

out that man's own origin has always been to himself a subject of profound contemplation, the mystery of which he generally clears in a manner quite creditable to his own clan or tribe.

Now, assuming that we have placed ourselves in the mental attitude of primeval man—What then? We are conscious of our existence, and of our surroundings—the hills, the streams, the vegetation, the beasts and the birds, and we are equally so of the heavenly bodies, and of natural phenomena.

It will at once be observed that by no possibility could any but a first pair have been thus brought face to face with so many mysteries simultaneously, but, in any case, the mysteries were there, and man accepted as his duty, the task of accounting for them in some way most consonant at least, with his own intelligence. By this it is not meant that he said to himself or to any one else, "We must try to find reasons for all these things," but simply that as a result of the fact that he was a complex thinker, the several subjects forced themselves upon his attention, and he formulated this or that theory in a line with the facts of his own experience. Hence it will appear that myth-makers were not liars or impostors—they were gropers after truth, but proceeding on false premises they arrived at false or absurd conclusions, even, indeed as many more intellectually gifted ones have done in our own day with all the advantages of learning and the knowledge of centuries to guide them.

It would not be easy to say just which of the numerous nature-problems untutored man first undertook to solve, or the order in which he took them up. Perhaps no two groups approached them in the same order, and we are absolutely certain that no two arrived at exactly the same conclusions, as has already been indicated.

It is admissible because natural, however, to suppose that our primitive ancestors first tried to account for their own presence here, and next, perhaps, for that of the lower animals on which they were dependent for subsistence. Sometimes it is known that the latter were not only believed to have taken precedence on the scene, but that from some of them sprang the human race. But it is unnecessary for the present purpose to do more than allude to the fact that this has always proved a prolific source of myth, and one which drove even so highly cultured a people as the ancient Greeks beyond the verge of absurdity, for an explanation.

Then, too, the presence of the earth itself must be accounted for. In Indian legend we have many examples of how this was said to have been brought about, and savage folk all over the world entertain their own views on the subject, just as they do with regard to the existence of everything else.

While the belief has been entertained that these have always existed, some declare that they had a beginning, and profess to account for how they were brought into being, but nearly all unite in personifying the heavenly bodies, and not a few, too, so regard the earth.