not that his own are. A person, who will walk under a ladder without a second thought, may feel uneasy if he happens to spill the salt, and there are those who would spill salt or break looking-glasses or walk under ladders without a tremor, and yet would not be one of thirteen to sit at dinner. As a rule there is nothing at all definite about a superstition. Indeed, that relating to thirteen at the table is the only one that is specific, and even about that there is an indefiniteness, because no one pretends to know which of the company is to meet his doom.

This element of absolute vagueness ought to show the folly of superstition, but it does not. We are told sometimes that certain things happen as a warning; but, unfortunately, no one has the least idea what we are supposed to be warned against. Few persons would care to say, in the face of so many instances well established, that persons never have premonitions of coming danger to themselves or others. A very conspicuous case was that of the woman, who did not embark on the Cliallam the day that ship went down, because she had a premonition of disaster. The case was mentioned in the newspapers at the time. Instances of this nature, of course, simply be coincidences, and at any rate they do not come under the head of superstitions. But when we are told that to stumble when going up-stairs is a warning against disappointment, we have a right to ask as to what we are going to be disappointed, otherwise the warning is absurd. Of the two kinds of superstitions, that which supposes certain events to foreshadow evils and that the doing or omission of certain acts will be followed by evil, there being in no case any connection between the acts themselves and what they are supposed to presage, it is difficult to say which is the more absurd. Both are the cause of much useless anxiety and often of unhappiness. Some people attempt to justify their belief in these things by suggesting that certain things happen because it pleases God thus to warn us of something else. The scissors fall from the table and the point of one of the blades sticks in the floor. This, we are told, is a sign of something that is to take place, a warning to put us on our guard. Now if there is any being having a knowledge of future events, and caring sufficiently about you to desire to warn you, do you not suppose that the warning would be a little more explicit? What is it that you are to do or not to do because the scissors stand upon their point, or because you break the looking-glass or spill the salt? What would you think of a friend who, knowing that something evil was likely to happen to you, would push you as you went up-stairs so as to make you stumble, or would cause a pin to lie on the floor with its head towards you, instead of telling you specifically what was going to take place so that you might be prepared? Doubtless it is true that

"God moves in a mysterious way,"

but to suggest that He causes you to take a piece of bread at table, when you already have a piece, as a warning that something, you know not what and have no means of telling, is going to happen is the very essence of absurdity and not far removed from blasphemy.

A lady one day remarked to Bulwer Lytton how odd it was that a dove (Latin, colombe) should have been sent out to find the Old World, and Columbus (Colombe) should have found the New.

"Yes," agreed the novelist; "but more curious still is the fact that one came from Noah and the other from Genoa!"

"That omelet," remarked a young Benedict to his wife as he rose from breakfast—"that omelet is just like the ones my mother used to make."

The wife, who was the preparer of the dish, looked delighted.

"Yes," continued the man, "it's just like mother used to make. Mother never could cook anything fit to eat!"

Stories of the Classics

(N. de Bertrand Laym)

THESEUS AND THE AMAZONS

One of the chief events during the rule of Theseus was the invasion of Attica by an army of women-warriors, representative of that same people who sent an army to the assistance of the Trojans during the memorable siege, and whose leader the invincible Achilles slew, ignorant of her sex until her death, when he deeply deplored what he had done. The "athletic and amorous" Theseus had gone on a journey of invasion into the Euxine sea, having heard of a country ruled over by an intrepid race of women, called Amazons, said to be the daughters of Ares or Mars, god of war and Harmonia. So many an interesting tale had been told to the Greek hero regarding these women that he was not so eager to see their country as to meet the Amazons themselves and find out if their valor was as great as had been described and their physical strength as marvelous. Strange reports were current in Attica regarding the life and habits of these women—that they were of magnificent height and of an awesome beauty, that they "dwelt entirely apart from men, permitting only a short temporary intercourse for the purpose of renovating their numbers, and burning out their right breast with a view of enabling them to draw the bow more freely."

When Theseus had reached the Amazonian shores he found that his own fame had preceded him and that the inhabitants, quite as marvellous a people as had been described, were glad and eager to welcome him. Having partaken of their hospitality, he made a very poor return by running away with Antiope, the Amazonian queen.

There is another little love story in connection with this voyage which is only by the way but is of very great interest. With Theseus on board his ship were three Athenian youths, and one of them, Soloon by name, fell very deeply in love with Antiope, and knowing that his master's passion was but a transitory one, it vexed and agonized him all the more to think he dared not make an open avowal and ask the beautiful queen in honorable marriage. However, he managed to convey a message to Antiope secretly, hoping that if she favored him all might be well. The queen, far from returning his passion resented his slight advances, having probably been subjected to more than her share of indignity, and, though she was very gentle and courteous in her refusals, the young suitor was so disappointed and hopeless that he committed suicide by throwing himself overboard. Theseus, who usually had the grace to be sorry for any suffering he had brought upon others when it was too late to mend matters, was greatly distressed when he knew the cause of the unhappy young man's death. In order to make some small atonement he caused a landing to be made on the coast opposite the spot where Soloon had been drowned and he built a city there, calling the city for the god Apollo, and the river, which ran through the city, Soloon.

So deeply angered were the Amazonians over the abduction of their queen that they at once resolved upon an invasion of the kingdom of Theseus. They made a memorable march in the depths of the winter-time, and long before they reached Attica they engaged in many a battle, leaving the path of their journeying marked by the graves of their dead. They crossed the Bosphorus over the ice which was "no slight or womanish enterprise" and reaching Athens they encamped outside the city.

Theseus, after sacrificing to Fear, as the oracle had commanded, led his army out to meet the women. Worn and weary as they must have been after their long distressful march, the Amazons beat the Athenians back nevertheless, and had it not been that Theseus received reinforcements must have inflicted a severe and lasting defeat upon the Greeks. As it was the siege lasted four months, and was only brought to an end by treaty through the intervention of Antiope, who had watched the progress of events with feelings which can better be imagined than described. Some old historians tell us that while Theseus was sleeping, the queen with a few faithful followers would go out night after night to the battlefield and care for the wounded women, and take them down to the shore, where a boat that was always in readiness would convey the sufferers to Chalcis where they were carefully nursed and where most of them recovered.

Plutarch tells us at this point in the narrative that there is no more worth recording about the Amazons, and leaves us in the dark as regards the fate of Antiope, who seems to have loved her husband Theseus though she remained faithful to her people. One report assures us that the Amazonian queen died or was killed during the progress of the siege, but her ultimate fate is wholly uncertain. Later histories and other ancient historians than Plutarch speak of the Amazonians now and then. There is a story which mentions them in connection with Alexander the Great and no less an authority than Julius Caesar acknowledges them as having once conquered and held in dominion a large portion of Asia.

Theseus met his death at the hands of the king of Scyros, to whom he had gone for assistance in quelling the Athenians who had risen against him. Years afterwards his grave was found and his bones and his brazen spear-head and sword taken to Athens where they were given splendid burial. For centuries his tomb was a refuge for slaves and a sanctuary, for Theseus while he lived was an assister and protector of the distressed, and never refused the petitions of the afflicted that fled to him.

DISHING DOSSER

The election heckler was on the warpath again, and this time in the person of Jem Dossier, one of the "sons of rest," who had lounged about the town for months. He was willing to vote for any party or cause so long as the "unemployed" got their rights.

The local candidate was addressing the meeting one night when Dossier and his pal turned up, determined to have a voice. The candidate had not proceeded far in his address when Dossier bawled out:

"Hi, guv-nor! Hold on! Who put up the beer?"

"Well," retorted the candidate, who knew the man, "it doesn't matter much who put it up, but it's evident that you can always put any quantity down."

"Ha ha!" laughed Dossier. "Clever bloke! That's only gas! But answer this: What about the big loaf and the little loaf?"

"You believe in the big loaf, of course?" was the query.

"Rather—I should say so."

"I knew it; you're the biggest loafer I've seen about here for years."

BOTH MISTAKEN

Hire Sistem, the great furniture king, having made his pile, had settled down to the pursuits of a country gentleman. He invited his friend, Plane Figger, to make a stay with him. One day, armed with the latest appliances for dealing out sudden death to anything in the game line, he and his friend trudged over the brown furrows, but at the end of three hours they were still looking for something to start the bag with. Suddenly a hare got up. Bang! come from Hire Sistem. Bang! from Plane Figger, and over went the four-footed one.

"My hare!" shouted the ex-furniture king.

"My hare!" cried his friend.

They argued for ten minutes as to whose weapon had worked the mischief. Then the keeper was called up to adjudicate.

"You'd take your oath it's your 'are, would you?" he turned to Hire Sistem, fiercely.

"If necessary, certainly."

"And you'd swear 'twas your 'are," truculently to Plane Figger.

"I would."

"Then think yourself jolly lucky you're escapin' seven years apiece for perjury; 'cos it 'appens to be my dog!"

THE JAWS OF DEATH

"Man overboard!" roared the first mate of the Artful Alice excursion steamer.

"Man overboard!" roared the second mate, running to the taffrail.

"Man overboard!" roared the crew, joining in.

"Man overboard!" roared the skipper, remembering the dictum that the captain should always be the last to leave his ship.

Seeing that something must be done, and that if he didn't do it nobody would, a gallant passenger dived into the briny depths and, seizing the drowning person by the waist, swam with him to shore.

"Sir," groaned the rescued one, "if it had not been for you I should most certainly have been drowned. How can I reward you? I am only a poor dentist, but if you will come round to my surgery tomorrow morning I will extract every tooth in your head for nothing!"

WINNING HIS CLAIM

"I sent you an account of £5 for collection," said a man, coming into the office of a lawyer.

"Yes, you did."

"What success have you had?"

"Sued him last week and got it."

"That's good. Give me the money, and tell me the amount of your fees and I will pay you."

"My fees are £10. I have given you credit for the £5 collected, pay me another £5 and we'll be square."

"What?" gasped the man. "I don't see where I make anything by collecting the debt."

"Nothing, my dear sir, from a money point of view; but you have the satisfaction of knowing that a dishonest man has been brought to justice."

Hardly had the proud father entered the room to get his first glimpse of the new twins than both new-borns set up a loud bawling.

"Now, now," cautioned the father, holding up his hand and glancing from one red face to the other, "one at a time; one at a time!"

"I met Dunkey today for the first time for years. He hasn't changed at all, but he doesn't seem to realize it."

"How do you mean?"

"Oh, he's for ever talking about 'what a fool he used to be'."