

An Hour with the Editor

PRIMITIVE MAN

Men may be descended from monkeys, but if geologists are right, there is a long line of intervening ancestry. Not many years ago the naturalists undertook to reconstruct from the famous Neanderthal skull a figure that would be something like what our remote ancestors were at the earliest date when we know them to have been in existence on the earth. The result was not flattering, and indeed as recently as within two years it was supposed that men, as they lived 20,000 years ago, bore a strong resemblance to baboons. We have at hand a drawing supposed to represent a man the remains of whom were found in France. The picture is of a creature with a monkey-like face, long arms, long flat feet, short legs and a head too large in proportion to the body, altogether a very degraded-looking creature. Recently certain remains have been found in Jersey under conditions that seem to call for the lapse of at least half a million years since the bones were interred. Rude implements of flint were found with the bones, thus establishing the fact that mankind had at that period made some advance in civilization. The skull is such as indicates that the face was long, wide and heavy, but not flat. The profile reconstructed to suit the skull shows an overhanging brow, a prominent nose, lips of moderate width and a slightly retreating chin—by no means a bad profile. The brain is shaped much like it is in civilized man today, the ears being almost exactly midway between the brow and the back of the head. The whole figure as reconstructed is erect and well-proportioned, differing in no way from an average man of the Twentieth Century.

Dr. Keith, who has devoted much attention to the investigation of ancient remains of mankind found in Europe, says that the Glacial Period on that Continent lasted for several hundred thousand years, probably with periods of milder temperature. He thinks that during so long a time there must have been racial variations; nevertheless he says there is no evidence to support the claim that there was any more of the monkey type in man five hundred thousand years ago than there is now. Mr. Richard Swann Lull, who has also investigated the subject, thinks that man of the Glacial Period was not more than five feet or perhaps five feet three inches in height, but very powerfully built. Dr. Keith's conclusions are to the same effect. The latter paid close attention to the impressions on the lower jaw for the muscles used in speech, and he reached the conclusion that Glacial man could not have spoken as we do, that is to say that his articulation could not have been like ours. There is nothing surprising in this, for it is well known that Europeans are unable to articulate as some of the more savage tribes do, that is in all respects.

Our preconceived ideas get somewhat of a shock when we find ourselves forced to the conclusion that hundreds of thousands of years have elapsed since our race was physically at least quite equal to what we are today, a little smaller in stature, but stronger and possibly more active. The evidence shows men of this type to have lived during the Glacial Age, that is, they existed under most unfavorable conditions. A period in the world's history, when almost perpetual winter reigned, was not favorable to the improvement of the race. On the contrary, it may be naturally supposed that the effect would be otherwise, and that the people, whose characteristics have been above set forth, were far more likely to have degenerated from a higher type than to have advanced from a lower one. We seem to be driven to the logical conclusion that before the Glacial Period man existed on the earth and that he was of a type higher than he is shown by the remains of the later and far more unfavorable period. Geology seems to establish that before the Age of Ice conditions were favorable on the earth for the development of very high types of animal life, at least physically.

But the question may be asked: If man lived in this period and had attained a stage of advancement greater than that of the Stone Age, why is it that we find no proof of it? This may be briefly considered, premising, however, that what is now to be said is purely surmise based upon what is known of geological conditions. Climatic conditions preceding the Ice Age were very different from what they are now. There have been great changes in the surface of the earth since that period. These two facts make it quite impossible to say what parts of the world were habitable by man before the appearance of frost. The ancestors of the race, whose remains are found in caves in some parts of Europe, may have had their homes in parts of the world which, for one reason or another, are not now habitable. If they lived towards the North, the grinding action of glaciers through thousands of centuries would have effaced all trace of their existence. If they lived elsewhere, the sea may now cover such remains as they may have left. There is nothing surprising in the fact that remains have been preserved in caves for hundreds of thousands of years in places where water could carry lime or some other material to form impenetrable cases for them. But when we think of one hundred, two hundred or three hundred years of ice action, of vast bodies of ice pressing down upon the earth and grinding beneath them everything into powder, we will realize that whatever numbers and civilization mankind may have attained to before the Ice Age, it would be absurd to expect to discover even the faintest

trace of his bones or the smallest fragments of his handiwork.

It is clear from what has just been said that science is no nearer telling us what the type of primitive man was like than it was fifty years ago. Dr. Darwin suggested an easy solution. We were all monkeys to begin with, and although he could not find the missing link, he advanced the hypothesis that the modifications which differentiate the highest type of man from the lowest type of monkey could be accomplished, if sufficient time were allowed for them. But we now find that there has been no material physical change in man in what seems to have been a period of five thousand centuries, and it is difficult to suggest how it is possible, if no material change has taken place in that length of time, the necessary changes could ever have taken place at all. If, as at one time seemed probable, we had to be content with the explanation that, about twice as long ago as the time when the Egyptians made the pottery found in the lowest strata of Nile mud, men were little better than baboons, it was not difficult to suppose that in a slightly longer period our ancestors may have been low types of monkeys. But if half a million years have produced no material physical change, what reason is there for supposing that five hundred million years would have brought about the changes necessary to be supposed. We are and must continue to be in the dark concerning primitive man, but, as has been said above, there is logical ground for the theory that, whether it was his primitive state or not, man before the Glacial Period was, physically at least, of a high type, and that with the Ice there came a period of degradation due to circumstances unfavorable to the perpetuation of the highest types. What intellectual advancement the pre-Glacial ancestor of ours may have reached, must seemingly remain forever a mystery.

MINISTERS AND PEOPLE

It is not unnatural that a man who devotes himself to the work of a clergyman should not be expected the concern himself very much with things such as politics and business. Time and other influences have developed in the ministerial profession a sort of exclusiveness, and this has grown to such an extent that it has come to be regarded almost an essential feature of it. The laity expects the clergy to keep itself a little apart, and the result is that many persons, when they hear a minister of the Gospel speak about such matters as politics, or the requirements of commerce or the need of municipal improvements, are very likely to express the opinion that he had better mind his own business. And so it comes about that the aloofness, naturally arising out of a profession, which deals with things relating largely to a life to come, and the attitude of the laity just mentioned react upon each other with the result that a line of demarcation is drawn where none ought to exist, whereby the usefulness of the clergy is lessened and the laity receives the minimum of the advantage derivable from the presence in the community of a body of men, whose special duty it is to promote moral and spiritual welfare. Time was when the church was the dominant force in every community—we use the word church in its broadest sense and the word clergy as embracing all persons who make the ministry of the Gospel their life work, no matter by what name they may prefer to be called. Too frequently nowadays the co-operation of the church is invited in a perfunctory way and most frequently it is ignored in all political, commercial and other matters of the class known as temporal. In hours of crisis we turn to the church; we do so when we wish to add dignity to any public function, but we as a rule close the door against the clergyman when we deal with the affairs of everyday life.

Just here a word on a subject that is not thought of sufficiently. Did you ever stop to think that men and women may ignore the church year after year, but in some hour of deadly peril, in some moment when their souls are torn with anguish, they send a message to a clergyman asking his presence, it is always heeded. Sickness, sorrow, danger never deter the steps of a true minister of the Gospel, when he hears the cry of those who need him. Those of us who know the clergyman only in the pulpit hardly know him at all. We hear him preach and express our surprise that he cannot make his theme more interesting. We drop our contribution into the plate and feel that we have been paying in full for what we have received. How many of us ever think of what the clergyman does about which he never tells us. He gets up into his pulpit, and talks to us from a text to which we only pay half attention and very often in a manner that fails to arouse interest, and some of us are apt to think that it is this preaching and the conduct of certain services that make up his life and measure his usefulness. If some day he would tell us the things that he knows about some of us, of the sorrow and suffering he has witnessed and been able to alleviate, of the burden of others' grief that he has had to bear, and of his own anguish because he has not been able to lighten it; if he would take us with him in imagination to some of the scenes where his presence has brought a ray of comfort; if he would tell us of sickened souls to whom he was able to minister, of wavering courage that he was

able to strengthen, of footsteps faltering on the brink of temptation that he was able to sustain and lead into paths of safety—if he should do these things, we might see the pulpit as it were through a halo; we would at any rate realize that those whom as business men we ignore, as politicians we refuse to recognize, as men of the world we find unnecessary, are doing a great and noble work for no reward other than that which comes from a sense of duty performed. But they do not trumpet their deeds abroad; they lock the secrets of others in their own bosoms and though conscious of the greatness of the work they are doing make no murmur because it is not appreciated.

But this is a digression from the purpose of this article, which is to emphasize the fact there ought to be a closer bond between the clergy and the laity. Doubtless there are faults on both sides. Clergymen as a rule do not care to be obtrusive or to seem so, and the very proper desire to avoid being so regarded leads them to abstain from doing what they often would like to do. It is doubtless true that clergymen as a rule would like to be regarded by the laity as of themselves, free to mix with men of business and affairs, and to speak of their work freely as other men speak of theirs. If we should meet a physician and he should tell us what he was doing to stay the ravages of some epidemic in some part of the city, we would be interested and appreciative; we would be very likely to mention it to some one else and praise the physician for his usefulness in the community. Most of us would be just as appreciative if a clergyman should tell us what he is doing to bring rays of happiness or at least the cool breeze of comfort into hearts that are dark with sin or heated with passion; but to the clergyman his work seems too sacred to be talked about, and so he goes on his way "doing good by stealth and blushing to find it fame." We plead for closer contact between the clergy and the laity; for more constant co-operation; for a relaxation by both that the work of the former is not merely for results in another world, but for the betterment of the world; for a fuller and better understanding, so that each may be strengthened by the other; for the promotion of a sympathy with each other whereby the forces that make for righteousness and the general betterment of the community may be welded together in close alliance.

THE ROMAN EMPERORS

III.

When Caligula was assassinated, there was a movement in Rome to restore the republic. Many of the wiser of the people saw only catastrophe ahead for the nation, if the absolutism of that had marked the reigns of Tiberias and his successor was allowed to continue. But the Praetorian Guards were determined to continue the new order of things and they sought for some one, who might be assumed to possess some hereditary right to the highest offices. They found him in Tiberias Claudius, son of Drusus, who was step-son of Augustus. He was sickly and infirm and had been the subject of neglect; nevertheless being of a studious mind he had acquired much knowledge and even had written several books. Him the Guards proclaimed Emperor, and proceeding to the Senate compelled that body to recognize their choice. Thus the soldiery took charge of the succession and we find for the first time the title Emperor being conferred before the other chief offices of state were vested in the ruler. The end of the republic had now come, and Rome passed under a military despotism. Having no military qualities himself, Claudius knew of no better way to attach the soldiers to him than by paying them, and this he did with a lavish hand. During the first years of his reign he exhibited many good qualities of heart and mind, but in A. D. 42, having discovered a plot against his life, he became a victim to fear, and threw himself into the hands of his wife, Messalina, who was of all women of her time the most infamous. He went into retirement, although he interested himself in public works. He began the famous Apian Aqueduct, a work which employed 30,000 men for 11 years. Messalina was a merciless extortioner, and Rome groaned under her cruelties. She was executed for her crimes, and afterwards Claudius married Agrippina. Agrippina, who has the reputation of having been one of the worst women that ever lived, was daughter of Germanicus, of whose valor and virtue mention has already been made, and of Agrippina, who was a woman of exceptionally noble character. The younger Agrippina had lost two husbands when she persuaded Claudius, who was her nephew, to marry her. She also caused his daughter to break her marriage contract with a youth whom she favored, and to marry her son, Nero. Thereafter all her plans were devoted to securing the succession to Nero, which she accomplished by removing by murder or otherwise every one who stood in the way, including Claudius himself, whom she poisoned. This was in A. D. 54. During the reign of this emperor, Mauritania was added to the Empire and the conquest of Britain was begun. After his death the Senate declared Claudius to be a god. He was succeeded by Nero.

The Praetorian Guards were at first disposed to secure the succession to Britannicus, son of Claudius, who had escaped the cruelty of Agrippina, but they allowed themselves to be persuaded to choose Nero, and their choice met with the prompt approval of the Senate. As was the case with several of the emperors who afterwards became infamous, Nero, whose tutor was the famous Seneca, began his reign with every promise of doing well; but unfortunately the common vice of the day, sensuality, proved too strong for his good intentions, and weakened by his voluptuous life he became an easy victim to his strong-minded mother. There was probably a taint of insanity in his blood. One of his first acts of infamy was to order the execution of Britannicus, a boy of 14, but feared by him as a rival. Shortly afterwards he caused the assassination of his mother, who doubtless richly deserved death, although Nero only ordered it to gratify the wish of one of his mistresses. At the instigation of this woman, whose name was Poppaea Sabina, he divorced his wife and afterward caused her to be murdered. He was now fully embarked upon his career of infamy. In July 64 the city of Rome was burned. It is usually supposed that he himself was responsible for the conflagration, and it was alleged that he caused the destruction because he wished to rebuild the city; but upon this point there is a great deal of doubt. He himself blamed the destruction upon the Christians, who were at this time quite numerous, and he ordered their rigorous persecution. It was during this dreadful time that St. Paul is supposed to have been slain.

The persecution of the Christians in ancient Rome is much misunderstood. They were not, as is often supposed, people who lived exemplary lives and were killed because they would not take part in the licentiousness of the day. Many of them were doubtless people distinguished for right living and there is no doubt that the teaching of their leaders was antagonistic to the vicious practices then so common. They were despised because they lived differently from their neighbors, but their religious faith was not regarded very seriously by those in authority. They were looked upon with suspicion because they were credited with disloyalty to Rome. They were regarded either as Jews or as persons who had come under Jewish influence, and to the Romans there were no people so obnoxious as the Jews, because the latter claimed to be a superior race, who were looking for a deliverer to set up a kingdom that would be universal. The Romans regarded Jesus, if they thought of him at all, as a person of no importance, but the fact that the Christians made no concealment that they expected him to return to earth and overthrow all existing dynasties was not calculated to make them many friends with those in authority. Moreover, they were accused of all manner of horrible rites and were generally considered as an exceedingly dangerous element in the community. Their persecution was hardly religious; it was partly political and partly simply an expression of the infinite cruelty of the time.

Nero rebuilt Rome, two-thirds of which had been destroyed, in magnificent fashion, and he emulated Augustus by the splendor of his public entertainments and his gifts of food. His cruelties were horrible. He caused Seneca to be slain because of his alleged participation in a conspiracy. He kicked his wife, Poppaea, to death. He asked Antonia, daughter of Claudius, to marry him, and when she refused he caused her to be slain. His desire then fixed itself upon a married woman named Statilia, and he killed her husband in order to marry her. He began a campaign against everything that was wise and virtuous in Rome, killing hundreds and banishing more; but in the year 68, after he had reigned 14 years and when he was only 31 years of age, the soldiers determined to drive him from power, and he was accordingly forced to abdicate. Shortly afterwards he ended his life by suicide.

Nero was a poet of no mean quality, a skilful painter, a good musician, a clever actor and an athlete. He was a man who in other times might have made a great record for good. He himself was in a sense a victim of the age in which he lived and of the habits of vice and licentiousness into which the rich classes of the Roman people had fallen. He inherited his villainess from his mother, who it is charitable to assume was insane. Nero was succeeded by Galba.

Stories of the Classics

(N. de Bertrand Lagim)

Before poetry was written, as we all know, it was sung by the bards and the minstrels, and the great epics had their birth in those romantic days when the minstrels went from castle to castle and hall to hall and enlivened the hours of the resting warriors by their tales of brave deeds and noble endeavor, of honor dearer than life, and of death's sweet reward for the valiant. In these modern days we can have little if any conception of the conditions which prevailed then, conditions which bred a vastly different race of men from the men

of the Twentieth Century. The endurance, for instance, of these old ancestors of ours was past belief, and matched only by their courage and their achievements. Mentally, in some respects, they were stronger than later peoples. For example, their memory was prodigiously strong. They were obliged to rely solely upon it for the retention of what they had learned. There is no doubt but that the habit we have nowadays of jotting everything down for reference, and depending upon our books to keep us from forgetting, has done a great deal towards destroying our power of remembering. Therefore, it was that the old-time bards could keep in their minds the lengthy poems, recounting their again and again to their never-weary listeners until the latter, too, had mastered the songs and repeated them to their children. So the stories were passed along until familiarity had made them doubly dear, and a few generations saw them part of the national life, the embodiment, in fact, of the nation's history.

The epic, therefore, is simply a story, a story which enforces no moral, but concerns itself with the struggles and the victories or defeats of heroes, mythical or legendary, subject-matter well calculated to inspire the hearts of those who heard them, for the epic belongs to the first vigorous manhood of a race, a manhood that still retained a large percentage of the credulity and impressionableness of childhood, with all of a childhood's love for and faith in high ideals.

Beowulf is the only complete Anglo-Saxon epic which we have preserved. It is based on the legends and myths current among the Teutonic tribes in the Fifth Century prior to the conquest of Britain. "The poem in its present shape," writes Gunmore, "was probably composed at one of the Northumbrian courts before the Eighth Century. . . . Probably many other Anglo-Saxon epics were lost in the wholesale and wanton destruction of MSS. when the monasteries were broken up under Henry VIII."

Beowulf

Hrothgar was a powerful king of the Danes, and fond of luxury, dancing and song; he built himself a huge banquet hall, and night after night gathered about him hundreds of his best-loved subjects, and together they feasted and played the hours away. Grendel, a hideous monster, who lived in the neighboring fen, was Hrothgar's bitter enemy, and, jealous of the King, and his nightly revels, came one night, when weary from an excess of merrymaking, Hrothgar and his vassals slept, and carried off the unconscious guests to be devoured in his home. In vain the enraged King demanded recompense, in vain he struggled against Grendel; nothing availed, until from over the sea came brave Beowulf in a boat manned by fourteen vassals, and after having feasted in the great banquet hall, he prepared to meet and conquer Grendel. The Danes and their King took no part in the great fight when at length the monster came and engaged Beowulf. But the latter was more than a match for the giant of the fen. He tore Grendel's arm from its socket "with shrill death-song," and the Danes were delivered from their enemy.

But one night during Beowulf's absence, the mother of Grendel, a more hideous and awful monster than her son, came to avenge his death, and killed one who was dearest to the heart of Hrothgar. When Beowulf heard of the crime, he at once set out to find the monster. He met her far underneath the cold water, and put her to death; and, after receiving rich gifts from Hrothgar, who was now released from all trouble, he returned home.

When Beowulf had ruled for fifty years, with "strong hand and gentle heart," over his people, a dragon came to waste and kill, and the old hero donned his armor for a last great struggle. Single-handed he fought against the fire and poison-belching foe, until he had slain him, but in so doing he received a mortal wound himself. So "exulting that he had fought the good fight of his life," he died, and was buried under a great mound by the sea, with "honors of flame and song."

This is the mythological conception of the epic. The coast of Europe in the northwest is exposed to terrible ocean storms. "Over the low lands, along the borders of the Cimbric peninsula, swept in fury the tempests of spring and fall. The sea broke its bounds and raged over the flat-country, sweeping away houses and men. Against these wild storms came the gentle spring-god the god of warmth and calm. This god men called Beow. The god conquers the monsters of the stormy sea, follows them even into their ocean home and puts them to death. Grendel and his mother may fairly be taken as types of these storms. In autumn they burst forth afresh. The waning power of summer closes with them in fiercest struggle. After long combat both the year and the storms sink into the frost-bound sleep of winter."

In the Sixth Century we find historical data which bears out the story of the old epic, for Beowulf was a real hero, worthily famed in story and song.

"Do you believe in long engagements?" he asked, after she had consented to be his.
"Yes, dearest," she replied. I have always thought it was such a mistake for two people to rush into matrimony before they learned to really know each other."
"Well, about how long would you wish the engagement to last?"
"Yet me see. Would you think it was too long if we didn't get married until a week from next Thursday?"